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EDITORIAL

A NUT FOR THE OAKLAND “HERALD.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

WITHIN a month of the disaster that overtook the city of San Francisco, there occurred some ugly “labor troubles” in Paris. The military had been called out, it is true; true the “riot” was declared “suppressed”; true, also, quiet seemed restored. Nevertheless, there ran a feverish note through all the capitalist despatches, published in the capitalist papers. The “riot” did not seem to be suppressed except in appearance; “quiet” was restored only on the surface. There was fear, there was apprehension. The class of the Usurper in France obviously did not feel at ease—and does not yet, nor ever will. The Oakland *Herald* was not deceived by the seemingly reassuring despatches. It published them religiously enough, the purpose being to deceive the public, the working class public, in particular, whose ears have of late been pricking up, and from whose now alert ears bees had to be kept away—if possible. Not being itself deceived, the Oakland *Herald*, proffered some advice to the French capitalists. It was a far cry from Oakland to Paris, yet the *Herald* arrogantly emitted the cry. It was this:

“WHAT PARIS NOW NEEDS IS AN EARTHQUAKE TO SETTLE THEIR LABOR TROUBLES.”

The cry or advice was based upon the experience then making in nearby San Francisco. For quite a time the labor world of 'Frisco was showing manifest signs of unrest. Then came the launching of the I.W.W.; that added fuel to the smoldering embers. Then followed the high-handed arrests of Moyer, Haywood, Pettibone and St. John; and that fanned the embers into a flame. An indignation meeting of workingmen was held in 'Frisco, and, generally, Labor seemed to be rising to its feet in that city. Suddenly came the earthquake, closely followed by the conflagration that laid the city waste. While the masses mourned, the capitalists of the city

rubbed their hands. Their threatening labor troubles could now be "settled." The pretext of "protection" was used to place the ruined waste under martial law. With martial law in force, Labor could be and was curbed. Hands were needed by the scores of thousands, but these hands could now be kept in subjection. They could be driven from the bread-lines, and pressed to work for what wages martial law chose to stipulate, payable at such time as martial law thought convenient. The sacrosanct law of capital: "Prices must accommodate themselves to the demand for and the supply of goods,"—a law behind which the capitalist shelters himself when he purchases the commodity labor-power in the normally overstocked labor markets—that law was not now to be observed. The demand for labor was now immense; the supply far below the demand. The observance of the law with the same devotion that the capitalist observes it when the supply exceeds the demand, was not now to be thought of. Martial law propped up "Supply and Demand" to suit the emergency. Wages dropped. Such were the general conditions in 'Frisco when the labor troubles of France broke out; it was with a knowledge of the situation in 'Frisco that the Oakland *Herald* exuberantly suggested an earthquake to Paris as the way to settle its workingmen.

Now to the nut—

Will the Oakland *Herald*, so expert an adviser on how "to settle labor troubles" answer this question:

"Will an earthquake in Russia settle Russia's present 'labor troubles,' and afford a fresh lease of life to the regime of the Russian usurping class?"

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Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

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