

Ten Canons
of the
Proletarian
Revolution



DANIEL DE LEON

TEN CENTS

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of the
Proletarian Revolution

A REVOLUTIONARY DECALOGUE.

By
DANIEL DE LEON



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THE CREED OF A REVOLUTIONIST.

Dare to be a Daniel,
Dare to stand alone,
Dare to have a purpose firm,
Dare to make it known.

—Favorite lines of Daniel De Leon.

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INTRODUCTION.

The Ten Canons of a Revolutionist are, as they originally stand, part of the second part—The Warning of the Gracchi—of “Two Pages from Roman History,” being lessons deduced from blunders or weaknesses of the two Gracchi brothers in their struggle with the Roman patriciate. Beyond a doubt, these Ten Canons are the clearest, the most concise outline of conduct of the Proletarian Revolution that have ever been penned. They amount practically to a code of revolutionary conduct and tactical ethics. Because of this, we have considered it valuable and proper to publish them in handy pamphlet form by themselves, so that the rest of the material, however significant in itself, shall not detract attention from these revolutionary canons, so important and essential that they ought to be engraved on the mind of every revolutionist, the “leaders” as well as the rank and file.

The strength, the cool, relentless and unassailable logic of each of these rules of conduct, could never at any time fail to strike the revolutionist, but it is only since the Proletarian Revolution actually got into action that we can fully appreciate these revolutionary “ten commandments.” So concrete are they that they might

well have been written in the strong light of present European events instead of as they were in the light of the events of Roman history of the second century B.C.

Turn to the first canon: how near did not Kerensky (the Gaius Gracchus of the Russian Revolution, without the latter's essential nobility of character and purity of purpose) come to steering the Russian Revolution onto the rocks by the lure of the Constituent Assembly! But the Revolution—with true revolutionists coming to the helm—abhorred form and the Constituent Assembly was dissolved to the tune of a united howl of the "democratic" bourgeois world and the bourgeois "Socialist" world of "undemocratic methods," of "suppression," of "dictatorship." The Bolsheviki, undisturbed, upheld the essence of the Revolution and let the forms take care of themselves in due time.

Turn to the eighth canon and again we see "Gaius Gracchus" Kerensky in action, leading the Revolution to the very brink of destruction with no sounder chart or more scientific instrument than marvelous rhetoric—the weapon of reform. We see the Revolution rescued in the very nick of time when true Marxian revolutionists, wielding the "tempered steel of sterner stuff," politely—more or less—relieved him of his leadership for which this reformer, in a period of revolution, was utterly unfit.

Turn to the tenth canon and we have a graphic picture of what actually took place in Germany when history gave the Social Democracy the opportunity to play

the revolutionary part. The Social Democracy—and it was true of the Independents as well—with its morale utterly destroyed by the tinkering with capitalist reforms for nearly three decades, was wholly unfit to play the revolutionary role which by its position as the Socialist party of Germany it had assumed. It “made peace with the usurper” and Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg and others had to pay the penalty.

This only by way of illustration. Every line in the canons is replete with lessons traceable to present-day events.

It remains but for the sake of clearness to say a word of the Gracchi. Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus were brothers who figured successively. Tiberius began his work in 133 B. C. with the introduction of a series of reforms in opposition to the Senate. He was assassinated by the Senators. A few years later Gaius took up the work and carried it on for a while successfully, but in 121 B. C., left in the lurch by the proletariat, he fled from Rome while his followers were being massacred, and committed suicide in the Grove of the Furies.

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*I wish to see a world that's free of guile:
A world no more a market-place, but made
A vineyard, and a garden, and a school.
I wish to see men's eyes freed of that sly
That mean, that shrewd, that knowing, cunning gleam
Which now proclaims to all abroad the creature
Who hath attained the hideous shame that's called
success.*

*I wish to see men strive for finer ends
Than those of furtive gain, of secret rule,
Or dull and stupid labor for a crust!
I wish to see the worthy hour arrive
When flaunting show will be disgrace, when all
Must do their measured doles of toil for food, for roof,
For everything of need, but none at all of spoil,
And leave some time for every man to raise
His eyes from trough, or furrow, and to live
With thought, with love, with nature, with the gods!*

— ODIN GREGORY: "CAIUS GRACCHUS."

