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EDITORIAL

EVIDENCE FOR US FROM THE ENEMY.

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THE lynching and burning of a negro named Alexander, which occurred in Leavenworth, Kansas, one year ago, was one of the most horribly atrocious, inhuman, ghoulish acts that ever stamped man as being not so very far removed from the brute after all. There were hundreds of persons present at the burning. They were “respectable” citizens, “substantial” citizens, men who were “gentlemen” in every sense of the word. These “gentlemen” tied the negro to a stake, poured oil over him, and then set him on fire.

Respectability stood by while the frenzied negro shrieked and prayed. Respectability stood by until the stench and the smoke of charring human flesh had subsided, and then respectability indulged in a wolfish wrangle for the possession of the unburned portions of the victim’s body. Toes and fingers, bones and shreds of crisp flesh were eagerly snatched at, and many of those who obtained a rag of the murdered negro’s anatomy sold it for a high price to some other “respectable” person who had not been so fortunate.

The negro Alexander had been convicted of rape, and the excuse of many persons concerned with his murder was that they had lost their reason owing to their anger and resentment against the man. This is but an excuse, and yet, having been given, it is sufficient to show the gross barbarity and the unrestrained passions that actuated these persons.

That the deed was not deplored is shown by the following item taken from the Leavenworth *Chronicle* of January 16:

“To-day is the anniversary of the burning of Alexander, the negro rapist, who for a year or more held Leavenworth in a state of terror.

“At the time the *Chronicle-Tribune* upheld the people of Leavenworth for their act, and on this, the anniversary of the event, it seems appropriate to observe that time has demonstrated the justice and wisdom of the whole proceedings.

“The result has been wholesome and beneficial. Not a single crime for

which Alexander was put to death has occurred in Leavenworth during the entire year. Our women no longer fear to venture forth in the evenings, and the state of terror once experienced in Leavenworth is now only a memory of the past.”

That is a deliberate statement that the *Chronicle* favors violence, that it is ready to defend those who violate the laws of the State and country, that it stands for murder in its most horrible and savage form, and that all the while it continues its pretense of good citizenship and humanity. Its assertion that rape has not existed may be true, but it is also a fact that for years before that single outbreak it did not exist, and Alexander was the sole exponent.

But this single item, much as it shows, is not the only evidence of the fact that the *Chronicle* is the organ of beings who mentally crawl on all fours. In the same issue it says:

“A man who was paroled from the penitentiary committed suicide the other day, and yet some people doubt if the parole system is productive of any good. The man would never have found the opportunity to kill himself in the penitentiary.”

There is here evidence of a thirst for blood, and an evidence that the persons who read the paper also have the same depraved taste. The *Chronicle* condones burning at the stake, and it also jests lightly over the unfortunate victim who took his own life. It even goes farther, and insinuates that prisoners be given an opportunity to kill themselves.

It is not very often that such a raw witness as the *Chronicle* comes on the stand. Ordinarily murderous instincts are hidden by a cunning display of rhetoric, or by a little juggling backward and forward of words. The papers which applaud the shooting down of strikers, which assist in the starving of workingmen and women, and which always have ready an excuse for capitalistic barbarities, are in the same class as this particular paper. They show that capitalism and its exponents are ever ready to throw aside all laws, and that the only thing which the capitalist at all regards is the carrying out of his own evil and cowardly designs.

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

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