

# DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 7, NO. 30.

NEW YORK, MONDAY, JULY 30, 1906.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

## THE DRUG HABIT.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**A** CONTEMPORARY yesterday published an article by a well-known charity worker, showing the appalling growth of the drug habit in all grades of society. Opium, morphine and cocaine are said to have to-day more than 50,000 slaves in New York city. Radical action is demanded from medical and legislative authorities. While these may mitigate the evil complained of, they cannot eradicate it. The drug habit is the unfailing accompaniment of the neurosis produced by this wonderful age of private-owned machinery. Machinery imposes an exhaustive drain on the nervous system. It compels an acceleration and competition in all departments of life, that is reflected in increased physical break down. Drugs then step in as a stimulant. Further, machinery has the tendency to drive men out of fruitful beneficial production into parasitic occupations. Among the latter are the quack and the drug seller. These batten upon the nervous and physical wrecks of society, dosing them with narcotics and otherwise encouraging the spread of the drug habit, in order that they may eke out a livelihood and attain a competence in their nefarious callings. Were their victims able to secure the rest, change of scene, and wholesome, normal conditions they so much need, these rogues would be without a means of existence. But such is capitalism, that any relaxation of effort, entails a loss of position and business standing. Men must keep to their tasks if they would succeed and survive. The result is the condition that now proves so appalling. The only cure is to eradicate the cause of the evil by making machinery common property, so that it may serve as a blessing, instead of a means of competitive destruction and thieving profit to private individuals, as at present. With machinery common property, the hours of labor and the stress of occupation will be proportionate to the progress of invention and the general well-being of society. Franklin, even in his day, estimated that four hours of labor would be

ample to supply the needs of civilized man under a proper social system employing machinery. Then neurosis will disappear and with it will go the vile drug habit and all that thereby hangs.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
Uploaded April 2009

[slpns@slp.org](mailto:slpns@slp.org)