

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 1, NO. 323.

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, MAY 19, 1901.

TWO CENTS.

EDITORIAL

SPECTACULAR.

By DANIEL DE LEON

DID the working class, did the masses in the land take to heart a certain picture drawn by all the despatches from Albany in the Friday, May 17, morning papers?

This was the picture:

“A car crept at 11:30 out of the company’s barn. It contained a company of the Twenty-third Regiment and four Pinkertons to protect two motormen and two conductors.”

No “theories” here: only hard facts, spectacularly exhibited at that, to the public gaze.

The company of the Twenty-third regiment, to say nothing of the Pinkertons, represented “The Law;” the protected motormen and conductors represented “The Law’s protégés.” What “The Law” is and what it protects the spectacle illustrated well.

“Life,” “liberty,” and “the pursuit of happiness”,—that is the theory of what “The Law” is there to promote, protect. Was it “life,” was it “liberty,” was it the “pursuit of happiness” that the strong arm of “The Law” was protecting in this instance? No! Yes!

Let the protégés speak. Or, rather, let them in eloquent silence tell the tale by their appearance.

Wretched enough is the lot of the motorman and conductor. A miserable share of the enormous wealth they themselves produce is all the wages that fall to them in exchange for hours long and inhuman. With barely enough to subsist on, not as the mentally and physically well-rounded beings that citizenship should imply, their future is still gloomier: not theirs is a future of the repose due to old age: not theirs is a future surrounded with children, grown up amidst the enjoyments of childhood: least of all is theirs a future with the companionship of womanhood, wreathed in the dignity of the sex. There is the future of the wage slave: a dreary old age, with

family torn and home blasted.

Were these the men protected by the strong arm of “The Law?”

No! There are still deeper depths of misery in the ranks of the Working Class. The men protected by the strong arm of “The Law” were wretches still more wretched, willing—being driven by the goad of want—to labor for a still lower wage, under conditions still more degrading, for a future still more gloomy!

Such is the “life,” such the “liberty” that the strong arm of “The Law” was protecting, and such is the “happiness,” the pursuit of which its sabres and bayonets was safeguarding for the Working Class.

By its fruits the tree is known. By its protégés, capitalist “Law” is understood. “The Law” that capitalism enacts is a Moloch, hypocritical, besides barbarous. When it says “Life,” it means a life of luxury for the idle, sponging Capitalist Class, but a life of brute servitude for the Working Class; when it says “Liberty,” it means liberty for itself to outrage all human rights, with the corresponding liberty on the part of every worker to assist it in “pursuing a happiness” that consists in degrading and plundering all the other workers!

Such “Law” is a “Buccaneer’s Logbook.” Such “Law” must be trampled under foot at the hustings; torn to shreds with the sabre of the suffrage; laid prostrate with the bullet of the ballot.

Will the Buccaneer Class itself render that service to the human race?

No!

That service is a boon, reserved by Social Evolution to the Working Class to confer.

Humanity is waiting; restlessly waiting.

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

Uploaded March 2006