

EDITORIAL

WHO IS MASTER?

By DANIEL DE LEON

AMONG the truths, as disagreeable to capitalist notions as they are pregnant, uttered by Socialism is the Truth that, under capitalism, property rules man, not man property. He whose eyes have been dusted of capitalist misconceptions cannot open a capitalist paper without he finds evidence of that Socialist Truth. Yesterday's papers furnish a batch of them, leading among these being an item from the Court. A Brooklyn Judge sentenced a homicide to one year's, a pickpocket to eight years' imprisonment.

Under capitalism human nature is twisted into the miser's nature. The miser is not the product of a day nor of internal qualities exclusively. He is the compound of external forces working upon an internal quality—the sense of self-preservation. The miser starts to acquire wealth for the purpose of securing life. A life-time of grind gradually has upon him the effect of raising the means to the importance of a goal, and thereby gradually to dwarf the goal itself. The acquisition of property becomes the goal; to that all else becomes subservient; life becomes a means, a secondary thing, no longer the great goal to be aimed at. As with the individual so with classes and social systems.

The crime against life has not, in the eyes of the capitalist, the heinous color that common sense imparts to it. His eye, accustomed to the sacrifice of the workingman's life in the pursuit of property for the capitalist, gradually comes to look upon life as of secondary importance; his own mind accustomed to the thought of pursuing property with utter disregard for the amenities of his own life becomes attuned to the practice that life is not the goal but the means. The miser is an insane man; insane is the capitalist class.

Sanity to-day rests with the militant, class-conscious Working Class. All reactionary classes have been inherently immoral, all revolutionary classes

inherently moral. When immorality reaches the point of a second nature, it becomes insanity. The militant, class-conscious proletariat is not only clad in the vestments of morality; it, and it alone, is rational.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded October 2009

slpns@slp.org