

# The People.

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FIRST EDITORIAL

## What! What!! What!!!

By DANIEL DE LEON

In the same issues of the papers that are hollering in their front and editorial pages about the avalanche of prosperity that has fallen upon this country the moment confidence in our “national honor” was restored by the election of McKinley, another tune begins to be whistled in the columns that are not intended for general consumption. In the reports of trades we now encounter the admission that “orders are not yet coming in” and then follows the laughable explanation: “because people are yet waiting to hear the returns from the doubtful States”!!!

No time need be wasted upon the claim that prosperity is halting, despite the undisputed election of its “Advance Agent,” simply because Wyoming’s full vote or Kentucky’s is not yet positively known. Such silliness is hardly entitled to the time one would consume in a smile.

The important fact is that prosperity has not yet arrived. No one will credit the “Advance Agent of Prosperity” with the “prosperity” of the workers who were locked out during the campaign for an “object lesson,” and who were allowed to return to work after election. Such artificial distress and such artificial prosperity is too transparent. The distress the country has been pining under for years was of different stuff, and the prosperity it is panting for must be of different color. Will it come? Whence the fact that “orders” are not flowing in and spreading prosperity?

The mystery is plain. The “enlightened” business men and their editorial quill-pushers may be, and, for all we care, may continue puzzled; the working class, however, those whom the “business men” have deceived with false expectations, and who are the only ones who can bring redress, deserve a word of admonition. To them we say:

“No orders can come unless there is a demand for orders; no demand there can be, sufficient to insure prosperity, unless the people have money to buy; the people can have no money to buy if they are thrown out work; every machine introduced into a

shop drives workers into penury. McKinley's programme, like Bryan's, did not and does not propose to prevent the steady displacement of labor. Both platforms upheld the private ownership of capital. Hence McKinley's election has, just as Bryan's would have done, simply continued the system that disables a larger and larger number of people from buying; that, consequently, dries up the source from whence the demand for orders comes; and, finally, that renders prosperity impossible."

The prosperity of the workers can come only when they have become masters of the machinery of production; when new and improved machinery will not be used for private profit, but will reduce the hours of work and increase the fruits of labor.

No political programme, outside of that of the Socialist Labor party can unlock the gates of prosperity; all others keep it closely bolted and barred (except for the loafing capitalist class), and unlock only the floodgates of misery for the working class.

Watch the next 4 years; and at every recurring election, let the workers demonstrate that by the thousands they have had enough of the sort of prosperity capitalism bestows upon them, and that they determine themselves to clutch the key to the gate of their emancipation.

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

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