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EDITORIAL

## THE CURE FOR LAZINESS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**HE “charities” of a Carnegie, however large they may sound, are but a crumb from the bread-board of their donor. The gift sought from an idol is always greater than the gift offered to him to secure it. The fortune kept intact by a “philanthropist” is always vaster than the trifles handed out to placate the toilers from whom the whole thing—both fortune and “charity”—are drawn. No different is it with the “beneficences” of the master class through its government.

This notwithstanding, even the niggardliness of the dole does not prevent its being begrudged. Side by side with the feeling that something must be done towards “keeping the working people happy without paying them enough to live on,” as the little girl said when asked to define the Labor Problem, goes the other feeling that “the discontented beggars should be satisfied with less.”

In view of these twin desires, *Darwinism and Race Progress* by Prof. J.B. Haycraft of Cardiff College, Wales, is a book that should be incense in the nostrils of Capital. Arguing on page 100 in favor of his notion that charity is a damage and not a benefit to the race, since it enables the “incapables” to continue alive, Haycraft declares:

“In reference to those who are lazy and vicious, and will not work although capable of it, we have to remember that the community itself is to some extent to blame for the present condition of things.

“Before 1834, the Poor-law in country districts habitually supplied the unemployed with what was considered a sufficiency, and those who maintained themselves by independent industry and capacity often fared worse than those in receipt of regular Poor-law aid.”

Ergo, cut down the Poor-rate, lighten the burden on the tax-paying capitalists, and drive these “lazy and vicious” ones to work!

But not so fast. The crusts of government charity have been often enough stig-

matized for all to know what they are. What sort of a system is it, under which even those “who maintain themselves by independent industry and capacity” can only whack out a living less good than the miserable lot of the charity-taker? Man’s labor produces sufficient to keep him and his in plenty. Can one be fairly blamed for becoming “lazy and vicious” and refusing to toil, when he sees the fruits of his own effort flowing into the pockets of his master? When he sees himself fleeced of so much that the residue is worse than going into the Poor-house?

“Poor is the diet of the pauper, poor is the diet of the small ratepayer, and poorest of all is the diet of the independent laborer,” declared a witness in the Poor-law Commissioner’s report of 1834, quoted by Haycraft himself. So long as such conditions obtain—and obtain they must, so long as the private ownership of the means of production continues—good men will inevitably be turned into “lazy and vicious” {men} by the operations of the industrial robbery they are subjected to.

The cure is not to cut the Poor-rate, but to give to each workman the full value of his toil. Then labor will be worthwhile performing, and the word “laziness” will become obsolete in the language.

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