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EDITORIAL

UPON WHOSE HEAD THAT BLOOD?

By DANIEL DE LEON

IT is the regulation despatch of an encounter between constables and strikers that came from Pittsburg, Pa., on the 21st of this month. The despatch, moreover, had the specific Pennsylvania flavor.

The despatches tell of about 250 Hungarian workingmen, now again on strike against the Pressed Steel Car Company at McKees Rocks, peacefully assembled at Bloody Angle and listening to one of their speakers; of constables and police ordering them to disperse; of a shot being thereupon fired by one of the workers, fatally wounding the Chief of Police; and of the subsequent dispersion of the strikers, leaving two dying and several more injured behind. This is the gist of the despatches, those that come from friendly and those that come from unfriendly sources.

That the blood of these workingmen victims falls upon the head of the Capitalist Class is a truism. It is a truism that almost loses weight by its staleness. The ordering of men, who are peaceably assembled, assembled, at that, on a spot where they could not even be charged with "obstructing traffic," to disperse, is an outrage. Outrage invites resistance, kindles rage. Even if, as all the despatches agree, the first shot proceeded from the workers, it was provoked, instigated and incited by the liveried law-breakers of Capitalism who presumed to repeal State and national constitutional guarantees concerning peaceful assemblage. The guilty incitement smears with gore the head of the head of the inciter.

But all is not said when that is said. Not upon the heads of the guilty inciters only falls the proletarian blood just spilled in McKees Rocks. In equal share is that blood shared by the heads of the unconscionable pack of self-seeking misguiders who have fastened themselves upon those very workingmen, together with the Infamous politicians of the Socialist party who abetted them.

All workingmen, whatever their nationality in this country, need as much the checking restraint of coolness, as the spur of information upon their class condition. All are equally exhausted in mind and body; all are equally racked of nerves; all are equally on the verge of despair—whatever their nationality. With the foreign-born, however, who do not even possess the country's tongue, the additional weakness of helplessness, and, consequently, of blind dependence upon those they deem their friends, is added to the other inflammable qualities shared by the whole proletariat.

Upon him who would take up the work of agitation among this specially distracted element lies, accordingly, the added responsibility of calm, cool, sound instruction. Not so did the Ettors, the Trautmanns, the St. Johns, the Elizabeth Flynn-Joneses, together with the rest of the female and male hyenas who covered themselves with the noble skin of the I.W.W., understand their duty. Seeing in the Labor Movement only pasture for their vainglory, besides even more sordid ambitions, they presumed and assumed to handle a question for which they were mentally and morally unfit. Without the remotest comprehension of the structure of Industrial Unionism; without, accordingly, the faintest understanding of the all-sufficient physical power that Industrial Unionism furnishes the proletariat with;—without any of these necessary equipments the pack started in to “amend Marx”—the ballot box was to be “struck with an axe,” “Direct Action” was to save the day; the ballot was a “politician's weapon,” etc., etc. The first consequence of this was a caricature of the Marxian principle that “force has ever been the midwife of Revolution”; the next consequence was a system of agitation that, instead of steadying the minds of their hearers with constructive information, aided in unsteading the same. With such a “propaganda” the pack of Ettors and Trautmanns fell upon the sufficiently distracted and helpless Hungarian proletariat at McKees Rocks, thus, instead of leading into useful channels the combustible elements already at hand, adding fuel thereto. And, lo, the shot, futile for good, big, under the circumstances, with evil, fired at the lawbreaking Chief of Police.

Justifiable tho' the first shot was at Bloody Angle, it was an act of insanity. For the insanity the “Direct Action” so-called I.W.W. is directly responsible. Upon their head, together with the head of their doubles, the Socialist party politicians—who, with the notable exception of the Milwaukee Social Democrats, and, in pursuit of

their petty anti-Socialist Labor Party policies, whooped it up for the Anarchist so-called I.W.W.—falls an ample share of the blood of the Hungarian wage slaves shed at McKees Rocks. No less than the Capitalist Class, is this viperous combine guilty, guilty, guilty!

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