

# DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 11, NO. 69.

NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 1910.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

## “SECOND CHAMBERS.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**HE “abusiveness” that Marx has been charged with by European bourgeois writers, and which even as late as eight years ago Carl Schurz echoed and dwelt upon in this country, is vindicated anew by the work of J.A.R. Marriott, M.A., of Oxford College. Not that Mr. Marriott has come out as a Marxian. Quite to the contrary. But that his book furnishes additional evidence for the charge of “shallowness” that Marx brought home to the bourgeois intellectuals.

Mr. Marriott’s work is entitled *Second Chambers*. It is a work on history intended to show that the dual chamber system is in and of itself a chunk of wisdom in behalf of “sober second thoughts.” All the historic facts mentioned are correctly mentioned, and in proper sequence. So far as that goes the work is a valuable addition to a library. Beyond that Mr. Marriott’s work is worthless—except as a horrible example of how blundering history is if the historian is not an economist and sociologist.

Acquaintance with Economics and with the twin sisters of Economics, Sociology and Ethnology, would have taught Mr. Marriott that the dual chamber system is the political offspring of the political State. Where the political State arises democracy is smashed: society is ruptured into social classes—one a ruling, the other a ruled class. The political State springs up as a necessary contrivance of the rulers to keep the ruled down. An arm of that contrivance of domination is the political legislature. The original political legislature has but one chamber, as Mr. Marriott’s history teaches him. The one chamber system, borrowed from the one chamber system of communal society, soon reveals its imperfections in political government. The ruled, however cowed down, are a seething mass. A single chamber is not a strong enough bulwark against the “unsober first thoughts” that boil up from the seething mass below, to whom concessions must be and are

periodically made. The consequence is the evolution of a Second Chamber—a sort of second string to the bow of Domination. The Second Chamber acts as a sort of corrective to concessions made: it is in the nature of a thimble-rig by means of which what was conceded, and what the fatuous imagined was their salvation, is made to vanish under the aspect of fair play. It is the “now you see it, now you a don’t” at the green table of Usurpation.

Had Mr. Marriott fathomed his subject he would have perceived all this—and more. He would have perceived that the identical causes, which originally dictated the evolution of the Second Chamber, are now, right under his own nose, dictating the evolution of “Third Chambers.” De facto there are Third chambers springing up everywhere in capitalist society—additional bodies through which legislation is made to filter. The perception of this significant fact would have explained to Mr. Marriott—

1. Why Single Chambers do not work to-day;
2. Whose “sober second thoughts” it is that demands Second Chambers;
3. That the very pressure for “Third Chambers,” and “Fourth Chambers”—under the name of “Boards,” and under the guise of “veto power” over general legislation, conferred upon local magistrates, like the Mayor of New York—is a symptom of the growing intensity of the fires that cause the mass of the ruled to seethe; and
4. That in the heat of this fire the conditions are melting away which necessitated the curb of the Political State, and that, with the melting away of the same, the Political State, its Chambers and all, will be consumed.

That, looming above the horizon, are the outlines of the Socialist or Industrial Republic, the modern and up-to-date Communist State of old,—of that the bourgeois intellectual has no inkling. He is too intellectually purblind, that is, too shallow to “see.”

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
Uploaded October 2011

[slpns@slp.org](mailto:slpns@slp.org)