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EDITORIAL

THE POWER OF CLASS INSTINCT.

By DANIEL DE LEON

DR. Woodrow Wilson, the Democratic candidate for Governor in New Jersey, is a gentleman and a scholar. The exact opposite of Roosevelt, who is shallow and a rowdy, Dr. Wilson has read deep and refinement typifies his every act. All this notwithstanding we find Dr. Wilson guilty of the following utterance made in the course of his speech in New Brunswick on the 26th of this month:

“The oldest struggle of man was against being controlled too much by government.”

’Tis hard to imagine a statement that is more seemingly true, and yet more thoroughly untrue.

The oldest struggle of man in the sense of Dr. Woodrow Wilson, was not against being governed too much but against being governed at all. Owing to the crazy posture of the Anarchists the statement that man’s earliest struggles were against being governed at all may give a color to the Anarchist theory. Both Dr. Woodrow Wilson and the Anarchists are in error.

Government, in the sense of a central directing authority, always was; and never was there any struggle against that. In the early tribal period such central directing authority was part and parcel of the people, and its function was necessary for production, such as it was. The central directing authority was, accordingly, a sharer in the productive activity of the tribe. When “government” arose all this changed. “Government” from its inception meant oppression; it implied class supremacy over class; it was, accordingly, an organism separate and apart from the body politic.

Of course, such an organism was fought against. But, for one thing, never was “government” fought against by the ruling class: the separate divisions of the ruling

class did fight, and often did the fight violently, but they fought, not against “government,” they fought against one another for the ownership of “government”—as for instance the sub-class, which Dr. Wilson represents, now fighting the class that Lewis represents, each trying to secure control of “government.” For another thing, the ruled class, at each recurring period of a lucid interval of class-consciousness, fought, not against being “governed” too much, but against being “governed” at all, that is against being oppressed.

Powerful is the developed Class Instinct. It is powerful enough to force Nonsense into the mouth of even so learned a man as Dr. Woodrow Wilson.

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