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EDITORIAL

‘A Public Nuisance’

By DANIEL DE LEON

William H. Taft of Ohio, Judge of the United States Circuit Court, delivered end of last month the annual address before the American Bar Association. In the course of his address Judge Taft pronounced the labor movement a “public nuisance.”

Judge Taft is right. To judge a man’s views one must do so by that man’s own barometer, not by ours. By the Taft, i.e., the capitalist, barometer the labor movement is a decided nuisance. And important it is to realize the fact. None but false conceptions can be made and false tactics incurred if one does not know the view-point of the enemy. That once known, the tactics to overthrow him are more apt to be sound.

A “public nuisance” was the name given by the slave holders to the movement for the abolition of slavery; a “public nuisance” was the name given to the movement for freedom from British rule. Considering abolitionism and independence a “nuisance,” no hope of relief could come from either Bourbonism or the British Crown to the movement{s} that sought to curb and abolish the wrongs they were perpetrating. After much dilly-dallying and trying of experiments, the revolutionists in both instances had to take the bull by the horns and fell him.

In calling the labor movement a “public nuisance,” Judge Taft enlightens the people greatly. He warns them they have nothing to hope from the class whose livery Judge Taft wears, and that, like the previous classes, the sooner the capitalist class is taken hold of by the horns and thrown, the better.

The labor movement is a nuisance, public and unqualified, to the idle class that sponges the wealth of the workers. Few things can be imagined that partake more fully of the character of a nuisance to a loafing class than a movement intended to deprive them of the opportunity and power to ride the people. If to be put to the alternative of working or starving is not a nuisance to the class in whose behalf Judge Taft frames his decisions or private and special trains, then nothing is a nuisance.

The nuisance of the labor movement is of the sort of nuisances that suffocate microbes and vermin, and that are called "disinfectants." Such "nuisances" have come up again and again in the history of man. They are the landmarks of progress. Those who are styled "nuisances" may and do bear the name as a badge of honor, and with their cleavers the Socialist ballot will soon become an "intolerable" nuisance, with the aid of which the back number of capitalism will be relegated to the shelves of ancient history.

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

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