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EDITORIAL

DIGGING THEIR OWN GRAVES.

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PHILADELPHIA as well as New York capitalist “Reformers” of all stripes are so taken up with their own local cries of “Down with the Bosses!” “Smash the Machine!” that they fail to realize that their Movements are not local at all. The fact is that the present movement against “bosses” and “machines” extends beyond two cities, extends beyond at least four States, has even its international bearing—and as such it is a precursor of the Social Revolution.

In Philadelphia the revolt is against Durham and his machine; in New York against Murphy and Odell and their machines; in Jersey City it is against Mayor Lentz and there the Movement begins to shade off into State issues; the Jersey City anti-Lentz furore assumes broader scope when it reaches Massachusetts, Ohio and Rhode Island, where the assault is directed upon the Lodge, Cox and Brayton respective State machines; finally the identical Movement in its spirit and essence, is noticed in Russia upon a scale broader and deeper than elsewhere. The capitalist “Reformer” who fails to perceive that the Russian Movement illumines the Philadelphia, New York, Ohio, Rhode Island and Massachusetts Movements fails to understand the Movement in which he is himself acting. If we thought that there would be one chance in a million of these lines opening his eyes they would remain unwritten. Fact is that the capitalist class is, in this general anti-boss and machine Movement, digging its own grave, as it nobly does in so many other respects. Nor should the fact escape the enlightened workingman.

“Anti-boss!” “Anti-machine!”—such are the terms that the Labor Movement often uses to express its own aspirations. The terms are clumsy. Nevertheless when they fall upon capitalist ears, uttered through workingmen’s throats, they convey a clear enough idea. So clear is the idea that the terms convey that the capitalist forthwith rises upon his hind legs and begins to preach to the workingman homilies

upon the God-ordained mission of bosses and machines, and upon the capacity of every industrious man to raise himself to the height of a boss and own a machine himself. These homilies are lies. The capitalist system cannot work without bosses (exploiters) and privately owned machines (plants of production); there must be the bossed (exploited working class) or there can be no bosses (exploiting capitalists). None knows that better than the capitalist; nevertheless, the capitalist is fatedly a sui-grave-digger. The law of his system compels him thereto. The political boss is, to the section of capitalists who are not in the ring, to all intents and purposes what the economic boss is to the Working Class. The very feature of political government, to oppress the Working Class, involves the feature of limiting the ring of the oppressors. A struggle then arises between capitalists and capitalists—the “ins” and the “outs”; and the slogan then becomes the identical clumsy one of still untutored Labor—“Down with Bosses!” “Smash the Machine!” The “bosses” thus assailed, the “machines” thus stormed against ARE eventually smashed; the Working Class serves in such instances as draft-horses for the capitalist chariot: without their efforts, which bourgeois wiles enlist, the smashing cannot be done. But then?—Let Russia tell the tale, and let the sapient “boss” and “machine”-smashing bourgeois read his fate there.

One thing is a bourgeois anti-boss uprising BEFORE any numbers of proletarians have articulated their grievances, another thing is such a bourgeois uprising AFTER a goodly number of proletarians have articulated their grievances and “infected” the mass. In the former case, the bourgeois’s triumph is complete; in the latter case it is only temporary. In the former case the bourgeois can forthwith unhitch his proletarian draft horses from his political and hitch them on to his economic cart; in the latter case, the proletarian draft horses of the capitalist political cart will rise to manhood, refuse to be unhitched, and will continue the revolution alone. They will pull the revolutionary cart to the goal that is their own—the total smashing of political government, and will organize themselves into the Industrial Body that will smash the economic “boss” and “take and hold” the machinery of production.

“Down with the Boss!” “Smash the Machine!” cried the Russian bourgeois aiming only at the feudal ruler and his feudal Grand Dukes regime. They seem to

have succeeded—feudalism has resigned; but the proletarian draft horses, having caught the echoes of their fellow proletarians abroad, seem to refuse to continue in the role of draft-horses: they have become human: they refuse to be “unhitched”; they are now conducting the Revolution onward.

Let the proletariat of New York, Philadelphia and throughout the land where these capitalist “outs” have set up the cry of “Down with Bosses!” “Smash the Machine!”—let the enlightened proletariat of America take heart and not despair if their seemingly still unenlightened brothers seem to be willing to play the role of draft-horses for the capitalist “Reformers.” These proletarians have caught the “infection.” The beacon set up by the fully enlightened proletarians organized in the Industrial Workers of the World and in the political reflex of the same, the Socialist Labor Party,—that beacon, together with the trumpet-blasts from that tower, will turn the scheme of the “outs” capitalist “revolutionists” into a stepping stone towards the Revolution indeed.

The “Anti-Boss!” “Smash the Machine!” political crew of capitalists are, true to capitalism, digging their own grave.

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