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EDITORIAL

## HEADED FOR WASHINGTON.

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**W**HO has forgotten the fervid argument, made barely seven years ago by the capitalist class, that “no one can grow rich by legislation”? Those were the days of populism.

The capitalist class feared the Movement little in and of itself. It realized that populism was structurally defective, consequently, that it was bound to go to pieces. But, while at ease on that score, capitalism was dreadfully uneasy on another. Its scent was keen enough to detect the breath of Revolution across the populist dust. It was a distant whiff, yet unmistakable; and especially alarming was its direction. The revolutionary breath, that even the thick dust of populism could not suffocate, denoted a knowledge of the objective point. There was in it none of the tomfoolery about “electing good men wherever found,” or “politics have nothing to do with bread and butter.” It knew better. Its peculiar aroma was political. It evidently had imbibed the truth that the Bread and Butter Question is essentially a political question. Accordingly, the objective point was the Government—and no little department thereof, such as municipal or State, merely—but the Federal Government, as embracing all others—that was to be captured. An ominous fact. It turned the stomach of capitalism. Thereupon the argument “no one can grow rich by legislation,” harped upon on all imaginable strings.

Stupid bulls may be turned aside by a rag. The rag of that argument had, of course, no effect. In the meantime, however, the dust of populism having settled, the capitalists regained confidence. So completely did these innocents regain their confidence that they resumed their old ways and thereby are unwittingly furnishing fresh incentive to the Revolution, and fresh ammunition to riddle the rag with when waved again. The latest act of this nature is that which has just come to light on the way certain capitalists were seeking to grow rich by legislation on Cuba, how they

struggled, and how one set, aided by Gen. Leonard Wood, outwitted the other and succeeded.

When the Cuban constitution was being framed, certain capitalist concerns—among them a syndicate of Boston and New York capitalists, with ex-Attorney General Griggs as attorney—desired concessions which a certain Castanada and other syndicates were likewise struggling for. In pursuit of their purpose the New York and Boston Syndicate secured the so-called Platt amendment, which Cuba was ordered to insert in its constitution, and which provided that all “lawful rights acquired thereunder (the military occupancy of the United States) shall be maintained.” The Castanada crowd thereupon forged a translation of the Platt amendment and had inserted in the Cuban constitution, instead of “lawful rights acquired,” “rights legally acquired,” thus giving validity to rights, however unlawful in themselves, provided they were legally acquired, that is, provided the method of acquisition was legal during the military occupation. Thus the Castanada Electric Light and Power Syndicate, the Cuban Central Railway, the Jai Alai gambling concern and other concerns, not less “lawful” than the New York and Boston Syndicate, but neither less fishy, are in, the others out; the former reaping their crop of riches through legislation, the latter empty-handed, likewise through legislation.

Without legislation the capitalist class would be as poor as church mice. Hence it is that the working class, whose connection with legislation is only to be legislated against, are church mice today. Hence also the Socialist Revolution is headed for Washington—which it will capture.

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