

EDITORIAL

DEBS ON THE PROGRAM OF SOCIALISM.

By DANIEL DE LEON

AGREEABLE to the promise made last week,¹ we now return to the statement made by Eugene V. Debs in the Pittsburg, Pa., *Press*, and submit the same to closer scrutiny.

Mr. Debs cites “old-age pensions,” “minimum wage,” “industrial insurance” and “welfare of labor” as “part of the program of Socialism.”

This is news.

Old-age pensions are no part of the “program of Socialism.”—Long before Socialism was thought of, there were poor houses.

The minimum wage is no part of the “program of Socialism.”—Many a passage in Thorold Rogers’ work,² and in Green’s history of the English people,³ not to mention less popular works, point clearly to the conclusion that from the time of the downfall of wages, the event that Thorold Rogers calls the “conspiracy against the workmen” after the Second Edward, movements of resistance sprang up with demands that are tantamount to a minimum wage. And surely there was not then the slightest thought of, let alone organization for, Socialism.

Industrial insurance is no part of the “program of Socialism.”—The monasteries of the Middle Ages, with their hospital attachments and asylums for the poor, had the lead of Socialism in point of time by quite a roll of centuries.

“Welfare of Labor,” insofar as it constitutes a plank of political parties in the land, will be found a hundred years ago by whomsoever cares to trace the “sops to Labor” back that far.—There was no Socialism then.

The capitalist class is not always reckless of the two-legged cattle, which, to-

¹ [See “A Contrast,” *Daily People*, September 5, 1912.]

² [*Six Centuries of Work and Wages*.]

³ [John R. Green, *History of the English People*.]

gether with the four-legged ones, are needed for production. As there are bourgeois laws against “cruelty to animals,” there were laws, early factory laws, initiated by capitalists to guard their Labor working cattle. And these laws were not the product of Socialism.

No doubt the program of many, if not all, the European parties of Socialism embraces demands for “old-age pensions,” together with such other means to alleviate the sorrows of the wage slave class. That is due to the fact that in hardly a European country has the bourgeois as yet settled accounts with feudalism, and, consequently, Socialism in those countries is bound to reach out outside of its own program.

What the program of Socialism should be is best ascertained in countries like our own. Here the program of Socialism is the overthrow of the Political State and the establishment of the Industrial Republic. Such a program denies conditions for Labor-pauperism. How alien from the Program of Socialism, a program that demands the Social Revolution, palliations and “immediate demands” are is proven by Mr. Debs’s own admission that Roosevelt has “burglarized” the platform of his party.

The program of Revolution is Revolution. Palliatives are props to that which the Revolution intends to overthrow. No such prop can be within the contemplation, hence part of the program, of Socialism.

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