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EDITORIAL

WHY NOT!

By DANIEL DE LEON

YESTERDAY'S despatches from the coal strike region of Wilkesbarre, Pa., tell the tale of some shots having been fired from the direction of East Boston, a mining settlement. The despatches proceed to say that Sergt. Dimon and ten troopers immediately thereupon proceeded to—do what? to arrest individual delinquents for some violation of the law? No—they started A HOUSE TO HOUSE SEARCH FOR WEAPONS.

The 2nd Amendment of the Constitution of the United States contains this clause: "THE RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE TO KEEP AND BEAR ARMS SHALL NOT BE INFRINGED"; the 4th Amendment provides as follows: "The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and, the persons or things to be seized." These are integral portions of the organic law of the land. And yet, without a warrant properly issued describing the place to be searched or the persons and things to be seized, Sergt. Dimon undertakes an indiscriminate house to house search in search of weapons—in search of an article, the right to keep and bear which is guaranteed to the individual as part of his sovereign rights! Lieutenant McClelland of the Colorado State militia said: "To Hell with the Constitution!" and he proceeded to trample it under foot: Sergt. Dimon of Pennsylvania does the thing without saying it, and the capitalist press shouts "Hurrah!"—all to the greater glory of the "Law."

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The despatches proceed to say that the people of that mining settlement, upon finding their homes invaded by Sergt. Dimon, ran into the woods with their

weapons, whereupon the Sergt. desisted from further searching but issued the threat: "If there is any more shooting during the night I will return with my troopers in the morning and BURN DOWN THE VILLAGE";—and the capitalist press jubilantly adds "this was no idle threat, for the coal company owns the houses and HAS AUTHORIZED THE TROOPERS TO BURN THEM." In other words, the ownership of a house, rented to a tenant, invests the owner with the right to burn that house down at any time during the lease, and, along with the house, the havings of the tenant!

Why not! Is not the Constitution sent to Hell by word of mouth and by act on the part of the capitalist class? Is not Anarchy the device of our modern rulers and their imitators? Live we not in the days when "Order" is the mask for disorder, "Sanctity of the Family" the mask for lechery, "Freedom" the mask for enslavement, "Truth" the mask for falsehood, "Godliness" the mask for bestiality, "Honor" the mask for calumny? Why should not the houses of the working class be searched for the arms that the Constitution guarantees them the right to keep? Why should not their property be burnt down at the behest of the pirate class of capitalism?

Why not!—Or until when!

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