

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 12, NO. 224.

NEW YORK, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1912.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

GORKI'S "COMPANION."

By DANIEL DE LEON

SVIT{,} a new paper started in this city by the Russian Government for the purpose of counteracting the influence of the Russian Jewish immigrants, comments upon the passport matter with an article in which this passage occurs:

"The Jews thought that Russia would be turned upside down; that Russians would be confused and say immediately: 'Come on. Please come and rule over us and over our pockets, over our land and over our possessions which we have earned by centuries of hard work.'"

Possessions "earned by centuries of hard work" by the Russian feudal lords!

The first impulse, upon reading such an unblushing lie, is to throw the thing aside. On second thought the article is read over again, it is conned, and it is preserved.

To lie is to tell an untruth, known to be such by the utterer. Does the writer of the *Svit* article know that he tells an untruth when he refers to the Ruling Class of Russia as having worked hard for centuries and thereby earned their possessions? In all likelihood the gentleman believes that what he says is true.

It is no sentimentality to give the *Svit* writer credit for lying unconsciously, in other words, for telling the truth it "as he sees it." To speak him free from intentional falsification is a strict conclusion from materialist philosophy, and, as such, is aidful in plowing the field of the Social Question.

A celebrated countryman of the *Svit* writer, Maxim Gorke, etched the mentality of the class that the said writer typifies in one of his short stories{,} "My Companion"—a Prince of Georgia who, as naturally as a sea-gull swoops down upon and swallows fishes, looked upon the industrious classes as vermin; cattle, at best, placed there for his convenience, to be robbed, sponged upon, occasionally even

killed out of hand. Gorki admits he had learned much from such companionship. It had widened his horizon—and no doubt solidified his revolutionary aspirations. The lesson the companionship had taught him is the lesson that the *Svit* writer should teach, hence, the lesson that should be treasured—the lesson that Ruling Class interests reach a point of petrification upon which argument is wasted, and which can yield only to transmuted social conditions, promotive of humanity, instead of inhumanity.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded January 2013

slpns@slp.org