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EDITORIAL

REVOLUTIONARY, FROM WING TO WING.

By DANIEL DE LEON

In an introductory article, in last week's issue, on the salient features of the battle that the Socialist Labor Party had just fought out, mention was made of the fact that, by victoriously cutting its way across the combined obstructions which flung themselves in its path, the Party could now, untrammelled, deploy its ranks ALL ALONG THE LOGICAL LINE OF BATTLE IN THE COUNTRY.

It will be the purpose of successive articles at this place to enumerate the several and important strategic points covered by this logical line of battle in the Nineteenth Century class struggle of America.

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The methods adopted by the elements, until recently within the Party, in their campaign against it were such as to obscure the issue. The exclusively personal lines of warfare that they initiated and kept up throughout, the personal abuse that constituted their only ammunition, raised, whether intentionally or otherwise, such a volume of dust that the point striven for by the contending forces might easily escape detection. Let none be deceived. As below clouds of thick smoke there is a burning spark, so here, below the stifling dust of personal vituperation, there was a PRINCIPLE at stake.

Socialism is no REFORM; it is a REVOLUTION. It implies a cycle in the social affairs of the race, where development, growth, becoming acute, rushes forward toward substantial transformation. But REVOLUTION is not like a bolt from the sky; it is a stage in EVOLUTION. Here is the rub. Debatable is the ground where the Evolutionary process actually ceases and the Revolutionary process actually begins. No hard and fast line marks the boundary. Its determination depends upon the combined workings of two forces, wholly distinct:—INTELLECT and TEMPERAMENT. Though the INTELLECT may be well stocked, the TEMPERAMENT may be too sluggish to keep pace with it; in other instances, the TEMPERAMENT may be up to the

revolutionary pulse, yet the INTELLECT too weak to accept its promptings; again, the INTELLECT, thoroughly equipped, may go hand in hand with and be fired by a TEMPERAMENT thoroughly revolutionary. Proceeding from such multiplex sources, divergence of opinions and resultant friction are inevitable.

The issue, in the conflict from which the Party has just emerged triumphant, was the product of friction brought on by such divergencies of opinions. The conflict really raged around the question: "HAS THE REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS BEGUN?"—Some answered: "NO!" and, consistently enough, demanded that the Party adapt its tactics to the EVOLUTIONARY process. Others answered emphatically: "YES!" and, with equal consistency, insisted that the head of the PARTY'S SHIP be held close to the REVOLUTIONARY weather.

It was no accident that the conflict broke out over the Party's attitude on trade unionism and on taxation. "Accidents" determine nothing worth mentioning, in social conflicts any more than in physical ones. The elements—intellectually deficient through lack of information on the economic, social and political lay of the land in America; or of sluggish temperament, being tired out; or combining in themselves both shortcomings, together with the acquirement of "evolutionary" material interests—clamored for tactics on trade unionism and on taxation that should keep the PARTY'S SHIP back upon the quiet—comfortable waters that hug the coast; on the other hand, the elements,—thoroughly posted on the economic, social and political lay of the land here; beating with the truly revolutionary pulse; vigorous, alert, and untrammelled by material considerations—insisted that the PARTY'S SHIP be steered straight for the open sea; leave unterrified, the old coast behind, and boldly make for its goal.

The latter element won the day. It won the day decisively. No frail majority left it dependent, after all, upon a strong minority, bound to curb its course and minimize its victory by the physical power to enforce subsequent compromises. The minority proved so diminutive, that it may be justly considered a neglectable {negligible?} quantity. On the night of Tuesday, the 7th instant, the Party camped, a solid body, upon that strategic spot, on the logical line of battle in this country, that faces the REVOLUTION, first, last and all the time.

In other countries, abroad, for reasons that they are best judges of, there may be Socialist Labor Parties with a Revolutionary left wing, a Reactionary right wing, and a center fused of both. Obedient to the economic, social and political lay of the land in America—with the Republican party representing the enthroned capitalist class; with the Democratic party to take in the bourgeois refuse of

radicalism—America's SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY is revolutionary throughout. From its extremist left to its extremist right, and crisscross across its center, INTELLECT and TEMPERAMENT combine in ONE REVOLUTIONARY SPIRIT.

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