

Letter to the Editor of the Lancaster Public Ledger

Earl Clement Davis

Lancaster, PA

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To the editor of the Public Ledger,

Sir: Armistice Day. The whistles are blowing. The bells are ringing. I have finished reading thig morning's Ledger. I did not overlook that "Col. House defends Foch's Armistice," nor "the Party Quarrels in France." I was particularly struck by headings, contents, and order of your editorial page. Let me recall them in order. Armistice Day 1920; Reunion at Camp Dix; The Shipping Graft; At the Mercy of Coal Gouggers?; No Place for Secrets.

Having in mind not only the topics discussed, but the background both historical and social, out of which these editorials have evolved, I am writing to ask question.

Is it necessary, with such conditions existing in America as you are commenting on, to drag in the bugaboo of Russian Propaganda to account for radical thought and action here? Has not the fight between the factions of the Republican Party in Philadelphia made every honest citizen of the State sick at heart? Have I not read between the lines of many editorials in your paper that sense of utter disgust, almost cynical at times, as those sordid facts have come to light? Has not the conflict between the management and the owners of the P.R.T. disclosed as gruesome a situation as of exploitation of the public as any agitator ever pictured? You have said things in your editorials today that would have laid you open to charges of disloyalty two years ago. For aught I know there are men in prison today for saying less than you said in editorial comment this morning.

The truth is that the men in the factories and on the streets know all these sordid facts; have known them all along. Stories of graft will out. All the men in industrial

plants know when the men higher up are crooked. Does not the average voter know the extent of political corruption. Every man who is bribed sells not only his vote but his faith in our form of government. Every political leader, who either directly or indirectly bribes a voter not only buys a voter, but he helps to make the very worst type of an anarchist, the man who knows that political action is bought and sold. The argument of the direct actionist may not be sound, but it is clear. His argument is that political action is worthless because political action is corrupt. Hence, if he wants an eight hour day, he gets it by strike rather than by legislation. If he wants legislation, instead of attempting to elect his legislators, he strikes to force political action. It may not be sound but it is clear and betrays one of the basic facts in our present political situation, a lack of faith in the integrity of political life.

Doubtless there are many Russians in the United States who imagine that they are Bolshevists. Doubtless there are many Russians in the United States who favor the old regime. One will offset the other in the long run. Our concern is to get at the facts in our own social order, and find out what are some of the causes of our unrest and serious discontent. Is there real hardship, real thwarting of the human spirit. What effect is the shortage of houses having on the integrity of the family life, and the health and development of children? Does the man become a radical because he sees his children's opportunities destroyed by corrupt politicians. Does he become a radical because he sees large numbers of his fellow citizens amassing wealth by dishonest and unjust means? We need to look to the facts of our own economic and social life. A democratic society is "No Place for Secrets." The Pilgrim fathers set the pace 300 years ago today as they thrashed out among themselves on board the Mayflower the difference between "the better part" and those "strangers" whose "discontented and mutinous speeches" made necessary this compact. "In these hard and difficult beginnings they found some discontents and murmurings arise amongst some, and mutinous speeches and carriage in other; but they were soon quelled and overcome by the wisdom, patience, and the just and equal carriage of things by the Governor and the better part

which clave faithfully together in the main." (Bradford's History).

This method of dealing with discontent, calm facing the facts, has been used quite frequently in this country during the past 300 years. The counselling together of both the Governor and the better sort with the mutinous and discontented has saved the day many times. We need to resort to that ancient method today.

Cordially yours,

Earl C. Davis.