TEN CANONS

of the

PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

Out of the shipwreck of the Gracchian Movement and tactics ten planks come floating down to our own days. They may be termed the warnings uttered by the shades of the Gracchi. They may be erected into so many Canons of the Proletarian Revolution. These canons dovetail into one another. At times it is hard to keep them apart, so close is their interrelation, seeing they are essentially differentiations of a central idea thrown up by the singular nature, already indicated, of the proletariat as a revolutionary force:

CANON I.

The Proletarian Revolution Abhors Forms.

It was a blunder of the Gracchian Movement to devote time and energy to the changing of the forms of the suffrage. The characteristic weakness of the proletariat renders it prone to lures. It, the least favored of all historic revolutionary classes, is called upon to carry out a revolution that is pivoted upon the most complicated synthesis, and one withal that is easiest to be obscured by the dust that its very foe, the capitalist class, is able to raise most plentifully. The essence of

this revolution—the overthrow of wage slavery—cannot be too forcefully held up. Nor can the point be too forcefully kept in evidence that, short of the abolition of wage slavery, all “improvements” either accrue to capitalism, or are the merest moonshine where they are not sidetracks.

It matters not how the voting is done; it matters not whether we have the Australian ballot or the Maltese ballot; it matters not whether we have the secret ballot or the *viva voce* ballot—aye, if it comes to it, it should not matter whether we have the ballot at all. All such “improvements”—like the modern “ballot reforms” and schemes for “referendums,” “initiative,” “election of Federal Senators by popular vote,” and what not—are, in the very nature of things, so many lures to allow the revolutionary heat to radiate into vacancy. They are even worse than that: they are opportunities for the usurper to prosecute his own usurpatory purposes under the guise, aye, with the aid and plaudits of his victims, who imagine they are commanding, he obeying their bidding — as we see happening today.

The proletarian’s chance to emerge out of the bewildering woods of “capitalist issues” is to keep his eyes riveted upon the economic interests of his own class—the collective ownership of the land on and the tools with which to work—without which the cross he bears today will wax ever heavier, to be passed on still heavier to his descendants. No “forms” will stead.

The Proletarian Revolution Is Relentlessly Logical.

Often has the charge been made against the Socialist Labor Party that it is "intolerant," that its officers are "unyielding." The Proletarian Revolution can know no "tolerance," because "tolerance" in social dynamics spells "inconsistency." Tiberius Gracchus overlooked the principle, and all that therefrom flows, in his revamped Licinian law. If the Sempronian law meant anything; if the attitude of Tiberius, together with that of the proletarian mass that took him for its paladin, meant anything, it meant that the landlord-plutocracy of Rome was a criminal class—criminal in having plundered the Commonwealth of its estate, doubly criminal in turning its plunder to the purpose of degrading the people and thereby sapping the safety of the State. The only logical conclusion from such premises and posture is a demand for the unconditional surrender of the social felon. The Sempronian law, so far from taking this stand, took the opposite. By its confirmation, implied only though the confirmation was of proprietary rights in stolen goods, by its provision for indemnity to the robbers, the Gracchian Movement became illogical; it thereby became untrue to itself. It truckled to usurpation; it thereby emasculated itself.

With the Proletarian Revolution, not a point that it scores, not an act that it commits deliberately, not a claim that it sets forth may be at fisticuffs with one another, or with the principles that they are born of. Capitalism is an usurpation: the usurpation must be overthrown. Labor produces all wealth: all wealth belongs to labor. Any act that indicates—or, rather, I shall put it this way: any action that, looking toward “gentleness” or “tolerance,” sacrifices the logic of the situation, unnerves the Revolution. With the Proletarian Revolution, every proposition must be abreast of its aspirations; where not, it limps, it stumbles and falls.

CANON III.

Palliatives Are Palliations of Wrong.

