

EDITORIAL

SHOEMAKER, STICK TO YOUR LAST!

By DANIEL DE LEON

AS tho' there was not already confusion enough in the country, as a consequence, also in Lawrence, the Rev. Arthur Barber now steps forward to render the confusion worse confounded.

The Rev. Barber did so at the recent meeting of Congregational Ministers, held at Pilgrim Hall in Boston.

Disorder? suffering? turmoil? things that should not be done, done? things, that should be done, left undone? Yes. All these evils the Rev. Barber admitted existed in Lawrence, and the strike merely brought them to the surface.

What's to do?

The Rev. Barber did not answer the question directly. Indirectly he did. He did so by declaring that both sides—capitalists and workingmen—were to blame: capitalists for “flaunting their riches in the face of the workers,” and workers for “raising larger families than their wages warrant.”

Here we have it all, clear as a pike.

If capitalists will only cease to “flaunt,” etc., and workers will only cease to “raise,” etc., peace will reign on earth.

Riches are wealth. Wealth is the fruit of work. Seeing that capitalists do not work, if they are in possession of riches they must pilfer the same from those who do work. Seeing that the blame that the Rev. Barber attributes to the capitalists is their flaunting of their riches in the faces of the workers, it follows that the Rev. Barber's admonition to capitalists, in order to secure social peace is that they keep the plunder secret, enjoy it by stealth—do anything with the same but flaunt it.

As to the workers, the Rev. Barber's prescription that they raise not families larger than their wages, may be understood in two ways. Either wages must be considered small as a fixity, and the size of families must be kept within that small

fixity; or wages are not a fixity, may be indefinitely raised, and then the families while always keeping within the bounds of wages, may also increase.

In either case the two bases for the Rev. Barber's social peace are—

1. The sociologic principle that masses of people will acquiesce in being robbed, provided the stolen goods are not flaunted in their faces; and

2. [On the assumption that wages are small as a fixity] the sociologic principle that infanticide is a source of social welfare; or [on the assumption that wages are not a fixity] the sociologic principle that the effort to raise wages, so as to keep the size of families within the wage bounds, is an effort that the capitalist class will not visit with reprobation, the only thing that the said class objects to being the disparity between wages and the size of the worker's family.

The Rev. Arthur Barber had better leave social science alone and stick to theology.

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