

# DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 13, NO. 186.

NEW YORK, THURSDAY, JANUARY 2, 1913.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

## AN OPEN LETTER.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**O Hon. William Sulzer,  
Governor of the State of New York.  
Sir:—

You have said, we believe with sincerity, that your inauguration, being the prelude to the inauguration of the President elected last November, and his election being the opening of a New Era for Freedom, your own inauguration precludes the prelude, hence precludes the New Era for Freedom.

It matters not that facts, as we know them, and the conclusions that flow from the facts, differ so radically that not only are you and we political adversaries, but that we know your expectations are false, and fated to disappointment. No Freedom, as we understand the term, can flow from the Democratic program, no more than it can from the Republican, both programs being planted on the principle of the private ownership of the necessaries for production, upon capitalism, in short. While capitalism lasts economic slavery is the share of the majority of the people. The portals of Freedom are double barred and bolted to these.

We repeat it—it matters not that we disagree irreconcilably with you in fundamentals. There is that in the posture that you and the President-elect have struck that entitles you to the respect of the Socialist, and that justify him at least to hope for good from you. The Socialist may not hope that you will strike the path that will revolutionize the status of the Working Class. Such an act on your part would amount to a violation of your class pledges. It would be a dishonorable act. The Socialist is the last one to urge dishonesty.

That in both you and the President-elect that justifies the Socialist to hope for good from you is the evidence of your enthusiastic devotion to the best traditions of

your class. To these traditions we expect you to remain true. With this expectation we call your attention to two blots that have been placed one each upon two of the signal contributions by the bourgeois to the stock of the human Progress, and both of which we urge you to see to that they be blotted out.

One is the Levy election law. Already the election laws of this State rang untrue to that contribution of the bourgeois revolution that is summed up in the term “political freedom.” Already the election laws of this State before the evil days of the Administration of your immediate predecessor seriously infringed our people’s freedom of political expression. The Levy law intensified the false note. The Levy law is a tanglefoot that virtually spells mass-disfranchisement. Mass-disfranchisement is a badge of feudalism. To the glory of the bourgeois revolution it smote the shackles of political enslavement. The Levy law, a breath of Tammany and of theocratic reaction, seeks to re-rivet the shackles. We call upon you to cause the Levy law to be expunged from the statute book, and, along with it, all the several election laws, so-called, whose real name should be “laws to hamper the freedom of political expression.” Free political expression is a pre-requisite for the peaceful solution of civic conflicts of thought.

The noblest task of the modern bourgeois State is to resist being thrown back to feudo-theocratic disorder and feud-breeding turmoil.

The other blot is the Sullivan law, also a Tammany reactionary thought of evil. The Sullivan law is a law the enforcement of which means the disarming of the masses. A disarmed mass is a target that invites the shots of an armed oligarchy. The bare thought is so utterly at war with the best instincts of our own American bourgeois revolution that the Constitution expressly states a condition for freedom to be an armed people, and expressly forbids the abridgement of the right to keep and bear arms. The Sullivan law abridges that cardinal right. The Sullivan law is, in fact, null and void. Nevertheless, null and void though it is, it has its effect for evil—for untold evil. Cause it, Sir, to be wiped out.

On all sides it is admitted that many changes are urgent lest a cataclysm overtake us. Nothing can contribute more effectively to the prevention of so dire a calamity as to clear the path of the encumbrances that the evil omened Administra-

tion that has just come to an end has encumbered the path of Progress with.

Respectfully,

ED. DAILY PEOPLE.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
Uploaded June 2014

[slpns@slp.org](mailto:slpns@slp.org)