

Leader

from the Anarchist Encyclopedia – S. Faure

A. Lapayre

1934

Leader: English word (from to lead) passed into common usage. One of those words universally used.

In the English parliament the leader is the member of the assembly who groups around him the men of the same party, of the same opinion, who pursue the realization of the same program. We naturally distinguish the leader of the government from that of the opposition...the leader is the most visible personality of his party.

By extension, we call “leader” the main article of a newspaper. Also, the horse that leads a race, gallops at the head of the others.

In a party one must be careful not to take the leader for the most serious, the most cultivated, the most intelligent man. Often he is nothing but the most versatile, the lowest, the most ignorant. His “superiority” resides in his ability to raise himself to the leading position by the usual political means, i.e., intrigue and a lack of conscience. Being a repetitive loudmouth, or having a tireless flexibility are enough to make of a man the leader of his party. Rare are those who impose themselves through their talents or their convictions; and in the youngest and most enthusiastic movements – like socialism – the Jaurèses and Lenins are exceptions.

Almost all the political leaders of our era were and are nothing but incorrigible blabbermouths and outright scoundrels. And from palinodes to betrayals they have led the masses to discouragement when they haven’t delivered them through their double game to the blows of their adversaries.

– A Lapeyre

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