

EDITORIAL

A. SPINRAD—NEXT!

By DANIEL DE LEON

ELSEWHERE in this issue¹ will be found what purports to be a criticism of the statistical portion of the Minneapolis address on *The Preamble of the Industrial Workers of the World*, recently published in these columns.² The critic, a Mr. A. Spinrad, jauntily pronounces the figures given in the address an attempt to “deceive the workingmen,” to “grossly deceive them”; he claims the arguments contain “ridiculous intimations,” that they are a “flagrant misapplication of figures”; finally, that they are an “affront to the intelligence” of “sane men”—he being, of course, one of the “intelligent” and “sane.”

Mr. Spinrad, it will be noticed by reading his criticism, makes just two points.

The first point made relates to the question of the share or percentage of Labor. In the address it is figured that the share of the Working Class in 1900 was, in round figures, 17 per cent. of the product of its labor. Mr. Spinrad gives this statement the lie. He takes the instance of a baker. Says he: The master baker sells the loaf for 10 cents and the journeyman baker receives 2; is it correct to say that the percentage of the journeyman baker is 20 and the percentage of the master baker 80? No! Remember, argues our “intelligent and sane” critic, that the master baker has to pay for the wheat from which the flour is ground.—The answer to all this is: The first requirement for intelligent and sane criticism is the careful reading of the thing criticised. There is not a line, or a word, in that part of the address to justify the error into which Mr. Spinrad falls, to wit, that the individual workingman, or the individual capitalist, is under the microscope. It is clearly brought out throughout that passage that, not the individual workingman, but the Working Class, not the individual capitalist, but the Capitalist Class is being considered. Unquestionably, it would be an error, in the instance cited, to

¹ [“A Criticism,” page 5, below.]

² [Read De Leon’s address.]

say that that particular journeyman baker was plundered out of 80 per cent of the product of HIS labor, or that that particular capitalist HIMSELF pocketed 80 per cent of the cost of the loaf of bread. That particular journeyman baker could not be plundered to the amount of 80 per cent of the value of the loaf, because into the value of that loaf went the labor of the wheat-raiser, of the flour-grinder, the transportation and other labor, in none of which he took a share; nor could that particular master baker have pocketed that 80 per cent as his gains, because he had to purchase the flour and thus paid for the labor of producing it, transporting it, etc. When that loaf of bread leaped into existence, ready for consumption, it was not the product of any one individual workingman, or individual craft. It was the joint product of a number of crafts and craftsmen that worked successively upon the raw material that went into the composition of the loaf. When that loaf appeared, and could be got for 10 cents, it contained the crystallized labor of ALL these crafts. In each of its successive stages there was laid up an additional deposit of plunder: at each stage the material that was turned out contained fresh values, produced by, but not paid to the workingman: at each stage the amount of unpaid-for-Labor was thus increased. When the loaf was finally sold for 10 cents, the total plunder was larger than the last recorded plunder which was levied upon the journeyman baker. That aggregate plunder was not levied by any one employer, it was levied by all, by the CAPITALIST CLASS: that aggregate plunder was sustained, not by the journeyman baker alone, it was sustained by the WORKING CLASS. The bulk of that 10 cents is plunder—not INDIVIDUAL but CLASS plunder. The figures on the poster, quoted in the address, contain, not in separate, but in dissolved state, so to speak, the class plunder levied upon the Working Class in the manufacturing and mechanical industries. That plunder is correctly and mildly put at 83 per cent of Labor's share.

There is a loop-hole through which the Spinrads may here try to slip. They may, perceiving the fallacy of their individual journeyman baker's illustration, say: "Very well; the conclusion in the address concerning the 83 per cent of plunder levied by the Capitalist Class is wrong even then. It would be right if the manufacturing and mechanical Working Class worked only on articles turned out by the several crafts among themselves only. But these workingmen have to work upon raw materials raised upon farms"; and, falling back upon their baker-shop illustration, the Spinrads may, like

