

# DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 13, NO. 7.

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, JULY 7, 1912.

TWO CENTS.

EDITORIAL

## OUR POLITICAL HAMLET.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**W**OODROW WILSON, the Democratic nominee for President, is by friend and foe, pronounced “a radical.”

On the 24th of last February the radical Woodrow Wilson delivered an address in Nashville, Tenn., on “The Tariff and the Trusts.” In the course of that, in many respects, remarkable address, Mr. Wilson said:

“If you [business] will quit, we [politics] will. If you will stop trying to determine elections by campaign contributions; if you will stop encouraging bipartisan political machinery, so that it is worth your while to contribute to both campaign funds; if you will stop making the control of Legislatures a business proposition, then you will find that in the most complete and only effectual way you have disentangled business from politics.”

Mr. Wilson is too serious a man to suppose him, on that occasion, to have implied a joke. He did not, he could not have meant to say: “You, gentlemen, who claim that politics should not meddle with business, are demanding an impossibility. If you don’t believe the thing is impossible, just you set the pace in the right direction. Try to quit meddling with politics, and you will see the pickle you will get yourself in. Politics and business are interdependent, and justly, legitimately so.” Mr. Wilson meant no such joke. He meant no joke at all. He meant just what he said. And what he said amounted to saying: “The meddling of politics with business is a wrong. But the wrong is brought about by business meddling with politics. Let business quit, and politics will.”

Hamlet trying to reconcile irreconcilable facts, or trying to save what was as unsavorably rotten as that which he felt had to be destroyed, is the stage-figure to which Woodrow Wilson is the counter-part on the sociological field.

Within the frame of capitalist society politics is the reflex of business. The Po-

litical State is the arms of the body Business. Leaving aside that function of the Political State which consists in keeping down the Ruled Class, the Political State has a function to perform within and toward the Ruling Class itself. There is no Ruling Class without conflict of interests within its own ranks. This feature of class-society reaches its fullest expression under capitalism. The Political State has for a duty to regulate, to render harmonious, if possible, these interdependent yet conflicting interests; and, if necessary, wherever necessary, to enforce, its decrees. Unimaginable is indifference towards the umpire on the part of opposing baseball teams. Chimeric is the idea of individual and conflicting business concerns not seeking, each in his own behalf and against all others, to be “on the inside” with the Political State, or social umpire.

Quit politics! As well urge ducks to keep away from the millpond. Politics can be “quitted” not a minute sooner than the Political State is overthrown. Overthrow that, as overthrown it must and will be—then, and not before will Business be disentangled from politics.

Against the pricks of this sociologic fact Hamlet Wilson is butting with philosophy.

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Uploaded October 2013

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