

Capitalism Is Doomed

Socialism Is the Hope of Humanity

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Preface

A reprinting of this pamphlet having been called for, a few words on events following the national election in 1952 seem in order. On page 20 this observation is made:

“By all present indications we shall probably have for President one who has been a militarist all his life, and who is completely dedicated to the feudo-plutocratic creed.”

Eisenhower *was* elected, and we may now add to the above observation: “and one who is unhesitatingly compliant as regards the wishes and interests of the plutocracy.”

As the present writer stated in a public address delivered in New York City, December 14, 1952:

“The Eisenhower Administration is undisguisedly plutocratic — it is so to a degree that leaves no conclusion possible other than that a master plan is being followed, and that in following this plan the schemers and conspirators are manifesting their supreme contempt for the mass of the people, specifically the working class. The DuPont-General Motors interests are virtually taking over the government on the Potomac. A Wisconsin newspaper depicts the White House adorned with a flag atop, inscribed with the legend: ‘Gen. Motors’! And editorially it commented: ‘We now have General Eisenhower in the White House and General Motors in the Cabinet. We can look forward to General Electric and General Mills finding their spots in the government, after which will come all the other generals who joined up in the Eisenhower crusade.’ One general that will probably soon be missing will be general election!”

Since the Eisenhower Administration took over in January, 1953, the general world situation has greatly deteriorated. While the actual fighting in Korea has ceased, the outlook for world peace has become still less promising. The capitalist system in this respect is like a worn-out automobile tire: patch it in one place and it will wear through in another!

If peace of a sort does come, the biggest of all headaches will confront the rulers of the world, viz., shrinking world markets in the face of an ever increased productive capacity. This spells mass-unemployment with no “cure” for it but

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another world war. And World War III will be an atomic war, with the hydrogen bomb undoubtedly being used by the two world imperialist powers, Western capitalism and Stalinist despotism, bringing death to millions and possible destruction of the race and all civilized life.

There is but one solution to the problem created by the doomed capitalist system:

SOCIALISM, the regenerator of civilization, and the only hope of humanity.

ARNOLD PETERSEN

November, 1953

I. Significance of the Present Crisis

The streams of time have cast on history's shores many a social wreck, and many an unfulfilled dream. As we look back into the past we seem to see, as if reflected in a mirror, the same visions, the same struggles, and the same blasted hopes that have become almost the commonplaces of today. The superficial observer, perceiving the seemingly repetitive events of our times, may perhaps ask himself: What is the use of these struggles which, again and again, in the past, have met with inglorious defeat? But the seeming repetitions, the apparent sameness, are deceptive — the similarity lies in appearance only. While the relatively quiet past may have its echoes in our stormy present, these are, in fact, but the faint echoes of steps on an ascending stairway. And futile as the taking of these steps may have seemed at each particular point, in so far as immediate gains for the great masses were concerned, they were none the less necessary steps, for without them we should certainly not be where we are today.

We have reached that period in social evolution where the cumulative effects of the past threaten to overwhelm the present. The turmoil and confusion of today, and men's reaction to them, may resemble somewhat those of previous crises in history, and to the extent that they do so we may profit by the lessons imparted. But we shall be greatly deceived if we allow these superficial likenesses to blind us to the fact that we are now facing entirely new social phenomena. Marx underscored this fact when in his oft-quoted, celebrated phrase (paraphrasing Hegel) he observed that all historic facts and personages occur twice, once as tragedy, and again as farce. In the sense implied here, farce obviously means a distortion of that which it suggests, or superficially resembles. Hence, it is not the same, it is not an exact repetition.

The resemblance, however, is there, and some parallels between the present and the past do present themselves. These may be usefully applied to our present problems if we do not forget that they are merely patterns, to be enlarged and diversified, and that under similar stress and strain class interests and human nature will assert themselves similarly. The similarity of present to past social crises lies in the fact that once again mankind has reached a terminal in the progressive march of civilization. The present social crisis presents not merely the unsolved problems produced by the development of capitalism, of which it is the

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direct climax, but also all the unsolved problems of previous historic periods and crises, even as it presents us with the cumulative achievements of the past — achievements that were never lost, but were carried over and into the main stream of social evolution.

