

EDITORIAL

THE SIGN OF THE TIMES.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE spectacle just now presented by this country—the most capitalistically developed country of all—is a luminous page on which to read the class cleavage of thought and action.

On the one side are the Top capitalists vociferously and heatedly discussing—what? The form of government.

On the other side are the workers, striking everywhere; everywhere raising the demand for—what? For the opportunity to earn a civilized living.

The sight is instructive, as never before.

Top-Capitalism has all the “bread and butter” it can consume, and to spare. Like Marie Antoinette, who, just before the French Revolution, when the people were crying for bread, naively asked why they did not eat cake, the Top-Capitalist, is not concerned about bread. It is concerned only about matters of FORM.

The Working Class, with no butter upon its bread, and an insufficiency of bread, is giving its thought, not to forms of government, but to BREAD.

If this were all, the situation would not be the luminous one that it is. At other seasons, before now, Top-Capitalism, at one end of the social ladder, thought of forms only, while at the other end of the ladder, Labor looked to bread. That which really makes the present contrast is the specific shape that the thoughts of the two social opposites is taking.

As to Top-Capitalism, the language of its leading exponents Taft and Roosevelt denotes their readiness to break with some of the traditions of their own class. “Republicanism,” “representative government,” are traditions once deemed sacred by the bourgeois. Taft-Rooseveltism kicks “republicanism” and “representative government” overboard. Taft-Rooseveltism amounts to a recognition by the Ruling Class that it has rounded the cycle of its, the bourgeois, revolution; that it has ar-

rived at the stage of the feudal aristocracy which it had overthrown, and into the cast-off shoes of which it is now trying to thrust its feet.

As to the Working Class—led, as its element in revolt indicates that it is led, by the teachings of the I.W.W.—it gives marked evidence of realizing that the straining after bread alone is the surest way to make sure of never getting even that pittance. Interpreting the present spirit of the Working Class of the land by the I.W.W., which is the pillar of fire that is guiding the militant workers, the Working Class is shuffling off the superstition regarding indifference to politics that so long kept it in the Wilderness. The posture of the Working Class to-day amounts to a realization of their mission—the overthrow of capitalist society; and the means to that end—their unification upon the political as well as the industrial field.

And thus it happens that, whether one look on the Top-Capitalist side, or on the Working Class side of the line, the class cleavage is perceived in the minds of the people, hence no longer as a politico-economic fact blindly groped around, but a reality, the meaning of which is fully grasped.

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