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EDITORIAL

BELITTLING SOCIALISM.

By DANIEL DE LEON

FOR the second time within a few weeks the New York *Sun* comes out editorially in praise of the European Socialists. Its praise, however, is actually more damning than all its previous curses ever were; for its evident object is to spread the notion on this side of the Atlantic that we have had here for a long time nearly everything that the European Socialists demand, and to thus convey the impression that



CHARLES A. DANA (1819-1897)

there is in this country no *raison d'être*—no occasion—for a Socialist Labor party. This lie is the more audacious as the chief editor of the *Sun*, [Charles A. Dana](#), is himself a renegade Socialist, fully aware of the political and social aims of the international labor movement, and who once denounced the present industrial order in this country with as much vigor as he now displays in its defense.

It is true that we have here some of the things which European Socialists have not and which they demand either as palliatives in the present unhealthy state of society, or as first steps to further advance. For instance, in those countries where universal suffrage does not exist they demand it. Again, in France, they demand, among other things, that the municipal and national governments, shall immediately reduce to eight hours the length of the work-day, and in this respect the *Sun* naively observes: “It will be remembered that a statute similar to this, so far as concerns the reduction of the labor day to eight hours in the case of government works, was passed by our own Federal Congress, although for various reasons it has not been obeyed.” And it is true that all such concessions

(including compulsory education, a graduated income tax, free public baths, gratuitous medical and legal advice, maternity hospitals, places of refuge for old working people, etc., most of which do not exist in this country) might, in the words of the *Sun*, “be granted without shaking the foundations of social order.” Similar demands are made by the American Socialists in their platform (printed every week in *THE PEOPLE*), “with a view to immediate improvement in the condition of the working classes.” But, as we have already observed, these are expressly deemed to be palliatives or preliminary steps, and it would be as absurd to form an idea of Socialism from those paltry demands as to mistake the ladder for the roof to which it leads.

The fact is that the aim of Socialists—the world over—is the complete emancipation of labor from the rule of the capitalist class through the establishment of the co-operative commonwealth—a system under which all the instruments of production and all the forces of nature will belong to the people in common, the government itself being transformed from its present political character of class despotism into a mere industrial agency, corresponding in its functions to the requirements of an age of industry, peace and progress.

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