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*From*

**Reform**

*To*

**Bayonets**



BY ARNOLD PETERSEN

PRICE 10¢

## From Reform to Bayonets

By *Arnold Petersen*

The New Deal hegira from Reform to Bayonets shocked, but did not surprise, the S.L.P. It was not "ironical" that a reform President should employ the mailed fist to break labor's resistance; it was logical. This is a revolutionary era and reforms and half-measures inescapably breed reaction. "There is no choice presented—it is either all for the capitalist class, or all for the working class. And since the chief aim and objective of the reformer is to reform capitalism in order to preserve it, it is natural that he should fly to the support of the human embodiment of the capitalist system, namely, the capitalist exploiter."

How the "great Humanitarian" follows the well-worn path of other reformers before him is related in this document. It is more than an indictment of the New Deal; it is an indictment of a social system which can no longer maintain tolerable conditions for the slave within his slavery.

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# From Reform To Bayonets

By

ARNOLD PETERSEN

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*REFORMS WORTHLESS.*

At the present stage of civilization there is possible no reform worth speaking of. . . .

—*Daniel De Leon.*

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I.

Revolution means transmutation, and a revolution is, accordingly, accomplished whenever....an entirely new principle is substituted for what is already in effect. A reform, on the other hand, is effected in case the existing situation is maintained in point of principle, but with a [supposedly] more humane....working out of this principle.—*Ferdinand Lassalle.*

A great deal of useless oratory has been emitted on the supposed efficacy and virtue of reform as a means of righting the wrongs of our age, and more voluminous still has been the chorus of indignation and horror directed at those who have suggested that revolution alone can bring peace, order and equity into this troubled world, with "redress to all mankind." Back of this oratory and these denunciations lies the notion that in the last analysis there is a free and independent choice left us. Nothing could be more fallacious. While man certainly can, and does, influence the course of events, and while he is far from being an utterly helpless creature who mechanically carries on toward supposed predestined ends, the fact remains that in the long run, and, at the last, he is a creature of circumstance. Within certain limits he can move more or less at will, but, given a particular social set-up, he has no choice as to the general direction. He may retard or accelerate tendencies and social trends, but he cannot decree the removal of these tendencies at his pleasure. The reason is obvious: Man makes his own history, but the material of which he makes it is that which he finds immediately at hand. Whatever man dreams or plans

must have its roots in existing reality. The past may inspire him and guide him, but it can do no more; and he can borrow nothing from the future, for to the future everything is contributed. Man, in his greed or ignorance, may even succeed temporarily in putting the social motor in reverse—to strike the road back to the dead, evil past. But once an economic or material fact or factor is established, the ideas born of it can never be destroyed. Destroy every machine invented by man, destroy every outward manifestation of man's progress, yet it would be impossible to destroy the *knowledge*, the images, of these machines and of the progress attained. It is as much beyond the power of man to do this, as it is beyond his power to project social and economic facts and forces arbitrarily.

Reforms naturally imply belief in the usefulness, or indispensability, of the thing to be reformed. A garment may be renovated or repaired over and over again, but the point is eventually reached when the effort and cost of repair exceed the replacement cost of the garment. To continue to repair must eventually, and inevitably, lead to the direct opposite result of that at which the process of repairing was aimed. It ceases to be economical to do so, and the garment is discarded. However, to continue to repair a worn-out garment is no more foolish and wasteful than would be the discarding of the garment while it is still serviceable and worth repairing. To repeat: To continue to "reform" the garment when the stage of "reform" has passed is as fatuous and destructive as would be the premature "revolutionary" act of throwing away a perfectly serviceable and useful garment.