What is coming to a close with the collapse of capitalism is, then, not merely a particular social system, but a whole ethnic period which began with the collapsing ancient communal society. The foreshadowed society of Socialism will become the entrance-portals leading into that new ethnic period which will witness, as did ancient communism, mankind's enjoyment of true and unfettered liberty and unqualified universal fraternity, and in which the only "struggle" will be the clashing of ideas, with a resultant spiritual enrichment of the race. It is this fact — the fact that a whole ethnic period is coming to an end, and not just the termination of one more class-ridden society — that renders inadequate all theories and explanations based on seeming parallels and superficial resemblances between the present and the past social crises.

II. Parallels Between the Present and French Revolution

However, aside from the larger implications, it is undeniably true that the present period has produced, and is producing, the same or similar manifestations as any other society in decay and on the brink of collapse. There is the same concentration of wealth and power in the hands of the few that occurred during the decline of the Roman Empire and the dissolution of the French monarchy. There is the same or a similar lapse in public and private morality, the same increase in crime and unbridled corruption, the same disregard for the welfare and happiness of the individual, despite hypocritical claims and pretenses to the contrary; there is the same mass discontent and ruling-class arrogance; and there are fears and superstitions similar to those manifested during the two previous great social upheavals and (to a lesser extent) during the flowering and decay of the Renaissance. These social disorders and manifestations of decay do testify to the rapid decline of capitalism, and point to its early and complete disintegration and inescapable doom, a doom from which not all the powers and resources of a decadent and socially criminal ruling class can save it.

The period preceding the French Revolution (being nearest to our times) offers

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many such striking and interesting parallels. As De Leon observed: “The French Revolution is an inexhaustible quarry.” The French monarchy had become as utterly corrupt as it was socially useless, even as capitalism and the capitalist class have today. The nobility and the clergy, performing no useful functions, had become thoroughly rotten, steeped in filth and decay. And when a ruling class (as, for instance, our present capitalist class) has grown useless and corrupt, its doom is decreed and is as certain as the dropping of dead leaves from trees in autumn. The degree of corruption and the scandals of the French monarchy are challenged by the similar corruption and scandals now issuing out of Washington and other capitalist citadels, and which will continue to issue forth, no matter which political party is in power. There was in France, in the dithyrambic language of Carlyle, nothing “but starvation, falsehood, corruption and the clam of death.” The workers of today face ‘Similar falsehoods and corruption, and if in this country they are not all actually starving at the moment, it is because of no inherent virtue of capitalism, but rather because of its ultimate vice, war — *its* “clam of death.”

As now, so then, apprehensive members of the ruling class sought to reform their decaying society — their rotten monarchy and the disintegrating feudal system of which it was the heart and symbol. “Reform if you would survive,” cried Mirabeau to the corrupt nobles and clergy! “Reform if you would survive,” Franklin Roosevelt pleaded with the idle capitalist class! But putting new clothes on a dying body does not save that body from impending early death.

In other respects one finds striking parallels between the crises of 1789 and 1952 — with obvious qualifications in respect to social trends and institutions. Then, as now, powerful vested interests oppressed and exploited the mass of the people, though the present ruling class has acquired a somewhat improved technique for camouflaging the fleecing process. In most respects the opposition to the popular demands of 1789 was naked and brutal. With cunning born of experience, today’s ruling class is able to frustrate such demands by making it appear that it is really doing something beneficial for the masses — with countless thousands of workers actually believing so! Then, as now, the ruling class (through supposed “friends of the people”) conducted an effective propaganda, a propaganda of slander and falsehoods comparable to the slanders and falsehoods to which Socialism and Socialists (from Marx and De Leon down to the lowliest Socialist agitator) are subjected today. Then, as now, the mass of the people seemed

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apathetic and submissive, and some of those in the front lines in the battle for freedom became apprehensive and at times even discouraged at this seeming mass apathy, even as happens today. Indeed, this apparent mass apathy on the eve of a great social crisis is characteristic of all such periods in history, as are the doubts and pessimism of some of the thoughtful and leading elements in the forward looking movements. The classic example is that of Ralph Waldo Emerson, one of the wisest Americans. In 1859 he wrote: “No man living will see the end of slavery.” Six years later chattel slavery had been ended in this country.