Plausible are phrases concerning the “wisdom of not neglecting small things,” and the suggestions to “accept half a loaf where a whole loaf cannot yet be had.” The Gracchian Movement yielded to this optical illusion. Even the old Licinian law, much more so its revamped form of a Sempronian law, was cast in that mold. “All that the people were entitled to they could not get.” They were to have a “first installment,” a slice of what was due; in short, a palliative. The Gracchian Movement thereby gave itself a fatal stab.

If the palliative could trammel up the consequence; if it could be the be-all and end-all here, then, what ills might flow might be ignored as neglectable quantities.

But here also the relentless logic of the Proletarian Revolution commends the ingredients of his poisoned chalice to the bungler's own lips.

In the first place, the same hand that reaches out the "palliative" to the *wronged*, reaches out the "palliation" to the *wrong*. The two acts are inseparable. The latter is an inevitable consequence of the former. Request a little, when you have a right to the whole, and your request, whatever declamatory rhetoric or abstract scientific verbiage it be accompanied with, works a subscription to the principle that wrongs you. Worse yet: the "palliative" may or may not—and more frequently yes than otherwise—be wholly visionary; the "palliation," however, is ever tangible; tangible to feeling as to sight; no visionariness there. The palliative, accordingly, ever steels the wrong that is palliated.

In the second place, the palliative works the evil of inoculating the Revolutionary Force with a fundamental misconception of the nature of the foe it has to deal with. The tiger will defend the tips of his mustache with the same ferocity that he will defend his very heart. It is an instinctive process. The recourse to palliatives proceeds from, and it imperceptibly inculcates the theory that he would not. It proceeds from the theory that the capitalist class will allow itself to be "pared off" to death. A fatal illusion. The body of Tiberius Gracchus, mangled to death by the landlord-plutocratic tiger of Rome, sounds the warning against the illusion. The tiger of capitalism will protect its

superfluities with the same ferocity that it will protect its very existence. Nothing is gained on the road of palliatives; all may be lost.

CANON IV.

The Proletarian Revolution Brings Along Its Own Code.

When, at the critical stage of the revolution he was active in, Tiberius Gracchus took a "short cut across lots," and removed, regardless of "legality," the colleague that blocked his way, consciously or unconsciously he acted obedient to that canon of the Proletarian Revolution that it must march by its own light, look to itself alone, and that, whatever act it contemplates, it judges by the code of law, that, though as yet unformulated into statute, it is carrying in its own womb. When, afterwards, Tiberius looked for justification to the laws of the very class that he was arrayed against, he slid off the revolutionary plane, and dragged his revolution down, along with himself. The revolutionist who seeks the cloak of "legality," is a revolutionist spent. He is a boy playing at soldier.

It was at the Denver Convention of the American Federation of Labor, in 1894, that a scene took place which throws much light on the bearing of this particular point of the movement of our own days. The A. F. of L. at a previous convention, had ordered a general vote upon a certain "declaration of principles." Among

these principles there was one, the tenth, which a certain class of people, who called themselves Socialists, were chuckling over with naive delight. They claimed it was "socialistic." One of their number bravely smuggled it into the said "declarations." They were by that maneuver to capture the old style trade unions, and thereby "tie the hands of the labor leaders." For a whole year these revolutionists had been chuckling gaily and loudly. The unions actually polled a majority for all the "principles," the celebrated "Plank 10" included. At the Denver Convention the vote was to be canvassed; but the labor leaders in control threw out the vote on the, to them, good and sufficient reason that "the rank and file did not know what they had been voting for." That is not the point; that is only the background for the point I am coming to. But before coming to that, let me here state that the rank and file meekly submitted to such treatment. The point lies in a droll scene that took place during the debate to throw out that vote. The scene was this:

The "revolutionist" who had surreptitiously introduced "Plank 10" in the "declaration of principles," and thereby schemed to capture the unions by ambush, a gentleman of English Social Democratic Federation antecedents, one Thomas J. Morgan, now of Chicago, was storming in that Denver Convention against the labor leaders' design to throw out his "Plank 10," and incidentally, as he expressed it himself, was "putting in fine licks for Socialism." Suddenly his flow of oratory

was checked. A notorious labor leader, to whom the cigar manufacturers of America owe no slight debt of gratitude, Mr. Adolf Strasser of the International Cigarmakers' Union, had risen across the convention hall and put in:

"Will the gentleman allow me a question?"

