

EDITORIAL

## WHAT POSSIBLE INCENTIVE?

By DANIEL DE LEON

“**W**HAT possible incentive,” writes Lawrence F. Abbott of the *Outlook* to ex-Gov. Edward C. Stokes of New Jersey, “can there be to a man with Col. Roosevelt’s record . . . to enter the arduous, disagreeable and often disastrous contests into which the candidate who struggles for the Presidency is inevitably plunged?”

What possible incentive?

After many months of following his master in the hope of receiving from him a vast island as the reward of his services, and receiving, instead, hardly anything else than his share of the blows that fell upon Don Quixote, Sancho Panza’s expectations were at last realized. The two having fallen in with a certain Duke of Aragon, who realized they were types to play upon, and who had the means to gratify his humor, pretended he had received instructions to bestow upon Sancho the absolute rule of the Insula Barataria as the spoils of his master’s prowesses. Sancho departed for and was installed Governor in Barataria. But his reign was troubled and short.

Under instructions from the Duke his vassals in “Barataria” led Sancho a miserable life, while pretending veneration for his exalted office. He, a hearty and heavy eater, was held under the strictest of diets—for the sake of his precious health. He, a lover of sleep, was kept on the go—owing to the profoundness of his wisdom that required his personal attention to the details of his rule. Finally, one night, he who loved deeds of valor as much as a hare, was suddenly hauled out of bed to the sound of cries that Barataria was invaded by enemies, and, the lights being put out, was thrown down in the hustle and received a sound drubbing, until the cry was heard that the enemy was repulsed, thanks to the valorous and invincible arms of Sancho.

That was more than Sancho was willing to put up with. Soon as he recovered from his fright and had wiped out the cold sweat from his body, he walked in silence to the stable, kissed his donkey, saddled him, and left to return to his master. Sancho never returned to Barataria. But on his way to his master, and after a refreshing snooze or two, he felt sorry for having given up his Insula of Barataria. He reasoned that all the troubles he there went through notwithstanding, “that thing of ordering and being obeyed has its charms.”

What possible incentive can there be to Theodore Roosevelt to re-plunge into a Presidential struggle? If Sancho Panza, who, as he himself observed, came empty-handed to Barataria and returned empty-handed, could forget the pricks of rule, it surely is no puzzle why Theodore Roosevelt, who surely can not hold the same language with regard to the Presidency, should hanker after the “arduous, disagreeable and often disastrous” experiences of a Presidential contest.

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