

EDITORIAL

THE STEEL TRUST PROSECUTION.

By DANIEL DE LEON

WHAT does it matter whether or not the United States Steel Corporation is the fruit of a conspiracy in restraint of trade?

What does it matter whether or not a feature of the conspiracy was gigantic inflations, running up into a hundred million dollars of fictitious values?

What does it matter whether or not leading personages in the concern deceived the President of the United States into acquiescence with their dark schemes?

What does it matter whether or not “in no line of business in the world at any time has there been such a large percentage [90 per cent.] of those engaged in a business as the percentage of those in this country who at these meetings [Steel meetings] go along day by day, hand in hand pursuing the same course”?

All these allegations, in all likelihood absolutely true, are, true enough, of prime interest to Socialist reasoning, in that they are official confirmation of the Socialist forecast that capitalism travels, and needs must travel, towards economic despotism, and of the Socialist indictment that the route pursued by the capitalist “Pillars of Law and Order” is the route of law-violation.

Nevertheless, of what benefit to the wage slaves of the Steel Trust Combine would be the Trust’s conviction, on each of the many counts of the long indictment, in an indictment in which, with not one word, the Trust’s overworked, underpaid and mutilated wage slaves are mentioned, and their cause espoused?

In this circumstance, and in this circumstance only, is the prosecution of significance to the wage slave class of the land.

The Government’s move against the Steel Trust is a move against the architrave, the cornice, the coping stones, the foundation blocks of which are pounded of human bone, cemented with human marrow, and reddened with human gore—the bone, the marrow, the blood of workingmen, and not a few workingwomen and chil-

dren. To indict the filigree features of such a piece of social architecture; to indict them with the beat of drums and flare {blare?} of trumpets, wherewith the Government and its press-echo announce the move, and yet pass by in silence the foundation sins—to do that is to approve the principal, the initial Wrong. It is to set the seal of official sanction upon the real Defect. It is worse. It is to seek to draw attention away from it with noisy pretenses of devotion to social-architectural perfection.

It is being said in “high places” that the Steel Trust prosecution is “a political move.”—Of course it is.

It is being more specifically said that the Steel Trust prosecution is “a move to take the wind out of the sails of the Insurgents and of the Stanley Democratic Investigating Committee.”—There is some truth in that.

What, however, is not being said in the afore referred-to “high places,” yet felt and known all the same, is that the Steel Trust prosecution is a tub, desperately thrown at the whale of the rising and increasingly intelligent Unrest of the Working Class of the land.

Charles I threw his Strafford at the whale of the bourgeois revolution in England,—and yet saved not his neck, nor the neck of feudality, by the sacrifice of his and its favorite.

The Manchu Imperial Government at Peking have just thrown their Cheng Hsuan Huai at the whale of the rebels, variously called Revolutionists, and Republicans—yet seem not to have improved their position with the sacrifice of their “strongest man.”

Even if the present Steel Trust were to be actually sacrificed to the whale of the Socialist Revolution, the plumb-line by which that structure was reared remains in its full Labor exploiting vigor. What with that, and the vast amount of education with which Socialist literature and agitation is riddling the bourgeois mis-education of the masses, the Steel Trust will go the way of the Straffords and the Chengs, and blazon the way that these have blazoned and are blazoning.

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