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EDITORIAL

HIS HOLINESS “SUPPLY AND DEMAND”.

By DANIEL DE LEON

A CHICAGO despatch gives an interesting conversation that took place between a committee from the Oil Wagon Drivers’ Union and Manager Stephen N. Hurd of the Standard Oil Company. The committee showed in detail that with the \$2 a day which the drivers receive, there are only 3 cents left on which to dress, shoe and educate a family. “Could you”, asked the spokesman of the committee, “live on \$2 a day yourself, Mr. Hurd?” “No,” answered Mr. Hurd, “I don’t believe I could, and probably you can’t either. But I can get plenty of teamsters who are willing to work for that price. That is really what governs wages more than the cost of living.” In other words, Mr. Hurd re-stated the principle of the law of “supply and demand”, and he re-stated the principle and law in the way the capitalist class always does—reverently bowing before it where it suits them. Mr. Hurd said that that was REALLY what governed wages.

In the Tabernacle of the Temple of Capitalism, there are a number {of} “Holies”. These are called “Natural Laws”, and, therefore, they are deemed “sacred”. To ignore any of them is benighted heathenishness; to act in violence to them is “blasphemy”, “heresy” and an utterly damnable act. Among these “Holies”, these sacred “Natural Laws”, the law of “Supply and Demand” holds prominent place. Before it the capitalist bows in mute reverence, his whole being radiating with the celestial light of him who “fears God”, and “walketh in His path”, and “transgresseth not His commandments”. Do principles of humanity or charity seem to suffer by the application of the law of Supply and Demand? The suffering can only be in seeming. “No man can really suffer from the acts of God”: Supply and Demand is an “act of God”: consequently it must be enforced. Such is the reasoning, such the posture of the Hurd Class, the capitalist, before the Oil Wagon Drivers’ Union Class, the workingman. Does it seem inhumanly impossible for a family to

live on \$2 a day? May be so; but "Supply and Demand" is the law that REALLY governs wages; rather than become sacrilegious, the capitalist may not, even if he would, question the "ways of God"; he may not, even if he would, act contrary thereto. The supply of, and the demand for, Labor in the Labor market "really governs" wages. The supply being greatly in excess of the demand in the industrial centers, the capitalist will not be so impious as to pay wages at a higher rate than the "Supply and Demand" dictates. He will pay wages at the low rate dictated by that Eleventh Commandment.

But now watch this identical Capitalist Class on the farms. Regularly, at each recurring harvest season, there is a "scarcity of hands". It happened notably last August in this state when the peach crop was to be gathered in. If "Supply and Demand" is the sacred law which the capitalist makes out; if it is so "natural" and "sacred" that he would run the risk of hell-fire were he to violate it; if that is the reason that compels him to pay low wages where the supply is large; if that is what "really governs" wages, and he has no choice—if all that is so, what should one expect to see at harvest times? Why, the "God-fearing" capitalist, who under no conditions would violate the "Natural Laws", should be seen bowing reverently to the "Law" that "really governs" wages; he should be seen paying wages obedient to the governor thereof—"Supply and Demand". Demand being high, Supply low, he should be seen paying correspondingly high wages, in other words, allowing the workingmen a larger share of the wealth. Does he? Wonderful to say, he does not. A complete Black-Crook transformation scene takes place on the capitalist stage. From being a devout reverencer of Supply and Demand, the capitalist becomes a veritable heresiarch. He storms at the workingmen who raise their demands in keeping with that "sacred law". He calls them scamps, rascals, confiscators; and when these thereupon give him a wide berth, and leave his crops on his hands, as happened to the owners of the peach orchards, they are denounced from the columns of his papers and his pulpits as a "lazy pack of wretches", who are seeking to "introduce chaos into the land" and "disrupt society". A little closer inspection of these thunderingly irate capitalists will illumine the field. They will be found panting, even scheming, for the power to put Supply and Demand upon its feet, in other words, for the brute force to introduce the conditions under which Supply and

Demand will work beneficially for them—an overstocked Labor Market.

There is no such "natural law" as Supply and Demand. The pickle of the agricultural capitalists, together with their schemes, points to the conditions, and the methods that bring about the conditions, under which capitalism raises Supply and Demand to the dignity of a "Natural Law". The conditions are a mass of proletarians; the method is brute force. Brute force first dispossesses the peasant and hurls him in large numbers into the cities; the supply thus becoming large, the Hurd Class of capitalists set up their "Natural Law", and conveniently bow before it, and demand of the workingmen that they submissively revere the monster. The day of the initial brute force being so far back, one almost forgets the source of the "Natural Law". Periodically, however, the aspirations—often put in practice by the agricultural capitalist, and not infrequently by the industrial capitalist as well—raises the veil over the past and exposes the swindle of His Holiness "Supply and Demand".

The application and enforcement of the law of supply and demand upon the workingman is but the continuance of plunder upon a foundation of rapine. No wonder it is holy to the Hurds; for that very reason it is hell-born to the Working Class, and fit only to be torn up by the root.

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