EDITORIAL

A WORD OF COMFORT.

By DANIEL DE LEON

Among the many grotesquely amusing sights of the season none is more so than the sight of the New York Times turned into a preacher, a preacher of Christianity, at that!

Quoting the REV. ELIOT WHITE of the diocese of Western Massachusetts, who said: “The revolution is coming, is here, and there may be spots of blood. If you are not ready to experience blood, wounds, or death, go home,” the Times stops for breath at this point, turns its eyes up to heaven, the corners of its mouth down to earth, and gasps: “Surely this is strange talk, to be followed by even stranger to the effect that any Christian who did not believe in action is ‘on the brink of hell looking down.’”

And thereupon the Times shivers a shiver, throws a fit, and audibly exclaims between the lines: “’Tis the end of the world!”

Nay. It is not the end of the world. It is the beginning of a world worth living in. And natural enough, at such a season, is the sight of a leading organ of capitalist iniquity and crime being so flustered as to forget whatever little history it ever knew.

For one thing, “action,” together with the other words that send a cold shiver down the spine of the Times and which may be translated into “the sword,” was far from being a thing unknown to Christianity in particular, or to the march of civilization in general. A remarkable passage in Lassalle’s Franz von Sickingen contains this remarkable condensation of history, lay and ecclesiastic:

My worthy Sir, think better of the sword!
A sword, for freedom swung on high, that, Sir,
The Word Incarnate is of which you preach;
It is the God born of Reality.
Christianity was by the Sword extended—
The Sword was the baptismal waters that
The Charles, we still with wonder name the Great,
Baptized Germania with; the Sword smote down
Old heathendom; the Sword the Savior’s tomb
Redeemed. And further back, it was the Sword
That Tarquin drove from Rome, the Sword that back
From Hellas Xerxes whipped, and for our Arts
And Sciences plowed the ground. It was the Sword
That David, Samson, Gideon labored with.
Thus long ago, as well as since, the Sword
Achieved the glories told by history,
And all that’s great, as yet to be achieved,
Owes in the end its triumph to the Sword!

No wonder the Times fears for the necks of its dummy director masters, and its
clientele of suiciding bankers and other desirables, besides its still more numerous
desirables who should, but have not yet, committed suicide. Consciously or
unconsciously, it realizes that the passage from Lassalle gives a correct summary of
the role that the sword has played in the past; naturally it fears the same role in the
future.

But here let a word of comfort be uttered to the Times, and, through it, to all
Plunderbund.

Socialism needs no sword for its accomplishment. The Socialist Movement is
the first Revolutionary Movement that has not blood on its programme. Socialism
moves on the elevated plane of XXth century intelligence and morality. It organizes
the Revolution in such way that bloodshed may be avoided. It marches to the
hustings with the ballot of peace, and comes equipped with the Industrial
organization to enforce the fiat of its ballot.

Plunderbund need not fear for the necks of its membership. The neck that will
be cut is the neck of Plunderbundism. Its members will be allowed to live—and
WORK. To be sure, to work is like death itself to the Plunderbunders. To the extent
that life is sweet to them and that they prefer work and life to death, Socialism
gladly offers the word of comfort to them through their organ, the Times.