

The People.

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EXEMPLIFICATION.

By DANIEL DE LEON

If ideology—those who place Society on its head instead of on its feet, as it and all other things stand on—were to pick out one nation and one profession to illustrate their theory with, surely France and the military profession would be the ones picked out. In the former they would find a mercurial people of long standing in history that has earned its spurs as an impassioned pursuer of high sentiment and principle; in the latter they find a profession in which honor is prized as a cardinal virtue, and lucre as below the dignity of the officer. If each of these would seem to carry the complete refutation of the Socialist principle that material interests are at the bottom of man's actions, that all his sentiments, whether he is aware of it or not, are but reflexes of his material interests; if each of these two illustrations would seem to carry a complete demonstration of the theory that sentiment and not material interests are the foundation of man's acts, then surely a combination of the two—the French Army Officers—must be all the more forcible an illustration. And so, indeed, it would be—if the illustration is not merely a surface affair. That it is, however, the Dreyfus incident brings out clear.

It now is proved beyond peradventure that, although an actual, organized plot on the part of the Army officers against the civil authority does not exist, nevertheless hatred of the republic does, and the reason for his hatred is—what? An ideal love for Monarchy? A sentimental attachment for the trappings of feudalism? a hereditary affection for the customs and forms of Auld Lang Syne? No, and yet again, No! The reason of this hatred of the Republic is that the Republic means peace, while the only outlet for the army officer's justification of his trade is in the direction of war,—which the Monarchy is supposed to favor.

Under a social system, where man's material needs are not guaranteed; in a social system, accordingly, in which the animal part of man is kept perpetually pricked into alertness, animal instincts cannot choose but dominate. Cover and cloak and

whitewash them as man may with the cover, the cloak, or the paint of the Idea, they are bound to peep through—a warning to the race, a guidance to the men of action as well as to the men of thought.

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

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