

EDITORIAL

THE PERPETUAL “KICKER.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

EVIL days are closing in all around our Republican-Democratic ruling class. Speaking at Dunkirk, N.Y., on March 18, President Taft congratulated his hearers because it was the home of the Brooks Locomotive Works, and he added: “I suppose you are glad the works are busy day and night.”

“No, siree!” came from a workingman in the crowd.

This was “answering back” with a vengeance; and the President’s rejoinder: “Some people kick all the time” only underscored the fling at the class which he represents.

Work is healthy for body and mind. It invigorates both. Work uplifts. It has been left for bourgeois society so to warp conditions that work has become a curse—a curse when got, a curse when not got.

In bourgeois society “work” means overwork with insufficient pay and under the conditions of the galley-slave. In bourgeois society work is in the nature of a punishment. It would seem that “no work” would be a blessing. So it is—but only for a class,—the class that can live on the work of others. Thus, under bourgeois conditions, it happens that, to the class that can not live on the work of others, “work” presents itself as a Hobson’s choice of rotten apples—either affliction of outright starvation by having no work, or the affliction of starvation by having work; while, to the class that lives on the work of others, “work” presents itself as the opportunity for plentiful plunder, and “no work” as a period when the gathered plunder must be consumed without increasing the heap, it being unprofitable to increase the plunder at such periods.

Owing to the warpage brought about by bourgeois conditions, “work,” despite all its evils, became popular. The masses, preferring to live starvingly, than to starve outright deified “work.” The mystification suited bourgeois purposes. The

immediate consequence was the piling on of work, day and night. But the mystification reached the end of its tether—as President Taffy found out.

Man works in order to live. When the Brooks Locomotive Works started working “day and night” they evidently brought home to some of the workers that, according to the present situation, they are expected to live in order to work. No wonder when President Taft was dealing out his taffy in Dunkirk one of the men from the Locomotive workers answered emphatically back—“No, siree!” No wonder either that the taffy slinger was surprised at “people who kick all the time.”

The proletariat need expect nothing but insult from their exploiters at any demurrer against the exploiters’ way of looking at things. The only thing to do in order to squelch the contempt is to KICK—that is, to KICK to a purpose, by uniting upon the political as well as the industrial field, and then KICKING the capitalist system of taffy overboard.

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