

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 4, NO. 192.

NEW YORK, FRIDAY, JANUARY 8, 1904.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

AUSTRALIA, OLD AND NEW.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE chapters on Australia in the great work of Lewis Morgan on *Ancient Society* are a brilliant candle by which to read the political and economic news that is just now coming in from that country. It is a striking instance of ethnology illumining politico-economic evolution. Morgan showed how the peculiarly kinky system of the Australian family throttled the ethnic development of the Australian aborigines; and now, in that same Australia, the white invader in possession is repeating, on the politico-economic field, the same self-throttling evolution that the old aborigines had fallen into.

Capitalist society is corner-stoned on the merchandise status of the working-man. In the instance of this peculiar merchandise, it happens that, seeing the article really sold (labor-power) is not distinguishable, at least not separable from, the seller or owner (the working-man, a human being), a conflict arises between Labor and capitalist society. Capitalist society, on the one hand, demands that the merchandise Labor quietly submit, like all other merchandise, to the law of capitalist progress, that is, to an ever declining price; Labor, on the other hand, insists upon resisting that law of capitalism, aye, it even aspires to turn the law upside-down, as far as the merchandise Labor is concerned, and fetch an ever increasing price. This conflict manifests itself in all industrial nations, while it takes different aspects of detail in various lands.

In the United States, the country that typifies the trend of the conflict almost everywhere—the same as it typifies the ethnic evolution that took place in all lands, except Australia,—the aspect of the conflict has been to rip up the pretensions of the merchandise Labor and compel it to fall in line with all other merchandise. Accordingly, the development of capitalism has been quickest here, and, as a final result, the social evolution has been here so complete that here the field is ripest for

the next step in the evolutionary process,—Socialism.

In Australia, however, and along lines strictly parallel to the self-throttling development of the aboriginal family system, the aspect taken by the conflict has likewise been self-throttling. The merchandise Labor, while upholding the capitalist system through its old style or pure and simple Unions, was allowed and managed to take joint control of the government. The result was obvious. The contradiction between cause, capitalism, and results, merchandise feature of Labor, could bring no fruit. The capitalist development was arrested, like the ethnic development was before. Capitalism wilted, labor pines, and Socialism does not find the path smoothed for it. The present generation suffers, and the future will have to bear the consequences—unless our young and enthusiastic fellow-worker, the Australian Socialist Labor Party, can succeed, by dint of all the more strenuous efforts, to make up for the time lost by the people and pluck national salvation from the jaws of threatened national ruin.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded March 2007

slpns@igc.org