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EDITORIAL

## {HEARST DEFINES A RADICAL.}

By DANIEL DE LEON

“I DEFINE A RADICAL AS A MAN WHO IS ANXIOUS TO GET AT THE ROOT OF ANYTHING, BUT THE TERM HAS BEEN SOMEWHAT DISCREDITED BY AN EXTREME CLASS WHO APPEAR TO BE ANXIOUS TO TEAR UP THE ROOTS OF EVERYTHING.”—*From W.R. Hearst’s speech accepting the nomination for Mayor, October 11, 1909.*

**A** CANADA Thistle, towering in the pride of its weed exuberance over a lot of other Canada Thistles, which, with their verdant prickly leaves were causing no end of trouble to a farmer by suctioning to themselves the fertility of the soil, and crowding out and causing his crop of corn to shrivel, once addressed his breed as follows:

“Fellow Thistles—The season demands that we put our radiant tubular heads together and consider what’s to be done. (Hear! Hear!)

“Look at yonder prowling farmer. (Hisses.) Not satisfied with a sharp hoe and a pointed spade (Groans) he has a can of benzine, or kerosene, in his hands (Redoubled groans.) You know what that’s for.

“With the hoe he cuts down our verdant leaves, with all their luxury of prickles, level with the ground. That does not satisfy the fellow. He then inserts the point of his spade between the earth and our upper roots, pushes the murderous implement’s head down deep with his foot, and, throwing all his unconstitutional weight upon the handle, scoops up a big chunk of our upper root. Nor yet is the fellow satisfied. He uses profane language. Such language he sputters over us. He mumbles something to the effect that so long as there is a bit of our root left in the ground we are sure to sprout up again. The irrational man! He does not realize that the very fact over which he sputters his profanity is a proof of our being God-ordained (Hear! Hear!) He has no appreciation of the fact that it requires a special order of capacity to thrive as we do. No, the dullard knows nothing of religion, the

family, or patriotism! After he has leveled us to the ground with his hoe, and scooped up a big piece of our roots with his spade, as far as he can go, then—(Loud groans)—then he pours that liquid into the hole and kills the deepest rootlets of our deep roots. That man calls himself a ‘radical.’

“I define a radical as a man who is anxious to get at the root of anything. But the term has been somewhat discredited by an extreme class who appear to be anxious to tear up the roots of everything.” (Long, loud and prolonged applause that lasts three minutes and forty seconds.)

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

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