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EDITORIAL

“REFORMERS” DONE DIRT.

By DANIEL DE LEON

RECENT events in California are not calculated to make any less rough the path of the Nationalization or Municipalization freaks, who, innocently or otherwise, insist on denying the Socialist contention that the Legislature is, no less than the mill or factory, a capitalist shop, with the aid of both of which the Capitalist Class oppresses the Working Class.

The Legislature of California enacted a law that authorized a system of railroad private police. Acting upon this law, the Governor, upon the application of the Southern Pacific Company, has just made State peace officers of the Company's detectives, depot officers and secret service men. What does this mean?

Without its own trusted pets being clothed with State powers, the Southern Pacific is unable to run things, especially with regard to Labor, in the way that it desires, and with the promptness that may suit its needs. Just as soon, however, as this, or any other corporation, can, by issuing its orders to hired men of its own, thereby command simultaneously police and other functions, its love relations with Labor are greatly simplified. Its employees being at the same time public officials, clothed with police powers, the corporation becomes the State itself,—sacred towards its employees, and clothed with redoubtable functions. Do the employees threaten a strike? The pet hired men, who are also policemen, can come down upon them, and place their action in a light that is infinitely harder than it would be were the strikers simply operating against other workingmen, private citizens like themselves.

The “reformers” and freaks generally have been looking for a solution of the vexed Social Question via the nationalization (meaning thereby also State and Municipal ownership) of the railroads, etc. They were told that such act was folly, seeing that the present Government was capitalist Government, and that, consequently, the placing of capitalist concerns into the hands of capitalist Government could have no effect other than to concentrate, more completely than

they are now, the economic and the political powers, with which the Capitalist Class plunders the Working Class, and then browbeats it into submission. Of course, the “reformer” was incapable of seeing the point. But while the “reformer” is owlishly pondering over the problem, the problem steals a march and turns the tables upon him: Instead of Corporations being nationalized, Government is being Corporationized,—which means the identical thing.

It is not to be expected that the “reformer” and municipalization fiend generally will realize how they are done dirt by this move. A certain minimum of intelligence and honesty is ever needed to perceive and admit disaster to one’s illusions. But the broad masses of the people, the Working Class, so long operated on by the quack “reformers,” will not, their attention being called to it, fail to perceive the point, and perceiving, draw by so much nearer to the day when, stripped of all illusions, they realize that no sleight-of-hand can solve the Social Question.

The path to the emancipation of the Working Class lies along the road of the uncompromising Class Struggle, and over the prostrate body of the Capitalist System together with its upholder, the Capitalist Class.

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