Betrayals of the revolutionary cause (by its supposed supporters as well as by agents of the old order) were common in 1789, as they are today. The Norman Thomas and Zig-Zag Foster counterparts were everywhere, sowing confusion, suspicion and discord. Just as today a venal press, an Ultramontane clique, and powerful combinations of industrialists spend money like water — or cajole, threaten and bribe — in order to corrupt the mass — mind and blind the workers to their true class interests, so in 1789 in France the nobility, the clergy and the financial bourgeoisie cajoled, threatened, bribed and corrupted in order to maintain their power, class privileges and wealth. A historian of the French Revolution wrote:

“In all these towns the anti-revolutionists joined hands. The rich had a thousand means — which the generality of the patriots, the revolutionists, did not possess — of moving about, of corresponding by means of special messengers, of hiding in chateaux, and of accumulating arms in them. The patriots no doubt corresponded with the Popular societies and the Paris Fraternities, with the Societies of the Indigent, as well as with the mother society of the Jacobins; but they were poor!”

It is not difficult to visualize what the Situation would have been if the movies and radio had been in use then! In the experience of the S.L.P. today we have the answer!

III. The “Man on Horseback” Lurks In the Background

Then as now the distribution of pamphlets, and leaflets was an important means of reaching the people. Even in this country pamphleteering had become a commonplace, with Tom Paine as the outstanding pamphleteer. Our French Revolution historian wrote:

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“Paris was devouring revolutionary pamphlets, of which ten, twelve, or twenty were published every day, and passed rapidly from the hands of those who could afford to buy them into those of the poorest.”

All of official Europe was arrayed against the revolution, even as today capitalist officialdom the world over is arrayed against Marxian Socialism. Edmund Burke (ironically enough the defender of rebellious America!) sneered and snarled slanderously at the French revolutionists even as his current, but inferior counterparts, the Peglers, Sokolskys & Co., sneer, snarl and spit their poison at Marxism and Marxists. Catherine II of Russia fumed and belched fire at the revolution, pleading for a Caesar “to subdue them” — the ungodly revolutionists! Asking, and answering her own question, she wrote: “When will Caesar come? Oh, he will come, never fear. He will force himself to the front.” And *there* was Bonaparte lurking in the shadows — poor, and as yet unknown. But he knew the tricks, of the trade! For, like today’s renegades, he was playing his role craftily. Biding his time, he posed as a revolutionist, as his wretched spiritual kinsmen of today, the Max Eastmans, Budenzes, Gitlows, Bohns, and the rest of the intellectual ragtag and bobtail have done and are doing. At this stage this incipient Caesar vied with the rest in would-be revolutionary ardor and the mouthing of revolutionary phrases. Barras, later a member of the Directory, wrote in his “Memoirs”:

“Bonaparte showed me some copies of a pamphlet he had just written and printed at Avignon, asking permission to distribute them among the officers and even the soldiers of the republican army. Loaded with an enormous pack, he said to each while giving them out: ‘One can see whether I am a patriot! Can a person be revolutionary enough? Marat and Robespierre, those are my saints!’”

IV. Capitalism Nears the End

Thus again the realization of the dream of the ages failed, as in the circumstances it had to fall. For the foundation of man’s social and economic democracy was not yet laid, though it was taking shape even in the wake of disaster. Carlyle apostrophized the proletariat of France in these Old Testament terms:

“O Man of Toil, thy struggling and thy daring these long years of insurrection and tribulation, thou hast profited nothing by it, then? Thou

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consumest thy herring and water, in the blessed gold-red evening. O why was the Earth so beautiful, becrimsoned with dawn and twilight, if man's dealings with man were to make it a vale of scarcity, of tears, not even soft tears? Destroying of Bastilles, discomfiting of Brunswicks, fronting of Principalities and Powers, of Earth and Tophet [Hell], all that thou hast dared and endured, — it was for a Republic of the [corrupt and decadent] Cabarus Saloons? Patience; thou must have patience: the end is not yet.”

No, the end was not yet come, nor even in sight. But now it *is* in sight — the beginning of the end of the long road of man's travail since the downfall of the ancient commune. Feudalism had a progressive successor in capitalism, the last class-ruled society in the forward march. Capitalism is now, where feudalism stood in 1789, but with no class-ruled society as a possible *progressive* successor. Socialism is the legitimate heir of capitalism, but not of capitalism alone. It is the inheritor of the cumulative achievements of the long and mighty past, and it is so in a definitive, final sense. That is why there are not, and cannot be, exact parallels between the present and past social crises, despite superficial appearances to the contrary. The theory of exact parallels is a pernicious one, and it is fostered by propagandists in the plutocratic imperialist and Stalinist imperialist camps alike. Both draw crumbs of comfort from it: the plutocratic imperialists reason that *if* the fruits of the American Revolution are finally destroyed, and their so-called free-enterprise system gets completely bogged down, they can always count on the coming of the Caesar — the man on horseback. The Stalinists, on the other hand, having already acquired their sawdust Caesar, count on a prolonged rule of the bureaucratic State, although they profess to conceive of it as temporary. Thus they hope to safeguard, for at least their own lifetime, their individual vested interests in the static economy of their nascent feudo-industrial State.

