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EDITORIAL

“GIVING MEN WORK.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE destruction of lives and property during the first two months of this year is almost without a precedent. The Waterbury fire resulted in the destruction of \$1,000,000 worth of property; the Paterson fire was responsible for the loss of one life and \$8,000,000; the New York Central tunnel wreck resulted in the death of 17; the New York subway explosion was responsible for 8 deaths, and it did damage to the extent of \$500,000; the fire in the armory and in the Park Avenue Hotel resulted in 21 deaths, and \$2,000,000 loss; the recent floods have occasioned a loss that is estimated at over \$15,000,000, and the fatalities are placed at 30; the Colorado snow slides have already, as far as is known, killed 25 persons. These major accidents foot up to 109 lives lost, and over \$35,000,000 worth of property destroyed.

Working on the theory often heard advanced in capitalist circles, that war, in which many persons are killed and much property is consumed, is beneficial to the human race, we cannot avoid the conclusion, and it is a strictly Christian conclusion, that Providence has of late been good to its children. People have been killed right and left—and have thus given place to other people; there has been a waste of human energy, as crystalized in wealth—and an opening has been made for expending more human energy in replacing what has been destroyed.

Capitalist philosophy and religion reach their highest point in the formulation of the above monstrosities. So drunk and blind is the capitalist class that it seeks eagerly for anything that will allow it to continue the day of its drunkenness and blindness. A calamity is a godsend, and death and disaster are things to be devoutly wished. From the snow storm which “gave men work” clearing the streets, to the fires which gave men work rebuilding, to the snow slides which “gave men work” rescuing, capitalism has drawn its consolation. It is tied and helpless, the only thing

according to its own dogma, to bring relief is violence. A war of two months’ duration would not have been half as destructive of life and property as have the happenings of the past two months. Yet war is the great relief of capitalism—for “it gives men work.”

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