As with a garment, so with social systems and social organizations, except, of course, that the latter involve

questions far more complex, and, as said, infinitely further removed from the arbitrary will and whims of man. Social systems in the past served useful purposes, or they could not have endured so long, assuming, that is, that they could have appeared at all. And, as with earlier social systems, so with the present capitalist system. As in the case of a garment, a social system may develop defects which demand "repairs," i.e., reforms. If the social system, however imperfect, is serving the needs of man better than any other which is possible or conceivable at the time, common sense dictates that its curable defects be reformed. Necessity and enlightened self-interest generally operate toward effecting the indicated reforms, though there may be some who (through ignorance or unenlightened selfishness) would oppose reforms. But when experience, and the obvious facts in the case, prove that reforms no longer operate to produce the desired results, the advocacy of reforms, and the attempts made to keep alive artificially that which should be allowed to die a natural death, become foolish and eventually socially criminal. Those who seek to prevent the inevitable, or at any rate the socially needed change, constitute the undesirable and reactionary element in society, whereas those who seek to further the revolution—i.e., the substitution of a new and sound principle for the diametrically opposed prevailing unsound principle—represent the useful, the desirable element. At least, a truly sane, a genuinely rational society, would so appraise them. But in a society where private property interests dominate, and where classes contend for supremacy, the verdict is quite different. In such a society (the present capitalist society, for instance) those who would retain the worn-out social "garment," at a tremendous cost to humanity, be-

come the "pillars of society," the patriots; and those who would cast away the worn-out "rags" (to use Mark Twain's phrase<sup>1</sup>) are denounced as enemies of society, as "subversive elements," and with similar false nonsense. Those who consciously, and out of selfish class interests, oppose the change which so greatly would benefit society as a whole are generally rewarded as if they were really the benefactors of mankind, seeing that they enjoy prestige and wealth, whereas the real benefactors of society and the true friends of mankind, are reviled and generally suffer penury and persecution.

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<sup>1</sup>"My kind of loyalty was loyalty to one's country, not to its institutions or its office-holders. The country is the real thing, the substantial thing, the eternal thing; it is the thing to watch over, and care for, and be loyal to; institutions are extraneous, they are its mere clothing and clothing can wear out, become ragged, cease to be comfortable, cease to protect the body from winter, disease, and death. To be loyal to rags, to shout for rags, to worship rags, to die for rags—that is a loyalty of unreason, it is pure animal; it belongs to monarchy, was invented by monarchy; let monarchy keep it."—*Mark Twain.*

2.

Where a social revolution is pending and, for whatever reason, is not accomplished, reaction is the alternative.—*Daniel De Leon.*

Someone may say: Granted that all this is true, how do we know that this *is* the hour of revolution? How do we know that reforms are no longer possible or desirable? We know this, first, because it is capable of scientific demonstration. We also know it for the same reason that a tree is known by its fruit. Society is an organism, and it reacts to artificial promptings, or artificial restraints, as do all organisms. Human society is a living thing, a growing thing. Its roots are in the sub-soil of the past, its topmost branches straining toward the sky of the future. Social systems are born, grow and mature, and eventually decay. During the ethnic period when class has contended against class; when private property rights for the few at the expense of the many have prevailed; and where slavery in one form or another has existed, social systems have come and gone. The system typified in the ancient Roman empire came into existence out of the dim past. As it grew in size and power, it scattered its seeds over the then known world. Its mission had been to pull society out of the morass of equality in poverty and ignorance. A vast slave class was the basis of this society—a slave class which made it possible for the few to enjoy the leisure and freedom of action which enabled them to acquire learning, to develop culture, and to insure the spreading of this civilization far and wide. The means

often were cruel, the cost in human life and happiness terrible, but the cost was necessary in order to make it possible for man to emerge out of the near-animal stage, and rise above the level of brute existence. But the Roman slave system naturally ceased to serve a useful purpose in the measure it achieved its mission—and only a few, of course, were even dimly conscious of the nature of this mission, however well its ends were served. In due time corruption set in, and, though noble and well-meaning men arose to reform the Roman system (notably the famous Gracchi brothers who perished in the attempt), it was all in vain, and eventually the empire fell into utter decay and collapsed.

Out of the ruins and chaos emerged the feudal system. Its mission was to bring order out of chaos, to safeguard what cultural conquests had been made against the threatening barbaric hordes of the east and the north, and generally to raise the standards of life and to introduce greater security, greater stability to the end of insuring a continued upward development—a steady progress in education, in the arts, and general culture, all of which rested on a growing and steadily expanding commerce, with its accompaniments of settled communities, and the opening up of the rest of the world.

