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EDITORIAL

HAPPY MODERN “MASSAHS.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

“**M**ASSAH”! a Negro slave is said one day to have answered his master, who ordered him to climb on a steep roof and plug a leak, “Massah”! If I go up that steep roof, and I rolls off, and I falls down, and I breaks my neck, massah will lose \$500. Now, if Massah send up that Irishman whom massah is hiring for \$1.50 a day, and he rolls off, and he falls down, and he breaks his neck, massah will lose nuffin.”

For all we know, this conversation took place in the State of Alabama; for all we know, it took place eighteen miles southwest of Birmingham; there is nothing to indicate that the conversation did not take place on the very spot where the Virginia mines of that State are located, and where on the 20th of this month an explosion took place entombing one hundred miners. Who knows but that the identical “Massah” of the conversation or some near and lineal descendant is the principal owner of the said mines!?

A hundred slaves entombed by an explosion or any other catastrophe would have sent any Southern neighborhood of slaveholders into mourning. It would have meant approximately an immediate loss of \$50,000. To-day the mourners are not the “Massahs.” Whoever may now be mourning the “Massahs” are cool. They, in their stupid class conservatism, fought hard to retain the conditions under which such an “accident” would almost ruin them. To-day they are glad they were beaten. The wage slave is cheap as dirt; his death costs the “Massahs” nothing. His “Massah” need not even take precautions for his safety. Such precautions cost too much money and time, and time is more money. So, let them be exploded—no loss comes to the “Massah”: he neither loses his investment, nor does he lose any time worth mentioning in supplying the places of the dead! The capitalist system lashes new applicants into his {sic} web like a vacuum attracts the air!

At the hecatomb of the hundred slaughtered miners near Birmingham, Ala., the "Massah" class of to-day rubs its hands and says: "Thank heaven, the fellows were only wage slaves!"

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