

EDITORIAL

## WITH MARX FOR TEXT.

By DANIEL DE LEON

“Only the economic organization is capable of setting on foot a true political party of Labor, and thus raise a bulwark against the power of Capital.”

—MARX.

**I**T happens with Marx as with Shakespeare—their sentences are weighted with meaning. As it does not suffice to “read” Shakespeare, neither does it suffice to “read” Marx. Their utterances must be STUDIED. There is hardly a sentence-utterance of Marx that does not contain, compressed, half a dozen separate thoughts, which, combined, present a simple-looking sentence enough, heavy, however, with meaning. The sentence used for text at the head of this article is typically Marxian. It compresses fully six distinct subjects, running along parallel lines. It condenses the essence of fully six distinct sociologic topics, which, woven together constitute a mighty thought. The sentence is a flashlight upon the nature and mission of the economic organization, upon the nature and mission of the political action, upon the relation there is between the two, and, by inference, upon the theories of “Neutrality towards Unions,” of the “Transitoriness of the Union,” and of “Physical Force.”

The first sentence of the Marxian text declares: “Only the economic organization is capable of setting on foot a true political party of Labor”—in other words:

1. A political party of Labor is a necessity. It could not be a “true political party of Labor” if not useful and necessary.—Incidentally, it follows from this, as the reverse of the thought that a bogus party of Labor must, in some way, be the product or reflex of some bogus economic organization.

2. A political party of Labor can not ignore the trunk from which it is a shoot.

“Neutrality” by the shoot towards its trunk is unconceivable.—Incidentally there follow from this, as reverses of the thought, first, that a true political party of Labor is bound to carry into the political arena the sound principles of the revolutionary economic organization which it reflects, and feel bold to proclaim the fact; secondly, that a bogus party of Labor is likewise driven to carry into the political arena the false principles of the bogus economic organization, and be prompted by the cowardly feeling of striving to deny its parentage. There is a third conclusion, and one of no little importance to the practical understanding of the subject—only the political reflex of the bogus organization of Labor can set up the theory of “Neutrality in Unionism”—a theory known by the said political reflex to be at odds with the law of its own existence and the facts that dominate it.

The closing, or second sentence of the Marxian text, “and thus raise a bulwark against the power of Capital,” defines the mission of the “true political party of Labor.” That mission is to “raise a bulwark against the power of Capital,”—in other words:

1. It is not the part of “political action” to “take and hold” the Nation’s productive powers; consequently, that the revolutionary ACT of “taking and holding” is independent of political action.

2. The part of “political action” being the transitory, though necessary, function of “raising a bulwark” against Capital, it follows as incidental to the thought, first, that the revolutionary act of achieving the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of Socialism is the function reserved to the economic organization; secondly, that the “Physical Force” called for by the revolutionary act, lies inherent in the economic organization; thirdly, as a corollary of the second conclusion, that the element of “Force” consists, not in military or other organization implying violence, but in the STRUCTURE of the economic organization, a structure of such nature that it parries violence against itself, shatters it, and thereby renders the exercise of violence in return unnecessary, at least secondary, or only incidental; finally, that the economic organization is not “transitory,” but is the present embryo of the future Government of the Republic of Labor.

Marxian sentences are like thick racemes of grapes. They yield grape after grape. Digested, they enable the digester to see as on a map the border lines of the

contiguous territories of the A.F. of L. and the S.P., and of the I.W.W. and the S.L.P. They allow an insight into the theories regarding “Neutrality,” the “Transitoriness of the Union,” and “Physical Force” in the sense of organized violence. They explain the appearance, on the political arena, in the shape of resolutions on “inferior races,” then on “backward races,” then in the shape of a string of words intended to concede the same thought—of the Craft Union principle of Anti-Immigration, Race and Craft Conflicts.

Marx has uttered many pregnant sentences. None more so than the text that heads this article.

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Uploaded October 2009

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