

# The People.

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EDITORIAL

## A WORD WITH MAYOR H.P. FORD OF PITTSBURGH, PA.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**S**ir:—The *Dispatch* of your city publishes the following views, expressed by you, on the occasion of the victory recently won by the employés of the Schoen mills in Allegheny:

“Immediate steps should be taken to wipe out these Socialist organizations which are apparently gaining strength in all parts of the United States,” said Mayor H.P. Ford of Pittsburg, yesterday to a *Dispatch* reporter. “When matters are proceeding along in the usual quiet manner, no one thinks of them or pays attention to them, but when there is a storm brewing, such as that at the Schoen works, along comes a lot of Socialists from Philadelphia and the East to inculcate their doctrines and make trouble.

“During the periods when no one pays any attention to them the Socialists are rapidly and quietly spreading their ideas and strengthening their organizations. They meet at the houses of different members, in groups of 10 or 12, attracting no attention from the police, but steadily increasing in number by their active missionary work among the foreign and native elements to whom their doctrines, uncontradicted, appeal as they would not if openly discussed by well-informed people.

“The time has come to put a stop to this, for it is going to be one of the greatest dangers of this country if not checked. I believe that firm and drastic methods should be used, and that wherever a Socialist meeting is held the leaders of the movement should be promptly arrested. The statute books should be carefully searched for laws under which they can be arrested and punished, and if on investigation it should be found that there are no laws to meet the case, immediate legislation that will fit the case should be enacted.”

Questions of greater pith and moment than those of mere veracity or information are involved in these views. We shall, therefore, pass, without comment, by your statements concerning the methods of meeting and propaganda adopted by Socialists.

It matters, after all, but little whether it is your ignorance or your mendacity that speaks when you refer to the openly held, widely and publicly announced large meetings of the Socialists, called together at regular and frequent intervals in large halls in your city, within a stone's throw, at that, of the Municipal Building, as little secret gatherings "of groups of 10 or 12" that "meet at the houses of different members"; nor is it of much, if any, account whether it is your mendacity that speaks, or your lack of information, when you suppress the fact of the constant challenges issued by Socialists to your fellow capitalist politicians and their pay-masters, the capitalists themselves, to dare debate in public with us the principles we stand for and the indictment we have drawn up against them, and the further fact that Socialism grows thanks to the utter inability of your set to refute the facts and arguments we present. All this can be let go with silent contempt. But there is that in your interview that does deserve careful, close, intense attention.

What is that that you propose to suppress, to take "firm and drastic" measures against? Is it a private affair; is it, per chance, a matter concerning slight, unimportant interests? No; and yet again, no! It is no less a matter than one affecting the civic-political rights of the American people; it is no less a proposition than the daring one of suppressing a POLITICAL PARTY; it is nothing short of a scheme to smash the ballot box, impair the suffrage, thwart the sovereign will of a sovereign nation! Sir, you are preening your feathers for flights of treason; but, remember, however high such flight may be, the gallows tower higher yet above it. Malign, slander and libel the class that feeds, clothes and houses you are your parasitic capitalist pay-masters; to the injury of fleecing this class, add the affront of vilifying it; set loose the triple-headed hyena of your prostituted pressdom, professordom and pulpitedom, and let them in one accord seek to fill full the ears and the minds of their victims with their brew of villainous falsifications, economic and political; keep the political power and economic supremacy while you may by such dastard means,—but keep your hands from the ballot box, together with its necessary approaches: free right of assemblage, free speech and free press!

Sir, you are stepping mighty near the danger line; habituate not your mind to the thoughts of treason; America is not the Philippine Archipelago—as yet; Government here can not exist without the consent of the governed; your class had the lead of the Socialist, and, thanks to that, the governed still tolerate it; but, thanks to Socialist propaganda, light is breaking fast in the heads of the working class: the legs of the economic and political lies, with which you have fettered the workingman's intellect, are wearing off—like all lies' legs do—, and Truth is overtaking them. Organizing and marching along the avenues that lead to the ballot box, the proletariat of America, awake at last to its class duty and class dignity will express, in accents not to be

mistaken, that it withdraws its consent to be longer ruled by a class whose social system is an insult to decency, to manhood, to humanity.

Monkey not with the buzz-saw, Mr. Mayor; the Bourbon slave-holders, the prototypes of your class, heeded not the warning; you know their fate; be, yourself, wiser in time.

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

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