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EDITORIAL

INSCRUTABLE ARE THE WAYS OF PROVIDENCE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

Sweet are the uses of adversity;
Which, like the toad, ugly and
Venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in his
head.

—*Shakespeare.*¹

TACTICS, much more than principle, is what the present situation demands in order to switch the overwhelming majority of the working class and of all other decent people in line with the Socialist Movement, and end the misrule of Capitalism. Principle, of course, must be sound and straight. Without that there could be no proper Socialist Movement. But the principles of Socialism, like all abstract Truth, are simple: they can be condensed into a nutshell: and, what is more, they are quite generally understood. There are enough men in the country to-day, who realize that Socialism is right, to turn down the capitalist system, and set up the Socialist Republic. Why does this mass hold aloof? It is not clear upon the tactics requisite to the desired end. While principle, being greatly aided by sentiment, may be settled on by elemental knowledge, tactics, on the other hand, being wholly dependent upon positive knowledge, can be settled on only by a comprehensive view of facts, living facts, facts in motion, accordingly, by a comprehensive view of conflicting streams. This confuses the average mind, especially when its time is taken up with the struggle for existence. The stored experience of the past is not available to them. They must make their own experience: These masses can profit only by their own observations. Hence it comes that, to-day, what is most needed is a knowledge of correct tactics, a knowledge of

¹ [*As You Like It*, Act 2, Scene I]

the correctness of the tactics of the Socialist Labor Party. And this knowledge is being imparted to that vast on-looking mass from quarters least expected.

The stern tactics of the S.L.P. are the sole tactics that the nature of the Social Problem demands. But the masses can not of themselves appreciate their soundness. They are taken for too severe; and the inexperienced masses were all the more inclined to their opinion by the attitude of the Organized Scabbery, misnamed the "Trades Unions." The Organized Scabbery met the S.L.P. indictment against them by pronouncing it "shameful attacks," "vilification," "disgraceful conduct," "maligning of decent men," etc., etc. Surely, thought the on-looking mass, the tactics of the S.L.P. unnecessarily create enemies to it: its principles and rectitude are unquestionable: but its tactics are offensive. And they stayed away.

It was banking upon the frame of mind of that vast and increasingly vast on-looking mass that the capitalist politicians, aided by their cubs, Organized Scabbery, launched the Social Democratic party in this city, then in this State and then in the rest of the country. To the slogan "Other Tactics," "Kinder Tactics," they set up "another Socialist party," declared the S.L.P. "dying, dying, dead"; put their bogus in charge of the crooks who lent themselves to such practices; and confidently expected that the Socialist Movement would now be scuttled. They were too previous. They underrated the intelligence of the masses. The decoy-duck that they set up created confusion, but failed to attract the masses. These continued to look on, to watch, to observe,—and to learn. The latest lesson they received was last Sunday, it was a valuable one.

The Social Democratic or Kangaroo party had joined the Central Labor Union. The two became known as the Central Federated Union. The "kinder" and "other" tactics were to be exemplified there. And they were. The Kangaroo licked the boots of the Organized Scabbery that ran that sink of corruption, and the Kangaroo press throughout the country shouted "progress!" Presently, what sounds broke out on the startled air? The Kangaroo, smarting under the kicks administered to him by the S.L.P., and realizing full well that he had to make some kind of protest against the "Civic Federation" sell-out of the Gompers crew, did stammer some mild protest against the act. They had to do so to keep up some appearance of decency; and they also knew that their protest would have to be very gentle because they had just voted for Gompers at Scranton, notwithstanding last year Gompers had already

joined hands with the “Civic Federation.” But their protest, timid tho’ it was, raised a storm. All the invectives formerly hurled by the Organized Scabbery at the S.L.P. were hurled at the “kinder” and “other” tactics. Correct! He who pulls one hair from the tiger’s moustache will have upon him the whole tiger, just as if he had tried to pull a tooth out of the tiger.

And thus sweet are the uses of adversity. The ugly and venomous Kangaroo, a nuisance and a gravel in the shoe tho’ he is to the Socialist Movement, still wears a precious jewel in his head. He,—meant for scuttling the Socialist Movement—becomes the source of valuable information, that will help the onlooking masses to appreciate the wisdom of the S.L.P. tactics, and to join in facing the tiger of capitalism in the only way the beast can be successfully tackled.

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

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