

EDITORIAL

WILSON AND THE LAW.

By DANIEL DE LEON

“**T**HE law was brought into this world not to guide the strong but to protect the weak”—said Woodrow Wilson in his much advertised Detroit speech.

How, when, and where was that delivery made?

Law is born with society; and society’s mother is Democracy—not Philanthropy, or any such abomination born of Class Rule.

Would anyone in his senses say a railroad time-table “is brought into the world not to guide the strong but to protect the weak”? Hardly, if his senses embrace digested history. And yet, a railroad time-table has all the essentials of Law.

What is “LAW?”

To-day, when one contemplates the thing that is called “Law,” and that passes for “Law,” as distorted a vision is obtained of the sociologic thing “LAW” as Zama-cois, or any three-legged and twelve-fingered micro-cephalic clown-hunchback, rigged in silks and kept for the amusement of My Lords and Ladies, presents a distorted vision of the species “MAN.”

“LAW” is a plant, the birth of which implies conditions of Equality, not theoretic, but actual; that Equality that enables the Individual to take care of himself, without the protection of anybody, anymore than he contributes in affording to all. “LAW,” accordingly, in its original purity, in the tribal Age that knew not Class Rule, since it knew not Classes, that sign manual of Inequality;—“LAW,” accordingly, in its original purity, contemplated no “weak”—it had none—hence had none to protect.

What, then, is “LAW?”

The railroad time-table answers the question.

“LAW” is that institution that arises the instant more than one human being

combine(s) for a common purpose. When two combine several do simultaneously. That instant the “time-table” becomes a necessity. It protects no weak; it guides no strong. What it does is to convey to all the information necessary whereby to accomplish their purpose. Obviously, everybody can not leave on a train any hour he wishes. The attempt would soon block itself. In order to travel at all, stated hours of departure and arrival are necessary. That is the essence of “LAW.” Information to all, by the observance of which the actions of each may be regulated so as to compass the objects of all and each.

Such was “LAW” at one time; such will “LAW” be again, when the Political State,—the scaffolding with the aid of which the structure of the Industrial or Socialist Republic is being reared—shall have been removed, and, Equality being restored, the cudgel, that modern Law actually is against the dominated in the hands of the dominant class, will be relegated to museums of antique horrors.

Even if this campaign does naught else than to warn by exemplifying, in the person of the cultured and lofty-minded Woodrow Wilson, the ravages that class habits of thought make upon the choicest spirits, the campaign will not have been in vain.

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