

EDITORIAL

LEGALIZATION OF TRUSTS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE more Taft speaks and the more Roosevelt answers, the more Roosevelt speaks and the more Taft answers, all the more the fact becomes salient that, whatever the differences between the two in many matters of political importance, the goal towards which both strive in economics is the identical one—the legalization of the Trust.

What does the term “legalization” mean? It means the giving of legal sanction and protection to an existing fact. And what fact is it that the legalization of the Trust proposes to give legal sanction and protection to? The fact is the Trust.

The only matter of importance under these circumstances is an exact understanding of what the Trust means.

The trend of civilization is the increase of production with decreasing waste and toil. The Trust does neither—under capitalism.

In so far as the Trust concentrates productive powers it tends to increase production. At the same time, in so far as the Trust produces for sale, that fact operates as a check upon that abundance of production that concentrated productive powers are instinct with. The lower the output the higher the prices, hence, the higher the profits, that which the Trust is after.

Again, in so far as the Trust is capable of promoting production, it is capable of decreasing toil. At the same time, in so far as the Trust is not a charitable organization, but a concern to grind out ever higher profits, that fact acts as the counterpoise upon its capacity to reduce toil. The intenser the toil, all the larger the volume of surplus wealth, or “unpaid wages.” Moreover, it is not only by intensifying the toil of the toilers that the capitalist increases his profits. He increases profits simultaneously with the decrease of his payroll. Improved and concentrated means of production displace labor: a smaller number of hands produces as much as, if not more

than, a larger number working with inferior appliances. The Trust adopts the method; it thereby is the largest displacer of labor. The final consequence of the sequel is enforced idleness for larger numbers, and increased precariousness of employment for all—all of which is tantamount to increased toil.

Accordingly, the Trust, being a privately owned affair, run for profits, is a present scourge to the overwhelming majority of the people. It is a social brigand, de facto.

The “legalization of the Trust” is a legalization of brigandage—it is to enter on the statute book a law dictated by a brigand fact.

Analogies are good or bad in so far as, and to the extent that they apply, and thereby illumine. The “legalization of the Trust” may be compared to the “legalization of houses of prostitution.” The one and the other is a surrender to an existing social Wrong—it is an attempt to justify an Evil by controlling it—it is a move, condemned in Equity, to profit by one’s own Wrong. A social condition of wretchedness with its reflex immorality styled “morality” breeds the Prostitute. Based upon the fact that prostitution is irrepressible [under existing, or capitalist conditions], so irrepressible that Mayor Gaynor, true to his class, warns his class not to “burn its fingers” by tackling that issue,—based upon that fact capitalist society seeks to profit by its own Wrong, and endeavors to “legalize prostitution.” Similarly in the matter of “legalizing the Trust” that both Taft of the Big Elephant, and Roosevelt of the Bull Moose aim at; and that the Socialist, or Kangaroo party, unconsciously leads to with its pure and simple politicians’ Socialism.

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