

# The People.

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## Setting Themselves Up for Sale

By DANIEL DE LEON

**A**t a banquet of lawyers and judges, presided over by the smirched Judge Gary, and given in honor of Justice Brown on the 5th inst. in Chicago, the guest of the evening held a speech in the course of which he said:

“The masses are getting more and more to understand the difference between freedom of the individual and the liberty of the citizen. It is a fact that no man is free who is dependent upon another for a living. The conditions are such that it will always remain that a majority of men must be thus dependent.”

No bit of merchandise, no yard of cloth, peck of potatoes, bunch of onions, ever exhibited on the counter of a tradesman, bore or bears more conspicuously a label announcing to the wayfarer the fact that it is for sale.

Time was when there was no juggling with the word “freedom.” Even the most prostituted branches of the Government refrained from any fine-spun distinction between the “freedom of the individual” and the “liberty of the citizen.” Partly owing to their ignorance, they would deny that in any way the American workingman was a slave; and partly owing to their corruption they would assert that labor was free, even in the glaring cases of slavery brought before them. But Socialist teachings have broken their way even into the sties of our courts; we have been pounding the fact into the heads of our fellow citizens that the man who has no access to land on which to labor and to the machinery with which to exert himself cannot earn his living, that the man who owns these owns also the life of the man who does not, and that, consequently, the man who does not is the slave of the man who does. Now even the judges’ world admits the fact, as does Justice Brown, that “no man is free who is dependent upon another for his living.”

This admission one would think would imply their surrender. So it would were not our courts saturated with corruption. So far from this admission having the result that

one would imagine, it has the result of causing the judges to lay a higher value upon the work they are expected to perform for the usurping capitalist. By granting the important Socialist premises, and then juggling with the word freedom, as Justice Brown did amidst the applause of the listening lawyers and judges, notice is given to the usurping class that our courts will be found equal to any juristic acrobatic feat.

Public morality demands the wiping out of these lepers—they and the conditions that breed them. Let next November day the sword of the Socialist ballot cut out the one and the other by the root.<sup>1</sup>

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

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<sup>1</sup>Sentence obviously garbled, but the solution is not clear.