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EDITORIAL

## MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**W**ITH big headlines, followed by thrilling outbursts of indignation at “cowardice,” the Republican-Democratic press of this city has announced the “literal throwing out” of a policeman from the force for “cowardice.” This surely is much ado about nothing.

Cowardice and courage are habits. Habits are primarily determined by surroundings. Cowardice is a peculiarly fit vice of capitalist society. Cowardice is the obverse of the medal the reverse of which is bullyism. The bully is a fellow who swaggers in mock heroics before the weak. Every school boy has made the experience. The bully cringes before the strong boy; he tyrannizes the little ones. In capitalist society the masses of the people are weak. Their impecuniosity places them at the mercy of the rich. Especially helpless is the working class. They have not even a little capital with which to attempt to shield themselves from the bullying of the capitalist class proper. Towards this weak class the economically giant capitalist plays the hero. The browbeating posture of the strong towards the weak is not heroism; it is cowardice. Like master, like man. The Police is the man of the capitalist master. From its master the Police inhale the breath of cowardice, and circumstances, or surroundings, or material conditions, cultivate, nourish and foment the vice. If lack of courage is a disqualification for service in the “force,” nine-tenths of the policemen should be summarily sacked.

It is small wonder that the capitalist press affects such indignation at the “cowardly” policeman. No society woman is as severe towards an erring sister as the society woman whose own morals will bear no investigation. It is the confirmed liar who will thunder loudest against lying. Everybody knows that there is no churchist so vindictive towards the “infidel” as the churchist whose life is a continuous series of breaches of the Ten Commandments. So also with the coward. The coward

capitalist must and does make much ado about the “cowardice” of this policeman—a necessary clatter. How else would anyone know that Sir Capitalist is a courageous hero?

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