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EDITORIAL

DON'T BE TOO "RUTHLESS."

By DANIEL DE LEON

IN sight of events in France the London, Eng., *World* observes:

"The events of the last few days have shown that the Third Republic is menaced by the greatest danger that has threatened France since the Commune. Sooner or later a protracted struggle with the social revolution, in the form of a general strike, will have to be faced with ruthless decision."

Which remarks suggest the friendly warning—Don't be too ruthless!

This identical Third Republic of France, at her very birth, listened to the promptings for "ruthless decision," and was thereby brought to the brink of ruin.

The ruthlessness the decision that massacred scores of proletarians during the Commune days, and that caused shoals of workingmen to be deported to New Caledonia, was the very thing the Third Republic needed to feelingly persuade her what she was—a dependent upon Labor.

Intoxicated with triumph, demented with rage at seeing its wage slaves dare to claim the rights of man, the Third Bourgeois Republic went the length of such ruthless decision that she was left crippled. The dead could not be resurrected to start her factories anew; but the exiled could be recalled, the imprisoned could be set at large. The Act of Amnesty, which closely followed upon the heels of the ruthless decision, was in the nature of an apology and retraction. It was a sort of canonization of the Joan of Arc of Labor by the very body that had committed the outrage. This all happened thirty and odd years ago.

Can the ruthless decision be repeated? If it can would it be wise?

The ruthless decision in the early seventies of last century mightily promoted the conditions that the ruthless decider is confronted with to-day. To-day, more than thirty years later; with thirty years of added experience; with the vivid, undying recollections of thirty years ago; the attempt at a repetition of the ruthless

decision of 1871 may have consequences that may recall to the London *World* the plight its likes found themselves in towards the end of the eighteenth century, after they had also counseled France to face the rising storm with "ruthless decision."

And, mayhap, the Waterloo of this century will be found to be "a boot on the other leg."

It were best for My Lord Capital not to be too ruthless.

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

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