

The People.

VOL. VI, NO. 33

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 1896

PRICE 3 CENTS

SECOND EDITORIAL

Our National Shame

By DANIEL DE LEON

A frequent item found in the Eastern capitalist press since election is this:
“Foreign money, needed here, will now come rolling in and enable us to develop our great national resources.”

By this sentence alone our capitalists accomplish two valuable things:

1st. They tear off their faces the mask of “patriotism” with which they have been masquerading during the last 5 months.

2d. They expose the stupidity of the social system that they uphold as “the wisest possible.”

To take the second first, what shall one say of a social system that palsies the unparalleled productive powers and the natural resources of a country like this? That renders the one and the other null unless, forsooth, foreign capital deign to smile upon us, touch us with its wizard’s wand, and set us agoing? We have a soil that will yield an abundance, we have machinery that will multiply that abundance infinitely, and we have human labor power and brain power willing and anxious to operate the machinery of production and conjure forth such plentiful wealth as may insure to all the industrious a life free from carking care, and an existence becoming to the dignity of man. But true enough, all this goes for naught under the capitalist system. Under the capitalist system, our natural resources remain unused to the extent that they could; our machinery of production does not fulfill its mission; and brain and labor power pine and lie idle: without money the wheels of capitalist production cannot move. Europe has the bulk of the world’s money; consequently this great, this potentially powerful nation, must, with bated breath and whispering humbleness implore foreign aid to do its own work!

At this stage of development, Capitalism is stupidity carried to a climax. Once the principle of private ownership of the land and the tools of production is granted, the rest follows: money becomes a necessity, and then is developed that parasites—the financier, who sucks his living off the capitalist, who sucks his living off the workingman. The chain of cause and effect becomes irresistible. National pauperism follows, and with it national independence goes to the dogs—or to the capitalist class, which amounts to the same thing.

The Socialist Commonwealth needs no MONEY to set it on its feet. Money does no work; its necessity is only the result of a social system that has become wholly vicious. LABOR only does all work. Organized co-operatively upon a national basis, Labor is to-day self-sufficient. Master of the soil and of the weapons of production, Labor needs no prop, foreign or domestic; no wizard's wand to enable it to exist, domestic or foreign. It can bring forth a paradise. That this is impossible under Capitalism, brands the system and its upholders stupid, if not criminal.

And as to the 1st, it follows from the 2d. What wondrous “patriots” must not they be who uphold a system under which our political freedom from Europe is an illusion, and we are made actually dependent for the necessities of a fit human life upon the whim or the good will of foreigners! What traitors, rather, must not they be who lash our nation to the chariot wheels of foreign powers, and keep her captive at their feet!

In the language of Lowell.

“The time is ripe, rotten-ripe for change.”

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

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