

# DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 12, NO. 230.

NEW YORK, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 1912.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

## THE BLIND TWITTING THE BLIND.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**R**EFERRING to the unquestionably incorrect perspective into which William D. Haywood places physical force in the Socialist Movement, the *New York Call* of the 11th of this month attempts to impart “real knowledge” to Haywood, and to post him so that he may become a “teacher.” The attempt is entitled “The New Utopianism,” and it contains this bit of “knowledge”:

“Comrade Haywood is unfortunately at sea relative to the police. The police, the militia and the regular army are not the law. They are the tangible expression of law enforcement as that is viewed by the dominant economic class. Actually to control that force we must have the political power, and while we are acquiring it we are also going to acquire economic freedom and economic power.”

Germany is not the United States—that’s true; nor are the days of William Liebknecht our days—that also is true. Nevertheless, upon the principle that anatomists study the anatomy of the dog so as to understand the anatomy of man all the better, the peacockiest of Jingos should condescend to give an ear to what Liebknecht said, however superior they may be to him. Upon the very subject, considered in the just-quoted paragraph, William Liebknecht uttered this warning:

“But let us suppose that the Government, either out of conscious strength or calculation, make no use of its powers, and that, agreeable to the day-dream of some Socialist fantastic politicians, the effort to elect a Social Democratic majority in the Reichstag were successful—what is that majority to do? ‘Hic Rhodus, hic salta.’ The moment has arrived to remodel society and the state. The majority adopts a world-historic resolution; the New Era is born—not at all! A company of soldiers chases the Social Democratic majority out of the Temple; and, should the gentlemen fail to submit quietly, then a couple of policemen will conduct them to the lock-up, where they will have leisure to meditate upon their Don Quixoticism.”

Obviously Liebknecht did not share the phantasmagoria of the *Call's* wiseacre that the capture of political power imparts, automatically, control of “police, militia and the regular army,” that is, of the physical force requisite to enforce the political victory.

Furthermore, our own country itself has within the last three-and-twenty years furnished a graphic confirmation, a confirmation tangible to feeling as to sight, of the truth of Liebknecht's teaching.

It was in 1893. It happened during the Farmers' Alliance political uprising which speedily turned into Populism. It happened in the State of Kansas, a State of manly courage and fibre. From top to bottom—Governorship, Legislature and Judiciary—Populism carried the State at the hustings. According to the theory that the *Call's* wiseacre inflicts upon an already sufficiently afflicted Socialist Movement, the physical forces of the State—police and militia—must have instantaneously fallen into the hands of the victors, securing them in their contemplated legislation against the “Railroad and Wall Street Octopus.” Indeed, it was so believed by the victors—but not for long. They soon learned better. When the Populist majority ambled into the Legislature with the expectation to organize the same, they found a “Railroad and Wall Street Octopus” minority in possession claiming to be a majority. A spectacular tussle, often degenerating into farce, ensued and held the stage for weeks in the Legislative chamber. The triumphant Populists finally thought the nonsense had gone far enough. Had they not carried the Executive also? Was he not ex-officio the generalissimo of all armed forces, militia and police, of the State? They called upon him. Gladly did Gov. Lewelling hearken to their cry. He ordered out the militia; at his command a gatling gun was planted before and pointed at the Chamber held by the usurpers—but when the gun was to be fired it was found to have been “spiked”—the very militia had rendered that engine of force inoperative. The land's saving sense of humor roared at the experience. Amid peals of laughter the wisdom of Liebknecht's words, and all that they implied, were taught to the country, that is, to those who can learn.

Right without Might is a scare-crow for crows to perch, and hop, and caw-caw upon. Correctly did the late President Harrison, his pet bill to compel honest elections in the South by means of Federal troops being decried as the “Force Bill,” ridi-

cule his critics by pointing to the fact that force must be behind all law. Nevertheless—

He who would conclude that Force is all-sufficient to dethrone the modern Usurping Class,—such a one is blind of one eye, so blind of that eye that the other eye is of no account.

Likewise he who would consider political action all-sufficient, a sort of dead-open-and-shut affair, whereby to seize power,—such a one is blind of the other eye, so blind of that eye that he might as well be blind of the other also.

The former may, in the language of the *Call's* wiseacre, be “elephantine” and “hippopotamic”; the latter however is a calf, with the gales of his own vanity blowing through the empty chambers of his skull. The mind’s eye of both being out of commission, neither has anything to twit the other with.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
Uploaded January 2013

[slpns@slp.org](mailto:slpns@slp.org)