

EDITORIAL

DEMAGOGUE AND PLUTOGOGUE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

HE who tickles the vanities and promotes the undigested aspirations of unthinking masses is, no doubt, a wretch. The term “demagogue” has been applied to him from time immemorial. He is a disturber, not of the public peace only, he is a disturber of the public mind, and thereby renders public peace precarious.

Unspeakably vile though the demagogue be, his counterpart is still viler. That counterpart is the plutogogue.

The plutogogue must square himself with the plutocrat. Plutocracy is crime legalized by itself. The plutogogue’s mission is to exalt the Plutocracy. Not a vice of the Plutocrat but the plutogogue will extenuate, if not defend. And he goes further. The sins of Plutocracy are raised by him into virtues.

Does the Plutocrat outrage public decency by ostentatious banquets that are an affront to the starving masses?—The plutogogue spins out an economic theory about the utility of lavishness in that it “sets money in circulation.”

Does the Plutocrat debauch women, flaunt his concubines in all the capitals of Europe, and, drunk with ribald sensualities, kill a supposed rival from behind?—The plutogogue forthwith terms the deed “Dementia Americana.”

Does the Plutocrat violate all laws human and divine to such an extent that his workingmen strike, whereupon he seeks to shoot down a picketman of his men on strike, as was attempted against Preston?—The plutogogue jumps into the breach and sings the praises of the would-be assassin as a “champion of Christian order.”

Does the Plutocrat cause establishments of his competitors to be burned down? The plutogogue goes on a lecturing tour with statistics made to order “proving” that the concern which was guilty of arson is a benefactor of humanity in that it has lowered the price of its goods.

Does the Plutocrat bribe the Legislature into raising the tariff so that he can extort untold millions from the Government which needs his goods?—The plutogogue will be seen filling magazines with articles upon the public spirit of the malefactor in that he furnishes organs to needy churches, and libraries to towns and hamlets.

And so forth.

The demagogue is bad enough. But he, at least, puts his finger upon a wrong. The plutogogue is a promoter of wrong, an ulcer upon the face of the earth.

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

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