

EDITORIAL

THE COMING CAMPAIGN.

By DANIEL DE LEON

IT is quite possible that quite a number of militants in the Hearst movement are sincerely after “pure” government; quite certain, however, is the fact that the majority of those gentlemen are more or less shrewd “political navigators,” men who scent the approach of a certain political weather, and organize to be carried into office by the winds which they foresee. That something much stronger than a breeze, much stronger than a wind, and very much like a gale is now blowing and will blow quite fiercely before the election day is over, may be judged from the following conversation reported by a Kingston Democrat. Said he:

“It is just as it was in New York last year. Many of my Republican friends in that city told me they voted for Hearst, frankly confessing that they did not think much of him personally.

“I said to one of them, ‘You were foolish. You could have elected Ivins if you had voted for him with the others who bolted.’

“‘But,’ he said, ‘that was just what we didn’t want to do. We wanted to beat Ivins.’

“‘Then why did you not vote for McClellan?’ I asked.

“‘Because we wanted to beat him, too,’ he replied, ‘and who was there to vote for but Hearst, whatever we think of him personally?’”

In other words, the political gale that is rising aims at just one thing—to down both the old political parties. For years and years there has been a growing dissatisfaction among the masses. The majority of these, being wholly unenlightened by Socialist teachings, have imputed their troubles to the political party that happened to be in office. They never penetrated below the surface; they have no inkling of the fact that the trouble lies with the social system. They blamed the Republican party when in power; then they blamed the Democratic party; moreover, whichever of the two parties was in power, the dissatisfaction spread and

deepened in the several municipalities, Republican and Democratic alike. As a consequence, the sentiment has been growing that it was useless trying to improve things by kicking one set of rascals out when the kicking out had to be done by kicking in another set of rascals. The cumulative evidence of rampant corruption in both parties added weight to the conviction that neither could be really purified except by the simultaneous kick-out of both. The conversation reported by the Kingston Democrat is an evidence of this sentiment. Quite shrewd, under the circumstances, are the political calculators in charge of the Hearst movement. They figure correctly upon a good fighting chance of drawing to themselves a sufficient number of both the old party men to scuttle the two old party candidates, and themselves sail into office.

They are right, and they can count with more than the regulation old party men. The political weather which these political navigators are justly scenting will divide the voters of this State into two main divisions. On one side will be drawn first, all those elements that pin their faith in an “entirely new deal”; secondly, all those elements that have a vague idea of the real trouble, but that being, in the main, visionaries, the “reformers” and the pure and simple political Socialists, are naturally captivated by revolutionary phrases. The other main division will consist of the Socialist Labor Party forces. There will be three other but only secondary divisions—the organization men of the two old parties and of the Socialist party who will stick together so as to “save their organizations”—and the prospect of future boodle.

Such an alignment is natural and in the cards. Whoever believes that the trouble lies with the old parties merely, naturally must flock to the Hearst standard; and all those other people who feel more or less vaguely Socialistic should and probably will do the same thing. The only people who are disgusted with the old parties, but whose joining Hearst would be folly and consequently will not do so, are the voters who have been drilled in the Socialist Labor Party principle. These people know that the political victory, which alone will accomplish results, can be only that political victory that comes equipped with and backed by the proper economic organization. These people are not looking for immediate “political success”; they know that not such can be had; they are builders. All such people will be utterly

inaccessible to Hearst. On the other hand, no sane man, except those who wish to preserve their own party machine, will vote the Socialist party ticket in this State. That party can not win, Hearst probably will win. The sane thing to do from the premises of those who have trained with that party, and have not yet graduated into the S.L.P., is to go with Hearst, as they undoubtedly will.

Thus the Hearst movement will bring about the following main alignments—on one side, the element that sincerely believe in the efficacy of a “new deal”; on the other side the element that know their day has not yet come, and are building for the future. Beside and around these two elements of conviction—the Hearst and the Socialist Labor Party—there will be the three other groups—the machine Republicans, the machine Democrats and the machine pure and simple political Socialists, or S.P.’s.

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