Neither camp is seriously worried about the workers' taking over. Both camps may be I proved right, in which case we shall witness an eventual merger of the two. It is the business of Marxists to prove them both wrong, and to leave no stone unturned to effect the ushering in of the nobler society reared on the principle of ancient communism, but on that infinitely higher level made possible by the phenomenal technological advances of our day — the apolitical, state-less society of Socialism. In the words of De Leon:

“We shall either have Socialism — and that means that the State shall have vanished; or we shall have no Socialism. . . . Capitalism is not to be saved. If Socialism does not triumph now, then imperialism will seize upon

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our society, and establish a sort of feudo-capitalism that will set back the wheels of progress, and force freedom to start all over along some fresh path.”

V. The Threat of Industrial Feudalism

That capitalism has definitely and irrevocably entered on the road to industrial feudalism is glaringly obvious to every Marxian Socialist. The signs of this trend are many and ominous. Among the most typical and menacing is the increasing dependence on the political State to settle industrial conflicts. While in specific instances powerful industrial groups may decry intervention by the State, collectively the plutocracy looks to the State for aid when in trouble. It was so in 1933 when President Roosevelt virtually seized the banks of the country (closing them), and subsequently, by pump-priming, started the capitalist economy functioning again, thus saving the system from shipwreck. It is when the political government fails to meet particular corporate demands, and seemingly lines up with the labor merchants, that the false cry of “Socialism” is sounded.

More and more the State is being loaded down with bureaus and commissions whose business it is, as agencies of the executive committee of the capitalist class, to adjudicate among warring capitalists, or to devise means of keeping the working class “in its place.” It is natural that the labor fakers should work hand in glove with the bureaucrats in such instances, since their personal interests depend upon their continuing as successful “labor merchants.” The term “labor statesman” has acquired a sinister meaning, but the term is as logical (under capitalism) as the somewhat older term “labor market.” Both designations would have been utterly unintelligible to the Revolutionary Fathers, a fact that measures the vast distance capitalism has traveled from its original revolutionary moorings.

So tremendous has been the growth of industry, so enormous the concentration of wealth and corresponding corporate power, that the political clothes of capitalism are bursting in all their seams. Frequently, in fact, the political clothes are as non-existent as the “emperor’s new clothes” in the fairy tale. The patent fact is that the industrial empire has virtually replaced the political government — the industrial empire *is* the *de facto* government, the elected politicians having become mere agents and errand boys for the plutocratic rulers at the crack of whose whip they

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jump and do as they are bidden.

The concentration of industry is a fact that cannot be denied, however much servile “economists” may seek to explain it away. Interlocking directorates carry the concentration still further toward its ultimate consummation, which is monopoly. Under such circumstances, the familiar standbys of capitalism, largely lose their meaning, or cease operating altogether. Within restricted fields the law of supply and demand may still exert its force, but in the larger fields it is virtually non-operative, having been partly superseded by agreements among the giant corporations and cartels, and partly replaced by government price controls. Wages also have been regulated more and more by wage stabilization boards, and what not.

We know that this is a logical development, given capitalist premises and rules. Yet this development toward what Frederick Engels called “the ideal personification of the total national capital” — or totalitarian capitalism as we might say in today’s terminology — is designated “Socialism” by the enemies of Marxian Socialism! They will persist in thus slandering Socialism, despite protests, despite logical demonstrations proving the contrary, despite the explicit language of the cofounder of Socialism, Frederick Engels, who tersely observed: “The more it [the State] proceeds to the taking over of productive forces, the more does it actually become the national capitalist, the more citizens does it exploit.”

VI. Steel Dispute Reveals Plutocracy’s Arrogance

The recent clash between the government and the steel industry over the wage dispute reveals industry as the de facto government and the political State as at best a junior partner. For despite the President’s bluster, it is a foregone conclusion that the steel industry will gain its original objective of keeping real wages down, and raising the price to the point desired, which is not necessarily the point publicly demanded.

