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EDITORIAL

A VAIN ENDEAVOR.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THERE is now before Congress a bill from Representative Acheson of Pennsylvania intended “to take the Post Offices out of politics.” Representative Acheson is undertaking an impossible task.

Nothing is, to-day, any longer out of politics—not even clothes-lines from the rear of tenements. Railroads and mines, factories and mills, sweatshops and department stores, armies and navies, immigration and “Little Egypts,” “international marriages” and gas, custom-houses and “Teddy Bears,” “labor organizations” and “Daughters of the Revolution,” etc., etc.—none of these can exist without, and all of them project themselves into, politics. Indeed, the Nation’s lungs cannot operate but by inhaling and exhaling politics.

It cannot be otherwise. The Social Question is essentially a political question. The political aspect of the Social Question lies in the circumstance that it fatedly contemplates the complete remodeling of Government. Seeing that Government, as now constituted, acquired in the course of historic evolution the name and character of “political,” whatever force tends, willingly or unwillingly, knowingly or unknowingly, to affect Government, cannot choose but be political. Being political, all sincere efforts to divorce such forces from politics are visionary; and the efforts that are not visionary are knavish, because insincere.

In what category must Representative Acheson be ranked? In one of the two he belongs.

Does he belong to the category of the railroad magnates—themselves and their roads up to the eye-brows in politics—who object to public ownership on the ground that “the railroads must be kept out of politics”? Or does he belong in the category of the philanthropic old ladies of both sexes, who aspire to free public sanitation from “political influences”?

Does Representative Acheson belong in the category of Mr. Gompers—his own and the hands of his A.F. of L. horny with political wire-pulling—who sets up the principle “No politics in the union”? Or does he belong in the category of the wild-eyed visionaries who imagine politics can be excluded from the economic organization by the “politics” course of ostentatiously “knocking” the Socialist Labor Party—the only political party of Labor that shatters the folly of pure and simple dynamitism by simultaneously shattering the companion folly of pure and simple ballotism? Does Representative Acheson belong to the category of these wild-eyed visionaries, whose irrational endeavors to escape politics plays right into the hands of, is influenced by, and cannot choose but plunge them into that worst of politics—Anarchistic dynamitism, with the eventual, if not sooner, consequence of falling victims to the McParland-Orchard “agents provocateurs”?

Whatever may be the case with Representative Acheson, vain is his endeavor. Humanity must be pulled out of “politics.” But as well may a man endeavor to extricate himself out of a quagmire, in which he finds himself, by imagining he can leap out of it, as can society extricate itself out of “politics” by Achesonian endeavors.

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