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EDITORIAL

HOLDING UP THE NATION.

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Every little while, and of late with increasing frequency, reportorial broadsides are fired upon the public giving accounts of “hold-ups.” These incidents are usually placed in the Far West, occasionally a populous city like Chicago is the theatre of the high-handed act that tells the tale of organized ruffianism assailing the safety of society. These incidents certainly are serious; and yet they are not a circumstance to another category of “hold-ups,” which though they assail the whole Nation, are passed over in silence by the plutocratic press. One “hold-up” of this category has just been tearfully revealed in Congress. Speaking on urgent measures needed for the safety of the Nation, Representative Payne said:

“For the past three years we have had no appropriation or expenditure for armor plate to be put on our naval vessels, SIMPLY BECAUSE WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO MAKE ANY TERMS WITH THE PEOPLE WHO MANUFACTURE ARMOR.”

To appreciate the depth of national degradation implied in his statement, one must put himself in the shoes of the social system of which “the people who manufacture armor” are a limb, and the existing government is the upholder.

Here we have a Nation, run upon the theory that any one country is the natural foe of all the others, thriving as the others decline, and declining as the others thrive; here, accordingly, we have a Nation whose safety demands that its borders bristle with guns, and that the floating parts of its territory—its naval equipment—be proof against the guns of its “natural foes;” here we have such a Nation left with armor unrepaired; left exposed at the very time when foreign complications threaten—just because private concerns refuse to make terms! Here we have a sovereign Nation of over 75,000,000 held up by “the people who manufacture armor,” and virtually told: “Stand and deliver!” and its government acquiescing in the indignity.

Hard were it to pick out of the many features of Capitalist Society any one feature and pronounce that the most infamous. The feature in point is as good as any. The Capitalist Class stands there convicted simultaneously of treason and hypocrisy; its vaunted patriotism stands exposed, its bragged-about honor is a thing to traffic on.

A Nation's safety, a Nation's honor, can never be safe in the hands of any one class. A Nation's safety, a Nation's honor, can be safe only when in the keeping of its whole people. Nor can that day come until the Capitalist Class has been dethroned, and the dome of the Socialist Republic has been reared.

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