"Certainly."

"Do you favor *confiscation*?"

The answer is still due. Mr. Morgan collapsed like a punctured toy balloon.

The scene should have been engraved to preserve for all time pictorially the emasculating effect of ignorance of this canon of the Proletarian Revolution upon that venturesome man who presumes to tread, especially as a leader, the path of Social Revolution, notwithstanding he lacks the mental and physical fiber to absorb in his system the canon here under consideration.

As I said, the Proletarian Revolution marches by its own light; its acts are to be judged by the code of legality that itself carries in its folds, not by the standard of the existing law, which is but the reflex of existing usurpation. Indeed, in that respect, the Proletarian Revolution shares a feature of all previous revolutions, the capitalist revolution included. A new social system brings along a new code of morals. The morality of the code that the Proletarian Revolution is impregnated with reads like a geometric demonstration: Labor alone produces all wealth. Idleness can produce maggots only; the wealth of the land is in the hands of Idleness, the

hands of Labor are empty; such hard conditions are due to the private ownership by the Idle or Capitalist Class of the land on and the tools with which to work; work has become collective, the things needed to work with must, therefore, also become collective property; get from under whosoever stands in the way of the inevitable deduction, by what name soever he may please to call it! Accordingly, no militant in the modern Proletarian Revolution can be knocked all of a heap by the howl of "Confiscation."

Plutarch, whom Prof. Lieber shrewdly suspects of responsibility for much of the revolutionary promptings of modern days, touching upon these two acts of Tiberius Gracchus, produces without comment—a severe sarcasm in itself—Tiberius's elaborate legal plea in defense of his removal of his colleague. A revolution that needs to apologize for itself had better quit. And he comments upon the Sempronian law in these touchingly incisive terms:

"There never was a milder law made against so much injustice and oppression; for they who deserved to have been punished for their infringement of the rights of the community, and fined for holding the lands contrary to law, were to have a consideration for giving up their groundless claims, and restoring the estates of such of the citizens as were to be relieved."

Preach to the proletariat, in the most convincing way a man may please, the abstract principles of their own, the Socialist Revolution, and then let that man seek to sugar-coat the dose with suggestions or acts that imply the idea of "buying out the capitalists," and he

has simply wiped out clean, for all practical purposes, all he said before: he has deprived the Revolution of its own premises, the pulse of its own warmth.

CANON V.

The Proletarian Revolution Is "Irreverent."

Karl Marx—the distinctive feature of whose philosophy is that it stands with its feet on earth, and is supremely practical—throws out, right in the midst of an abstract economic chapter, the point that it is essential to the stability of capitalism that the proletarian look upon the conditions surrounding him as of all time.

Reverence of the blind type is a fruit of latter day capitalism. Starting as an iconoclast, the capitalist winds up as a maw-worm. And it is essential to his safety that the proletarian masses take him seriously. The root of this blind reverence is the belief in the antiquity of the subject revered; and that implies the future, as well as the past. Capitalism, along with its gods, its gods along with it, are all pronounced "sacred," "ever were and ever will be, life without end." The capitalist foments such "reverence"; and, while he pushes his parsons forward to do the work, he holds himself out as the high priest. The usurper ever needs the cloak of sanctity; and therefore it is of importance to strip him bare of the cover.

The posture of Tiberius materially played into the hands of this useful capitalist deception. He cultivated

reverence for the magistracy. The plea in defense of his deposition of his colleague was a sanctification of the class of the usurper. It riveted superstitious awe on the mind of the proletariat, whose striking arm never could be free until its mind was emancipated. When the reverential proletarians trampled over one another, reverently to make way for the Senators, who, sticks and staves and broken furniture in hand, rushed forward to slay Tiberius, the luckless reformer could not have failed to notice that the arrow that killed him was steadied by a feather plucked from his own reformatory pinions.

