

EDITORIAL

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

IF ever there was a proof of the principle that consistent lying is an impossibility that proof is furnished by JAMES M. BECK, the Federal Assistant Attorney-General from 1900 to 1903, in his attempt to bolster up the iniquitous practice of "Government by Injunction."

Up in arms against the demand that comes up from the camp of the working class to curb the power of the Courts in issuing injunctions, Mr. Beck argues that the complaint is irrational because—mark well—"if the workmen did not commit the wrongful act, the injunction could do them no possible harm." Why, then, should they object?

By the same token Mr. Beck is irrational when he objects to having the Federal statutes so amended as to provide rigid instructions to prevent the Courts from issuing unjust injunctions. A statute to that effect is itself in the nature of a writ of injunction to restrain the Courts from doing a wrongful act. Now, then, "if the Courts are not committing the wrongful acts, the injunction could do them no possible harm." Why, then, Mr. Beck's howl?

Mr. Beck's reasoning implies an insinuation that the objection of the working class to injunctions proceeds from their desire to be left with a free hand to do mischief.

By the same token the objection of Mr. Beck to have the Courts enjoined from doing wrong proceeds from the desire on the part of the capitalist class to have the Courts left with a free hand to do mischief.

Obviously, if it is proper that the Courts retain the power to enjoin the workers from committing wrongful acts, there can be no impropriety in restraining the Courts themselves from committing acts that are wrong.

Mr. Beck is a trained lawyer of much mental acumen. If even he slips so badly

in the attempt to bolster up a wrong; if even he gets tangled up in the meshes of his own false reasoning; if even he convicts his criminal clients by the mendacity of his argument—the spectacle is encouraging to no slight degree. Only Truth is consistent, because only Truth fits all the facts. The Lie ever is with its foot in its own mouth. It is the law of its existence. Such is the plight of the reasoning that seeks to sustain “Government by Injunction.”

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

Uploaded February 2010

slpns@slp.org