

# DAILY PEOPLE

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EDITORIAL

## AN OPEN LETTER.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**O Paul J. Bonwit and Others,  
New York City:  
Sirs:—

We are at a loss to understand the process of reasoning that led you to request the co-operation of the *Daily People* in pushing through the Legislature of this State the bill you have drafted for “the gradual reduction of the rate of taxation on all buildings in the city to one-half the rate of taxation on all land,” as “an important relief to all business men and manufacturers of the city.”

The *Daily People* is the official organ of the Socialist Labor Party. The organ of Socialism in this country, the *Daily People* advocates scientific, that is, Socialist, economics.

Scientific political economy teaches that taxes fall upon the property-holding class. This conclusion is most obvious with regard to direct taxes. Direct taxes can be levied only upon property, hence, only property-holders are affected thereby. Indeed, the very language of your circular indicates as much. Business men and manufacturers are the folks whom to relieve you have expressly taken the field. You thereby exclude the working class of the land, an act of frankness for which you deserve credit.

Now, then, the Socialist Labor Party stands exclusively upon the class interests of the workingman—a propertyless class. This class has no concern with taxation.

The revenues of the workingman are to-day the price (wages) that he can realize for his merchandise labor-power in the labor market. That price depends upon the supply of and demand for labor-power. The supply being in excess of the demand, and being steadily on the increase, due to the inevitable concentration of capital, the price of labor-power is as steadily on the decline.

Obviously, high taxes will take not a copper from wages, nor will low taxes add a copper thereto.

Obviously, also, however low the taxes may be that the capitalist class, the employer or purchaser of labor-power, that is, your “business men and manufacturers” pay, the working class remains where it is—with its nose to the grindstone.

There is a further reason why the *Daily People* must decline to assist you.

Whatever property the “business man and manufacturer,” the capitalist class, in short, has, is wealth produced by, but plundered from, the useful toilers, the working class, of the land. The establishment of a social order, under which plunder shall not continue to be legalized, is the problem of the Age, and Socialism is the solution of the same. Now, then, sticking to the question of taxation—seeing that the taxes are paid out of the plunder held by the property-holding or plundering class, the propertyless, or plundered class, sees in taxation one of the methods instituted by the plundering class itself whereby eventually to restore the plunder to the plundered.

You will have to fight your taxation fight among yourselves—for the present. When the working class shall take a hand in that fight, it will conduct its campaign, not against some plunderers and in favor of others, but against the whole of Plunderbund. On that day the volume of taxation will equal the volume of plunder.

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