

EDITORIAL

AN OPEN LETTER TO FREDERICK C. HOWE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

TO Frederick C. Howe,
President Insurgents' Club,
New York City.

Dear Sir—

In fullest sympathy with the motto on your communication that “government should be for the people, not against them,” indeed, for that very reason, we seriously hesitate to enroll with your Insurgents, unless you could make it clear in what manner any or all the five planks of your platform could remove the cornerstone of “government against the people,” to wit, a class, and that the most numerous of our population, involuntarily in the position that, in order to exercise their labor-function, and live, they must submit to be plundered by another class.

We take it for granted that you recognize the economic principle that, without the most up-to-date mechanism of production, labor can not, in many lines, be at all, and in all others can not be effectively exercised.

Now then:—

1st. In what manner will the “direct popular election of United States Senators” place the socially necessary mechanism of production in the hands of the Working Class so that they need not pay the slave’s tribute to anyone for utilizing such mechanism?

2nd. What reason is there to expect from the “direct nomination of party candidates for all elective offices” the securing by Labor of the mechanism of production?

3rd. By what process would the “direct election of party delegates to national conventions” do the trick?

4th. What virtue is there in the Initiative, Referendum and Recall that is not

now in the ballot? And why, seeing that merely voting does not equip the workers with the mechanism of work, will the Initiative, Referendum and Recall do the equipping?

5th Would there be any “corrupt practices” if a civilized living were the patrimony of the people? And, seeing that “corrupt practices” are the consequence of mass-precariousness of living, does your 5th plank—“thorough-going corrupt practices legislation”—contemplate legislation that will abolish involuntary poverty?

We are unable to answer these questions in a manner that would justify our falling in line with you. On the contrary, the only answers we can think of point to the conclusion that each and all the planks of your platform are so many plasters on a wooden leg, so far as the real issue of the day is concerned—the abolition of involuntary poverty, with the long train of evils that involuntary poverty drags after it. .

Awaiting to be enlightened, if in error, we are of the opinion that, so far as Labor is concerned, Insurgentism differs from Standpatism only in the sense that the sauces in which poultry is to be seasoned for the cooking and eating may differ. Seeing that we are not engaged in the culinary mission of introducing new brands of sauces for the Capitalist Class to devour the Working Class in, but are engaged in the mission of putting an end to the refined cannibalism practiced by the Capitalist Class, Insurgentism does not enthuse us.

Yours, etc.,

EDITOR DAILY PEOPLE.

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

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