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EDITORIAL

“Exclusive Privileges.”

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The decision, rendered last week in New Jersey by Vice-Chancellor Frederick W. Stevens, whereby union label laws were made void, is an incident that could not, if it would, and would not, if it could, have occurred forty years ago; its occurrence now, and the ground on which it is placed, surely mark a condition of things worth noticing.

The learned Vice-Chancellor swept away the union label law on the ground that such laws grant “special privileges,” and hence are unconstitutional.

The attitude of the Labor Movement is one of hostility to “Special Privileges”; the motto of the Social Revolution is “Down with Special Privileges.” What, then, means this language, dropped from the lips of the Vice-Chancellor, a lackey of the Capitalist Class, of the class the very breath of whose nostrils is “Special Privileges”? Has the Vice-Chancellor turned Socialist?

The answer is self-evident, provided the language of this decision is taken together with the language that with increasing frequency is proceeding from some division or another of the capitalist camp.

Pulpiteers, leading a lazy life, who twist awry the canons of Scripture so as to allay the feelings of their front-pew-holders, and who seek to uphold the capitalist class as the surest way to continue their parasitic existence,—such pulpiteers are again and again heard to proclaim themselves Socialists.

College professors, whose only science consists in a deep knowledge of how to frighten the rich and make them feel the necessity of paying well to the end of counteracting the “un-American” tendency that is manifested on all sides of seeking to arrest the social thieves who are plundering the people,—such professors, in not a few instances, pronounce themselves Socialists.

Politicians, who have found out how hard it is for them to make a living at honest labor, and who see the “barrels” of the capitalists bulging out with prospective and perspective bribes,—such politicians in large numbers are coming out as Socialists.

Now, are the Socialistic pretences of these pulpiteers, professors and politicians honest? Certainly not. Why are they made? Because, despite all the attempts they have hitherto put forth to throw obloquy upon the movement of the working class, the soundness of this movement and the righteousness of its demands have pushed its {their?} way forward, and the day has finally come when, so far from being unpopular, Socialism is rapidly moving into the very front rank of popularity. In view hereof, to oppose Socialism openly would defeat the very object of that disgraceful trinity of Pulpiteers, Professors and Politicians. The mask of Socialism must be put on. Thus the unthinking may be caught; and thus, while seeming to be with the workers, they can be stabbed in the back.

The Vice-Chancellor’s language is of a piece with the pretences of these “Socialists.” As these purpose to kill Socialism to the tune of “Socialism,” the Vice-Chancellor purposes to perpetuate “Special Privileges” to the tune of “No Special Privileges.” The one set and the other resort to swindle.

While these swindling worthies are at their performances, they materially aid the cause they seek to scuttle. Our people are a confiding people. They have long trusted these gentry and are still trusting them. But Lincoln’s homely words are a guarantee that there will and must be an end to this confidence game: “You may cheat some people all the time, and all the people some time, but you can’t cheat all the people all the time.” The Socialist teaching that there is no trust to be set upon any one who does not stand uncompromisingly upon the class interests of the Working Class, who does not unqualifiedly demand the unconditional surrender of the Capitalist Class, is bound to receive fresher and fresher impetus from an experience that sets bare the lie of the pretences of the spokesmen of capitalism. The Vice-Chancellor’s decision furnishes the latest illustration, and is the latest symptom of the rotten-ripeness of the times for the intelligent and revolutionary movement of the masses en masse.

[Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.](#)

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