

EDITORIAL

## BLIND CASSANDRAS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**A**t the moment of stepping out of office, Gov. Hazen S. Pingree of Michigan shrieked this shriek on New Year's day:

“I make the prediction that, unless those in charge and in whose hands legislation is reposed change the present system of inequality, in less than a quarter of a century there will be a bloody revolution in this great country of ours.”

Thus, with disheveled hair and arms extended, did Priam's blind daughter shriekingly grope her way through the winding halls of Troy's royal residence. Troy fell. Not a stone remained on the other. The city went up in flames and smoke, and descended in ashes. And yet Cassandra's prophecy was the prophecy of blindness. Whence she imagined danger threatened, none came; whence she expected safety, danger rolled upon and crushed her house. Hence her “prophecies” were worthless. And so it is with the Hon. Hazen S. Pingree, to-day.

The Hon. Hazen S. Pingree is a blind Cassandra. Partaking of his prototype's high-wrought nervous temperament he is sensitive; but, being as intellectually as she was physically blind, he cannot see. Like her, he imagines dangers from quarters whence none can threaten, and, consequently, looks for help whence none is possible. His warnings are useless.



GOV. HAZEN S. PINGREE (1840-1901)

No help will come, no help can come from those “in whose hands legislation is reposed.” The leading act of the Hon. Hazen S. Pingree himself, the act that stamped him with the distinctive appellation of “Potato-patch Pingree,” he being himself a member of the class “in whose hands legislation is reposed,” amply attests to the fact that salvation cannot come from the class that has an interest in modern inequalities,—the ruling, the Capitalist Class. From this class, all that can be expected are “potato-patch” schemes of relief. Never will that class, never could it, any more than any previous ruling class, voluntarily abdicate. The one thing to end inequalities—the freeing of the Working Class from the burden of carrying the Capitalist Class—will not proceed from the latter. As Tolstoi well said, the latter will do anything—shriek, prophesy, build potato-patches, anything—short of itself stepping off the back of Labor. Help can come only from Labor; itself must do the freeing act; itself—enlightened into class-consciousness, consequently, scornful of “potato-patch” corn-plasters—must throw the Capitalist Class off.

The “bloody revolution” may or may not come. If it come, the fault will lie, not with those “in whose hands legislation is reposed”—the Pingree class for short. If it come, the reason will be that the healing work of the Socialist Labor Party agitation, education and organization was too far outstripped by the malady. Contrariwise, if the “bloody revolution” fails to materialize, thanks will be due, not to those “in whose hands legislation is reposed”—the Pingree class for short—but to the class in whose hands legalization does not now repose; it will be due to the Working Class itself, marching under the liberating folds of the S.L.P. banner.

Futile, more than futile, harmless are the prophecies of the Blind Cassandras. By looking for the North Star in the southern skies they promote and invite disaster.

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