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EDITORIAL

AN OPEN LETTER.

By DANIEL DE LEON

SECRETARY {of the Navy} Bonaparte of President Roosevelt's cabinet, speaking to the Chatauqua Society, recommended death for Anarchists who kill, and the whipping-post for those whose seditious language would overthrow Law and Order, "a warning to their kind." The first part of the recommendation partakes of Rooseveltian platitude. There are now ample laws for the killing of killers. It is with the second part of the recommendation that the people of the country are interested. In order to help their enlightenment upon this point we have two questions to put to Secretary Bonaparte:



CHARLES JOSEPH BONAPARTE
(1851-1921)

Question First—The Constitution of the United States provides that the law-enacting power of the land shall be Congress. Obedient to the provision, Congress has enacted certain laws governing the procedure of extradition. Gov. McDonald, the present Governor of Colorado, in a letter to J.C. Lamb of Dreyden, Mich., attached his signature to the following bit of information: "There are United States laws governing this matter [extradition], but, aside from this, the Governors of the various States, at a convention held several years ago, adopted rules which are much more stringent than the United States laws, and which are followed by most of the Governors,

and this State is particular that these rules be followed in all their details." In other words, the Gov. of Colorado has torn down the laws of the United States. By repealing them through a "convention of Governors," a body not recognized by the

Constitution, he has held “seditious language” looking to the “overthrow of Law and Order.” Nor did he stop at the “holding of language.” He put the language into practice. Jointly with Gov. Gooding of Idaho, and obedient to the “much more stringent rules” enacted by the “convention of Governors,” and repealing “the laws of the United States governing the matter,” he allowed and ordered last February the arrest in Colorado of three men, residents of long standing in Denver,—Moyer, Haywood and Pettibone—and their deportation to Idaho, where they have ever since been held in prison and denied the right of a speedy trial, all upon the alleged confession of a self-confessed murderer.—Our first question is: Does not the conduct of Govs. McDonald and Gooding come within the scope of the whipping-post recommendation? Should they not be strapped to a stout pine-tree on top of Pike’s Peak, and, in constructive plain view of the outraged majesty of the nation, receive a cowhiding that would leave their backs of the color of the rainbow, “a warning to their kind”?

Question Second—Judge Gaynor of the Supreme Court in Brooklyn recently rendered an opinion that a single five cent fare should be charged by the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company to Coney Island. The opinion notwithstanding, the Company demanded double fare, and, seeing that the passengers refused payment, it provided 260 heavyweight “Inspectors” to drag the disobedient passengers out of the cars and dump them on the road. The instructions of the Company to their plug-ugly “Inspectors” went further. What those instructions were may be gathered from the words of Mr. Timothy Roberts, a member of the Company’s “Legal Department.” Said Mr. Roberts: “My men have the right to kill any man who refuses to pay his fare.” As in the case of Govs. McDonald and Gooding, Mr. Roberts did not stop at the “holding of language” calculated to “overthrow Law and Order.” The language was put into practice. A girl was thrown into the canal and drowned. In short, the right to try, convict and punish with death has been arrogated by the “Legal Department,” be it marked, by the LEGAL DEPARTMENT of the Company, contrary to the laws and statutes made and provided, and in derogation of {the} majesty of Law and Order, and of the Commonwealth.—Now, then, our second question is: Does not the conduct of Mr. Timothy Roberts and of every member of the Board of Directors of the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company come within the

scope of the whipping-post recommendation? Should not they be strapped to the telegraph poles along their line and whipped so thoroughly as to be a thorough deterrent and “warning to their kind”?

A categoric answer from Law and Order Secretary Bonaparte would be welcome to an expectant public.

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