the “intelligent and sane” people that they are, proceed to clinch their point with the argument: “the figures on the poster, quoted in the address, say nothing concerning the values of agricultural products or the wages there paid.” This would be a clincher, indeed, only if the Spinrads dared go further and claim that wages are higher in agriculture than in manufacture. Obviously, if wages ranked higher on the farm than in the mill, the conclusion in the address would be false, “deceptive,” “flagrantly deceptive,” an “affront to the intelligent and sane,” etc. It so happens, however, that agricultural labor is notoriously the worst paid. Not only is it not higher than, not only is it not equal to, but it is savagely below industrial earnings. The address, accordingly, by taking the best paid branch of Labor as standard, presented the condition of the whole Working Class in the best possible light. Seeing that the poster said nothing concerning agricultural wealth and wages, the address left that untouched. It did so relying upon the general knowledge on the subject—also relying upon the “intelligent and sane” Spinrads to afford the speaker, as our jaunty critic now does, opportunity to bring out the fact that conditions are even worse than they appear from the figures given by the poster.

The second point made by Mr. Spinrad is that, to estimate the share of Labor from the figures given by the poster on wages, is wrong because “salaries” are not included. He asks “are not clerk and office hire ‘labor?’” and he proceeds to give a sample of his “intelligence and saneness” by quoting, not Census figures, but *New York World Almanac* estimates, and then caps the climax of “intelligence and sanity” by accepting all these “salaries” as “wages.”—To that the answer is:

First. One Depew’s or McCurdy’s “salary” is larger than the combined wages of whole rafts of their clerks engaged in office work. The Depews and McCurdys have a way of calling “wages” the plunder which they grab under the title of “salary,” and of calling themselves “labor” by virtue of their drawing such “wages.” And their statisticians act obedient to the fraud. The “intelligent and sane” Spinrads may fall into the trap, or may like to accept such claims: the “unintelligent and insane” Socialist repels the imposition. The “salaries,” that presidents, directors, etc., of the large capitalist concerns pocket, are not wages. These salaries are plunder that they levy upon those of their fellow stock-holders who are not themselves wealthy enough to become directors and run the concern. These salaries are, like taxes and other things which Mr.

Spinrad wrongly deducts from the capitalist plunder, a plunder levied upon other plunderers. That is the secret of the recent rumpus among the insurance magnates, and of the periodical rumpuses that break out among railroad and other magnates. It requires a curious grade of “intelligence and sanity” to accept the grotesque claim of these sublimated plunders that they are “labor” and that these so-called salaries, pocketed for doing nothing, are “wages.”

Second. There ARE clerks doing office work, and who ARE wage-earners. The earnings of these do properly belong in an estimate of wages. But these earnings are entitled to consideration only if they would materially affect conclusions. They do not. For one thing, the total number of clerks, including bookkeepers and accountants, given in the Census for 1900, is 885,007, in other words an insignificant figure when compared with the many millions of the other wage slaves, so-called handworkers; for another thing, the total wages of these real office workers, after the “wages” of the Depew-McCurdy class have been deducted, is too slim a sum for consideration.

Third. The taking up of the clerks, etc., would require the thorough handling of another feature of capitalism—its wastefulness. It is no legitimate picture of the situation to deduct from the capitalist plunder the amounts that the inherent wrongfulness of capitalism compels it to expend. Directly productive labor will rise in numbers under civilized conditions; service-labor of the kind required by competitive commerce is wasteful labor that civilized conditions will reduce to a minimum.

The reasoning and figures in the address on “The Preamble of the Industrial Workers of the World” are confirmed by the critique of Mr. Spinrad. Mr. Spinrad elegantly says that Socialists lie. Whoever may be the liar in the premises, it is not the Socialist.—Next!

ARTICLE

A CRITICISM.

ON THE ADDRESS "THE PREAMBLE OF THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD."

I HAVE read Mr. De Leon's speech. He states the workingmen are getting only 17 per cent. of what they produce (figures for 1900), thus intimating that the capitalists receive the remaining 83 per cent. He claims that the Republican party issued a circular giving the total value of products and the wages paid to the Working Class for various periods, from 1860 to 1890, alleging that the Republicans in doing so, sought to deceive the public by leaving out certain other figures. These figures, in the form of the Number of Workingmen employed during the various periods, Mr. De Leon adds for the consideration of the Working Class stating that now the statistics are properly presented, showing that while in 1860 they got as their share 20 per cent., in 1900 they received only 17 per cent. of what they produced.

My argument is not whether the Working Class in 1900 received more than in 1860 or less than 1860. What concerns me at present is the statement that they actually receive out of what they produce only from 17 to 20 per cent.

