

EDITORIAL

AN OPEN LETTER TO J.P. HEATON.

By DANIEL DE LEON

TO J.P. Heaton
New York.
Dear Sir:

We are astonished not a little at the information conveyed by your circular letter of the 5th of the current month to the effect that, despite all your efforts to get before the public the story of the communication to the White House on the recommendation of your body for the institution of a "Federal Commission on Industrial Relations," the Associated Press effectively stood between you and the public by simply not sending out the story.

We are positively amazed at such conduct on the part of the A.P.

An A.P. that understood the needs of its masters, the Ruling Class, would have hastened to give your story the greatest publicity possible, and otherwise promoted your ends to the best of its abilities.

The reason is simple.

When all the fustian is eliminated on the abstract subject of "Government," its limitations, etc., etc., etc., this fact remains—Government, as at present understood, is a product of social conditions under which the classes are bred and kept up. A long chain of consequences flows therefrom. The following are some of the links in the chain:

1. Political Government, that is Government as at present seen in operation, is a means for the repression of the ruled by the ruling, which means, the exploited by the exploiting class;

2. A further function of Political Government is to operate as a breakwater against the "ill considered" demands of all those into whose soul the cold steel of the Ruler is felt to enter;

3. The breakwater function of Political Government is speedily found by experience to need sub or parallel breakwaters to keep it in working order:

4. The first and most obvious breakwater was the Political Chief. The thing is now called “Executive”;

5. That first breakwater was then supplemented with a second—the Political Chief’s “Council.” The thing is now called the “Legislature”;

6. That second breakwater was later supplemented with a third, to which a variety of names was given, according as its clerical membership predominated at one time, or its lay members predominated at another time. The thing is now called “Judiciary”;

7. That third breakwater was subsequently supplemented with a fourth. The thing is now known as the “Lower House” or the “Second House” of Legislature, the one-time “Council” becoming the “Upper House,” “Senate,” or what not.

8. That fourth breakwater was furthermore supplemented in the course of time with a fifth, the “Mayor’s Veto” over laws passed by the Legislature.

There are a number of other links to the chain of consequences, or supplementary breakwaters. The eight mentioned will do for the nonce.

Seeing that the Political Government is a breakwater against the “ill considered” demands of the masses; seeing that the Political Government is the sieve through which these “ill considered” demands are meant to be strained into “thoughtfully” considered demands, that is, demands that will not interfere with the comfort of the Ruling Class; seeing that wherever there is a Ruling Class there is bound to be an increasingly large Ruled Class; seeing that the increase of the Ruled Class necessitated the strengthening of the original breakwater with more and more assistant breakwaters to break the impact of the swelling waves of “ill considered” demands;—seeing all this, the invention of “Commissions” is an invention to raise one more breakwater against the still surging “ill considered” demands aforementioned.

Hence it is obvious that the A.P. was derelict in its duties. It should help, all in its power, to raise that “Commission” dyke. The Ruling Class needs it badly. The “ill considered” demands aforementioned are swelling to ominous tidal wave proportions.

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