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EDITORIAL

WHITAKER WRIGHT.

By DANIEL DE LEON

IF the contemplated temple of The Hague's International Tribunal—the only international temple of capitalist society—were in existence, its flag would, at least it should be now, at half-mast. Whitaker Wright, in life a type and symbol of the full-orbed capitalist, in death prophetically symbolizing by his suicide and the cause thereof the attending fate of capitalism itself, lies on the funeral bier—mangled autopsied.

Whitaker Wright had the capitalist mind and also its physique. He was a “captain” of millions. His enterprises were launched thick and fast upon each other, and never to a lesser tune than \$5,000,000 each. In the aggregate, he had \$23,000,000 on the stocks. He knew to perfection the capitalist trick—nowadays blessed with a text by parsons and approved by lawyers—of making something out of nothing, plus the hide of the workingman. He shot up like a rocket. He blazoned forth illustratively whatever truth there is, and in how far there is, in the capitalist moralists' claim that “opportunities are ample for all but the lazy.” It matters not that his career was suddenly truncated by a British Court that sentenced him to seven years penal servitude for swindling, whereupon he committed suicide. On the contrary, the circumstance is brilliantly suggestive.

How many capitalists would there be at large if the swindle upon which capitalism thrives were prosecuted in each instance with the severity that Whitaker Wright ran up against?

There we have, for instance, the great Steel Trust. How dazzling three years ago were not its prospectuses and the dizzy array of figures of its profits that the Republican and Democratic press printed! To-day its stock has tumbled in a veritable break down. It was discovered to be insolvent. Hundreds, nay thousands, were swindled by it! Yet the criminals are at large.

And there is the Ship-building Trust. The last six months or so its affairs have been the subject of judicial fumigation. Telegrams have been published that read like a cross between “Town-Topics” jokes and the archives of the criminal courts. Swindle rampant, and to the tune of millions; but the Whitaker Wrights of the concern are at large.

And there is the Panama-Canal-Railroad affair. With \$40,000,000 cash as loot on the Federal Treasury and as bribe fund for Government officials and for the French “entrepreneurs,” not a few of whom have before now been convicted of felony, the Whitaker Wright genius is obvious. As yet no convictions have been reached, or even arrests made.

And so forth.

Capitalist society certainly mourns in the death of Whitaker Wright a foremost member of the fraternity whom the fate that awaits capitalist society overtook before all the pillars of that society could be corralled—as they will be when the hour will have sounded for THE PEOPLE IN MASS to be the prosecuting attorney.

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

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