EDITORIAL

UNEASY LIES THE HEAD
OF THE EVIL-DOER.

By DANIEL DE LEON

IT is now barely ten years ago that The People took the Sacramento, Cal., Bee
over its knees, and dusted the Pacific slope luminary for its then utterances on
Socialism. The Bee had haughtily threatened to shoot down the Socialists,
should the “brigands” ever become numerous enough to be taken notice of. The Bee,
in its exultant impudence even became picturesque in its threats. It talked of “the
rataplam-plam-plam” that the musketry of the capitalist class would administer to
the “brigands”, the Socialists. That was ten years ago.

And now? Not a word of “rataplam-plam-plam”. The Bee recognizes the rapid
strides Socialism is making. It no longer calls the thing “brigandage”. It has lowered
its tone. Now the thing is called a “fad”, a “fad” that, as soon as victorious, “would go
to pieces inside of twelve months”. Yet amidst all its confidence in the
impracticability of Socialism, the Bee’s mind is disturbed. It correctly refers to the
Socialist propagandists as “indefatigable”; it admits that “Socialism has become a
great force in the nation”. It gives another toss on its uncomfortable bed and quotes
“many deep thinkers of the times” as believing that “inside of twenty years at the
very furthest” the political issue in the country will be fought out between two
parties “one the Socialistic, the other anti-Socialistic”. And, arrived at this point, the
Bee gives a final and so violent toss on its thorny bed at the thought that the two
former old parties, long used to keep the workers divided, are now divided by “really
nothing but a name”, that the poor Bee rolls out of bed.

Can the disconsolate, now “un-rataplammed plam-plammed” Bee be blamed if it
seeks comfort and imagines it has found comfort pillowing its aching head upon the
belief that “no two Socialists will agree as to what Socialism really is”? Hardly! The
Bee deserves sympathy, all the more seeing that even that imaginary pillow, does
not seem to afford it rest. Its dreams are troubled. In its sleep it mumbles the
ominous reflection: “And yet they are persistent and ceaseless in proselytising as
though they were fighting for ONE UNITED IDEA!”

Aye, indeed! There is no balm in Gilead for the distressed apostle of capitalism.
One central idea unites all Socialists. With the Socialist, as with his predecessor the
Abolitionist, as the latter was described by Jane Grey Swisshelm, there may be
different views on tactics; even within the Socialist Labor Party, at times violent
dissuasions may convulse the organization, just as happened with the Abolitionists;
and just as in the instance of the Bourbon slave-holders and their Northern Copper-
head sympathizers, the descendants of these, the modern Capitalist Class, expect
their salvation from such divisions which, the wish being father to the thought, they
magnify into irreconcilable feuds, and cause them to leap and cling to the broken
reed that “no two Socialists are agreed”. But, again just as in the instance of the
Abolitionists, the broken reed will plunge the Usurper into the despair of crushing
disappointment. As the Abolitionists were held united by one central idea, the
Abolition of CHATTEL SLAVERY, so the Socialist, wherever found, is indissolubly
bound to all Socialists, wherever found, by the central idea of the abolition of WAGE
SLAVERY. That bond holds them now; that bond will draw them together at the
hustings of the approaching “Nov. 6, 1860” of this century and generation; and that
bond will marshal them, together with their increasing hosts, at the approaching
“Appomattox” of this century and generation.