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ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

## BUSINESS DEPRESSION AND IMMIGRATION.

By DANIEL DE LEON

I.

State of New York

COMMISSION OF IMMIGRATION  
19 East Twenty-sixth Street,  
New York City.

Telephone, 1387 Madison Square.

Albany, N.Y., November 6, 1908.

**M**R. DANIEL DE LEON,  
Editor *Daily People*,  
New York City,

My Dear Sir:—

The Commission of Immigration of the State of New York, authorized by the Legislature and appointed by the Governor as directed by Chapter 210, of the Laws of 1908, to institute full inquiry, examination and investigation into the “condition, welfare and industrial opportunities of aliens in the State of New York,” would be grateful to you for an expression of your views upon the direct causes for the business depression which has prevailed for some months. This is one of the most important questions for investigation, as it leads directly to the causes of unemployment of labor which so vitally concerns immigrants.

The Commission will be pleased to send you the results of its investigations, as soon as ready for distribution.

Very respectfully,  
C.W. LARNION,  
Chairman Industrial Committee.

## II.

*Daily People*

New York, Nov. 11, 1908.

Mr. C.W. Larnion,  
Chairman Industrial Committee,  
Albany, N.Y.

My Dear Sir:—

Often in my life time have I been amused—but never more so than at a request for an expression of my views “upon the direct causes for the business depression which has prevailed for some months” coming from a Commission of Immigration.

Often in my life time have I been amazed—but never more so than at the notion that the causes of “business depression” fall within the province of Commissions on Immigration.

Immigrants—meaning, of course, workmen immigrants, not immigrants of the category of the Duke of Manchester, who immigrated to take charge of the Hamilton and Dayton Railway property of his wife, the American heiress Helena Zimmerman of Cincinnati—immigrants, of course, are sufferers during business depressions, but they are not special sufferers as immigrants. They are sufferers along with, and as a contingent of the working class—a portion of our population whose only share in the economic phenomenon of business depressions is to suffer the consequences, not at all to produce, or “cause” them. Indeed, the “causes” of business depression is an interesting inquiry; the inquiry however belongs to Commissions, not of Immigration, but of Capitalist Misrule, the capitalist misruler being both native and of the Duke of Manchester variety.

The causes of the economic phenomenon of business depression are, primarily, of a general character; at this stage of the game a specific character is added to the general one.

The general cause of business depressions, or “crises,” is the double

circumstance that capitalist production is anarchic, planless; and, secondly, that Labor receives for its work so small a share of its product in money that it is out of all possibility for the working class to buy back the goods it stocks the markets with. Combine these two causes and the result is as obvious as it is inevitable. The planlessness that inevitably accompanies capitalist production at the individual stage causes a glut in the market. As to the capitalist consumer, bursting though he be with cash, he has no use for the superabundance of goods: even Bradley-Martin balls cannot swallow up the wealth. As to the working class consumer, immigrant and otherwise, pine though they do for the superabundant goods, they cannot purchase them, have not the cash, they received only 17 per cent. in money for the wealth they produced. A stoppage of sales stops production. The real sufferer is the worker. Though crises are hard on the small capitalist, they are killing to the worker. Kept, while at work, living from hand to mouth, so soon as the crisis acts in he is thrown out of work and starves.

The specific cause of business depression sets in when a sufficient number of capitalist concerns have graduated out the individual stage of production into that of the Trust. Arrived at that stage, the general cause above stated is then aggravated by the manipulations of the financiers, a sublimated portion of the capitalist class that is designated as the "Plutocracy." These gentlemen promote crises. The general cause being permanently at work, whenever the Plutocracy desires to make a big haul, a crisis is precipitated, with the consequences of "business depression"—failures, suicides of unwary banker{s} and speculators, etc., etc., and last not least enforced idleness and starvation for the working class, native and immigrant alike. Senator La Follette's speech in Congress this spring is as full of specific facts on this aspect of the case as an egg is of meat.

This explains the otherwise paradoxically seeming sight of "bread lines" increasing in length in even tempo with the increasing string of "heiresses" marrying foreign counts, dukes, marquises, and even Princes;—and the sight throws light upon the "causes."

So you see, my dear Sir, that, as a Commissioner of Immigration, you are trespassing upon the diggings of a certain other Commission which the working

class, intelligent natives and immigrants alike, together with all other honorable and intelligent people, are working to set on foot, and will certainly succeed in doing—a Commission of Capitalist Plundering.

Very respectfully,

D. DE LEON

Ed. *Daily People*

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

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