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EDITORIAL

## FRANK DARKCLOUD'S PARADOX.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**H**AVING committed a small theft after five weeks' ineffectual search for work, Frank Darkcloud, a Carlisle College graduate, is serving a 113-day sentence in the Chicago Bridewell. Darkcloud, the scion of a once proud Chippewa Indian chieftain, was half-back on the college team. Five weeks ago, with his young Indian wife, he went to Chicago to look for work, hoping to put his education to use. When he at last landed a place, his money was gone, no one would trust him, his wife in delicate health and starving. For the first time in his life he disregarded the law, stole, and was arrested.

In the native state, when his tribe roamed free over their ancestral lands, the fight against nature was severe. But every new fact acquired, every new faculty developed, was an added weapon in the struggle. Every added weapon meant an easier conquest and more certain victory. The idea of a fully educated man's being put out of the running would have been preposterous.

Now, however, it seems to be quite possible for a man who has spent years in acquiring facts, training his abilities, and "fitting himself for life" as the saying is, to be slowly forced to the wall and driven to theft to keep body and soul together. Here is a paradox. Evidently the trained man of the present has something to contend with which the trained man of tribal days had not.

What that "something" is, every day of our experience is proving. No amount of training, no amount of ability, will any longer enable a man by his own labor to acquire the means of economic independence. The modern tool of wealth-creation is too vast, too expensive, for any worker's honest earnings to purchase. Upon the heels of this fact must follow another: he who has not the means of production must tender himself to the mercies of him who has. He must practically sell himself in the labor market to the employer, the factory owner, the labor buyer. All his skill,

all his training, are of no use to him unless he find a purchaser; and all his abilities and faculties may go begging if there be many more equally equipped with himself, all looking for the same job. In tribal days there was no labor market. He who had ability was free to use it. In the year 1910 there is a labor market. He who has ability is not free to use it. He must first find an employer willing to buy it of him.

The clear statement of the problem points the way to its solution. The private ownership of the means of production is at the root of the trouble. The political equality now considered one of the cornerstones of the republic must be carried over into the industrial field also. As the Socialist Labor Party has declared in its platform since 1900:

“We hold that the true theory of politics is that the machinery of government must be controlled by the whole people; but again taught by experience we hold furthermore that the true theory of economics is that the means of production must likewise be owned, operated and controlled by the people in common.”

Socialism is the only solution of the painful paradox of Frank Darkcloud—and of thousands of young men like him.

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