Feudalism, too, went through the successive stages of lusty youth, maturity, corruption and final and utter decay and collapse. The process of decay was slow, and, as in the case of the Roman empire, those who benefited by the social system—the princes, the nobles and the ruling class generally—resisted any attempt to change things socially for the better, with the result that corruption increased, and matters grew from bad to worse. The typical example of this process is found in

the case of France. There were men in 18th Century France who realized that an explosion was due unless something were done. They did not realize, however, that Feudalism—specifically the monarchy—was done for, and that the way of progress inescapably lay over the ruins of the monarchy, and the feudal structure generally. And so these would-be reformers of feudalism, through their attempts to maintain the monarchy—that is, by their attempted reforms of the feudal system—merely postponed the inevitable, thereby aggravating the situation; and, far from preventing the foreshadowed revolution, they merely rendered inevitable that this revolution should become bloody and violent. We know this violent and bloody revolution now by the designation of the Great French Revolution. The American Revolution of 1776, and the British Revolution of 1688, were essentially of the same character as the French Revolution, but quite different in form and manifestation. The reasons for this lie beyond the scope of this article. But the things to remember are these: The system had reached the end of its normal development. It could not continue to grow within the existing legal restrictions and property relations, and the ruling class that had become useless refused to yield to, or share power with, the new important class in society, the bourgeoisie, or, as we say today, the capitalist class. Conciliation was attempted, as were compromises, and special “reforms” were agitated. But in the end revolution was called in to cut the Gordian knot. And so, eventually, a new system was born, the system we call capitalism, or, as its current beneficiaries and apologists like to call it, “the system of free enterprise.” How free it is today, we shall soon discover.

The capitalist system, like its predecessors, went

through the familiar stages of growth—lusty youth, maturity and ripe age, and is now in the last stages of decay and corruption. The specific mission<sup>1</sup> of capitalism (successfully carried out) has been twofold: To organize and coordinate production on a basis and scale insuring forever the elimination of want, and the fear of want, in society; and, further, to train, to organize co-operatively, and to coordinate functionally, the working class, the class destined to supplant all other classes, by so doing bringing into existence the free, classless Socialist society wherein, to paraphrase the old Greek philosopher, there will be need for neither servants nor slaves, nor room for masters and “bosses.” Scarcity, inability to produce things in quantities, rendered slavery and poverty necessary for the many, lest all society remain in the rut of universal poverty, ignorance and social stagnation. Capitalism’s gift to mankind has been to make possible mass production, insuring a basis for universal well-being and prosperity, with freedom for all.

<sup>1</sup>The use of the word “mission” is, as already indicated, not to be construed as implying the foreordained or predestined.

3.

Every reform granted by capitalism is a concealed measure of reaction.—*Daniel De Leon.*

“By their fruits ye shall know them.” So sayeth St. Matthew. And the fruit which capitalism is yielding now demonstrates it to be an intolerable evil, a menace to man and all that he has achieved through his age-long climb out of the abyss of the past. Do not tell us what great things have been accomplished by capitalism, how marvelously it has wrought for us; nor ask us where we would be but for capitalism. We grant all the things claimed for capitalism in the past; we know it has wrought wonders, and we know that but for capitalism we should still be grovelling in the dust before idle aristocrats and insolent feudal autocrats. But the capitalism which we witness now is no more capitalism the creator, capitalism the organizer, than a senile, decrepit and feeble-minded octogenarian is the same man he was at youth and maturity. Capitalism has long since reached the stage where it should be utterly destroyed, to make room for its successor, Socialism. Its persistent lingering on the stage of history is producing all the familiar symptoms of decay and corruption. First, starvation in the midst of plenty; unemployment and idle machinery, men and machines forcibly kept apart, yet with a great and tragic need confronting us of the good and useful things that could be produced by bringing idle men and idle machines together. Further, crime, corruption and all the social vices known to man

