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EDITORIAL

## AN ERRONEOUS THOUGHT.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**HE following letter appears in the January *Locomotive Firemen's Magazine*, under the heading "Contributed":

"In the July number of the *Locomotive Firemen's Magazine* appears an article, covering several pages, under the heading 'Colorado'. It was with fast beating heart and quickened pulse that the Canadian people read of the most harsh, cruel, high-handed injustice ever perpetrated under the cloak of justice. We felt confident that when the details were made known to the Federal authorities, Justice, so long delayed, would be so swift, sure and complete as to forever wipe the stain from the American flag.

"It seems that not only the Federal authorities, but the American people, have failed to vindicate their national honor by not bringing to summary Justice the parties guilty of the star-chamber acts, as that of the crime of murder. It seems to me that the labor organizations throughout the United States have not taken the stand they should have. If every labor organization had joined hands and pledged themselves, as well as their capital, and placed both at the disposal of a joint committee for the purpose of bringing pressure to bear on the National Government for the purpose of prosecuting the so-called military authorities, alias 'mine operators', there would be a different story to tell now.

"It seems incredible that the American people, who went so nobly to right Cuba's wrongs, should stand by calmly and allow such a state of affairs to exist such as would not be tolerated by any other civilized power.

"J.G. Shepard."

This letter is not only rightly indignant, but it is also wrongly so. The writer cannot express too strongly his condemnation of the inactivity of the Federal authorities and the trades unions, in the matter of Colorado, to suit the friends of Labor familiar with the damnable facts relating thereto; but he is mistaken in thinking that the Federal authorities and the trades unions, as at present constituted and controlled, can be appealed to as a means whereby justice can be

done the miners, or any other large body of workmen battling for their rights against the combined forces of political and economic Capitalism. The contrary thought: that the Federal authorities and the trades unions, as at present constituted and controlled, are agencies, closely identified and interwoven with each other, in the enslavement and degradation of labor, and cannot, therefore, be enlisted in its aid, is the true one to hold in this and all other matters affecting the working class. Both the Federal authorities and the trades unions, as led by the Gomperses, Mitchells, Sargents, Hannahans, et. al., stand for the right of capital to exploit labor by means of the private ownership of the instruments of production and distribution. Standing together in the perpetration of this basic wrong to Labor, the Federal authorities and the trades unions, as at present constituted and controlled, are logically bound to stand together in its perpetuation. The Federal authorities are chosen by the trades unions at the ballot box. They are praised in the official organs of the trades unions. One has but to turn to the leading editorial, on the President's message, in this same January issue of the *Locomotive Firemen's Journal*, or to the disgusting eulogy pronounced upon President Roosevelt, the supporter and accomplice of Gov. Peabody and Gen. Bell, by Grand Master Hannahan, at the recent Buffalo convention of Locomotive Firemen, to be convinced of the fact that the trades unions of the Gompers-Hannahan stripe, are the strongest supporters of the political agencies of capitalism that maltreat and oppress Labor. The trades unions of this character aid Capital even more directly. They approve of the militia, which, Colorado has demonstrated, is one of the most destructive weapons used in Capital's conspiracy against the rights of Labor. Nay more, they permit the locomotive enginemen and firemen to transport the militia to the very spot where Labor is ruthlessly shot down and bull panned! And it is due to their lack of initiative, the cowardly silence and acquiescence, of the Gompers-Hannahan type of trades union, that national feeling is not aroused against the infamy that Labor endured in the mining camps of the Centennial State. The trades unions, as at present constituted and controlled, are participants in the crimes against Labor.

Any thought of appealing for the rectification of Labor's wrongs to the Federal authorities and the Gompers-Hannahan form of trades union, is fundamentally

wrong and erroneous. Labor will be in a position to make effective appeals when its component parts recognize that the private ownership of the means of production and distribution, the basic cause of its exploitation and degradation, must be abolished, and social ownership,—or Socialism—, substituted in its stead. With such a recognition will come the organizing of trades unions that will elect to office men pledged to the abolition of capitalism; that will disapprove of the militia, and strike to prevent its transportation; that will, in fewer words, be dictated at all times by the interests of the working class as opposed to those of the capitalist class now dominating both the government and the trades unions. Then woe to whatever remnant of capitalism still in existence that will dare inflict another Colorado on the working class! It will be treated with the scant ceremony it so justly deserves!

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
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[slpns@slp.org](mailto:slpns@slp.org)