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EDITORIAL

“DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE meek-as-Moses “Labor” cabinet of Australia must feel like Sir Andrew Aguecheek, when he was forced into a duel, if ever the June 7 issue of the Berlin *Vorwaerts* should fall into its hands, and it behold itself described by the title of the “Dictatorship of the Proletariat,” and commented upon in the article as an illustration “not of class-reconciliation, but of class-struggle.” But, leaving the Australian Aguecheek to its chills and agues, what about the *Vorwaerts*?

“Dictatorship of the Proletariat” is a challenging title, promiscuous of a martial, revolutionary subject; and when such a title heads a front page article, expectation mounts and soars. Nor is the discovery, revealed by the very first lines of the article, that Australia’s “Labor” cabinet is the theme, sufficiently chilling to cause expectation to droop. On the contrary, the title—“Dictatorship of the Proletariat”—is hot enough to start a new stream of expectation, the expectation that the information previously received on the “Labor” cabinet may, after all, be wrong, and that, after all, Labor may actually have got on its ear in Australia. Alas for both sets of expectations! The *Vorwaerts* article describes Premier Watson as interpellated in Parliament on what the program of his cabinet is to be, and answering that, while he could not yet answer in full, he could say this, that “whatever else the Labor cabinet’s program may or may not contain, one thing it certainly would contain, to wit, a provision for”—what? Oh, Proletariat! Oh, Dictatorship! What will that certain provision be that is to mark the dictatorship of your proletarianism and the proletarianism of your dictatorship?—“a provision for a COURT OF ARBITRATION”!!

And as if that were not a tumble deep enough to take away one’s breath, the *Vorwaerts* adds to the depth by concluding that the Watson-led labor movement moves along the line, “not of class-reconciliation, but of class struggle!”

Arbitration between Capital and Labor and yet the class struggle! The class struggle arbitrated!

No wonder Bebel gets out of patience with that editor. At the Dresden convention, when Bebel was flaying the gentleman, the editor exclaimed: “But I am improving!” and Bebel’s reply followed like a flash: “It takes you too long!”

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

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