

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 7, NO. 331.

NEW YORK, MONDAY, MAY 27, 1907.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

'FRISCO VINDICATES SOCIALISM.

By DANIEL DE LEON

PATRICK CALHOUN, president of the United Railroads of San Francisco and a grandson of the famous John C. Calhoun, is out with a vigorous denial of the indictments of bribery found against him. He accuses Rudolph Spreckels, the "reformer" who began the war on Schmitz and Ruef and his associates with having inspired the recent car strikes, and retorts that the indictments "are each a part of Spreckels' plan to confiscate the property of the United Railroads, to replace our street railroads by lines owned by Spreckels, and to that end to control the politics of San Francisco." Spreckels is a local capitalist interested in a competing corporation, the Municipal Street Railways of San Francisco. Calhoun, who is a New Yorker, backed by Eastern capital, defeated this company in the scramble for franchises. Allied with him are Harriman's Southern Pacific attorneys, who have also blocked Spreckels' attempts to promote the political and economic interests of himself and associates.

All these facts constitute a tale that is worth adorning with a moral. It has long been the contention of Socialists that "reform," under capitalism, is but one of the many ways in which the conflict of capitalist interests manifests itself. Government, under capitalism, is primarily based on property, to whose protection and perpetuation it is mainly devoted. It follows that the capitalist faction out of office, or not in control of the same, by either hook or crook, seeks to become the capitalist faction directly or indirectly in office, in order that it may utilize the powers of government for the confiscation of its competitor's properties, and, obversely, for the advancement of its own. The sum total of the "reformer's" efforts results in the creation of a condition of affairs worse than that which they profess an anxious desire to remove. Their "reform" only tends to aggravate the iniquity in which it is conceived.

The 'Frisco "graft expose" admirably illustrates the profundity of Socialist contention. It vividly makes apparent that Spreckels and his associates were animated by factional capitalist interests instead of "civic pride," in the "crusade for reform." In the advancement of these interests, they out-Heroded Herod, making the District Attorney's office an appendage to their corporate interests, exposing the crimes of their competitors while hiding their own, among them the inspired strikes that plunged the city into civil warfare. In the pursuit of this "reform" policy, Schmitz and Ruef had to suffer. They went after strange gods from other cities, neglecting the hitherto dominant interests of their own bailiwicks, with the result that both now stand uncovered, though they are still far away from jail, the probability being that, in the long run, the "unreformed" and the "reformed" capitalists will compromise their differences. Such things have been known to occur when capitalist "reformation" gets too hot for all concerned.

But murder has already out; and Socialism stands vindicated once more!

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

Uploaded October 2009

slpns@slp.org