

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 5, NO. 181.

NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1904.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

ARSON AND DEARTH CAPITALIST PROPS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE New York *Times* is a capitalist paper. It is owned by multi-millionaires. During the elections the paper was for the “sane and safe Democracy”, which is equivalent to saying it was as Republican as it was Democratic. A less impeachable witness by capitalism can not well be imagined, nor one more unwilling for the prosecution in the suit of Socialism vs. Capitalism, or the Working Class vs. the Capitalist Class. It is such a witness that we now summon to the witness stand.

In its December 21, 1904, issue the *Times*, in its report entitled “The Financial Markets”, makes this statement:

“Cotton broke to the year’s minimum, this being one of the sequels to an abundant yield, A MISFORTUNE WHICH, IT IS SUGGESTED, MAY BE MINIMIZED BY DESTROYING THE EXCESS BY FIRE.”

We feel certain that the defendants in the suit will not care to cross-examine so notable a witness subpoenaed out of their own house. We ask him, accordingly, to step aside, and we now summon to the witness stand a second witness, likewise subpoenaed from the defendant’s own house, Mr. N.C. Murray, President of the Farmers’ Educational and Co-operative Union of America. Mr. Murray’s credentials, as the *Times*, are his position. The President of an organization of employers, he holds to capitalism as the proper thing. Mr. Murray also bewails the large crop of cotton; he looks forward and sees no prospect of let-up in the “misfortune”, and his capitalist head seeks to avoid the evil consequences. In pursuit of this object he has hit upon a plan. He said in Dallas, Tex., on December 26, 1904:

“Next year I want to see the acreage REDUCED at least 20 per cent. That is THE ONLY SALVATION OF THE COTTON-RAISING INDUSTRY

OF THE SOUTH.”

Mr. Murray may now leave the court together with the *Times*.

Whenever the official upholders of the capitalist system find their “economics” overthrown by Socialism; whenever they find their claims, that the condition of the Working Class is improving, pounded to dust by Socialist facts; whenever they find their pretence, that capitalism offers free opportunities to all, made mince meat of by the irrefutable Socialist reasoning which proves that under capitalism the opportunities become ever fewer for the masses and the future for these ever blacker; whenever their affectation of love for “individuality” is torn to pieces by the Socialist logic which proves that capitalism is a destroyer of individuality and a breeder of despotism;—Whenever, in short, the upholders of capitalism are routed by Socialism they drop the mask of “democracy”, of “Christianity”, and of what not, and, putting on a bold front declare:

“That may all be true, but it cannot be helped. Nature so wills it. Everybody can not be well off. There is not wealth enough to make us all rich. Some must be poor.”

This claim is as false as any other advanced by capitalism. It is not true that Nature so wills it that pauperism must be the lot of the masses: it is not true that there is not wealth enough for all. The reverse of all that is the truth. As far as Nature herself is concerned, she is bountiful, and aided, by the social contrivances of civilization, an industrial people can raise an abundance of wealth for all with but little physical exertion. Such, however, is not the condition in modern society. In modern capitalist-run society there is, indeed, not wealth enough for all. Why not? Are Nature and man’s skill to blame? The two witnesses quoted above answer the question, and in answering it they convict the capitalist system out of its own mouth.

A large cotton crop, certainly a blessing, is pronounced a “misfortune”, and the misfortune is to be minimized by arson! And in order that the “misfortune” may not recur, 20 per cent. of the acreage is to be rendered a desolate wilderness, because it would not do to render it productive in some other channel and thereby bring about some other “misfortune”.

A social system that is compelled to look upon abundance as a “misfortune”, and that can thrive only upon the real misfortune of dearth or devastation is a social crime. Capitalism blights Nature’s womb; capitalism cripples the machinery of production; capitalism lames the arm of industry—and all for the purpose of breeding a minority of despots and fastening them to the back of a pauper Working Class. It is not Nature and man’s inability that justify the horrors of capitalism, it is the horrors of capitalism that require the thwarting of Nature and of man’s capabilities. A social system to which arson is prop and which needs dearth for its “salvation” is a horrid nightmare.

And the human race is awakening and making ready to cast the oppressing nightmare from its chest. On the approaching Bosworth field of civilization, the hideous, deformed monster of Capitalism—a veritable Richard III. in point of uncouthness and of criminality—may perchance, like the royal hobgoblin, awake to a sense of its blood-stained career, and in the agony of despair, just before giving up the ghost, confess:

My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
And every tongue brings in a several tale,
And every tale condemns me for a villain.¹

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

Uploaded September 2007

slpns@slp.org

¹ [William Shakespeare, *Richard III.*]