Irreverence—not the irreverence of insolence, which is the sign manual of the weak, but the self-sustained irreverence that is the sign manual of the consciously strong because consciously sound—is one of the inspiring breaths of the Proletarian Revolution.

Reverence for the usurper denotes mental, with resulting physical, subjection to usurpation.

CANON VI.

The Proletarian Revolution Is Self-Reliant.

The tactics of Gaius Gracchus in seeking support or protection in the Equestrian Order, by raising it to senatorial powers, was a grave tactical misstep. Instead of inspiring the proletarian movement with self-reliance, he thereby trained it to lean on others than it-

self. The Proletarian Revolution must, under no circumstances, play the role of the horse in the fable.

You know the fable? It is a pretty one. A horse was being harassed by a lion. The horse found that his opportunities to graze were impaired by that roaring beast that lay low in the bushes and threatened to jump upon him, and frequently did jump upon him, and not infrequently scratched him to the point of bleeding; so that the horse, finding the area of his pasture narrowing, and his life threatened either way, entered into a compact with a man. According to agreement, the man mounted the horse, and by their joint efforts the lion was laid low. But never again could the horse rid himself of the man on his back.

By the action with which he clothed the Equestrian Order with the powers it had not formerly wielded, Gaius Gracchus certainly weakened the Senate, but he thereby also, and in the same measure, extended the number of the political participants in the political usurpations, that had backed and brought on the social distress which he was combating. The Equestrian Order was of the identical class that profited by the senatorial iniquities. By setting up the Equestrian Order with powers formerly wielded by the Senate alone, Gaius Gracchus was safer from the latter, but only in the sense that the horse in the fable was from the quarter of the lion after his alliance with the man. Gaius, like the horse, had saddled himself with a master. And the hour came when the master rode him to his death.

That it is a waste of time and energy for the proletariat to knock down the Democratic party, however oppressive that party may be, if the knocking down is to be done by saddling itself with the Republican party, a partner of the Democratic oppressor; that, however resentful the proletariat may be at a Republican President or Governor, who throws the armed force of the State or Nation into the capitalist scales in the conflicts between employer and employe, it were a mere waste of energy to substitute them with their Democratic doubles; all that is elemental. The absurdity is illustrated by the fate of the horse in the fable. There can be no real knocking down of either party until they are both simultaneously knocked down; that knockdown blow is in the power of the proletariat only.

All this is elemental. But equally elemental, though the point be more hidden, should be the principle that the Proletarian Revolution must not only not seek, but must avoid as it would a pestilence, all alliance with any other class in its struggles, or even its skirmishes, with the capitalist class, the landlord-plutocracy of today. Here, again, the peculiar weakness of the proletariat, the proneness to yield to lures, manifests itself and needs watchful guarding against by its movement.

There is no social or economic class in modern society below the proletariat. It is the last on the list. If there were other classes below it, the Proletarian Revolution would not be what it is, the first of all with a world-wide, humane program. All other classes, while

seeking their own emancipation from the class that happened to be above, were grounded on the subjection of a class below. The Proletarian Revolution alone means the abolition of class rule. It follows from such a lay of the land that any class the proletariat might ally itself with must, though oppressed from above, itself be a fleecers' class; in other words, must be a class whose class interests rest on the subjugation of workers. Such a class is the modern middle class. It, like the man in the fable I have just recited, can ally itself with the proletariat only with the design to ride it. However plausible its slogans, they are only lures.

So long as a Proletarian Movement seeks for "alliances abroad," it demonstrates that it has not yet got its "sea legs." Any such move or measure can only deprive it of whatever chance it had to develop and acquire them. The Proletarian Revolution is self-reliant. It is sufficient unto itself.

CANON VII.

The Proletarian Revolution Spurns Sops.

