

# The People.

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FIRST EDITORIAL

## “THE HIGH MISSION OF THE BLACKMAIL IN CIVILIZATION.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

It is now in order for the poets, professors, parsons and politicians of Capitalist Society to come out with verses, essays, sermons and stump speeches on the high mission of the blackmail in promoting civilization. These gentlemen are in the habit of cribbing Socialism in the way cribbers always crib; take one point, wrench it out of its connections, and then, with that as a text discard upon the beauties of Capitalism. It is so they do on the subject of the Trust. Socialism teaches that the trend of civilization is to relieve man of the arduous toil of producing the necessaries of civilized life, in other words, WEALTH; that the increase of wealth is predicated upon the power of the means of production; that this power goes hand in hand with the concentration of production; and, finally, that the Trust is the highest contrivance of production, being the most concentrated form, and, consequently, that the Trust carries with it the potentiality of increased and general well-being;—but, Socialism adds that this potentiality for good is turned into an actuality for harm by the private ownership of the Trust, whose efficacy as a promoter of well-being is possible only when the Trust shall have been freed from the private ownership that now destroys its powers for good. This last point and conclusion the spouters for Capitalism suppress. Cribbing the first part of the reasoning, they sing the praises of the Trust as it now is, and vaunt its mission as a lever of civilization. Such being the mental and moral course of the upholders of Capitalism on the subject of the Trust, why not on the subject of the Blackmail?

Facts have of late been finding their way in the press, telling of the blackmail practices of some agents of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. These agents are almost stone-blind when they see a horse that belongs to a large concern and is not in fit condition; but when a wretched one-horse fellow is spied, his horse is, ten to one, condemned as unfit for work. Now, then, by this system of

blackmail, upon both the small and large horse-using concerns, it is evident that the life of the small fellow is rendered more and more burdensome, till he is at last forced to throw up his small tool (one-horse wagon), sink wholly into the ranks of the proletariat, and leave the field freer for the large tool (many-horse wagon) concern, or embryonic Trust.

Here certainly is a fine subject for poets, parsons, professors and politicians of Capitalism. With their wonted moral turpitude and prurient love of paradox, they should lose no time to sing the praises of the blackmail as a lever of civilization.

The Rev. Minot J. Savage will not be charged commission if he takes the hint.

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