

EDITORIAL

## TOP-CAPITALISM NO SCAPE-GOAT.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**HE Brokaw suit for divorce, the latest of an almost continuous series of exposures of the scandalous state of things that constitutes “the family” of the top-capitalist class, will no doubt be added to the string of evidence with the aid of which certain apologists of capitalism seek to justify their social order.

There is a class of apostles of capitalism who argue this way: “Capitalism has many defects: no human institution is faultless. With all its defects, capitalism is the best thing attainable. Socialism would make things worse. Look at the family scandals that periodically come to light in the upper crust of capitalism. Why do these things happen? Because this upper crust has an abundance. Under Socialism, where abundance would be for all, scandals would not be confined to a few, as now under capitalism: scandals would be the rule.”

The apologists for capitalism overlook an ingredient of scandals, without which scandals and degeneracy could not be—that ingredient is the knowledge of the existence of a debased humanity, without whose existence a ruling class can not be.

It is not affluence that breeds scandals. It is the manner in which the affluence is gotten. A class that can not exist without downing another, insensibly comes to the conclusion that the safety of its own existence is in direct ratio to the degree that the downed class is down. The mentality of a ruling class is, accordingly, of necessity taken up to a large extent with the straining requisite to keep on top. Strained nerves—whether the strain be through liquor, opium, or physical effort—require and inevitably seek the relaxation found in practices that result in scandals. It so happens with the capitalist class.

Such a state of things is excluded by the very structure and nature of Socialism. The hoarding necessary to prevent descending to the class that must work is

unnecessary under Socialism. The necessity of checking production, so as to keep up prices, vanishes under Socialism, and idle wealth, itching to be enjoyed, is no longer there to furnish the means for scandals. Finally, and above all, the mental strain attendant upon the maxim “do others or you will done by them” be effectually dispelled by social conditions that render each the architect of his own fortune, unendangered by schemes, cures the body of the fatal ailment which is so productive of scandals.

The scandals that break out in top-capitalism are not confined to the “upper crust.” They poison the whole social system. Those who would defend capitalism by making the top-capitalist out to be a scape-goat upon whom the sins of society are dumped misconceive the situation. The Brokaw scandal can not intelligently be used by them. That and the rest of the scandals are but nauseous gases inherent to capitalist society, and that pungently urge its overthrow.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
Uploaded January 2011

[slpns@slp.org](mailto:slpns@slp.org)