in the past, and many he (lucky fellow!) never knew; and finally the mad slaughter called war—the insane, purposeless, cruel destruction of millions of human lives, the systematized destruction of wealth, the wanton waste of the fruits of man's ingenuity and painful labor. All this, and more, are the convulsions of a body stricken with incurable diseases and racked with consuming fevers. And yet, there are those who would reform this social system in the expectation of saving and preserving it. Among the outstanding reformers of capitalism in this country stands Franklin D. Roosevelt, President of these United States—united, that is, in theory, but divided in fact. Divided into classes—the capitalist class and the working class; divided in interests, socially and economically; divided functionally, the capitalists merely owning wealth, and the means of producing wealth, the working class (the overwhelming majority) producing all the social wealth, yet owning nothing, or nothing really worth owning.

And this is the society which its comparatively few beneficiaries wish to reform—to reform so that it might, as after a short time it surely would, once again plunge mankind into the same nameless horror—this is the social system (or, rather anti-social system!) to whose beneficiaries Mr. Roosevelt said a few years ago: "Reform if you would preserve [capitalism]"! One asks: How much additional proof must be submitted to satisfy these gentlemen that neither capitalism nor its parasitical beneficiaries are capable of being reformed, even if it were desirable to reform them? We know now that not only will efforts prove vain, but they will prove disastrous. We know now that reforms which it is attempted to force on a sick and dying body can result only in aggravating the evils besetting us.

Reforms which fail of their object—as fail they fatedly must—create disillusionment, first in those whom they are supposed to benefit, and secondly in those who dispense reforms. Wherever reforms of a generally anti-plutocratic nature have been effected, the blackest reaction reigns. An outstanding example today is the state of Wisconsin, reform-ridden by the elder La Follette and the bogus "Socialist party." Wisconsin, and particularly the city of Milwaukee, rank foremost today as reactionary, labor-hating communities, with an ignorant, dull-witted obscurantist for governor. And hand in hand with disillusionment of the mass, and the rise of the "man on horseback," go violence—sometimes violence by the disillusioned and bitterly disappointed mass, but more often by the ruthless dictator—petty or otherwise—who usually is himself a disillusioned reformer, a disappointed Stalinist or Social Democrat, or a bankrupt Liberal. And we may well say that just as reforms in our day are concealed measures of reaction, so reformers are potential reactionary despots, dealing out violence to those for whose welfare their hearts once bled so profusely! From reform to bayonets, that is the formula, the latter the nearly always inescapable result of the former.

Proof of this abounds on every hand at this period of extreme capitalist reaction. One of the recent, and most convincing and impressive, proofs is that supplied through the crushing, by federal troops, of the strike at the North American Aviation Company at Inglewood, California. The facts concerning the strike and the questions involved are now generally known. The men demanded that the minimum wage of 50 cents per hour be increased to 75 cents per hour, and that all employees receive a blanket increase of 10 cents an hour.



The company had been given defense orders amounting to \$200,000,000, hence huge profits were assured. Under any circumstances the demands of the workers were modest—almost humiliatingly so. Yet, a howl was set up by the jackal press, obviously inspired by the corporation whose president, Jas. H. Kindelberger, sneeringly said (according to a report by the New York newspaper *PM*, June 10, 1941) that “he felt 50 cents was enough for those young punks who would only buy gas to run around in their jalopies and take their girl friends out over the weekend.”

The insolence of this labor-exploiter places the dispute in proper perspective. The parasite Kindelberger thinks 50 cents per hour sufficient for competent workers, and he reviles these useful workers by calling them “young punks.” President Roosevelt and his administration has been praised for its alleged “pro-labor” stand. Here, then, would seem to be presented a glorious opportunity for that great Democrat, the labor-loving Mr. Roosevelt, to step in and say something like this: “Here, that will do, Kindelberger. You are in America, and not in Nazi Germany. A minimum wage of 75 cents per hour is low enough in all conscience. Grant the demands of your workers, or else.” But did the Great Reformer, the “most pro-labor President in American history” (to quote Mr. Arthur Krock of the *New York Times*, June 11, 1941)—did the Great Humanitarian do this? He did not. But his Secretary of War, Mr. Stimson, issued a statement in which the plutocratic exploiter, Kindelberger, was warmly praised (*PM* editorial, June 10, 1941). And when the workers stood firm, refusing to toil for less than 75 cents per hour, labor’s great friend in the White House sent his strong-arm squad, the United States Army, to compel

