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EDITORIAL

A HOLD UP!

By DANIEL DE LEON

IMPOSSIBLE for any self respecting citizen to read the reports of the struggle between Mayor Gaynor, on the one side, and the capitalist syndicates, on the other, over the extension of the subway, without a deep sense of humiliation.

Here is a municipality, ranking next to the largest on earth; an empire in itself; the home of a vast population to whom rapid transit is a necessary of life;—here is such a civic aggregation thwarted and impeded in the pursuit of its happiness by men with no power other than capital who have been placing before the municipality the alternative: suffer discomfort, or submit to our dictation;—here we have the sight of progress arrested by men who virtually say to the municipality: “Stand and deliver!”

It is a plain case of “hold up.”

For less than this men have been convicted of piracy, and hanged to the cross-yards of their own ships; or convicted of brigandage, and sent to the penitentiary and the gallows.

The disgraceful performance, accentuated by the impunity with which it is conducted, exhibits the civic virtues of capitalism. It nurses the pirates and brigands into being: it shields them and smoothes down their path; it sets up light-houses and sign-posts for their convenience: in their behalf it tramples upon every instinct of man manifested by the wage-slaves:—and then, in reward to the mother that reared them, they turn upon her and smite her over the head with clubs of her own fashioning.

The sight of Mayor Gaynor battling with a crew that is flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone might afford the gratification that is derived from the sight of swine rending swine. But not all the gratification derived from the sight upon that score can soothe the sense of humiliation on the part of the sensitive portion of the community.

Such is the law of the race. The overflowing of the measure is the necessary condition for the ending of Wrong. The top-capitalist is running amuck. Brutal towards the

working class, inconsiderate towards the weaker members of his own family, he is doing his work of causing the measure to overflow.

There is comfort in the humiliation of the subway hold-up.

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