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EDITORIAL

SHOEMAKER, STICK TO YOUR LAST!

By DANIEL DE LEON

ALL intelligent observers of the functions performed by the various wheels in the mechanism of our modern governments are aware that there is more than a theoretical connection between the Judiciary and the other branches, and that all of them together are set in motion by one and the same breath—that of the capitalist class, i.e., of the class that lives off the toil of others. Accordingly, it is not only not surprising but quite in the order of things to see the Judiciary interpret the laws under the inspiration of the powers behind their thrones, i.e., in the interest of the skinning or capitalist class and against the skinned or working class. The pulpit from which the Judiciary delivers its capitalist homilies has, until recently, been exclusively the bench. But latterly the Judiciary has not waited until a case was brought up before them. In multiplying instances, they have been stepping down from the bench to do the dirty work for capital. The most recent illustration of this was the performance of Judge David J. Brewer¹ of the United States Supreme Court before the New York Bar Association in Albany. On that occasion, and, with a purpose too evident to need pointing out, he said: “It is the unvarying law that the large majority of men are unwilling to endure that long self-denial and saving which makes accumulation possible. They have not the business tact and sagacity which brings about large combinations and great financial results, and hence it always has been, and until human nature is remodeled, always will be true, that the wealth of a nation is in the hands of a few, while the many subsist upon the proceeds of their daily toil.”

This judge of the Supreme Court may or may not be posted on jurisprudence. In political economy, however, no untutored jackass, kicking up his heels on the wildest of

¹ David Josiah Brewer. [Click here for biographical sketch.](#)

prairies, can hold a candle to him.

Judge Brewer would be in a pickle if he were to be called upon to “quote a case” to substantiate the “judgment” that self-denial and saving are the sources from which have flown large accumulations of wealth into the hands of any capitalist. The sources from which these accumulations flow are the wealth that labor produces and of which the capitalist defrauds the wage-worker, and none other. If self-denial and saving were a source of “large accumulations,” the largest accumulators should be the workmen: there is hardly a thing they do not deny themselves, hardly an object necessary to physical and intellectual health that they do not deprive themselves of. And inversely, if the lack of self-denial prevents accumulations, there is not a set of men that should be poorer than the paymasters of Judge Brewer: there is not a thing they deny themselves, from the honor of their unfortunate working girls down to the integrity of our Executives, Legislatures and Judiciaries.

Judge Brewer had better restrict the field of his operations to his own bench. He can from there quite sufficiently poison the public mind with class-inspired decisions and “arguments”, and then he would not be at a loss for “precedents” to substantiate his position; when, however, he steps down from the bench, and tries his hands at the perversion of truth upon the domain of political economy, he becomes as vulnerable as a soft shell crab.

Shoemaker, stick to your last!

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