Sops are not palliatives. The two differ essentially. I have explained the palliative. The sop is not a "slice," an "installment" ladled out in advance, of what one is entitled to. It is an "extra," a "bon-bon," a narcotic, thrown out to soothe. Accordingly, the sop adds as little to the character and directness of a movement as does the palliative. The essential feature of the sop is,

however, that it is a broken reed on which to lean, a thing no clearheaded revolutionist will ever resort to. It was upon just such a reed Gaius Gracchus sought support when he proposed the establishment of three colonies for the relief of the Roman proletariat.

What could these colonies accomplish? In the first place they were in the nature of a desertion. The colonists were to leave Rome, the soil of Italy, in short, the battle ground, to set up in far away Africa, in Spain, in Sardinia. But, above all, in what way could colonies relieve the distress in Rome, unless undertaken on a gigantic scale; that is to say, on a scale of wholesale migration from the city? And that would nullify their very purpose. At any rate to propose only three colonies was the merest sop thrown at his army. The revolutionist must never throw sops at the revolutionary element. The instant he does, he places himself at the mercy of the foe: he can always be out-sopped. And so was Gaius Gracchus. The proposition for twelve colonies with which the patriciate answered Gaius's proposition for three, completely neutralized the latter, leaving the "honors" on the side of the patriciate. Nursed at the teat of the sop, the Roman proletariat decamped to where they could get the largest quantities of that commodity. And that, more than any other thing, stripped Gaius of his forces. Once he was deserted and downed, the bigger sop of twelve colonies never materialized. It had answered its narcotic purpose, and was dropped.

On this very point, there is an all-around remark-

able illustration, fresh from the oven. I here read to you a telegram sent from Chicago on April 2—only two weeks ago—to the Milwaukee *Social Democratic Herald*, and signed “Jacob Winnen.” Referring to the vote polled in Chicago by a capitalist party proposition for “municipal ownership” the day before, the Social Democratic Winnen says: “Two-thirds majority cast for municipal ownership shows that Socialism is in the air.”

The labor field of Chicago has been convulsed a great deal more than that of New York. As a result of that, or possibly due to the lake air, the capitalist politicians of Chicago are, if such a thing be possible, “quicker” than even the New York politicians. I admit that is saying a good deal. We have seen, even in New York, “municipal ownership” often, of late, used as a stalking-horse by individual politicians. Unterrified Socialist agitation has familiarized the public mind with Socialist aspirations, though still only in a vague way. The politician, being “broad” besides “quick,” has no objection to polling “socialistic” votes. Being “quick” besides “broad,” he has no objection to the performance if he can indulge in it by giving the shadow for the substance; all the less if he can thereby run Socialism into the ground. “Municipal ownership” lends itself peculiarly to such purposes. It sounds “socialistic”; and yet we know the term can conceal the archest anti-labor scheme. His nursery-tale theory concerning his God-given capacity to run industries having suffered ship-

wreck, the capitalist can find a snug harbor of refuge in "municipal ownership." It is an ideal capitalist sop to catch the sopable. We know all that. It is in view of all that that the Socialist Labor Party "municipal program" has been drawn up as it is. It renders the Socialist Labor Party man sop-proof from that side. Accordingly, it is not surprising to find the "municipal ownership" sop or dodge in full blast among the Chicago politicians. It is there in such full blast that in the municipal campaign, which closed there with the election of April 1, "municipal ownership" was a capitalist party political cry. The platform so declared it, and the speeches of the politicians of that party resounded with "municipal ownership" of railways, of gas plants, of electric plants—well, of everything in sight. And the Chicago politicians had sharp noses; how sharp may be judged from the double circumstance that the Socialist Labor Party vote at the election rose considerably, while the Social Democratic party—with a national platform declaration on "municipal ownership" that plays into the hands of the sop—went down so markedly that its statisticians have had to seek shelter for their diminished heads behind "percentages." Such, then, was the situation in Chicago. The intelligent Socialist perceives the sop of "municipal ownership" in that campaign; it cannot escape him. The large vote polled for that capitalist "municipal ownership" proposition, so far from smoothing, can only cause his brow to pucker. That vote discloses vast chunks of Socialist education

left unattended to; vast masses left so untutored as to be caught by fly paper. No cause for joy in the phenomenon. And yet this Social Democrat rejoices: "Two-thirds majority cast for municipal ownership shows that Socialism is in the air."

