

EDITORIAL

THE USES OF KINGDON.

By DANIEL DE LEON

“**L**EST we may forget” the luminous Marxian generalization that “it is not because he is a leader of industry that a man is a capitalist; on the contrary, he is a leader of industry because he is a capitalist”—lest we may forget this valuable pointer, and fall into the bourgeois-cultivated error that capital is a reward of leadership in industry—lest the fact and the important conclusions therefrom fail to be constantly kept in mind, the stock holders of the Missouri Pacific and Iron Mountain Railroad have considerably elected Kingdon Gould, the son of George J. Gould, and grandson of Jay Gould a member of their Board of Directors.

This action on the part of the M.P. & I.M.R.R. is, indeed, considerate. The profundity of the Marxian theory, quoted above, could not be better confirmed. Kingdon Gould knows about railroading or its financing no more than a spinster knows the division of a battle, nor even the bookish theorick thereof, wherein even the togaed consuls could propose more masterly than he. Yet Kingdon becomes a leader in industry. Why? Simply because he is a capitalist.

Again, Kingdon promises to illustrate another Marxian principle—at least those who elected him a director expect he will, and have said so.

Marx points out that one of the functions of the capitalist, by reason whereof he becomes a “leader of industry,” is the function of exploitation, on account of which the form of his leadership, or control is *despotic*. That the electors of Kingdon expect much from this particular function appears from the gusto with which they have hearkened back to an incident in Kingdon’s freshman year at Columbia when the stripling drew a pistol upon his fellow students. The electors of Kingdon Gould probably hearkened still further back. They probably recalled, but preferred for good reasons not to mention the incident in the switchmen’s strike at Buffalo of

1892, when the switchmen struck to help enforce the 10-hour railroad law just passed, and when the Sheriff of Erie County, refusing to pretend that he could not enforce order and thus furnish an excuse for the calling out of the troops, George Gould, Kingdon's father, shook his fist under the Sheriff's nose and, in regulation capitalist "law and order" style, threatened him with bodily harm. Like father, like son had been verified at Columbia; like father like son is now expected to be verified upon a larger scale by the new "leader of industry."

Thus, like measles and New England rum, which, according to Artemus Ward, have their mission in the scheme of Nature, Kingdon Gould has his mission in the scheme of social enlightenment on two cardinal points—the point of the genesis of the leader of industry, and the point of the despotic function of such leadership.

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

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slpns@slp.org