The incident has brought out fully the rawboned arrogance and brutality of the plutocracy. The Wage Stabilization Board had made its recommendation, and while this was not legally binding it was, and is, generally accepted as morally so. If, for

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instance, the decision had been favorable to the steel industry, and the unions had rejected the proposal of the board, can we not hear the howls of derision and screams of denunciation that would have been directed at the workers! They would have been accused of every crime on the calendar, including the familiar charge of murdering American soldiers at the front. The press would have praised the board, upheld the justice of its decision, and lauded its patriotism.

But this time the shoe appeared to be on the other foot, and the jackals of the capitalist press really let go at the workers, or rather, at the unions. Thousands of editorials assailed the board and the decision, and attacked the union representatives for — accepting the decision like nice, obedient labor lieutenants! Full-page advertisements have appeared in the country's leading newspapers, at a cost of thousands upon thousands of dollars, berating the President for taking over the steel industry, and carrying such headlines as “A Threat to American Freedom,” “Stop! . . . the light is flashing RED for dictatorship,” “An Appeal to Reason,” etc., etc. A move to impeach the President has even been initiated! The president of the Inland Steel Co., a fellow named Randall, bought radio time and subjected the President of the United States to a barrage of billingsgate and threats that has scarcely ever been equaled in our history! Who is the master now — the government or the plutocracy? Silly question, of course — the answer is obvious.

The members of the Wage Stabilization Board who represent “the public” apparently forgot their duty that is, they forgot that “the public” (in the lexicon of capitalism) is actually part and parcel of the ruling class, and as such should have voted with “industry.” This disturbed plutocracy's chief journal, the *New York Times*, no end. In its best Pecksniffian manner it sobbed:

“Unfortunately, the W.S.B.'s ‘public’ members, in the steel dispute at least, became just another mediation agency [!!], which haggled with the parties and failed to keep an eye single to the stabilization function.” !

Tsk! Tsk! Tsk!

And so this capitalist spokesman disavows the “public members” — it even puts the word “public” in quotation marks, apparently now agreeing with the S.L.P. that “the public” is a myth, a humbug! Casting about for substitutes, it suggests that the board should perhaps be made up of “neutrals” only (isn't that what the public” is

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supposed to be?), or that “an impartial person” should be appointed. One would have supposed that a “neutral” was, in fact, “impartial”! A plutocratic journal’s lot is not always a happy one!

An interesting sidelight on the position of the steel magnates is the fact that they did not object to the W.S.B.’s consideration of the issue in the first place. It was not until they found themselves “cheated” that they howlingly protested. The tragic feature of the incident is that the workers were apparently satisfied with the decision, little realizing that the government’s interest lies, not in supporting labor’s demands, but in keeping the economy functioning in the interest of the larger capitalist objectives at stake. If the decision had been favorable to the steel industry, and if the workers had gone on strike after the government had seized the industry, and if they had then been drafted as “government employees,” not a voice would have been raised in protest from the camp of the plutocracy, and none in that camp would have moved to impeach the President for having violated the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution!

VII. The Military’s Menacing Rise to Power

The tendency toward naked absolutism in government is further indicated by the increasing dependence on the military in civilian affairs. Lately the term “soldier statesman” has come into use. Presently Eisenhower is represented as the ideal “soldier statesman” or “military diplomat.” The role of “soldier statesman” in its prescribed field is as ominous as the role of “labor statesman” in its prescribed field. Both underscore the fact that we are on the threshold of that dreaded industrial feudalism which threatens to become the logical alternative to the free society of Socialism. Hanson Baldwin, the New York *Times* military expert, wrote in his book, *Price of Power*:

“With a surge of nationalism — which expresses itself sometimes in the feeling that ‘America ought to rule the world,’ ‘we must hold to everything we got’ — has gone a new respect for our top military leaders and high civilian executives, which complements the latent demand for greater centralization of federal authority, and which has expressed itself in the form of political booms — ‘Eisenhower for President,’ ‘MacArthur for President,’ ‘Marshall for President.’”

In this trend toward the substitution of the military for the civilian authority

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we find added evidence to support the contention that this country is in real and imminent danger of becoming transformed into a military dictatorship, the logical complement of a feudo-capitalist society. Eisenhower himself a few years ago advanced the soundest reasons for opposing the nomination of a soldier for the Presidency, eliminating himself then from consideration in this respect. Since then he has become a “soldier statesman” and tasted the sweet fruits of presidential preferment. By all present indications we shall probably have for President one who has been a militarist all his life, and who is completely dedicated to the feudo-plutocratic creed. America has indeed traveled far since the days of Jefferson and Madison. It was Jefferson who in 1789 wrote:

“There are instruments so dangerous to the rights of the nation, and which place them so totally at the mercy of their governors, that those governors, whether legislative or executive, should be restrained from keeping such instruments on foot, but in well-defined cases. Such an instrument is a standing army.”