"In the air!" Very much "in the air"—everywhere, except on Chicago soil.

Two-thirds majority cast for a municipal ownership proposition, emanating from a capitalist political party, "shows that Socialism is in the air," and is pointed to with joy! Can you imagine such childish fatuity? For this man, the Gracchi lived and labored, bled and died—in vain!

Let the modern revolutionist try the "municipal ownership" sop, and he will find himself out-municipal-ownershiped. Nothing there is more demagogic than usurpation. For every one "municipal ownership" he may propose, the capitalist class will propose twelve; the same as, for every one colony proposed by Gaius Gracchus, the Senate out-sopped him with a proposition for four, drew his support away from him, and threw the threatened revolution flat on its back. And Gaius Gracchus had himself lent a hand. Every sop thrown by Gaius at the proletariat was a banana peel placed by himself under their feet. Of course, they slipped and fell.

Not sops, but the unconditional surrender of capitalism, is the battle cry of the Proletarian Revolution.

The Proletarian Revolution Is Impelled and Held Together by Reason, Not Rhetoric.

Speech is powerful. No doubt. But all is not said when that is said. The same nature of speech that answers in one instance fails to in another. Whatever the nature may be of the proper speech on other fields, on the field of the Proletarian Revolution it must be marked by sense, not sound; by reason, not rhetoric. The training of the Gracchi, of Gaius in particular, disqualified them in this. They had been tutored from infancy by Greek rhetoricians. Now rhetoric, like a ship, may cleave the waters of the Proletarian Revolution; but these close after it, and presently remain trackless.

Organization is a prerequisite of the Proletarian Revolution. It is requisite by reason of the very numbers involved; it is requisite, above all, as a tactical protection against the tactical weakness that I have pointed out in the proletariat as a revolutionary force. Other revolutions could succeed with loose organization and imperfect information. In the first place, they were otherwise ballasted; in the second, being grounded on the slavery of some class, a dumb driven herd of an army could fit in their social architecture. Otherwise with the proletariat. It needs information for ballast as for sails, and its organization must be marked with intelligent cooperation. The proletarian army of eman-

cupation cannot consist of a dumb driven herd. The very idea is a contradiction in terms. Now then, not all the fervid and trained rhetoric at the command of the Gracchi, and lavishly used by them, could take the place of the drill that the Roman proletariat needed on hard, dry information. The Gracchian rhetoric pleased, entertained, swayed, but did not organize; could not. At the first serious shock, their forces melted away—just as we have seen proletarian forces again and again melt away in our own days.

Rhetoric is a weapon of reform; it may plow the ground, it does not sow. The Proletarian Revolution wields the tempered steel of sterner stuff.

CANON IX.

**The Proletarian Revolution Deals Not in
Double Sense.**

It is at its peril that a revolution conceals its purpose.

This is truest with the Proletarian Revolution. Gaius Gracchus had set his cap against the Senate. He conceived that body to be the embodiment of all evil. That he looked only at the surface of things appears from his conduct in clothing the Equestrian Order—men of the senatorial class—with senatorial powers. Nevertheless, it is the Senate he sought to overthrow. In his mind that was the barrier against social well-

being. His revolution aimed at the overthrow of the Senate. But he kept the secret locked in his breast, and only allowed it to peep through by indirection.

It is narrated of Gaius that, meaning to convey the idea that not the Senate, but the people, should be considered, he, differently from the orators of old, stood with his face toward the Forum and not toward the Senate, in his public addresses. This was a bit of pantomime, unworthy of a great cause that called for plain language in no uncertain tones. By such conduct Gaius Gracchus could only raise dust over his designs. And that could have for its effect only to weaken him. It could not throw the affronted foe off its guard. On the other hand, it could only keep away forces needful to his purpose, whom straightforward language would attract.

