

The sit-down technique

Peter Maurin

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1. On Gandhi lines

1. Strike news doesn't strike me, but the sit-down strike is a different strike from the ordinary strike.
2. In the sit-down strike you don't strike anybody either on the jaw or under the belt, you just sit down.
3. The sit-down strike is essentially a peaceful strike.
4. If the sit-down strike remains a sit-down strike, that is to say, a strike in which you strike by just sitting down, it may be a means of bringing about desirable results.
5. The sit-down strike must be conducted on Gandhi lines, that is to say, according to the doctrine of pure means as expressed by Jacques Maritain.

2. In the Middle Ages

1. The capitalist system is a racketeering system.
2. It is a racketeering system because it is a profiteering system.
3. It is a profiteering system because it is a profit system.
4. And nobody has found the way to keep the profit system from becoming a profiteering system.
5. Harold Laski says: "In the Middle Ages the idea of acquiring wealth was limited by a body of moral rules imposed under the sanction of religious authority."
6. But modern business men tell the clergy: "Mind your own business and don't butt into our business."

3. Economic economy

1. In the Middle Ages they had a doctrine, the doctrine of the Common Good.
2. In the Middle Ages they had an economy which was economical.
3. Their economy was based on the idea that God wants us to be our brothers' keepers.
4. They believed in the right to work for the worker.
5. They believed in being fair to the worker as well as the consumer.
6. They believed in doing their work the best they knew how for the service of God and men.

4. Proper property

1. Leon Harmel, who was an employer, not a labor leader, says: “We have lost the right concept of authority since the Renaissance.”
2. We have not only lost the right concept of authority, we have also lost the right concept of property.
3. The use of property to acquire more property is not the proper use of property.
4. The right use of property is to enable the worker to do his work more effectively.
5. The right use of property is not to compel the worker, under threat of unemployment, to be a cog in the wheel of mass production.

5. Speed-up system

1. Bourgeois capitalists believe in the law of supply and demand.
2. Through mass production, bourgeois capitalists increase the supply and decrease the demand.
3. The speed-up system and the extensive use of improved machinery have given us technological unemployment.
4. As a Catholic worker said to me: “Ford speeds us up, making us do in one day three times as much work as before, then he lays us off.”
5. To speed up the workers and then lay them off is to deny the worker the right to work.

6. Makers of depressions

1. Business men used to say: “We make prosperity through our private enterprise.”
2. According to business men the workers have nothing to do with the making of prosperity.
3. If the workers have nothing to do with the making of prosperity, they have nothing to do with the making of business depressions.
4. The refusal of business men to accept the responsibility for business depressions is what makes the workers resort to sit-down strikes.
5. If business men understood business they would find the way to increase the demand for manufactured products, instead of increasing the supply through the speed-up system and the extensive use of improved machinery.

7. Collective bargaining

1. Business men have made such a mess of things without workers' cooperation that they could do no worse with workers' cooperation.
2. Because the workers want to cooperate with the business men in the running of business is the reason why they sit down.
3. The sit-down strike is for the worker the means of bringing about collective bargaining.
4. Collective bargaining should lead to compulsory arbitration.
5. Collective bargaining and compulsory arbitration will assure the worker the right to work.

8. In the rumble seat

1. There is nothing wrong with the sit-down strike if it is used to bring about collective bargaining.
2. The aim of the N.R.A. was to bring about collective bargaining, but, as Fr. Parsons said: "The N.R.A. made the mistake of placing labor in the rumble seat."
3. Labor must sit in the driver's seat— not in the rumble seat.
4. Bourgeois capitalists are not such good drivers as to be able to drive without the cooperation of organized labor.

9. The modern mind

1. Organized labor, whether it be the A. F. of L. or the C. I. O., is far from knowing what to do with the economic setup.
2. Organized labor, as well as organized capital, is the product of the modern mind.
3. The modern mind is in such a fog that it cannot see the forest for the trees.
4. The modern mind has been led astray by the liberal mind.
5. The endorsement of liberal economics by the liberal mind has given us this separation of the spiritual from the material, which we call secularism.

10. Paul Chandon

1. Organized labor, organized capital, organized politics are essentially secularist minded.
2. We need leaders to lead us in the making of a path from the things as they are to the things as they should be.

3. I propose the formation of associations of Catholic employers as well as associations of Catholic union men.
4. Employers and employees must be indoctrinated with the same doctrine.
5. What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.
6. Paul Chanson, President of the Employers' Association of the Port of Calais (France), has written a book expounding this doctrine, "Workers' Rights and the Guildist Order."

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