

EDITORIAL

A HOME-MADE SOCIALISM.

By DANIEL DE LEON

WM. F. DEVOE, who declares he “makes his own socialism,” makes good the declaration by announcing in the *Truth Seeker* of March 25 as an axiom of Socialism that “capital, if justly accumulated, is only entitled to a profit equal to the legitimate interest on that amount of capital.”

The use of the term “interest” as the proceeds of capital, in Mr. Devoe’s definition, is sufficient evidence that, however Mr. Devoe’s conception of “capital” may otherwise differ from the concept that the organized Socialist Movement has of “capital,” the two concepts are identical in one dominant respect. From this common point we may “reason together.”

“Interest” is that amount of wealth one appropriates, not by dint of work performed by him in the production of that or of other wealth of equal value, but by virtue of the ownership of something, necessary to production, and not owned by him who pays the “interest.” Obvious from this definition, construed together with certain known things, flow the following conclusions:

1. The producer does not start producing with the primary purpose of accommodating others: his primary purpose is to accommodate himself;
2. The producer’s ideal is to keep the full fruits of his labor;
3. “Interest,” paid by the producer is a portion of the fruits of the producer’s labor subtracted therefrom;
4. The producer is under no obligation to give unto others a portion of the fruits of his labor, unless compelled, against his wishes, to do so;
5. When the producer thus parts with a portion of the fruits of his labor he does so because of the necessity he was under to borrow, from one who had it, that without which he could not start to produce;
6. “Interest” is a tribute paid to Ownership: “Interest” is wealth extorted by

Ownership: “Interest” is the proceeds of advantage taken of another’s needs: the motto, and at once the law of existence, of “Interest” is: “Others’ hard luck is my opportunity”;

7. Capital is the lever for “Interest.”

8. The adjective “legitimate” is, to-day, applicable to such Cause and Effect only in the sense that the child, born by, for instance, his Czarina to such an extortionist of people’s wealth as the Czar, is “legitimate”;

9. Such “legitimacy” is planted upon Force, not Reason: an opposite force turns the “legitimacy” into “illegitimacy”;

10. Socialism, the coming Force, born of Reason, guarantees to the citizen the necessaries for production; it guarantees that to him as his birthright, upon a principle supplementary to the principle that the suffrage—1 man 1 vote—is the birthright of all;

11. Socialism safeguards the citizen against economic hard luck; finally,

12. The social system that excludes the possibility of economic hard luck leaves room neither for “Capital” nor its brat “Interest.”

There is a 13th conclusion—the excentric {eccentric?} genius of Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin Shelley gave birth to only one “Frankenstein.” Mr. Wm. F. Devoe’s genius—which can concoct a Home-Made Socialism, and “Legitimate Capital” and a “Legitimate Interest”—gives birth to Frankenstein triplets.

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