the workers to accept the terms of their exploiters. Logic, and that great love for labor, should naturally have prompted Mr. Roosevelt to have removed Kindelberger and his gang from their posts of authority, perhaps jailed them, or possibly used them for bayonet-drilling purposes. But no, the Great Reformer sent the army, of which he is commander-in-chief, which arrived at the scene of conflict, the troops being, wrote the *New York Times* reporter, “in full marching equipment, steel helmets in place, rifles loaded and bayonets fixed.” The *Times* reporter adds that the troops “were not smiling.” No, the troops “were not smiling”—they were there on grim and possibly bloody business. War had been declared—violent class war had broken out between the plutocratic exploiters and their wage slaves, with the army, the government and the jackal press lined up on the side of the exploiters of the aviation corporation. And there *was* bloody business. A picket captain with quaint notions about the right of freemen to strike, to take all legitimate steps to insure a successful strike—this naive citizen whose vote is said to count as much as the President’s—did not move fast enough to suit one of Mr. Roosevelt’s storm troopers, who therefore bayoneted this striking worker. And all this by order of the Great Humanitarian, the incomparable reformer, the labor-loving occupant of the White House. “From reform to bayonets”—there we have it.

Arthur Krock wrote in the *New York Times* that “It is ironical that the most pro-labor President in American history should have been forced to such measures. . . .” (*New York Times*, June 11, 1941.) Mr. Krock errs—it is not ironical, it is logical that Mr. Roosevelt should have done what he did. For, once again, reforms in a revolutionary period inescapably

breed reaction, and the reformer under ruling class pressure, or in rushing to the defense of the capitalist system, discards the velvet glove of benevolence, revealing underneath the mailed fist of despotism—economic despotism. In a grave crisis produced by capitalism, there is no room for half measures or compromises. There is no choice presented—it is either all for the capitalist class, or all for the working class. And since the chief aim and objective of the reformer is to reform capitalism in order to preserve it, it is natural that he should fly to the support of the human embodiment of the capitalist system, namely, the capitalist exploiter.

From "Reform to Bayonets"—*quod erat demonstrandum*. The proof is established!

There are a thousand hacking at the branches of evil to one who is striking at the root.—Henry D. Thoreau.

The Inglewood strike is, of course, neither the first of its kind, nor is it likely to remain the last. All over the country strikes are taking place, and with few exceptions the cause has been the same—the natural desire, as well as the desperate need, on the part of the workers to secure a larger share of the immense wealth produced by labor alone. Prodded, on the one hand, by rising living costs, and, on the other, by the spectacle of huge profits being pocketed by the parasitical exploiters, and with vivid memories of the many lean years that preceded the present "boom," nothing could be more natural than that strikes should take place. The attitude of the exploiters, of their spokesmen, of the government and allies, including the contemptible labor fakers, reduces to mockery the boast that this is truly a democracy. Yet, facts have been published proving the complete justification for the demands of the workers even from the viewpoint of the capitalist reformer. The President himself (weeks after the bayoneting of the Inglewood workers) made this significant admission in his message of July 30, 1941, on price control plans:

"Increases in the workers' cost of living, on the one hand, and *excessive* profits for the manufacturer, on the other, lead to spiraling demands for higher wages. *This means friction between employer and employed.*" (Italics mine.)

