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EDITORIAL

THE WORKMAN MADE SCAPE-GOAT.

By DANIEL DE LEON

JOHN M. Wiskar, the engineer whose train, amid blinding soot, smoke and fog, crashed into another train in the New York Central Tunnel has been indicted: Under the skilful guidance of the Reform District Attorney, the Grand Jury found itself “beyond any reasonable doubt,” convinced of his culpability and found a bill against him for manslaughter. On the other hand, under skilful guidance of the same Reform District Attorney, the Grand Jury could not convince itself “beyond a reasonable doubt” that the officials of the New York Central were guilty, and it accordingly allowed to go off scot free the gentlemen under whose management the above-named soot, smoke and fog was allowed to gather in the tunnel, despite repeated accidents, and despite a prophetic presentment made by another Grand Jury not quite ten months ago, calling attention to the horrible Dark Hole of Calcutta that those same gentlemen were keeping up in the Tunnel.

That the class of people, who get on capitalist Boards of Directors, who call themselves “workingmen,” and whose ponderous salaries are lumped in Census reports with the pittances earned by the actual workers on the roads, are, at every such recurring event as the Tunnel Horror, found out to be non-workers, except in the work of drawing salaries, is nothing uncommon. Nor is it at all uncommon that whenever punishment is to be meted out, it regularly falls wholly upon the worker. For all that, there is in this particular instance something uncommon; and fortunate is the uncommonness thereof.

As a rule, such glaring acts of injustice carry the stamp of only one or the other of {the} capitalist parties. If Tammany had been in power, not a few would the innocents have been who would have thought, oh, if only the Republican party had been in power! On the other hand, had the Republicans been in power, quite a few would the innocents have been who would have sighed, oh, if only Labor-Loving

Democrats had been in power. And thus the point would have been muffed: the important fact would have escaped all but the most watchful that the infamy committed was, not the act of this or that political party, as the case might happen to be, but the act of the capitalist class, which both parties agree upon upholding, nursing and protecting. Now, the uncommonness in this Tunnel case lies in the fact that the point cannot be muffed except a man be a natural born idiot.

The Administration now in power in New York, and under whose presiding influence, direction and breath the certainly guilty New York Central officials go free, while the at least probably innocent Wiskar is indicted, that Administration is not Republican only, is not Democratic only, it is both Democratic and Republican. The Administration is a fusion Administration, made up of representative men of both parties. The infamy of Wiskar's indictment, and of freedom granted to the Board of Directors is thereby riveted in plain view of all upon the Capitalist Class.

The Working Class, in voting either Democratic or Republican, simply assumes on the political field the role it fills on the economic field: the role of food for cannon.

Why not try to run that cannon yourselves?

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