

EDITORIAL

THE TAFT-ROOSEVELT ISSUE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

LEGITIMATELY intense as is the interest in the issue jointly raised by Roosevelt and Taft, an undue degree of interest is being attached to what the outcome will be of the bitter conflict now raging between these two men.

Suppose Taft wins out? Suppose Roosevelt wins out? What, essentially will be the difference?

The angle of view from which to contemplate the Roosevelt-Taft conflict is, of course, not the angle of view of simple economics, or of proletarian interests.

So far as simple economics, or proletarian interests, are concerned, the Taft-Roosevelt conflict is not distinguishable from the Taft-Roosevelt-Hughes-Cummins, or Republican conflict, on the one hand, with their Woodrow-Wilson-Harmon-Champ-Clark-Bryan, or Democratic adversaries, on the other. Both sets stand upon the principle of Capitalism; in other words, all of them are agreed upon the principle that the Working Class is legitimate prey for the Capitalist Class. But this is not all.

The angle of view from which to contemplate the Roosevelt-Taft conflict is a purely political one. As has been set forth in these columns, Rooseveltism is the exponent of a trend among the Ruling Class towards ONE-man rule; Taftism is the exponent of a trend among the same Ruling Class towards oligarchy—the rule of a select few. As has likewise been indicated in these columns, the two trends are but different manifestations of a common political sentiment among our Rulers, to wit, that the Republican form of government has come to an end, and should be quietly laid away.

The conflict translates itself into this: What shall the style of winding-sheet be in which the Republic shall be buried?

Roosevelt answers: “ONE-man rule.”

Taft answers: “Oligarchy.”

By the light of history, which teaches that the oligarchy is a transition period, which fatedly winds up in ONE-man rule, it follows that, if Taft now beats Roosevelt, Taft will simply have smoothed the transition, from the present status, to that of Rooseveltism; whereas, if Roosevelt beats Taft, the transition threatens to be made more abruptly.

In a way, the issue between Roosevelt and Taft is interesting; it is instructive; but the victory of neither over the other will “mark an epoch.” The two streams are bound to converge in the end and set up Autocracy—unless the Socialist Revolution heads off the catastrophe.

Hence the keen interest that is attached in the Taft-Roosevelt issue is not justified by the facts in the case.

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