We not only have now such a “dangerous instrument,” but we shall in all probability have for President a five-star general of that “dangerous instrument.” Obedience to men rather than to law may henceforth come to be regarded as the patriotic duty of citizens. For, as Jefferson also wrote (in 1788), “the breaking men to military discipline, is breaking their spirit to principles of passive obedience.”

VIII. De Leon’s Genius Proved By His Prescience,

In the year 1889 Daniel De Leon wrote his famous essay, “The Voice of Madison.” In this essay De Leon paid a tribute to the genius of Madison, whom he admired above all the revolutionary fathers. Quoting Marx on the genius of Aristotle in “discovering in the expression of the value of commodities the central truth of political economy,” De Leon wrote:

“How much more brilliant and deserving of tribute the genius of Madison that enabled him to take so long a look ahead; calculate with such nicety the results of political and economic force; foresee with such great accuracy the great coming problem of our country, and state it with such clearness; weigh with such breadth of judgment the methods known to him in order to meet and solve it, and discard them, one after the other with such acumen; rise to such height of statesmanship by boldly declaring the problem could be dealt with in no way other than by adapting the laws and

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institutions of the country to the social changes that may take place; and, finally, commend the task to, and invoke for its performance, the wisdom of the future patriot.”

De Leon concluded that the voice of Madison had reached our generation, and that there were those on hand who would heed it and perform the wise and necessary act.

It is now sixty-three years since De Leon paid his tribute to the genius of Madison. He went on from there to translate into action the words he re-echoed on that occasion so long ago. Like Madison in his generation, so De Leon in his fully rose to the need of the hour and the demands of the time. And, like Madison’s, his brilliant genius enabled him to take that long look ahead, to calculate with nicety the results of the economic forces at work, to foresee with accuracy the great problem now confronting us, to state it with clearness, to weigh with breadth of judgment the methods required to meet it and solve it, and with acumen to discard one after the other the apparent solutions that presented themselves to him, until finally the nature of the problem was perfectly understood by him, the goal thoroughly clarified in his mind, and the methods for achieving it fully tested by him in the “social laboratory.”

On this centennial commemoration of De Leon’s birth, it is right and fitting that we should pay this tribute to the great Social Architect of our generation. It is fitting that we should appraise his genius, set forth in bold relief the services he rendered the working class and ultimately humanity at large, and reflect admiringly on his prescience, his devotion to principle, and his, tireless perseverance. Above all, his prescience, which is the special faculty of the scientist, commands our attention and compels our admiration. It was of such a man that Shakespeare sang in one of his plays:

“ . . . a man may prophesy,
With a near aim, of the main chance of things
As yet not come to life, which in their seeds
And weak beginnings lie intreasured.
Such things become *the hatch and brood of time.*”¹

De Leon’s analysis of the economic forces at work has been proved correct again

¹ [*Henry IV*, Act 3, Scene 1.]

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and again. The conclusions he drew from his penetrating study of the *genus* labor faker have been completely vindicated. His prognosis of the menacing tendency toward industrial feudalism has been confirmed, and with a vengeance. His conception of the Industrial Union Government, with its occupational basis, as the next higher social stage, to take the place of the outmoded political State, deriving from territory, has met every test and every challenge with facts and logical reasoning. In all these respects De Leon towers alongside Marx and the greatest thinkers of the ages, and we hail him as the supreme Master Builder. As Lewis Morgan said of the ancient Greek state builder Cleisthenes, so we say of De Leon and his achievement: "This discovery stands as the master work of a mastermind."

