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EDITORIAL

PROPERTY SELF-EXHIBITED.

By DANIEL DE LEON

PROPERTY, not Labor, sat in convention at Memphis, Tenn., on the 12th of this month at that day's session of the Cotton Convention.

The men there assembled were not the farm hands of the cotton plantations, or the clerks and other employes of the Cotton Kings. The men there assembled were the "Kings" themselves.

They met to deliberate upon their interests. This purpose the "Kings" may or may not have accomplished. What they did unquestionably accomplish was to exhibit the feature, image and the form and pressure of the Beast Capitalist Property.

One of the "Kings" charged that the Night Riders were a curse and "men who shoot people in the back." Immediately a terrific uproar ensued. Another "King" rose. He "vindicated" the Night Riders. He said they were "an oppressed people," that they "fought for what they believed to be right" and acted always "from the best of motives." The convention of the "Kings" divided into two sets—one set, the smaller, denouncing the other larger set, lauding the Night Riders without denying the charge that these shot people in the back, but upholding them for doing what they "believed to be right."

The Night Riders are armed "Kings" who steal by night into the cotton plantations of those competing "Kings" who manipulate the sale of their staple in ways that do not suit the "Kings" competed with, and there burn down their barns, often kill the owners, and occasionally commit their acts of arson and murder to the church hymn of "Nearer, my God, to Thee." These facts are undisputed. Nor is the fact disputed that the men who commit these acts "fight for what they believe to be right."

In this very fact lies the truthfulness of the photography of the Beast Capitalist

Property as taken by itself at Memphis.

The feature, image, form and pressure of Capitalist Property is that it believes, sincerely so, that it is in the nature of sacred things. The picture, drawn by the philosophic historian Buckle, of the Inquisitors who tortured and killed fits the physiognomy of Capitalist Property. The Inquisitors, Buckle shows, sincerely believe that whosoever did not worship God in the exact manner that the Inquisition demanded was a fiend hateful to the deity, obnoxious to man, hence his torture was incense to heaven and a boon to mankind, and his death a “good riddance.” Exactly so with the Night Riders. Their motives, like the motives of the Inquisitors, are “the best of motives”—from their standpoint, of course. And therein lies the present Social Issue.

Motives that reveal themselves in murder, by “shooting in the back” and otherwise, and in arson reveal the Beast, not the Human.

The features of Capitalist Property have long since well earned for it the name the Beast of Capitalist Property.

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

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