

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 9, NO. 310.

NEW YORK, THURSDAY, MAY 6, 1909.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

OPEN LETTER TO HENRY HARRISON LEWIS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

TO Henry Harrison Lewis,
Executive Committee of the General Committee of 100
for a Tariff Commission, New York, N.Y.

Dear Sir:—

Your favor of the 22nd of last month admitting the correctness of the *Daily People's* position in opposing a Tariff Board or Commission “such as Senator Aldrich apparently favors,” and recognizing that something more is needed,” encourages us to warn you that your economic-political soul, so to speak, is not yet quite in paradise, a good portion of it still lingering in purgatory.

You say something more is needed, and you proceed to explain that what is needed in addition is “one or two members on the Board who have had practical experience in production.”

Why these one or two members in addition to a majority of politicians with no practical experience in production? Why at all these politicians? Why not a Board, or Commission, exclusively made up of men who know? Is it imaginable that the water of the inexperienced would fail so to adulterate the wine of the experienced as to render it tasteless, if not brackish?

Allow us, Sir, to introduce you to your own mind.

Social evolution is propelling a new birth. Society is in travail. The new Social Order that the pulsations of social evolution are pushing forward is a purely economic Social Order, with its reflex of purely Economic Government. Every event of the day proves its necessity more forcibly, thereby proving the antiquatedness of the Political Social Order, with its reflex of pure Political Government. Daily is the Economic or Industrial State felt to be more urgent; in even tempo is the Political State felt to be a hindrance, if not a nuisance. It is in the nature of a worn-out

slough that should be cast off, the new one being ready to replace it, but that still insists on sticking to the body which no longer needs it, and to which it is only a clog. The Industrial Government, Board or Commission that is aborning needs not the Political Government, indeed, repels it.

Your yielding the point, to the extent of admitting the necessity of men who know what they are about, and yet adhering to the notion of retaining politicians who know not and must be coached, betrays a mental state portrayed by present material, yet not fully grasped conditions.

If your Committee could account to itself for its existence, it would realize the reason of its existence to lie in the increasingly manifest incapacity of the Political Government to meet requirements. If your Committee could fathom the secret recesses of its own wishes it would discover that it heartily relegates the Political State to the limbo to which the Socialist Movement consigns it. Finally, the no doubt startling discovery of its mental proximity to Socialism would enlighten your Committee upon the utter futility of its own efforts. With Socialism, the demand for the Economic Government is recognized as a revolutionary class demand; it is approached as such; and, consequently, comes hand in hand with the demand for the abolition of the Political Government, in fact, the former demand is predicated upon the latter and vice versa. With capitalists, however, the increasing strain for Economic Government is bound to dash itself against the inevitable consequence of the downfall of Political Government. Capitalism, a class social system, could not exist a day without its shelter—the Political State.

This circumstance explains your timidity to cast loose of the politician; the circumstance points to the unavoidable tangle your move is caught in; the circumstance finally marks your efforts Ichabod.

As you will perceive, your fight is not ours, our fight is not yours. It is an instance that serves to warn against the popular error which recommends alliances between forces that “go together part of the way.” Your goal not being ours, ours not being yours, the part of the way we “go together” runs on tracks so divergent that co-operation is excluded. All the same your move is to us a cheering manifestation. It is an evidence that {the} Capitalist Social Order which Socialism is in the field to overthrow is crumbling in one of its main citadels. Its Political Government is

falling into disrepute with its own supporters—and what is more to the point, with those who need its support.

Very truly yours,

EDITOR DAILY PEOPLE.

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

Uploaded August 2010

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