

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 12, NO. 108.

NEW YORK, MONDAY, OCTOBER 16, 1911.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

WELL FOR THE TRAMP!

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE Cleveland *Plain Dealer* thinks it got off a great joke at the expense of the tramps in the following skit:

“The impassioned orator at the tramps’ convention paused and wiped his perspiring brow.

“Brothers,” he said, “this is hard work.’

“Then they expelled him!”

The joke is on the *Plain Dealer*.

The Mosaic curse—In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread—no longer rests upon Labor as an unavoidable necessity. To-day mechanical powers and the methods of production have repealed the curse *de jure* so to speak; it remains *de facto* only because the enforcement of social revolutions has a way of lagging behind, some times far behind, the revolution itself.

Between the day of an accomplished revolution and its enforcement things do not lie still. There is trouble brewing, the brewing possibly comes to a seething point, and then the enforcement *de facto* of what has happened before takes place. It is the latter event that carries the name of revolution. The stage has not yet been reached of the enforcement of the social revolution that has taken place *de jure* in production. What is going on now is the brewing and the seething. These brewings and seethings are presentiments of the revolution to come. Of such a nature is the gathering of tramps who prefer to starve without working, rather than work and starve anyhow.

Examined by the light of social philosophy, the joke cracked by the *Plain Dealer* places, not the tramp, but the *Plain Dealer* itself in unenviable light. The tramp, though, perhaps, not always conscious of the fact, represents a higher order of civilization than the *Plain Dealer*. The revolution *de jure* that has taken place divides

society into two mental categories—one, the category of those who say: “We work in order to live”; the other the category of these who say: “We live in order to work.” The former has taken in the breath of the New Era; the latter still breathes the breath of the Mosaic age.

WORK is, to-day, no longer necessary. The ampleness of wealth, that civilized man requires, no longer requires WORK for its production. Healthy exercise has become sufficient.

Well for those who expel from their midst the devout devotee of “hard work.” He either is a slave who licks his chains and “likes it”—or he is what the *Plain Dealer* is, one who profits by such mental wrecks.

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Uploaded August 2012

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