

EDITORIAL

A NATURAL DELUSION AND CONFUSION OF THOUGHT

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE below communication is one out of not a few:

To the Editor of *The People*—I am inclined to think the time is ripe for circulating petitions similar to the one given below, as it would tend to effectually sever voters from the influence of the capitalistic parties which favor inadequate measures like “control of the trusts.”

This is the pledge and petition:

“We, as public-spirited citizens, independent of both Republican and Democratic parties, do hereby pledge ourselves as advocating the absolute public ownership of coal mines. We will vote for those only who also openly stand for public ownership, and not mere ‘control’ of the coal.

“We petition the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives to at once obtain control of all coal mines.”

H.J.B.

New York, September 29.

Here we have a bunch of delusions and not a little confusion of thought.

The delusion lies in the notion that the nominees of capitalism—Republican and Democratic—would stick at any pre-election pledges. The confusion of thought lies in the notion that men who stand for office on a capitalist platform could, if they would, or would, if they could, destroy capitalism. The delusion lies in the notion that a capitalist government would run upon Socialist principles the capitalist concerns that it would acquire ownership of. The confusion of thought lies in the notion that the emancipation of the workingman from the thrall of capitalism consists in external forms, whereas it consists in a substantial fact—the overthrow of the capitalist class. The confusion of thought and the delusion combined lie in the notion that the voters can be weaned from capitalism, instead of, as the fact is, that Capital’s rude hand must thrust them away, and that the mission of Socialism is to have the skeletons of the army ready for those

who are intelligent, clean and manly among the thrust-away masses to flock to and then mop the earth with the capitalist class and its system at the ballot box.

So far from this being the time to “petition” a capitalist Senate and House of Representatives to cut the throat of their capitalist system; so far from this being the time to obtain “pledges” from capitalist candidates—this is the time to turn in and help uphold strong and staunch the principles that inspire the Socialist Labor Party, and that render it invincible.

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