And yet, in that same message, the President lectures the workers on the need of exercising restraint in demanding wage increases. "Labor," he said, "has far more to gain from price stability than from abnormal wage increases." (!! ) And again he said in that message: "But labor as a whole will fare best from a labor policy [!] which recognizes that wages in the defense industries should not substantially exceed the prevailing wage rates in comparable non-defense industries where fair [!] labor policies have been maintained." One wonders what that labor policy may be. With his annual salary of \$75,000, it is scarcely likely that Mr. Roosevelt has had to operate under a "labor policy" which presumably regulates wages! Nor is it to be assumed that the President's personal experience supplies him with a guide, or a proper norm! Reflecting on the President's salary, and the lecturing he so thoughtfully and unctuously administers to the workers, one irresistibly is reminded of an observation by his immortal predecessor, Abraham Lincoln. Said Lincoln:

"An honest laborer digs coal at about seventy cents a day, while the President digs abstractions at about seventy dollars a day. The coal is clearly worth more than the abstractions, and yet what a monstrous inequality in the prices."

Well said, honest old Abe—but will your successor see the point?

Throughout all the contentions, pleadings and the cajoleries of the politicians and the editorial apologists for capitalist interests, there are sounded two distinct notes: One says that, although the supply and demand give labor the upper hand (temporarily, and so long

as bayonets are not jabbed into the quivering flesh of the worker), the workers must not take advantage of the favorable "labor market." (Note that—the "labor market," where labor is bought and sold, as cattle are bought and sold in the cattle market.) Yet, in hard times, when the worker is a drug in the market, he is told that it is just too bad, but—the "law of supply and demand," you know! Indeed, it was no less a Prince of Finance than the late John Pierpont Morgan who gave classical expression to this typical attitude of exploiterdom. When asked in 1914 by a government committee—

"Do you consider ten dollars a week enough for a longshoreman with a family to support?"—John P. ("Corsair") Morgan answered:

"If that's all he can get, and he takes it, I should say it's enough."!!

The other note says that, since increased wages mean higher prices (which in fact they do not), it is really foolish for the workers to ask for higher wages. Just a case of biting off your nose to spite your face, you see! The President himself leads off with the false claim that high wages cause high prices, although this crude notion has been exploded again and again. In his message on inflation Mr. Roosevelt said:

"Of course there cannot be price stability if labor costs rise abnormally."

The *New York Times* (May 17, 1941) editorially whines about "the spiral of wages," concluding on this note:

"Where will this process [wage demands] lead to? Will it lead to a spiral of wage advances that

either bring about an upward spiral in the cost of living, or reduce private margins to the point where private industry cannot function?"

As in the nature of things it cannot be the former, let us console ourselves with the thought that the latter may be the answer!

As said, the theory that increased wages cause increased prices has been exploded again and again. It is absurdly false, as an investigation of the history of prices and wages abundantly reveals. And when the capitalist apologist does not happen to be howling against strikes, and denouncing the workers' demands for higher wages, he (the capitalist spokesman) frankly states the facts and tells the truth. In view of the claim of the *New York Times*, just quoted, it is of interest to recall that that plutocratic paper, during the two or three years that preceded the starting of the *first* world war, devoted columns upon columns to lengthy and detailed articles establishing conclusively that high wages did *not* result in high prices. But let us take a couple of recent capitalist depositions to that effect. In the July issue of the monthly bulletin published by the huge National City Bank of New York (surely not a pro-labor journal!) we find the following:

"...In every industry we see signs of vigorous competition *which has steadily reduced prices and raised the quality of the products—and all in the face of the great advances in wages paid to workers and reduction in working hours.*"

Could anything be more specific or to the point?

Let us now turn to the *New York Times* of Au-

gust 3, 1941. In the financial section one of the financial experts writes:

"Earnings of the steel industry before providing Federal income and excess-profit taxes and reserves for other contingencies in the second quarter of 1941 were 18.7 per cent higher than in the first quarter, *despite an increase of 10 cents an hour in wages on April 1, which lifted the average pay about 11 per cent over the first quarter.*"

This last proof should particularly console the *Times* in its grave concern for the poor "private enterpriser," allegedly being driven into bankruptcy as a result of having to pay higher wages! The simple fact is that the increased productivity of labor enables the capitalist to pay higher wages (if he *must* do so, and he will assuredly not do so unless compelled), at the same time stimulating the tendency toward lower prices which, normally, result from the lower value of commodities brought about by the increased productivity of labor.

