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EDITORIAL

THE TRUE AND THE SUPPOSITITIOUS TILLMAN.

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“The action of President Roosevelt in entertaining that negro Booker T. Washington will necessitate our killing a thousand negroes in the South before they will learn their place again.”

FROM whose lips did this utterance drop? It dropped from the lips of the Hon. Benjamin R. Tillman, United States Senator from South Carolina, in the course of a speech delivered in Guthrie, O.T.,¹ on October 23.

The “point” would be pointless, by reason of its iteration, that such a rowdy conception of social order comes from one of the “Pillars of Capitalist Society.” Dull, indeed, must he be out of whose head the cob-web illusion, about the capitalist class being the class that supports civilization, has not yet been swept into the ash-barrel of the realm of myths. Dull beyond redemption must that dullard be who still entertains any doubts touching the fact that the capitalist class is a buccaneer class that enacts laws, which it clothes with sanctity only when it concerns their observance by the working class, but that casts aside and wholly disregards them when its own convenience is at stake. Not worth a minute’s attention is he who is not by this time fully aware that Religion is but a cloak with which the impious fleecer of the working class covers his habitual impiety. All these points have been and are so amply being demonstrated by daily occurrences, and have been commented on so extensively that the making of “points” upon them has become superfluous. From the capitalist and capitalist politician Benjamin R. Tillman no sane man expects any thing but the manifestations of a criminal instinct. But there is another Benjamin R. Tillman in the mind of many a denizen of the land. That other Benjamin R. Tillman is a supposititious being. The virtues imputed to that being deceive not a few. As, moreover, the supposititious Tillman is but a type of a species, it is essential to nail him.

Not a few people are mentally so constituted that they mistake the shadow for

¹ [Oklahoma Territory]

the substance, and in that way are regularly taken in. They suffer; they read and hear arguments to show that the capitalist class is at the bottom of the ills that afflict them; they grow clear upon the point that the strategic spot from which the capitalist class rakes them fore and aft is the “Government;” and, credulous of disposition, they become the dupes of whoever assails the “existing Government,” without enquiring whether the assailant proposes to revolutionize that Government, or merely to substitute for the existing another personnel of the same instincts and the same class. The “other Tillman” belongs to the species of dupers of such dupes. His unmeasured denunciations of Cleveland and such have taken prisoner the mind of the unthinking. Their eyes are filled with his figure, in defiant pose against the Government; their ears are filled with his words, resonant of defiance to known representatives of the workers’ oppressors,—and they conclude from that that he is a paladin of the revolutionary forces in the land. This posture of Tillman’s conceals the fact that he is himself a raw-boned capitalist cannibal; and well-meaning Populists, and half-baked Socialists of the Rev. Myron Reed stamp have hailed him “Great.”

The Tillman who brazenly admits his readiness to slaughter a thousand negroes to teach them “their place” is the true Tillman. At any time he stands ready to substitute “workingman” for “negro,” as he has sufficiently indicated by his attitude towards the children of the white workers engaged in his South Carolina factories.

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