

EDITORIAL

TERMS DEFINED.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE scuttle-fish nature is not limited to the Kingdom Fish. Two-legged terrestrial beings also often partake of the scuttle-fish nature.

In the Labor Movement the two-legged terrestrial scuttle-fish needs an opaque atmosphere to move in. He produces the same by creating confusion on terms. For that reason, a periodical redefinition of terms is essential to progress—though not to the comfort of the scuttle-fish mammal.

POLITICAL ACTION—all the legitimate acts connected with the effort to elect men to political office.

It includes nomination of candidates, agitation by voters and non-voters for their election, and voting for them by the voters. It also includes activity in political office on the part of those who are elected.

It does not include blowing up a political adversary. Although the blowing up may have a political consequence, it is no more “political action” than are the cramps that may carry off a Czar, although the said cramps may have serious political consequences.

OPPORTUNISM—the wisdom that guides man in all walks of life, civil and political.

The man on the fifth story of a house, and looking out of a window that opens out on the street, who decides to go on that street adopts opportunism. The first thing he does is to turn his back upon the street, look for the staircase, follow its windings, and finally reach the street

In political life the man who aims as the Social Revolution will not jump “out of the window,” so to speak. He will “take the staircase, follow its windings,” and get there.

It does not include the policy of hunting with the hounds and running with the

hares. That is “double dealing.”

DIRECT ACTION—physical force only for the accomplishment of social changes.

It includes dynamite, the pistol, the dagger, the blackjack, the sandbag, theft, sabotage, and all other acts typical of Anarchy.

It excludes “Political Action” and everything connected therewith.

THE BALLOT—the document containing the names of political candidates and such issues used in the pursuit of Political Action. The Ballot is used at the hustings—the civilized battlefield upon which meet all the opposing forces within society.

It excludes all papers, or other methods, used within an organization to ascertain the opinion, or choice of officers of that organization. Such papers are not The Ballot.

PHYSICAL FORCE—the method and outcome of Direct Action.

It includes all acts of force out of season, that is, before The Ballot has done its work, and before the element defeated at the hustings repudiates the fiat of The Ballot. It therefore includes all the dishonorable weapons in the arsenal of Direct Action.

It excludes the exercise of Force in season, that is, when the element defeated at the hustings, repudiates the fiat of The Ballot. The Force that is then called into existence appears obedient to the summons of civilization to rescue it from the barbarism that those would plunge society into who dishonor The Ballot. That Force is War.

IMPOSSIBILISM—the name given by traffickers with Evil to the policy of those who hold that compromise with evil is criminal.

It includes the belief that capitalist society is not a tenable social proposition; that the overthrow of capitalist society means the establishment of an Industrial Republic in lieu of the Political State; that the Industrial or Socialist social order demands for its establishment the Industrial, class-conscious organization of the useful occupations of the land as the constituency of the Congress of the future, and likewise demands an “Impossibilist” political party of Socialism as requisite for the recruiting of the Industrial Organization. All that is “Impossibilism.”

It excludes the A.F. of L. with the Civic Federation and Militia of Christ affinities. It excludes all parties, whether they fly the Socialist colors or not, that fuse with capitalist candidates, that act as gougers and rounders for the A.F. of L., that tolerate the doing of business in the Socialist Temple, and whose “possibilism” spells “getting there” for individuals, and whose “intellectualism” consists in the vainglory of talking nonsense grammatically.

It is well to keep terms clearly defined.

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Uploaded May 2013

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