IX. De Leon's Heritage to the SLP

Born one hundred years ago, Daniel De Leon breathed his last thirty-eight years ago, in the month of May. His untimely death left unsaid and unwritten much that would have guided us today even better than we are now guided by our heritage from him. He had hoped to see the day when the edifice of Socialism would rise shelteringly over a happy race of men. But that boon and joy were denied him. Even so, we sense that he was resigned to the possibility of having to share the fate of Moses who could only view "the promised land" from the summit of Mount Pisgah. There seems to be an indication of this in the editorial he wrote on the occasion of the death of August Bebel, in which he included a fraction of an essay by an unknown author. The essay is entitled "To the Noblemen of the Human Race," and from it De Leon quoted these poignant lines:

"He had been used to feel humanely, and to look upon life more widely than from the narrow loophole of personal pleasure and advancement . . . He had long been used to wait with interest the issue of events in which his own concern was nothing. . . There remained unaltered all the disinterested hopes for mankind and a better future which were the solace and inspiration of his life. These he set beyond the reach of any fate that only menaced himself; and it made small difference whether he died before the good epoch for which he so faithfully labored. He did not deceive himself; he knew from the beginning that he followed the pillar of fire and cloud, only to perish himself in the wilderness, and it was reserved for others to enter joyfully into possession of the land."

These words, beautifully conceived and beautifully expressed, might well be

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inscribed on the mausoleum which one day, under the aegis of the Socialist Republic, shall house his dust.

DEBAUCHING THE WORKING CLASS

I

“Divide the workers, and maintain mastery” has become the unspoken slogan of the ruling classes the world over. They stir the embers of religious bigotry long after the musty creeds have lost whatever justification they had for emerging in the first place, and they fan the flames of patriotism, of so-called nationalism, long after the disappearance of the once factual and historical basis for national egotism and narrow provincialism.

The plutocracy and its clerical allies are deliberately sowing the seeds of discord among the workers within the respective countries, and among the workers of different lands. But they are also sowing the wind and must inevitably reap the whirlwind — the whirlwind that eventually shall sweep them off the stage of history, to join the other ruling class rubbish previously consigned to history’s scrap heap.

With characteristic ruling class blindness the capitalist class does not see that its role is finished, *that as a class it is doomed*, and that continued resistance to the decree of social evolution can only prolong the agony, and increase many fold the problems generally attending all major social transitions. They have never grasped the wisdom and significance of the Marxian dictum that, “wherever there is a revolutionary convulsion, there must be some Social want in the background, which is prevented, by outworn institutions, from satisfying itself.”

The possession of property, and the power and privileges that flow therefrom, prevent the possessor from comprehending that the turbulence and upheavals, of a revolutionary period such as the present one are not the work of a few agitators, but rather that the agitators are a product of the period (in this case capitalism in its decay), as legitimately and inescapably so as are the trials and tribulations, the poverty and’ miseries, of the exploited workers.

Members of a ruling class rarely understand the nature of a revolution, which they frequently mistake for an insurrection. Or, conversely, they will regard as a revolution that which is merely an insurrection. Insurrections are flashes in the pan; they proceed from superficial causes. Quite the contrary with revolutions. As

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Henry Thomas Buckle pointed out, “insurrections are generally wrong, revolutions are always right.” For insurrections, he added, are “often the mad and passionate effort of ignorant persons, who are impatient under some immediate injury, and never stop to investigate its remote and general causes.”

Hence, we witness the spectacle of illiterate politicians conducting investigations of “subversive” activities, and jailing their alleged perpetrators instead of conducting an investigation into the causes of social unrest and maladjustments, and formulating the indicated prescriptions to remedy the situation. Of course, if such investigators were to conduct themselves in such an admirable manner, they would cease to be politicians. A revolution, being the culmination of a preceding evolutionary process, and the result of deep-seated social evils incapable of being cured or removed within the prevailing political and economic framework, is a majestic phenomenon not to be dealt with by petty politicians, nor to be suppressed by a corps of police, nor even by a whole army. “A revolution . . . ,” said Buckle, “is a splendid and imposing spectacle, because to the moral quality of indignation produced by the presence of the evil, it adds the intellectual qualities of foresight and combination; and, uniting in the same act some of the highest properties of our nature, it achieves a double purpose, not only punishing the oppressor, but also relieving the oppressed.”

II

The trend toward industrial feudalism is increasing steadily, though it is called by other names. Currently the name for it is “Stateism,” or as some politicians foolishly call it, “Socialism.” The Truman “welfare State program” is a manifestation of it, and its supporters are found mainly among the lower ranks of the capitalist class, although a few farsighted top plutocrats (who may have learned from the history books what unbridled ruling class arrogance may lead to) are also found among its supporters.

