

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 8, NO. 318.

NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 1908.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

PROSPERITY BY RESOLUTIONS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

IF prosperity can be introduced by resolutions there will be not a single member of the National Prosperity Association outside of the millionaires' club.

The Association "has all the elements of strength," so it assures the public. It has "numbers", and it has "brains".

That the Association has "numbers" may be easily granted upon the authority of no less a philosopher than the late lamented P.T. Barnum, who contributed to the list of philosophic maxims the brilliant one of: "There is a sucker born every minute".

That the Association has "brains" is a less obvious fact.

The first clause of the declaration of principles of the Association places it officially on record as having "nothing to do with the past". This can hardly be classed as a brainy statement. Philadelphia is said to be "corrupt and contented." One is moved to say that the National Prosperity Association is "brainless and beatific."

Not the least of the valuable lessons brilliantly taught by Eugene Sue's great work, *The History of a Proletarian Family Across the Ages*, is the importance of historic knowledge. The members of the proletarian family, whose long line of descent are the heroes in the series of historic novels, that constitute Sue's production, are buoyed up by familiarity with the past. The knowledge of previous facts; the knowledge of the changes that took place from age to age; a perception of the underlying law of progress; acquaintance with historic characters, the good, the bad, the indifferent;—all this raised that family above its surrounding fellow-proletarians, and enabled it to help the others up. The man ignorant of history, is like a poodle. His experience begins with his birth, which is to say he is no further

advanced than the first man who stepped on earth. He can not see forward.

History lies in the past. People, who, like the National Prosperity Association, have “nothing to do with the past”, cultivate ignorance of history, and consequently blindness. No wonder they resort to resolutions as a means to encompass prosperity.

History teaches that prosperity can be brought about only by a system of production which shall combine the qualities of abundance, little toil, and insured safety. Where any of these qualities fails, prosperity is an impossibility. There may be periods of fairly good times for some, comparative good times for most, but the specter of want will ever haunt even the most affluent, and that contentedness, without which there never can be real prosperity, will be absent. Under capitalism all the three requirements are barred.

Abundance there can not be, because production is made for sale, and that requires a supply below the demand;

Toil must be excessive, because without the condition of general poverty the idle class could not have a needy proletariat as part of their assets;

Finally, security is out of the question. What with the planlessness that is inseparable from capitalist production, and the raw-boned Anarchy of the Big Stick that capitalism breeds, the Biggest Stick of the hour ever splinters the smaller, and ever is exposed to be, in turn, splintered by a possibly Bigger Stick.

These are things that history teaches. But these being things which people having “nothing to do with the past”, know nothing of, leaves the brainy National Prosperity Association a rudderless ship tossing on the waves, with “Resolutions” to threaten it any moment to turn turtle.

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

Uploaded January 2010

slpns@slp.org