

# The People.

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FIRST EDITORIAL

## Cut This Out and Paste It in Your Hats

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**he following incident is an actual occurrence that happened in the city of New York, on Monday, the 2d instant, between the hours of 5.30 and 6 p.m.

In a large manufacturing concern, the bell that usually rings at 6 p.m. the signal to stop work for the day, rang at 5.30, and the rather surprised workmen were told by the foreman that the Superintendent wanted to give them a talk. Marshalled before the superintendent, the latter addressed the men in this language:

“To-morrow is election day. You will, of course, do as you think best. You are free men. But I have this to say to you: ‘If to-morrow Mr. Bryan is elected you need not come here Wednesday morning. This factory will be closed and remain closed until further notice.’”

Let no one howl: “Intimidation!” and go wild. All such display of temper amounts to nothing but to flying off the handle; nor could the capitalist class want anything better.

The occurrence above reported is natural. You cannot step into a lion’s den and not be devoured; you cannot stick your head into a sewer and not be suffocated with stench. The capitalist system robs man of all freedom. The worker is dependent on his skinner for a living, and the latter can control the former’s vote by threatening to withhold the living. The dependence of the worker, and the power, and the will of the skinning capitalist to dominate his wage slave follow as inevitably as night follows day. He who in any way would uphold capitalism has nothing to complain against; if his party is defeated by intimidation, it is defeated by that which itself breeds; none such may cry “foul play!”

Is then the emancipation of labor impossible? No!

The effect, no doubt, had upon the workingmen above referred to by the language of the Superintendent, can be had only so long as the men to whom it is addressed have not had the error pumped out of their heads that “as things are so will they ever be and are natural absolutely,” so long as the revolutionary spirit has not taken hold of the masses. If the Socialist Labor party had been big enough to raise the dust that Popocracy did, and just as soon as the S.L.P. shall have reached such dimensions, as it assuredly will, the Superintendent in question would either not have dared to hold the language he did, or if he had, the response would have been an intensified determination to throw off the yoke of slavery the next day.

But for the working class to take such a manly attitude, a manly agitation must have previously cast off the slavish souls from within them, and breathed into them the souls of heroes. No agitation can accomplish this result that goes about sneaking, trying to make “flank movements” on the enemy, “stealing a march” upon him, getting into his ranks “with the thin edge of the wedge,” setting up “one thing at a time,” ducking, bending, creeping.

The leading lesson of the election is the futility of cowardice, the inefficiency of a propaganda which does not thunder aloud in every spot where the proletariat can be met that capitalism must go; that the capitalist class must be overthrown and laid flat; that the bonds of wage slavery must be shattered; that Labor, manual and intellectual, alone produced and produces all the wealth of the nation; that this wealth is now held by a robber class, and labor is plundered by that class; that the country is now too small for the capitalist class, the same as a hundred and odd years ago it was too small for King George and his satraps; and that, just the same as then, the people must now vote themselves into power, and if despite the fact of the suffrage they are resisted, must mop the floor with the usurper in this century as they did in the last.

Alone the Socialist Labor party has held this language in the late conflict. Alone it emerges with a Presidential vote considerably larger than the Presidential vote it polled 4 years ago, and that is indestructible. But its columns were as yet too small to have its voice heard as extensively as was needed.

Workers of America, men of thought and men of action, the country’s deliverance calls for MEN!

Join the Socialist ranks!

[Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.](#)

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