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EDITORIAL

A Capitalist Ignoramus—No Rare Thing

By DANIEL DE LEON

Our French comrades are pushing the French capitalist hard. These have now unearthed a certain Leon Caubert, who delivered a lecture before the French Academy to show that Socialism has been tried and rejected. He took China for his “historical” illustration. About the time when Clovis, King of France, was baptized, said he, a great Chinese scholar, by the name Cuang Ngam Che, was writing and preaching the principles “which underlie modern Socialism.” He then proceeded to claim that China thereupon did establish Socialism, “the land and all that it produced belonging to everybody;” but that after a while “the Old Adam asserted itself,” and the experiment was given over.

The report does not state how this wondrous bit of history and economics was received, but one needs no great imagination to see the capitalist audience that listened to the address settle itself back, and, heaving a long sigh, say: “Now, workingmen, you see it is no use; keep quiet, and let us ride you in future as we have done in the past.”

The fact is that, to be very charitable, Mr. Leon Caubert is an ignoramus.

In the first place, he should know that “modern Socialism” could not have been preached in China in the age of Clovis. Modern Socialism is born of a machinery-using age, that compels co-operation and illustrates its advantages. The age of machinery is a recent one.

In the second place, he should know that Socialism does not propose that “the products belong to everybody.” It demands that wealth shall belong to those who can and do produce it.

In the third place, Mr. Caubert shows that he can’t distinguish between the early communism, through which the ancestors of all of us went centuries ago, and modern Socialism; in fact, that he is ignorant of the history of the human race.

Of such mud walls are built the fortresses of capitalism; and they are expected to withstand the solid artillery of facts and science of Socialism.

The parallel between China is to with the Socialists, but with the capitalists. Modern Chinese history tells of a Celestial Emperor who, sitting within the, to his childish mind, consecrated walls and under the consecrated roof of his porcelain palace, laughed at the idea of the cannon of the united navies of the Western forces of Europe doing him any harm; and that, when the bombardment started and his palace fell over his ears, and he discovered he had been living in a fool's paradise, simply doubled up and died.

Ditto, ditto is about to happen with the fatuous capitalists, who fatuously imagine themselves to be planted upon an impregnable position.

We recommend the reading of Chinese history to Mr. Leon Caubert and his likes. It is never too late to learn; they may yet learn something.

A De Leon editorial transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

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