

# DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 8, NO. 124.

NEW YORK, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1907.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

## “THE TIME TO BUY.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

**I**N the midst of the general distress the panic has plunged the country in, there is one jubilant note that rises above the groans of the ruined, the murmurs of the fearful, and the death-rattle of the suicides. That note is: “This is the time to buy!” It proceeds from the thinned ranks of the Plutocracy, or Upper Capitalist Class.

It is one of the imbecilities of anti-Socialism pamphleteers to declare “we can all be capitalists.” He who says “capitalist,” must imply all the term implies. For there to be one capitalist there must be hundreds of wage-slaves. “Wage-slave” and “Capitalist” are obverse and reverse of the same medal, “The Capitalist Social System.” To suppose every body to be a “capitalist” is to suppose everybody to be skinner and skinned at once—an absurdity. Capitalism implies the supply of a helpless mass of Labor sheep for the capitalist to fleece. Capitalism, accordingly, is reared upon human suffering. Marx’s chapter upon colonies, and the authorities to which he refers, make the point clear that capitalism needs, for its thriving, a large and ever larger quantity of human helplessness. With such a foundation and source, it would be nothing short of a miracle were the acts of the capitalist at any of his economic turns to be guided by any principle other than “Others’ woes are my opportunity.” Such an “opportunity” panics offer. The regulation course of capitalism is to confiscate the wealth produced by Labor. That course is fruitful of much wealth in capitalist pockets, only the increase goes by slow accretions. Panics offer the capitalist the opportunity to confiscate big lumps at once. It is his opportunity to confiscate the confiscations of the fry smaller than himself. Their distress reduces the prices that they must sell for. Panics, accordingly, are “the times to buy.”

The confiscation of Labor’s product is called in capitalist slang “making profits.”

The confiscation of those portions of Labor’s product, that have been previously confiscated by smaller capitalists,—that, in capitalist slang, is “buying” at “the time to buy.”

Little wonder the Upper Capitalists feel jubilant, and that their jubilant note resounds lustily above the prevailing note of sorrow.

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Uploaded November 2009

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