

Daniel De Leon

Editorial: This is Growth

Stripped of the nonsense of Coxeyism pure and simple—from the “reincarnation” swindle, the “non-interest paying bonds” tomfoolery, and many another undesirable feature that is more or less common to most of the various armies that have been marching upon Washington—Coxeyism may be justly put under the head of progress.

Time was when the suffering masses used to turn their eyes only upon the local and immediate cause of their sufferings. If a boss was brutal, if wages were inhumanly reduced, if the hours of work were cruelly extended, if the mill or the mine shut down and thereby decreed starvation upon the homes of the workers, the people struck in various ways against THAT mine, THAT mill, THAT boss. Accordingly all those uprisings of the people were stamped with a local character. So long as that was the case the popular instinct was wrongly prompted.

The ills that afflict modern society are not due to individuals, and do not proceed from local causes. They are due to the system; accordingly, they are national. To turn to an individual boss for redress, to rise in strike on the spot of the wrong, was substantially to misdirect energy.

The Coxey movement denotes progress inasmuch as all the “armies” turn their eyes AWAY FROM the particular locality where they are stricken and turn their eyes TO the head center of the nation. They do not bother about Boss A, B, or C in California, Massachusetts or Texas; they look to Washington,

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i.e., to the national public powers, for redress. A world of difference lies in the instincts that direct such a movement from the instincts that directed{,} or rather misdirected, previous ones.

So long as the “strike” was local, it was isolated. However much the theory of solidarity was preached and may at such times have been asserted, the local character of their immediate aims stripped them of, or rather concealed, their national import.

So long as the “strike” was directed against a given boss or his establishment it was marked as an exclusively economic or industrial affair, to the exclusion of the political—i.e., it was unbalanced.

The Coxe movement is an improvement upon all this. By turning to Washington, the national capital, for redress, the “strike” proceeds from, establishes and enlists the solidarity of the nation’s whole class of workers, and furthermore, it imparts to the “strike” a political character. Thus it unifies forever the industrial or economic with the political feature of the Social Question; it establishes the equilibrium between the two. The lameness that had hitherto characterized the “strike” is relieved; its two legs are set in motion, and they move in unison.

Whatever may be the immediate outcome of the Coxe movement—whether it fizzles into nothing or not, whether it melt away or be clubbed apart—it certainly will mark an era in the historic storm that is bound soon to culminate in the overthrow of banditism or Capitalism in America.

The sense of national solidarity once awakened, the understanding once made clear of the intimate unity there is between the industrial and the political feature of the oncoming revolution, the next wave will rise as high above that of Coxeism as Coxeism rose above all previous ones.

The next wave will bear the banner on which will be inscribed in bold letters:

This is Growth

DOWN WITH THE CAPITALIST AND
WAGE SYSTEM OF PRODUCTION!
UP THE SOCIALIST OR CO-OPERATIVE
COMMONWEALTH!

And the men who will bear that banner will not march upon Washington to PETITION the government; they will march upon Washington themselves to CONSTITUTE government; themselves the chosen ones of the American proletariat, chosen at the ballot box by the Socialist vote of a nation that has decided to be free.

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*A De Leon editorial transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the
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