

EDITORIAL

“AMERICAN CONSERVATISM.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

ON the identical day that President-elect Taft addressed a deputation from South Carolina in Augusta, upon the beauties of American conservatism, as “proved by the determination of our people not to make the government different from that which our fathers and forefathers contemplated in the formation and maintenance of the constitution”—on that identical day, and without a blush, the dominant party of the State of Indiana, in caucus assembled to decide upon a Federal Senator, proceeded upon the principle that, not the State of Indiana, but the Principality of Beer was to be represented and needed representation in the Senate; and, obedient to the decision, the “brewery interests” of the Nation in and outside of Indiana won out, nominating Benjamin F. Shively of South Bend.

This denotes a revolution, as radical as the revolution of weaving by steam, or traveling by electric power.

Both by the letter and by the history of their enactment, the Constitutional clauses concerning the formation of the Federal Senate are reflexes and vestiges of the feudal system, a system in which territory, land, is the constituency, a sacrosanct constituency, at that. Congress has the power to increase or reduce the number of Representatives in the House; it has not the power to reduce the representation of any State in the Senate, without the consent of the State itself. The theory of the Constitution, as regards the Senate, was purely feudalistic. Acres, not men, nor yet chattels, was represented. “Hands off!” from that Holy of Holies.

Such was the government that the “fathers and forefathers contemplated.” Such is the government that the President-elect pretends we are still living under. And such is the government, which, as a matter of fact no longer exists. The latest Senatorial election in Indiana is the latest cumulative evidence of the revolution

that has actually taken place.

Industry knows not territory, nor acres. It is no longer States (their acres) that are represented in the Senate. It is industries. Much tho' the fact be disguised, a fact it is that the Mining Industry, the Railroad Industry, the Textile Industry, the Sugar Industry, the Tobacco Industry, etc., etc., and now the Brewery Industry are the entities that have seats in the Senate. These entities cross all State lines. A Senator may be owlshly addressed by the President of the Senate: "Will the Senator of Indiana yield the floor to the Senator of New York!" What he means is: "Will the Senator of the Brewing Industry yield the floor to the Senator of the Railroad, or of the Banking Industry?" as the case may be.

"American Conservatism"? There is none such. Americans are no ante-diluvian oysters, petrified to a rock.

"American Conservatism"?—rather call the thing American bourgeois lip-reverence to an extinct fetich.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

Uploaded May 2010

slpns@slp.org