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EDITORIAL

WHO BUT HE, OR THEY?

By DANIEL DE LEON

ANOTHER awful catastrophe is placed on the long list of railroad catastrophes of the land. Two trains ran into each other near Seneca, Mich., with a heavy loss of life.

Who is to blame? The Railroad Company? No, indeed! Abreast of the news of the disaster, the information comes that the blame lies with the engineer or other employes.

Of course, who but he or they?

Does the Company superintend anything except conspiracies against the minor stockholders? Does it run anything except the State and local legislative offices to aid it in its work of brigandage? Does it work at anything else except directing the reports of the Inter-State Commerce Committee so as to suppress information on the wholesale slaughter of the railroad employes? Does it exert itself in any way directly connected with the operation of its lines? Why, bless your heart, No! The point has been judicially established long ago; now nearly nine years ago, when Judge Van Brunt of the Supreme Court of this State quashed an indictment against Chauncey M. Depew and the rest of the Board of Directors of the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad, charging them with responsibility for the deaths of half a dozen people in their tunnel. The learned Judge stated there and then that there was no evidence of these Directors having been aware of the cause of the accident, and, taking a whole page from Socialist doctrine, he declared that it was not the Directors who run the road but the employes. These being the ones who run the road, the ones who operate it, is it not obviously wrong to saddle responsibility upon the Directors? Is it not downright wicked to charge the Directors with a knowledge they are as guiltless of as the unborn babe? Of course! And this being thus the Directors of the Wabash Railroad should not now be held responsible for the Seneca tragedy.

It is true that certain conclusions follow from their acquittal of all blame. There

are those who, reasoning backward, may conclude that, seeing they are not to blame, they do not work; and seeing they do not work, neither should they draw revenue from such roads. But such conclusions will occur only to the pestiferous Socialist, to the un-American Socialist, to the un-patriotic Socialist, to the un-Christian Socialist—in short, to the no-good Socialist. All other good people, truly patriotic, truly Christian and truly American will fail to see any connection between work and enjoying the fruits of work.

Peace to the bones of the victims!

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

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