

Daniel De Leon

Editorial: Homestead—Topeka

The country is just now the scene of two prodigious eye-opening events.

True and good citizens, members of the working class, are standing trial in Pittsburg on a combination of charges, all of which resulted from the stand they took last July at Homestead. As residents of their village, they had gathered on the banks of the Monongahela and resisted the invasion of their domicile by a band of brigands, known as the Pinkerton Guards, an unconstitutional, armed body, that waged war without warrant of law, and which, under the code of civilization, are out-laws, and under our Federal Constitution, traitors or pirates. The law-breakers, the pirates, who attempted to invade Homestead with felonious intent, were shielded by the officers of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, representing the capitalist interests of that State; the yeomanry of Homestead was buried under an avalanche of indictments, dragged before the Courts, and made to answer to a variety of charges: murder, destruction of property, treason, resistance to “constituted authority”, etc., etc. The capitalist class, through its lackeys in office, the Democratic and Republican office-holders of Pennsylvania, put on the airs of outraged “Law and Order”, and in the Courts of Allegheny County it has been conducting the campaign in favor of what it pleases to term peaceful government.

At the same time that this comedy of false pretences is being enacted in Pennsylvania by the Pennsylvania branch of the plutocracy, their Kansas branch is performing a very different

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role. A body calling itself there the House of Representatives of Kansas, but which is recognized as such by itself alone, and is repudiated by both the Executive and the Senate of the State; a body consisting of the hirelings of the capitalist class and members of that class itself, without right or color of law; an illegal, unconstitutional gang, that would thwart the will of the people of Kansas, has taken the law into its own hands; taken possession of government property; destroyed part of this; declared its intention to resist the militia of the State, called out by the Governor himself; and applied to the Santa Fe Railroad and other “friendly” industries to assist it in its open rebellion.

While at Homestead and Pittsburg, this class preaches obedience, in Topeka it preaches opposition to “constituted authority”; while in one place it condemns the men who took up arms to repel an invasion of brigands, in the other it places itself in defiance against the very State authorities, which itself recognizes as lawfully constituted.

These twin occurrences are precious. They are object lessons. They prove the case that the capitalist class is a class of brigandage; that force, brute force, revolution of the most dastardly sort, a contempt of law, a disregard for public opinion, are, all its pretensions to the contrary, the basic principles of its rule; they prove the oft repeated prophecy that, in the civilizing revolution that is impending, the bullet and the bomb will be first resorted to by the capitalist himself, as they were resorted to by the slave-holders in 1861.

These events will go not a little way to instruct the masses; to prepare their minds for the class of people they will have to deal with; to cause them to adapt their tactics to the exigencies of the case; and to enlighten them upon the necessity of promptly voting themselves, out of the exposed position they now generally occupy—in front of the guns—, into the right position—behind the guns—holding these in their own hands, as the Kansas populist did.

The populist movement in Kansas, together with last week’s

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events in that State, has the merit of having given an ocular demonstration of this last and important principle

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