

# DAILY PEOPLE

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ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

## TWO LETTERS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

I.

*The Referendum*

A Revolutionary Socialist Paper.

No Compromise. No Revision.

By E.B. Ford

Faribault, Minn., Dec. 10, 1904.

**T**O the Editor of *The People*:  
My dear Comrade:—

I call you Comrade, because you are a comrade, in this great struggle through which we are now passing in an awful storm and thousands of us mean well and toward the one great end—the Co-operative Commonwealth.

While I am a member of the Socialist party, I do not hate those of the Socialist Labor Party and there are bad men in the Socialist party who are not Socialists and bad men in the S.L.P. who are not Socialists. Socialism is the same, no matter where we find it.

It seems to me it would be better to expose the bad men in both the S.P. and the S.L.P., with their capitalist tactics, and relegate them to the rear, rather than for our party to abuse your party, and for your party to abuse **our** party.

Let's have clear cut, revolutionary Socialism, based on the class struggle, and a workingman's movement, with "labor as the whole" for our end.

Please send me several copies of your national platform, and Corregan's vote.

This letter is not private if you see fit to publish it.

Yours for revolutionary Socialism,

E.B. Ford,

Editor *Referendum*.

## II.

*Daily People* Office  
2-6 New Reade St.  
New York City,  
New York, Dec. 22, 1904.

Mr. E.B. Ford  
Editor *Referendum*  
Faribault, Minn.

Dear Mr. Ford:

No slight is meant if I do not reciprocate with the title of "Comrade". In your party title is applied as a term of friendship. It is not so in the S.L.P. With us the title is more technical. We apply it only to member's of the Party.

It is refreshing to me to see the stand your paper takes in the matter of the importance of the personal agency. In my many years of experience in the movement, one of the most frequent charges I have heard made against myself is my "personal abuse". I have ever looked upon the charge as an echo by fools of words that knaves invent. No principle, however good or bad, can be more than a dead letter unless upheld by man. The mailed glove is innocent until the human hand animates it. He who attacks a wrong must perforce attack the wrongdoer. Any other course is to trifle with Right. I congratulate you on your being unaffected by the counter charge of "personal abuse", on your being determined to pursue the line of policy that you have entered upon in the matter, and upon the decency you have shown in ever substantiating your personal charges against the freaks and knaves with verifiable allegations of fact. Your exposures of your own party men are admirable.

But much as I admire your clearness of sight in the matter of exposing individual wrongdoers, I detect a glaring contradiction, indeed, serious error, in the posture implied by your words that for the S.L.P. to attack your party is to "abuse" it. Is not that holding toward the S.L.P. the same unwarrantable language that is held towards you by the elements in your party whom you so justly castigate? Your posture in this matter leads, however, to something graver than mere contradiction.

It leads to error fraught with evil results. We laugh at the capitalists with their philanthropic schemes. Why is the ridicule justified? Simply because capitalist philanthropy is engaged at the Malapropian fool work of mopping back the ocean. For every waif whom philanthropy relieves, two are bred by capitalism. Capitalist philanthropy's work is love's labor lost. To uphold the institution of capitalism, with its wholesome breeding of pimples, and then to chase the pimples, even if they could all be chased and as fast as they spring up, is a Sisyphus work, that Socialism justly riddles with ridicule. What difference is there between such a posture, and yours with regard to your party? You would like your party to remain "unabused", but favor the "abusing" of the scamps that it produces. Do you not find the latter to spring up faster than they can be chased down and away? Is not your party organization similar to the institution of capitalism in that it is a regular breeder and attractor of such pimples? Your own words prove the fact. You have proved that your national platform is a fly-paper affair; you have proved that the bulk of your national committee men are traitors; you have gone further and claimed that in your late national convention there were only fifty-six Socialists out of one hundred and eighty-eight delegates. Moreover your columns fairly teem with the names of your party members whom you pillory. Does not that tell the tale that the system of your party, like the capitalist system, can be sooner ended than mended? We breed salmon and game to catch them and eat them. But, can it be worthy of a serious man's endeavor to breed scamps for the sport of lambasting them? Or can it be a serious man's posture to find fault with trespassers on the scamp-preserve, while approving of the individual shots at the individual scamps? I wish to think that the point need but to be made in order to be clear to you. An organization that can produce such wrongs and wrongdoers as you have correctly pointed out must be inherently defective. How much superior is not that organization, which, like the Socialist Labor Party, is so constructed that the freak or knave ejects himself, than that organization, which like your party, not only breeds its own quota of freaks and knaves but attracts those we cast off?

Moreover, watch what misleading language your posture leads to. Not a charge that your paper brings against the Wisconsin State platform of the Social Democracy but is true. Your charges are a series of bull's-eye hits. That platform is

a disgrace to Socialism; it is a cross between freakishness and the political chicanery of the get-jobs-quick politician over the backs of the proletariat. And yet what are the flaming headlines that ornament your issue of Nov. 17? “600 Per Cent. Gains for Socialism in Four Years—Debs Beats Parker in Milwaukee—6 Legislators in Wisconsin”. Such a declaration is at fisticuffs with your previous and masterly demonstration that the Wisconsin platform is non- and anti-Socialist. A vote raked together by such means is everything but Socialist. In the measure that the voters were deceived into the belief that such a platform was Socialism, the Cause of Socialism was sinned against. The glorification of a vote gathered by such means as a Socialist vote does not square with the burning denunciation of the means as non- and anti-Socialist. Such are the inconsistencies that flow from misplaced loyalty. Can such inconsistency aid in clarifying the public mind?

I join you in the wish for clear-cut revolutionary Socialism, based on the class struggle, as alone it can be based upon. Seeing such is the single purpose of the Socialist Labor Party, its unflagging effort is to educate and organize the Working Class. Such work is both constructive and destructive. With charity for all, with malice toward none and ever patient with the well meaning laggard, the S.L.P.’s sword is ever out against both Wrong and the intentional doer thereof, whether the same be an individual or an organization. We hold such to be the correct course; I invite you to follow it.

I have forwarded to you the matter that you desire.

Yours truly  
D. DE LEON  
Editor, *The People*.

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