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EDITORIAL

## SAILING UNDER FALSE COLORS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**HE capitalist class, in the despair of its approaching doom, misrepresents Socialism as an arbitrary scheme of society, whose adoption would destroy individuality! “Socialism,” it declares, “would degrade us all to one dead level regardless of individual aptitude or merit. Capitalism, on the other hand, exalts the individual, promotes his rights and duties, and all else that appertains to him and his happiness. Down with Socialism. Up with capitalism!”

How does capitalist fact verify capitalist contention? In the promotion of capitalist enterprise the stock corporation plays a most important part. The stock corporation is a collective means of capitalizing great industries. Without the stock corporation the trust and other large aggregations of capital made necessary by industrial evolution would be impossible. As a collective means of capitalizing industry, the stock corporation has rendered the individual capitalist superfluous by merging him into the stockholder, and by making stocks, not individuals, count in voting on its policy and affairs. Likewise has the stock corporation made it possible for a few—those controlling the majority of the stock—to dominate the minority stockholders, who may, and generally are, the majority of the stockholders, in their interest, thus trampling the individuality of the many in the mire of economic aggrandisement of the few.

The newspapers of the day, in printing the protest of Gustave Loeb against the reorganization plan of the Shipbuilding Trust, are now giving point to these facts{,} are, in brief, throwing a strong light on the triumph of individuality! (sic) under capitalism. Loeb denounces the reorganization plan as a confiscation of the property of the bondholders and calls upon the other bondholders to refuse to give their assent to it. Should they, however, give their assent his property will be

confiscated—where then is his individuality? Should they not give their assent what becomes of the property and the individuality of those favoring reorganization?

In neither case is there any appeal to individuality or a recognition of individual rights. The appeal is to a majority of bonds, controlled by a few. Should these decided for reorganization, then reorganization it will be. Should they decide against reorganization, then reorganization it will not be. The individual will not count, but the majority of the bonds of the few controlling—the corporation—will.

Capitalism is a fraud within a fraud. Proclaiming itself individualistic, it organizes collectively in order to promote the aims of a few.

Socialism, on the other hand, is genuineness itself. Believing that industry is collective in organization and operation, it proclaims itself in favor of collective ownership and control. By these means it would secure to labor the products of its toil, now confiscated by the few, and, in this way, preserve to the workers, the majority of the population, a greater individuality than that which they now attain. With freedom from the economic pressure due to the capitalist control of industry such as Socialism can alone provide, since it is in accord with evolution, individuality will achieve proportions hitherto unattained.

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