

THIRD EDITORIAL

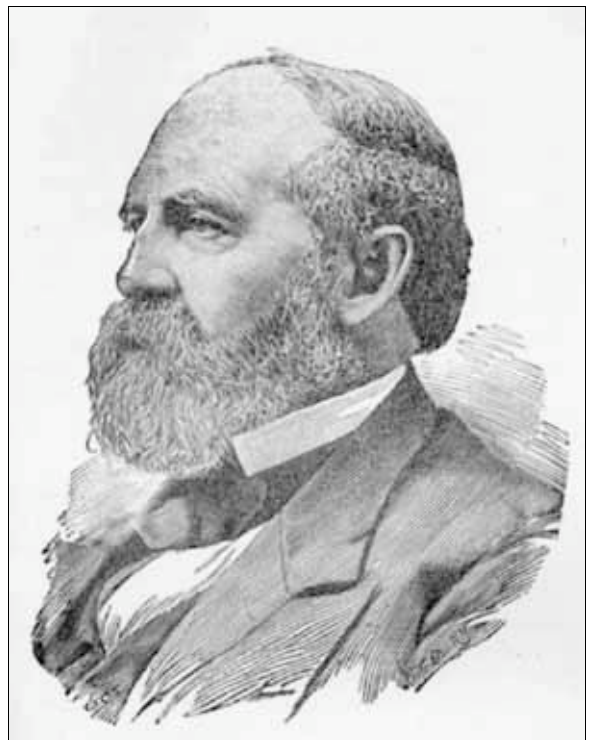
## HUNTINGTON, AMERICAN INDIVIDUALIST.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**U**nder this heading the New York *Press* publishes an editorial article on the late C.P. Huntington which is a gem of its kind. It is as full of points as an egg is full of meat. We will, however, only deal with its opening paragraph at this time:

“It was perhaps the greatest exponent of American individualism who died in the Adirondacks on Monday.”

There is no doubt that Collis P. Huntington was a splendid example of the triumphant individualist from the capitalist point of view. Starting in life without a dollar, never having performed any useful work, except for the few months of labor to accumulate enough to buy shoddy goods for his peddler’s pack, he dies with millions of dollars, envied by less successful buccaneers, but hated by the thousands of honest workers whom he plundered—despised by all whose ideals are higher than the vulgar grabbing for money, and mourned by none.



COLLIS P. HUNTINGTON (1821–1900)

What did this “exponent of individualism” do in his long life to justify this correct classification of him by the New York *Press*? The article in question instead of giving facts treats us to a string of glittering assertions too vague to take hold of.

We are told that he “built” railroads; that he did more in America than “the British Empire did in Hindostan,” etc., but these are mere statements which only impress by their absurdity.

Here is the record of achievements which mark Huntington as the “greatest exponent of individualism,” and show, at the same time what “Individualism” in the mouths of capitalists means: Huntington first appears as a peddler of trumpery clocks, a typical wooden-nutmeg swindler. Having “honestly earned” whatever money his unfortunate victims could be separated from, he starts for the gold diggings of California; he does not go to work, but takes advantage of the necessities of the miners until to-day “as mean as Uncle Collis” is a proverb in California. Having “earned” his first hundred thousand by plundering the people individually, he conceived the daring idea of plundering them collectively; he plunders the government treasury by bribing through Congress the Pacific railroad bills; this legislation practically bound the government to build the road, turn it over to Huntington and his associates, furnish the money to run it for years and pay besides immense bonuses in land and money to these “Individualists” for looting it. Huntington, with the government in his pocket, then marched on to greater triumphs of “Individualism.” He bought judges, legislatures, parties, as, in his wooden-nutmeg days, he had bought shoddy, and when he died he owned a great many valuable assets of this sort. That is what he did.

As for what he thought: his coarse ignorance of all the better and higher things of life was notorious. The sight of wage workers with an intellectual culture which made his boorishness appear more crass caused him to decry education for the masses; he wished to keep them to his level.

Correctly does the editorial upholder of capitalism point to this bourgeois as “the greatest exponent of American individualism.” He was that. And thanks to heaven the type will be made extinct by the purer spirit of a purer civilization that is about to bloom forth.

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

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