

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 7, NO. 345.

NEW YORK, MONDAY, JUNE 10, 1907.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

MISQUOTING LINCOLN.

By DANIEL DE LEON

PRESIDENT Roosevelt was guilty of an impious misquotation in his Indianapolis Decoration Day speech. It was the shades of no less a figure in American history than the shades of Lincoln that were the victim of “Big Stick” impiety.

Roosevelt, in the attempt to palliate, if not to justify the criminal conduct of the railroads, sought to throw upon the objectors to railroad usurpation the odium of enviousness. How did he do it? By directness? That at least would have had the merit of daring. It is not in the “hero of St. Juan Hill,” the renowned warrior who rode “triumphantly” where no Spaniards were, carefully dodging the place of danger to do a deed of daring, whether physically or morally. Roosevelt “quoted Lincoln,” or rather he wrenched a beautiful saying of Lincoln’s clean out of the sockets of its context. Referring to the slave-holding confederation, a houseless cabal, that sought to pull down the house of the Nation, the keen mind of Lincoln snap-shotted the morale of the Confederacy with the words: “Let not him who is houseless pull down the house of another.” This passage, of all passages, Roosevelt had the effrontery to quote against the rising tide of indignation towards railroad usurpation.

It is not the houseless that are drawing up the indictment against the railroad robber-burgs. The indictment is being drawn up by the builders of the house. It is the Working Class, mutilated and massacred on the railroads, and ground to dust and into dividends who are drawing up the indictment. These indeed, are seeking to pull down the robber burg of tyranny, not out of envy; not because they would like such a habitation themselves; but because such habitations are harmful to society. The attitude of the modern Working Class is no more the attitude of “the houseless” seeking to “pull down the house of another” than the attitude of the Revolutionary Fathers was that of “the houseless” seeking “to pull down the house of another.” The

Revolutionary Fathers justly pulled down the structure of feudal British tyranny. The modern Working Class is tugging at the structure that supplanted the tyranny overthrown in 1776, and that the “Big Stick” is vainly seeking to prop up by physical force and by misquotations.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded October 2009

slpns@slp.org