The law of capitalism decrees, and all the politicians, editorial writers, and their capitalist masters agree, that the workers should be paid merely a living wage. It was the Great Reformer himself, Mr. Roosevelt, who phrased this ideal in alluring terms when, at Block Island, R.I., on September 4, 1937, he said:

"There has been, and continues to be, urgent need to insure all able-bodied working men and women a living wage for a fair day's work. I repeat what I said in my message to the workers of the United States last year: 'The wage-earners of America do not ask for more. They will not be satisfied with less.'"

In other words, the worker is to receive just enough food, shelter and clothing—no more and no less—to maintain himself and to reproduce his kind. That is the grand endeavor and noble ideal of the labor-loving reformer—that is the very crown of labor's emancipation! A living wage? Why, the horse gets a "living wage," no more and no less! Come to think of it, a living wage is the slave's "wage"! It was another of Mr. Roosevelt's predecessors in the White House who correctly defined a "living wage" as the slave's pittance. John Adams, second President of the United States (happily ignorant of the fact that the thing he condemned would be warmly praised by the thirty-second President of the United States), said:

"When the workers are paid in return for their labor only as much money as will buy the necessaries of life, their condition is identical with that of the slave."

Thus we see that the prospect held up before the worker is the prospect of a contented slave's existence. This is what the reformers promise the worker—this is the happy lot they award him! From reform to bayonets—from reform to stark reaction, to intensified slavery! And when we look across the sea to Nazi Germany we witness, in a mirror, as it were, the picture of the stage toward which the reaction is straining. For Nazi Germany (which is capitalism gone to seed) presents the picture of a working class in economic serfdom, in a feudo-industrial state, resting on bayonets. And it is well to recall that no country in the world was one-half so reform-ridden as was pre-Nazi Germany. The German Social Democrats experimented with reforms on the German workers, as a scientist experiments with rats and guinea pigs in his laboratory! On

their reform planks they rose to power—and instantly turned bayonets against the German workers as the Roosevelt-commanded army turned bayonets against the workers in California on June 9, 1941. But for the Social Democratic reform madness, a Hitler might never have arisen in Germany. Or, if he had arisen, a thoroughly informed working class, organized on correct lines, with the Socialist revolution as its clearly outlined goal, and means and methods adopted in keeping with that goal—such a working class would have disposed of the mountebank and madman in short order, together with the reactionary interests behind him. In a stronger, in a more terribly real sense, Nazi Germany today stands as the living proof that reform in a revolutionary age inescapably leads to the rule of the bayonet. For—

*"Where a social revolution is pending, and, for whatever reason, is not accomplished, reaction is the alternative."*

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The great lesson to be learned by the working class is that reforms are the steps which fatedly lead to absolute serfdom. Hence, that the reformer—whether politician, "labor leader," or cleric—must be shunned by labor, as one would shun the very pestilence! The workers, accordingly, must discard the banner of reform which on one side bears the legend "A fair day's wage," while the other side portrays a working class, reform-doped, dragooned, and held in complete subjection by bayonets. Instead, the workers should, and surely will, in the words of Karl Marx, "inscribe on their banner the revolutionary watchword, 'Abolition of the wage system.'" Socialist Industrial Unionism,

and civilized, political action, based on the principles and program of the Socialist Labor Party, proclaim at once the goal and the means to reach the goal. Remembering that reform eventually must lead to bayonets, let our motto be:

Away with reforms and reformers! Away with bayonets and the rule of bayonets and machine guns!

Forward, now and forever, the Socialist Industrial Republic of Enlightened, Affluent and Free Labor!

*(The End.)*

## Demands "Immediate" and "Constant"

By Daniel De Leon

Does it not follow that the political party will and must have an immediate demand platform? No, it does not follow.

The reasoning that until the "constant" demands of labor, the maintenance of capitalism, is attained, "immediate" demands should not appear on the platform of the true political party of labor proceeds from a confusion of the term "immediate" as used in the two instances.

