

# DAILY PEOPLE

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EDITORIAL

## “ENABLING.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

**A** TECHNICAL magazine devoted to such things gives a graphic illustration of a little treadmill, connected by bevel gearing to a sewing machine, and to which a bulldog is harnessed for motor power. This contrivance the magazine entitles “An arrangement for enabling a dog or cat to run a small machine.”

“Enabling” is good. It cleanses the mind at once of a host of fondly cherished conceptions of natural events. The old belief used to be that gravitation compelled a stone to fall, that the spur compelled a horse to run, that starvation compelled a man to die. Now it is seen to be otherwise. The stone is just quivering with eagerness to crash to earth, the horse to gallop, the man to be gathered to his fathers; all that is needed is the force of gravitation, the spur, or starvation, to respectively “enable” them.

So it is with the workingman. The capitalistic press tells no falsehood when it announces: “The Squezem and Sweatem Overalls company has opened a new factory in Cohosh, where it will afford a livelihood to 700 hands.” These 700 hands were consumed with anxiety to work in a hideous factory 10 hours a day under severe repression and with unspeakable intensity. They could never be happy unless five-sixths of their product were withheld for the benefit of someone who never did a stroke. Life would be flat and barren unless it were rendered insecure to them by a wage-earner status, subject to the whim of the employer, as when the Dalzell Axle Company the other day closed down its plant and cast its whole force adrift, “because of an unprofitable business.” But what could the 700 do? They were powerless to reach their hearts’ desire until the company came along and “enabled” them.

To be sure, it can be proven that the same as the bull-dog is picked up and

harnessed into the “arrangement for enabling” by his owner, and has no say about it, so the workingman is picked up and harnessed into the shop by his owner, the employer, and has no say about it either. It can be proven that in the workingman’s case, as in the bulldog’s, this comes about through his owner’s also owning what the other needs to live upon, in man’s case the tool of production. It can be proven that these circumstances have been brought about by the owner himself, who first designedly deprives his workmen of the tool of production, and then by a somersault backward poses as a benefactor in allowing them to work with the equipment he has stolen from them. Further, and finally, it can be proven that the workingman, when properly politically and industrially united with his fellows, can throw off his master, and occupy himself both profitably, pleasantly and fruitfully—which he can’t now. But shall such trifling things as a few proofs be allowed to stand in the way of the sacred process of “enabling”? Never!

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