

DAILY PEOPLE

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ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

AN OPEN LETTER TO E.R.L. GOULD.

By DANIEL DE LEON

TO E.R.L. Gould, Fin. Sec'y,
New York City.
Dear Sir:—

We are in receipt of your circular inviting us to contribute \$10 to the support of the work that your organization, the Citizens' Union of this city, is doing "in the interest of taxpayers."

As you may know, the *Daily People* is a Socialist paper, the organ of the Socialist Labor Party. As you should know, Socialism advocates the interests of the working class, exclusively. Hence, Socialism is not interested in the question of taxation, leastwise municipal taxation, which must be grounded upon assessable property.

The instances of workingmen owning assessable property are so few and far between that the number is negligible. As a class, the workingman owns no assessable property. Owning none, he can not be taxed. Not being liable to taxation, the working class is not interested in that issue.

This, of course, does not mean that taxes are not paid with the fruit of the workers toil. "Far otherwise, and to the contrary."

Taxes, being wealth, and wealth being the product of Labor only, it follows that taxes are paid with the product of Labor's efforts. From this circumstance superficial thinkers frequently draw the conclusion that Labor pays the taxes. The conclusion would be sound if Labor received all the wealth it produces, that is, all the wealth there is. But Labor is not so situated under the capitalist system. Under the capitalist system, Labor receives from the fruit of its toil only that portion that its labor-power is bought for by the capitalist class in the Labor market. That portion, Labor's "wages," represents a very small fraction of what Labor actually produces—and the fraction becomes, absolutely, and still more relatively, ever smaller.

It follows from these undeniable premises that, as a class, the workingman lives from hand to mouth; as a property-less being; consequently, has no property that is subject to taxation, hence is not concerned in taxation—a question of deep interest to the capitalist class which absorbs the bulk of the product of Labor’s efforts, and must pay the taxes out of that plunder.

There are people who call themselves Socialists and who hold a different theory on taxation—their theory being in the interest of the small property-holder. Probably you meant your circular letter for the Editor of such a “Socialist” paper. If you so desire, we should be pleased to forward your article to the Editor of whatever Socialist party paper you may designate. Your circular belongs there, not in this office.

With distinguished consideration, etc.,

EDITOR DAILY PEOPLE.

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