*FROM REFORM TO GALLOWS.*

Revolutions triumphed, whenever they did triumph, by asserting themselves and marching straight upon their goal. On the other hand, the fate of Wat Tyler ever is the fate of reform. The rebels, in this instance, were weak enough to allow themselves to be wheedled into placing their movement into the hands of Richard II, who promised "relief"—and brought it by marching the men to the gallows.

—Daniel De Leon.

[This brilliant editorial by Daniel De Leon, the great American Socialist scholar, published first in the *Daily People*, August 2, 1913, definitely and authoritatively lays down the position of the revolutionary Socialist movement with respect to reforms and so-called immediate demands. A careful distinction is made by De Leon between immediate demands of a political party, and the demands for increased wages, etc., instinctively and naturally made on the economic field by the workers, through their unions.]

A correspondent argues that—

Whereas, the true political party of the workers must come through the workers, organized on the industrial field; and

Whereas, a political party so organized will reflect in its political platform the demands made on the industrial field; and

Whereas, before the final overthrow of capitalism, which is the constant demand, there will be more immediate demands—shorter hours, higher wages, better conditions, etc., etc.—

Does it not follow that this political party will and must have an immediate demand platform? No, it does not follow.

The reasoning that, until the "constant" demand of labor, the overthrow of capitalism, is attained, "immediate" demands are bound to appear on the platform of the true political party of labor proceeds from a confusion of the term "demand" as used in the two instances.

The overthrow of capitalism—that is a DEMAND—it is THE demand—it belongs in the platform of a true political party of labor.

Shorter hours—10 instead of 12, or 8 instead of 10—when really and ultimately the hours will be nearer to 3 than to 8; higher wages, which mean less exploitation, when really and ultimately wageism is to be abolished; a minimum of sanitary ventilation in factories, when really and ultimately the factory is to cease being a hole and is to become a parlor; these and the like are not “demands.” They are intermediary stepping stones, to be discarded as soon as possible in the onward march. They have no place in the platform.

This is not an instance of a “distinction without a difference,” or of “splitting of hairs,” or of “substituting a different word for the same thing,” a process which, in fact, changes nothing. It is a difference that goes to the root of things.

The test between “demands” and “non-demands,” however desirable the latter may be, is that the latter are included in the former, as a matter of course. This feature of desirable, but temporary, steps places them under the category, in point of principle and of tactics, distinct from the category of “demands.”

An army that takes the field against a city has that city for its “demand.” The setting up of tents, digging of trenches, providing for sanitation, etc., etc.—these are not “demands.” These are means toward the “demand”; and these means will vary according to circumstances, hence, need not be enumerated.

The “demand” is ONE—it is the proclamation of the goal. The so-called “immediate” demands are legion. The specification of them, or of any of them, is superfluous.

The importance of the distinction lies in its practical bearing.

The moment things that are not in the nature of a “demand,” because they are not the goal, are raised to the dignity of a “demand,” they are apt to be, and generally are, confused with the goal itself. A political party that sets up “immediate” demands by so much blurs its “constant” demand, or goal. The presence of “immediate” demands in a Socialist platform reveals pure and simple politicianism—corruption, or the invitation to corruption.

Only the economic organization may and must reach out after crumbs—“improved conditions”—on its way to emancipation. The very nature of the organization preserves it from the danger of “resting satisfied,” of accepting “improvement” for “goal.” The economic organization is forced by economic laws to realize it can preserve no “improvement” unless it marches onward to emancipation.

Otherwise with the political organization. It must be “whole hog or none.” The very nature of its existence—itsself only a path-clearer for the economic organization, and only a temporary means—renders the political organization prone to “rest satisfied” with incidentals and “improvements.”

There is no danger of the true political party of Socialism, that is, the party that flows from class-conscious unions, dragging behind it the navel-string of “immediate demands”—as well imagine a Declaration of Independence with “immediate demands.”



**REFORM MEANS  
DISINTEGRATION.**

The reformers carry the poison of disintegration that breaks them up into twos and ones, and thus deprives them in the end of all power for mischief; while the power of the revolutionist to accomplish results grows with the gathering strength that its posture insures to him.

—Daniel De Leon.

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