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EDITORIAL

## HOLD-UPS AND HOLD-UPS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**HE strike in the Street Cleaning Department has the distinctive merit of “rounding up” so to speak the Mayor of the land’s metropolis.

Hitherto, and in the main, Mayor Gaynor has exhibited one side, now he is exhibiting the other side of himself, as the purest type of his own, the bourgeois class.

As a protector of free speech, as a protector of free press, as a protector of the right of peaceful assemblage, in short, as the upholder of all the “freedoms” which it was the historic mission of the bourgeois to conquer for society, Mayor Gaynor introduced a new epoch in the modern history of the city which had mainly been lorded over by the Dark Ages rowdyism of Tammany. That was one side of the Mayor.

The other side of the self-same medal is now on exhibition.

One set of employes in the Street Cleaning Department having demanded, not opportunities for free speech, not opportunities for free press, not opportunities for peaceful assemblage, all of which, as a pure type of the bourgeois, the Mayor would have been foremost to vouchsafe the demanders, but having demanded better working conditions, and other sets of the same Department having made common cause with their fellow wage slaves, Mayor Gaynor forthwith jumped upon them with both feet, denounced their “impertinence” with unmeasured language, and called upon the physical force under his command to enforce his sentiments and words.

There was the other side of the bourgeois in full activity. To refuse to work under undesirable conditions was pronounced by the Mayor as “partaking of mutiny,” and the identical Mayor who dealt and dickered with the Traction magnates who stood in the way of the people’s facilities for travel, now hurls upon the conduct of the poor street cleaners on strike the anathema of a “hold-up.”

It is all in the cards.

It is as “legitimate” for the bourgeois to hold up the people in his financial manoeuvres as it is “illegitimate,” from the same bourgeois viewpoint, for his wage slaves to refuse to work. And it is as natural for the identical bourgeois Mayor to be a zealous defender of civic and political rights, to sit placidly at the green table of bourgeois hold-uppers, and then turn around and denounce as a hold-up the economic exercise of freedom on the part of proletarians.

To keep an eye upon only one of these acts is error—that way lies confusion of thought and action.

To expect of the bourgeois who, like Mayor Gaynor, is true to bourgeois “freedom,” that he be also true to the freedoms that the Labor or Socialist Movement is now lispings, is to expect impossibilities.

When Mayor Gaynor insults the municipal slaves on strike by calling their action a hold-up he is but supplementing his work. He is with Epictetus preciseness and Lecky accuracy teaching the Proletariat of the land the lesson that full freedom lies across the prostrate body of bourgeoisdom, aye, the best of bourgeoisdom.

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