Why, if Mr. De Leon wishes to give ALL the figures, does HE omit some important data respecting this matter? That is to say, why does he present the statistics in a manner to deceive workingmen, grossly deceive them, by presenting the ridiculous intimation that the capitalists get about 83 per cent. of what the workingmen produce? I can hardly be called a capitalist, neither am I insane; and a sane man regards such a statement as an affront to his intelligence.

Let us take the figures for the latest dates available, say the two decades of 1890 and 1900, which are as follows (before Mr. De Leon supplements the same):

Product of Manufacture:	
1890	\$ 9,372,437,283
1900	13,039,279,576

Wages Paid:	
1890	\$1,891,228,321
1900	2,330,578,019

Mr. De Leon adds:

No. of Workingmen Employed:	
1890	4,351,535
1900	5,341,539

The above figures are all taken from the *Daily People* reporting Mr. De Leon's speech, which he in turn claims to have procured from the reports of the U.S. census. According to these, the working class in 1890, he states, received 20 per cent. and (presumably) the capitalists the balance of 80 per cent., and in 1900 the Working Class received 17 per cent. and the capitalists (presumably) 83 per cent. of the value of the products.

Did the Working Class receive 20 per cent. and 17 per cent. respectively, and the capitalists 80 and 83 per cent. respectively, in 1890 and in 1900? Let us add some further figures and look at the results.

If I tell you that a baker sells a loaf of bread for 10 cents and the workingman gets 2 cents per loaf as his share, it doesn't mean that the baker has 8 cents profit. No, he pays, let us say, 6 cents for the flour and material. You will say, But labor crushes the wheat into flour and labor harvests the wheat. Yes, true enough, but in the statistics given, all these labors ARE included, CONSISTING OF THE VARIOUS LABORS ADDED TOGETHER, and form a TRUE figure or estimate of actual wages paid; whereas the Manufactured Product as given in the statistics is repeated over and over again,—the cost of the bread including the cost of the flour and again the cost of the wheat, etc. Suppose you save a dollar the first year, and the next year another dollar; at the end of the second year you will have two dollars. You will not have one dollar for the first year PLUS two dollars for the second year. There entered into the item of Products of Manufacture an item of total cost of materials amounting to \$7,377,907,079, representing the raw material, etc., to be manufactured, which is your dollar for the first year. Thus while the labor part of the figures is correctly computed, the manufactured products are not the result of a combination of different ingredients, but the same

articles added and included continually at every stage of manufacture, instead of taking the original cost of the wheat and adding thereto the various costs of labor and expenses in the course of manufacture. So you see that from the Value of Manufactured Products of \$13,039,219,566, can be reduced \$7,327,907,079 representing the raw material, the labor for the last item, nevertheless, having been computed under its proper heading, leaving for the purpose of comparison a Manufacturing Value of \$5,711,312,487. The Raw Materials figure I procured from the *World Almanac*.

Again, I notice *The People* states the wages paid in 1890 were \$1,891,228,321 and in 1900, \$2,330,578,010. These were the WAGES paid. Doesn't it occur to you that there is such a thing as SALARIES also, for clerk and office hire? Or isn't such work "labor"? The *World Almanac* for 1905 gives as "Wages and Salaries" paid for 1890 \$2,735,430,848. It does not give figures for 1900. But on this basis, the Wages and Salaries for 1900 would be approximately \$3,356,032,334.

Now, applying these figures, Wages and Salaries paid, and the purely Manufacturing Value figures, you will find that the Working Class received as its share, not 17 per cent., but actually 59 per cent. Of course, this would still leave 41 per cent. to be divided up among 709,326 proprietors (*World Almanac*), but this may include the heavy expenses of Government, of public institutions, of hospital and charitable institutions, etc., which would reduce considerably this 41 per cent. At any rate the Working Class is receiving not 17 per cent. or 20 per cent., but 59 per cent. according to the figures of 1900, and possibly more in other years. I have not computed the workmen's percentage for 1890 or other years, because my purpose was to show that this 17 per cent. share to the workers was a flagrant misapplication of figures by Mr. De Leon. For it must be that he recognizes that such a figure is ridiculous, to say the least.

If the Socialists can lie on one occasion, how is one sure they do not lie all the time?

A. SPINRAD.

New York.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

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slpns@slp.org