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ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

AN OPEN LETTER TO OWEN R. LOVEJOY.

By DANIEL DE LEON

TO Owen R. Lovejoy,
Gen'l Secretary
National Child Labor Committee,
New York.

Dear Sir:—

We hasten to assure you that the news items and other material that you may send us will receive our close and even sympathetic attention; and that we shall not fail to comment editorially upon the same.

Indeed, we should think that the request should be known to be superfluous. For years, and unflaggingly—in the teeth of storms of vituperation that beat against the Socialist for exposing the ulcers of capitalism, child-labor being not the least of these,—the literature and the organs of the Socialist Labor Party have held up to capitalism the mirror of its own hideousness by holding up to it the atrociousness of child-labor; by uncovering the false pretense of the evil's being lessened; by pointing out the ineffectiveness of the laws, ostentatiously passed “in protection of the child”; and by proving that the crime, for child-labor is a crime, is one for which capitalist society is responsible, and, in the nature of things, is bound to flourish so long as capitalism flourishes.

Indeed, we welcome material upon the subject. Indeed, the material will be the subject of editorial comment. In view hereof, we recommend that the news items which your honorable body gathers be gathered by men and women who will be animated by the desire of seeing child-labor abolished, and not by the desire that animates the common run of detectives—the desire of exposing enough of an evil to insure the continuance of their jobs, but never exposing all about an evil, lest their occupation be gone.

The crime of child-labor is not exposed to a purpose unless the setting in each instance accompany the instance. Statistical tables on child-labor in this and that and the other State; figures that reveal the increase of the crime; compendia of new laws enacted to “stop the cry of the child in the factory”; lists of factory inspectors to make a good showing of “practical methods”;—none of these, or all of them together, periodically seasoned with the detailed description of some “horrible instance”;—none of these furnish the sufficient “setting.” The setting must be supplemented with the names of the firms and the connection of the firm members with creeds and other politico-business organizations. The setting must be furthermore supplemented with the accounts, photographic wherever possible, of the luxurious quarters of the cannibal “businessmen” and “front pew-holders” who batten and fatten on the child. Finally, no setting deserves being considered even approximately complete without some account of the views that the said patriotic cannibals hold on the subject of Socialism.

We are inclined to believe that, if more attention were paid to the setting of the information that is spread regarding child-labor; if, in other words, the information went deeper, rather than spread over a large surface, vastly more good would be accomplished.

Sincerely

EDITOR DAILY PEOPLE.

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