

EDITORIAL

INSULTING THE WORKERS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE autobiography with which the Republican platform closes contains, among other crisp sentences, this choicest of all:

“Republicanism would give to each an equal right to earn.”

It does.

You have the right to go to the theatre—provided you can pay the admission fee;

You have the right to own a house—provided you have the cash to pay for it;

You have the right to eat—provided you have food;

You have the right to fly—provided you have wings;

You have the right to study Greek—provided you have the time to do so;

And so the Republican party gives the proletariat the right to earn—provided they have the opportunity and the means to boot; in other words, provided they are not proletarians.

That identical Republican platform announces the Nation’s “great natural wealth has scarcely been touched”; and it proceeds to emphasize the point saying: “We have a vast domain of three million square miles literally bursting with latent treasure,” yet unscratched.

And the announcement is made to the orchestration of literally more than twice three million idle wage earners who are crying for the opportunity and the means to earn their bread, while many other millions are working at reduced wages.

Never yet did studied insult reach so high a finish.

It is Marie Antoinette outdone, when she suggested to her famished vassals that they eat cake if they had not bread.

The “right to earn” is a mockery without the facilities to do the earning with.

With natural opportunities preempted by the class whom the Republican and

Democratic parties represent, and, even if free, inaccessible to the proletariat for want of the means of production, or capital, which that identical class has plundered the workers of, to say to the workers, We give you the “right to earn” is to add insult to injury. It is to indulge in the cruel sport characteristic of those vile minds that maim an animal, and then set him free to enjoy the sight of his torture.

The “right to earn” must be supplemented with the “right to the means to earn.”

The Declaration of Independence proclaimed the Right to Earn a hundred and thirty-two years ago. Now, a hundred and thirty-two years later, the supplemental Declaration of Independence proclaims the Right to the Land and the Means of Production to do the earning with.

The first Declaration was duly enforced upon the Usurper of a hundred and thirty-two years ago; the supplemental Declaration will be duly enforced upon the Usurper of a hundred and thirty-two years later.

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