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EDITORIAL

## A REAL ANTI-IMPERIALIST.

By DANIEL DE LEON

It is clearly the interest of all wage-earners to oppose imperialism, root and branch, and if they have any doubt on the subject, let them consider the cotton operatives of Egypt.

**M**r. Crosby, of the anti-imperialistic league, has issued a small leaflet in which the above appears. The arguments in it are drawn mostly from the cotton industry of Egypt, and Crosby points out the fact that the prevailing wage is about twelve cents a day. The industry is unimportant, because the absence of coal makes it impossible to carry manufacturing on at a profit. The abundance of coal in and near the Philippines would change this aspect of affairs, and our mills and factories would migrate thither.



ERNEST H. CROSBY  
(1856-1907)

While these statements are undoubtedly true, the most important fact of all is overlooked. The waiting millions of Asia and of the Pacific Islands are as nothing compared with the development of the machine and the organization of industry. We shall admit that they are a menace at the present time, but they are a menace, not through their numbers, not because they differ from us in face, in language and dress, but because they are a new field of labor power. They can be used only by the present capitalist system. The embryonic capitalist of one hundred years ago was no more humane and no more patriotic than his descendant of to-day. He was just as eager for profits, and just as unscrupulous in obtaining them. He did not obtain them in the same measure, because the state of industry would not permit it. He would have exploited the Asiatic, but he had not the means. It is only when, through the development of machinery and the organization of industry, the capitalist is forced constantly to cut his own throat that he reaches out and employs the barbarian.

Then again there is another element that Crosby overlooks, or else is not honest enough to admit. That is the fact that the only “pauper labor” in the world to-day is the machine. It varies alone in its increasing power. It gives to its possessor ever greater control. It also inflicts upon those who must have access to it, but who do not own it, misery such as no period in the world’s history ever witnessed in a like measure. These combined facts: the necessity of access to virgin fields of labor and the tendency of machinery and organization at home to drive down the price of labor, are responsible for the movement that Crosby tries to cry down.

While he cries it down, he defends its cause. He would hold off an inevitable result, and, like the cringing, fawning, governing class with which he affiliates, he would still use the results of capitalism, and would so restrict them that many more, and much more tyrannous masters would be given to the working class. It may not be amiss to express the machine question in theological language. The machine is unlike man. It was not “conceived in sin.” It “fell” because of the company into whose hands it was placed. Its “redemption” can only be accomplished by taking it out of those hands, and placing it in the hands of the people who use the machine.

Crosby overlooks all the real points in the matter, and he tries to argue onto safe ground by holding up a few of the effects of “expansion.” Those effects of expansion are only the effects of capitalism, and in order to do away with them, it is necessary to do away with capitalism. That is the mission of the Socialist Labor Party, and Crosby is miles from the conflict when he joins in the anti-imperialistic kite flying.

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