

# DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 5, NO. 360.

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, JUNE 25, 1905.

TWO CENTS.

EDITORIAL

## ORIENT AND OCCIDENT.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**HE victories of Japan are manifesting themselves in many beneficial ways. The blows dealt by Oyama and Togo, have not only endangered the continuance of Russian autocracy, but they have also encouraged Oriental criticism of Occidental life. Freed from the stigma of inferiority by the great military and naval achievements of Japan, the Orient is now analyzing and condemning Western mentality and morality, with the confidence and courage, the attention and respect, that arise from a consciousness of superiority. Some of this criticism is directed against the United States. The Orient finds us superficial and decadent, caring more for the material pleasures and gains of life than for its profounder mysteries and its intrinsic virtues and ideals. It points to our lack of home life, our masculinized femininity, our neurotic yellow journals, our insanity and crime, and our great mental and moral degeneracy, when considered in connection with our extreme national youth—all the result of our hankering after material pleasures and the disregard of the higher problems and ideals of life.

Of the correctness of this criticism, there can be little doubt. Such scandals as the Equitable Life and the Bowen and Morton affairs demonstrate that American ideals are low—decidedly low. The slaughter of Labor shows that life and its inherent problems are treated with slight consideration in the chase for the Almighty Dollar. The current disclosures and discussions regarding divorce, “race suicide”, suicide, immorality, and insanity, substantiate all the other points not included in the foregoing. But after all this has been said, there is still more to be said, something that the Orient has failed to say. American life, in fact, all Western life, is based on a colossal lie. It proclaims the right of ownership by him who produces. Yet its millions of producers own nothing. Though their toil has made the land tillable and has produced all machinery, they own neither land nor machinery.

These are the property of a few capitalists, and used by them in the exploitation of the millions of producers—the Working Class. This condition creates a conflict of interests—a struggle for life between the capitalist and the working classes, and the individuals composing them—a struggle that renders life an uncertainty, destroying thereby the poise necessary to its spiritual contemplation and exaltation; a struggle in which all others are sacrificed to self and class, and men, women and children are engaged, and everything is fair and permissible, except honorable defeat. Who wonders then that, based on such a lie, American life is superficial and overlooks the interests of the race? Who wonders then that based on such a lie, American ideals are low and material? Can a lie be profound or spiritual?

And it is toward this lie that the Orient is drifting. The Orient may smile in commiseration upon the Occident from its high mental and moral pedestal; but wait until the germ of Capitalism now implanted in it has fully developed—the East will then no longer sit in solemn contemplation of its navel in the attempt to evolve out of its inner consciousness a solution of the mysteries of life and its duties. Nay; it will then be stirred, as it is now being stirred in Japan, into an abandonment of its old attitude toward life, and the adoption of one more in accord with that of the Western world, with all of its decadent features and results. In the meanwhile, the Western world will overthrow its lie, by really giving to the producer his product, through the inauguration of Socialism, which the evolution of the lie is making inevitable. Then will the Occident rise superior to the Orient, and lead the way for it once more!

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Uploaded January 2008

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