Some of them sense how precarious is the hold they have on the working class — craftily they seek to ride out the storm by making minor concessions, by attempting to bribe and debauch the workers and to lure them from the path of revolution toward which otherwise they would instinctively gravitate. Some of them will not even hesitate to call themselves “Socialists” in situations where this would seem to further their purpose, the purpose of heading off the revolution, or running

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into the ground the revolutionary current.

Many years ago (in 1913), Daniel De Leon, distinguished American social scientist and economist, wrote in the *Daily People* that it was not precluded that some day Theodore Roosevelt (at that time declaiming against “monopoly” and “special privileges”) would be seen “to call himself and to chieftain a political movement styled ‘Socialist,’” and he advanced his reasons for his belief in such a possibility in these cogent terms:

“Socialism, as he who knows anything knows, aims at human emancipation, not by political tenets, but by the establishment of material conditions upon which Freedom can be planted. This implies a social revolution. Nor is this all.

“The social revolution implied in Socialism needs for its success the action of the least favored of all present classes; and, what is more, of all revolutionary classes that have yet stepped upon the stage of history. The task of educating and organizing at least a necessary minimum of this revolutionary class with the minimum knowledge to resist the onslaughts and, worst of all, *wiles of the ruling class*, is gigantic. Even the bourgeoisie in its pre-revolutionary era was frequently disintegrated by alternate applications of the feudal mailed and the feudal velvet hand. The bourgeoisie, however, could not be broken up. Its strength lay in the growth of its economic power. It is otherwise with the modern revolutionary class. The proletariat declines in economic power. Accordingly, in the measure that proletarian might in numbers waxes, there increases proletarian precariousness of existence; hence, proletarian nervousness; hence, proletarian lack of self-reliance; hence, proletarian desperation; hence, proletarian proneness to superstition. Hand in hand with this progression goes, it is true, Socialist education counteracting the above-mentioned downward progression. Indeed, viewed from the angle of the sociologic tussle, *modern society presents the spectacle of a race between Socialist education and proletarian demoralization*; — which will succeed in heading off the other?

“We hold [continued De Leon] that properly weighed, the social influences of the day that make for proletarian education will triumph, and triumph gloriously. This notwithstanding, so vast are the influences which make for proletarian demoralization that they are to be reckoned with. These influences, together with their immediate product, a demoralized and submerged layer of the proletariat, not only heat into life, they also attract certain sinister figures. Richard 11, applying to Wat Tyler’s mob for the privilege of being their leader; more recently, Louis Bonaparte starting, or utilizing, the ‘Society of December’; the ‘millionaire’ Crassus of Roman

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days identifying himself with the ragtag and bobtail that hugged Catalina and being hugged by them; the succession of ‘tyrants’ in Greece and the Aegean isles; — these be many variants of the identical type. In all these instances, mass precariousness of existence begot mass nervousness; mass nervousness begot lack of self-reliance; mass lack of self-reliance begot mass desperation; and desperation begot superstition.

“A superstitious mass in economic straits looks for saviors from ‘above.’ In Rome the savior was looked for from ‘senatorial rank.’ Elsewhere from the wealthy. On the same principle that weak lungs are points of gravitation for the tuberculosis microbe, such mass mentality is the point of gravitation for the tribe of Roosevelts. Any flag will do them. Any device is good enough for their purpose. ‘Socialism’ will not prove an unacceptable mantle within, or flag under which (given the continuance of favorable conditions), Col. Theodore Roosevelt may yet be seen braggadociating across the stage of the American social drama.”

This remarkable analysis and forecast by De Leon has found its confirmation, if not in the particular person of Theodore Roosevelt, then certainly in the “tribes of Roosevelt” that followed him, both here and abroad. One need only remember the “Socialist” Mussolini and the “National Socialist” Adolf Hitler, both of them hailed as demigods and “saviors from above.” And today we observe the identical phenomenon in the dictator Stalin, who is today being blindly “worshiped” as a god, as the originator of all the things with which deities in the past have been credited, and for which they were worshiped.

Capitalism is doomed, and with it the capitalists as a class. A doomed class is a desperate class, and its individual members, generally speaking, will fight for their possessions, privileges and prerogatives as fiercely as they would for their very lives, and they will be unscrupulous as to the means employed. But social evolution having decreed its doom, nothing can save the capitalist class, as nothing could save any ruling class in the past. At the last, the working class will emerge victorious, as it must if civilization and humanity at large are to be saved.

Socialism is the only hope of humanity.

— *From an address delivered by Arnold Petersen, in Akron, O., December 26, 1949.*