

Daniel De Leon

Editorial: Carnot's Assassination

Last Sunday, the civilized world was shocked in the midst of its Sabbath festivities by the murder of President Carnot of France.

Murders have been committed before, they will be committed again, nor is President Carnot the first, as he will not, probably, be the last chief magistrate of a nation to succumb under an assassin's blows.

Under general circumstances, such black deeds of crime are ranked among instances of brute passion, a preponderance of the brute over the human. But Santo's crime may not be thus dismissed. It is proper and necessary to pause and contemplate it in its social setting.

It seems established that Santo is an Anarchist, one of that tribe of men whose sufferings have cracked the little brains they have; men, probably, of naturally brutal instincts, and of no knowledge worth mentioning, at least not enough to control their actions—in short, a sort of social monstrosities that have turned up at various stages in the history of man, and that, in the present chaos produced by the social bankruptcy into which capitalist anarchy has thrown society, seem to spring up naturally like pestilential toadstools over night from poisonous ground. But even this is not enough to size up properly the crime of Santo.

In our issue of last April 1, we gave a full account of certain proceedings that took place in the French Chamber of Deputies, the significance of which now rises in importance.

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It was on the previous 8th of March. Comrade Jean Jaures, one of the fifty Socialist Deputies in the Chamber, interpolated the Government upon the relations that, it had transpired, existed between the Anarchists, on the one hand, and certain people high in the financial and the clerical world, together with the monarchists, on the other. Comrade Jaures called attention to the fact that the public press had that week been giving accurate details announcing the proofs of letters found in the satchels and the houses of militant Anarchists showing them to be in correspondence and upon relations of intimacy with the Rothschilds, the Duchess d'Uzes and high church dignitaries, and receiving funds from these sources; he charged the Government with culpable negligence in "leaving untouched prominent promoters of Anarchy" while all the while it was instituting, with great bustle, domiciliary searches in other directions; and he moved an immediate consideration of the matter.

Against this motion, the Government fought tooth and nail, and it finally succeeded in defeating Comrade Jaures' motion by 257 votes against 223, the leading representatives of the monarchist, clerical and the banking interests voting with the majority.

When the vote was announced, another Socialist Deputy, Comrade Jules Guesde, shouted to the ministry: "You alone will now have to bear the responsibility for all the bombs that may be thrown!"

In the light of these facts, Santo may be an autonomous Anarchist, acting upon his own private feelings; but he may also be the tool of any of the capitalist and reactionary elements whom Comrade Jaures showed stood at the back of many Anarchists. If simply the former is true, the assassination of Carnot is simply an act of Anarchist devilshness like that of Prendergast, Guiteau, Norcross and Wilkes Booth; if the second is the fact, the assassination of Carnot is the result of a complicated conspiracy, a capitalist-monarchic conspiracy in which the anarchist Santo figures only

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as a tool, and that contemplates the overthrow of the republic as a means deemed necessary to stem the tide of the oncoming Socialist Revolution.

The latter theory is the more likely.

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