It is only the path to servitude that needs the gentle; the path to freedom calls for the ruder hand. Pantomimes, double sense and mummery may answer the purpose of a movement in which the proletariat acts only the role of dumb driven beasts of burden. Pantomimes, mummery and double sense are utterly repellent to, and repelled by, the Proletarian Revolution.

I stated introductorily to the Canons of the Proletarian Revolution that they dovetailed into one another, seeing they all proceeded from a central principle. That central principle may now be taken up as the tenth of these canons. It sums them all up. You cannot have

failed to perceive it peeping through all the others. It is this :

CANON X.

**The Proletarian Revolution Is a
Character Builder.**

The proletarian organization that means to be tributary to the large army of proletarian emancipation cannot too strenuously guard against aught that may tend to debauch its membership. It must be intent upon promoting the character and moral fiber of the mass. Characterfulness is a distinctive mark of the Proletarian Revolution. Foremost, accordingly, in the long series of Gracchian blunders stands the measure of Gaius for the free distribution of corn. By that act he reduced the Roman proletariat to beggars. Beggars can only desert and compromise; they cannot carry out a revolution.

Their energies consumed with the tinkering on "forms"; their intellect cracked by illogical postures; their morale ruined by palliatives; the edge of their revolutionary dignity blunted by "precedents"; their mental vigor palsied by the veneration of the unvenerable; their self-reliance broken by leaning on hostile elements; their resolution warped by sops; their minds left vacant with rhetoric; their senses entertained with pantomimes; finally, their character dragged down to the ditch of the beggar — what wonder that, the moment the Roman proletariat were brought to the

scratch, they acquitted themselves like beggars, made their peace with the usurper, and left their leaders in the lurch?

The task is unthankful of submitting to rigid criticism the conduct of men of such noble aspirations as the Gracchi. Nevertheless, it must be recorded that, of all the distressing acts of the Gracchi, none compares with the conduct of Gaius when, finding himself forsaken by the masses that himself had debauched and thus virtually driven from him, he implored in the Temple of Diana eternal slavery for them in punishment for their "base ingratitude"—exactly as, in modern times, Utopians turned reactionist have been seen to do.

End of the Ten Canons.

Supplementary to the Ten Canons.

The modern revolutionist knows full well that man is not superior to principle, that principle is superior to man, but he does not fly off the handle with the maxim, and thus turn the maxim into absurdity. He firmly couples the maxim with this other, that no principle is superior to the movement or organization that puts it and upholds it in the field. . . . He knows that in the revolution demanded by our age, Organization must be the incarnation of Principle. Just the reverse of the reformer, who will ever be seen mocking at science, the revolutionist will not make a distinction between the Organization and the Principle. He will say: "The Principle and the Organization are one."

* * *

Again, the modern revolutionist knows that in order to accomplish results or promote principle, there must be unity of action. He knows that, if we do not go in a body and hang together, we are bound to hang separately. Hence, you will ever see the revolutionist submit to the will of the majority: you will always see him readiest to obey; he recognizes that obedience is the badge of civilized man. The savage does not know the word. The word "obedience" does not exist in the vocabulary of any language until its people get beyond the

stage of savagery. Hence, also, you will never find the revolutionist putting himself above the organization. The opposite conduct is an unmistakable earmark of reformers.

The revolutionist recognizes that the present machinery and methods of production render impossible—and well it is they do—the individual freedom of man such as our savage ancestors knew the thing; that, today, the highest individual freedom must go hand in hand with collective freedom; and none such is possible without a central directing authority. Standing upon this vigor-imparting high plane of civilization, the revolutionist is virile and self-reliant, in striking contrast with the mentally sickly and, therefore, suspicious reformer. Hence the cry of “Bossism!” is as absent from the revolutionist’s lips as it is a feature on those of the reformer.

* * *

No organization will inspire the outside masses with respect that will not insist upon and enforce discipline within its own ranks. If you allow your own members to play monkeyshines with the Party, the lookers-on who belong in this camp, will justly believe that you will at some critical moment allow capitalism to play monkeyshines with you; they will not respect you, and their accession to your ranks will be delayed.

—DANIEL DE LEON: *“Reform or Revolution.”*

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