EDITORIAL

CALDWELL-BIALYSTOK.

By DANIEL DE LEON

RECENTLY *The People* had an account of a distinguished Montana capitalist who went to Russia on a pilgrimage to learn the fashion of the Moscovite towards the working class.[1] The distinguished pilgrim, one W.R. Van Lieu, wrote home jubilantly about the Russian style of declaring "Strike Law," a term that meant the summary hanging, shooting or beating of any workingman who refused to work under whatever conditions and for whatever wage the employer chose to dictate. Mr. Van Lieu, it was evident, meant to import the system into the United States; he talked all the more jaunty on the matter seeing he felt sure the import could pass the Custom House without payment of duty. To judge by the despatches from Russia, giving details about the Bialystok outrages upon the Jews, some Russian pillar of "Law and Order" must have got ahead of the Van Lieu scheme, and, with keener sense than Van Lieu, pilgrimaged to America, saw how things were done here, and hastened back home, where he proceeded without delay to apply the "trick." That trick is as simple as simplicity itself. It consists in simply claiming that the particular workingman, whom the capitalist class wishes to get rid of, committed some crime, and, based upon that fabrication, proceed against him. The Russian Van Lieu saw Moyer, Haywood and Pettibone, three decent workingmen, kidnapped from one State, dragged to another, falsely charged with a crime and thrust in prison as a preliminary for hanging. Having witnessed such a fine trick he must have returned post-haste to Russia and applied the trick in Bialystok.

Civilization stands aghast before the Bialystok outrage. It is doubly an outrage. It is the assassination of the body and it is the assassination of the character.

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[1] [Not included here.—*R.B.*]

Inoffensive Jews are slaughtered mercilessly, and the slaughter is ordered upon the allegation that a Jew threw a bomb at a church procession, in other words, their character is first assassinated as a pretext for the subsequent assassination of the body. The difference between the tragedy consummated at Bialystok and the one frustrated at Caldwell is a difference for which the American capitalist class must not be blamed. The intent was the same here that it was in Russia. The scheme was as devilish here as it was there. The American capitalist class did its best to assassinate the character of Moyer, Haywood and Pettibone. Deliberately the American capitalist class lied about the men; deliberately it sought to poison public sentiment against them by calumniously charging them with a crime that it is now well known they neither did nor could have committed. That part of the "trick" was carried out here as perfectly as it was in Russia. Beyond that the trick broke down. Here the campaign of defamation could and was promptly checked. Through the Socialist press the lie was rammed down the throats of the liars; the tables were turned upon them; the facts were made public convicting them, as the Russian ruling class could be convicted, of being the real criminals; in short, the bottom was knocked from under the "trick" and the triple murder schemed for Caldwell did not, will not, shall not materialize.

Bialystok and Caldwell—how the American capitalist class must envy the Russian! How anxious it must be to be so situated as to be able to do as well! Yet should not the Russian ruling class glory. Its successful Bialystoks illuminate our Caldwells; our frustrated Caldwells reflect back upon the Bialystoks. The one and the other, each in its own way, is fuel under the social pot that keeps the pot boiling. With the ballot, wherever possible, without it wherever impossible, the terroristic reign of capitalism is about to be made an end of the world over.