

EDITORIAL

SANCTITY OF THE LAW.

By DANIEL DE LEON

A KEEN Frenchman once stated that powers that be, when they have survived their usefulness, themselves are the most active in announcing the fact, and in urging contempt for themselves.

The truth of the observation is being glaringly illustrated.

Law is a reflex of dominant interests. Under class-rule the Law is dictated by the ruling class. The Law, under such circumstances, naturally rises and is raised to the category of a mysticism, clothed in sacredness. It is of the essence of class-rule law that it be venerated by the ruled. The rulers know better than venerate: they know how their Law was concocted. They treat it the way pagan priests treat the pagan deity with which it is their function to benumb the masses.

Different civilizations have different methods of benumbing. The existing method is the bourgeois press. For instance, Kirby in the *New York World* represents the Supreme Court of the United States rising like a spectre before a Wall street magnate who is thereby struck with terror.

But he who says "bourgeois press" must mean all that is implied in the term.

The bourgeois press is the press of the bourgeois. The bourgeois is a muck-raker for dollars. Competing and cheating for dollars is of the essence of bourgeois existence. Hence his press can no more suppress bourgeois characteristics than the cat of the fable, converted into a charming damosel, could suppress her mouse-catching instincts. Thus it happens that now, when the mystification concerning the sacredness of bourgeois Law should be most vital, the bourgeois press teems with news items that box the mystification efforts on both ears; and the bourgeois "funny papers," not intending to be outdone in the dollar muck-raking pursuit, do their share in a manner that sums up the claps that the mystification efforts are now receiving

on both sides of the face—slaps dealt by its own devotees. One instance will suffice. “It would be a great comfort,” observes a bourgeois joker, “if a man could go broke with as little inconvenience as a trust suffers when the court orders it to disintegrate.”

The Frenchman in question was right. Having survived its usefulness bourgeois society is itself the most convincing announcer of the fact, and the most effective in taking upon its head the contempt that it deserves.

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