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EDITORIAL

POVERTY AND “EFFICIENCY.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

WHATEVER the editor of *American Medicine* may know about medicine, he knows precious little about sociology. How little that is can be judged from his utterance that

“Poverty is now recognized as the result of inefficiency.”

Such a statement might have passed unchallenged in the days when sociology still got about in a baby carriage. Now that the science of human society stands upon its own legs and can think for itself, it rejects the position as the breed of falsehood, nourished on optical illusion.

If poverty is the result of “inefficiency,” then riches must be the product of “efficiency.” Take the case of any representative capitalist. Put Rockefeller in a Standard Oil well, Vanderbilt at the throttle of a New York Central engine, or Morgan at the helm of a trans-Pacific freighter. How “efficient” would each prove? One and all, they would be totally useless, utterly unable to move a muscle or think a thought that would aid in performing satisfactorily the duties before them.

“Efficiency” in production, then, can not be the source of their wealth. The only sort of “efficiency” left is “efficiency” in preying upon production, and that each one of the sacred trio named, together with all their class, does to perfection. The role of the apostles of “efficiency” is purely that of playing the robber baron in industrial society.

In the days of the original robber baron, he with the “iron pot on his head,” it might also have been said that wealth was the product of “efficiency.” And so it was—but of what sort of “efficiency”? It was the “efficiency” of the cross-roads, the “efficiency” of brawn and the heavy hand, the “efficiency” to plunder and despoil, and cleave the head of the luckless objector. That sort of “efficiency” society very soon decided it could do without, and it proceeded to put the kibosh on the feudal brigand.

Similarly is it on the threshold of being with the industrial brigand. The "efficiency" he displays lies in seizing to himself four-fifths the wealth labor produces. The workman, the producer of the wealth, be he never {ever?} so "efficient," can still never rise above the one-fifth of his produce the master class now leaves him—that is, endless poverty. The more he produces, all the more is he is despoiled of. Even the new "scientific management" hoax emphasizes the fact. While wages may in some cases be raised even 100 per cent., the work put out therefor is increased up to 300 per cent.; that is, the workman is robbed of more than before.

"Efficiency" in the honest sense of honest toil, can never, under capitalist society, result in wealthiness. The dishonest "efficiency" of grab and cheat and exploit, the Socialist-organized working class is about to put down its foot on.

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