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EDITORIAL

## PROF. MOSSO SLIPPED.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**A**NOTHER European intellectual, this time the distinguished physiologist Prof. Angelo Mosso, has written his “impressions on America” and taken his place, along with the rest of the intellectuals, both American and European, among the social ranters. Among other things, Prof. Mosso says:

“I believe that the desire to become wealthy is so strong and powerful in every American that, in order to reserve the opportunity of realizing such desire, Americans willingly submit to the continuance of laws which allow such accumulation. This explains its existence and assures its continuance.”

That the “desire to become wealthy,” is a powerful inducement to submit to the continuance of laws that gall the hoper is logical enough. That, however, the existence to-day of such a belief, “assures the continuance” of the capitalist system, is an intellectual blunder; and there the Professor slipped.

It is essential to the submission to galling institutions that the desire to eventually profit by them be backed by the belief that such profit can be realized. The truly thoughtful mind does not conclude from the mere fact of people’s desire to become wealthy under capitalism that therefore the continuance of capitalism is assured. The truly thoughtful mind looks below the desire. He then finds that it is watered with the belief that his desires can be accomplished. That point reached, the truly thoughtful man spends no time in theorizing, but devotes his energies to ascertaining the facts touching the “waters of belief.” Is the fountain that feeds those waters a steady one, is its force on the increase, or is it a declining force rendering sure that the fountain will run dry? These are the facts that engage the truly thoughtful mind. According as these facts turn out must his conclusions be. If the fountain promises to be lasting, then and for that reason, the continuance of the desire, and with it of capitalism, is assured; if the fountain bears signs of running dry, the desire to profit by Capitalism will dry up, and, with it, Capitalism must

crumble down.

Now, then, what are the facts in the case?

The capital needed for man to exert his functions of labor is ever becoming larger. As a result of that the sky is becoming ever darker for the middle class, and the share of wealth ever smaller for the toiler. The belief, once entertained by all, that it was possible to acquire wealth, is being rapidly wiped out. The facts, hard, cruel and unrelenting, are knocking the old belief into fragments. Turn, not to the few, but to the masses, and the evidences hereof become manifest. Long after the pinch began to be felt did the belief last; it was kept alive by the Utopian chatter of the apostles of Capitalism, some of whom knew better, and many of whom did not. But prophecies unredeemed can never take for long the place of the fructifying waters of Hope. A time comes when the prophecies are found out to be lies. That time has come. It takes no extraordinary vision to discover that. On all sides the signs multiply that the belief that, under the Capitalist system, the popular well-being is possible is dying off, and the contrary conviction is gaining ground. This fact assures, not the continuance of Capitalism, as Prof. Mosso opines, but its downfall.

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