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EDITORIAL

MODERN PLEBS LEADERISM.

By DANIEL DE LEON

IN the first of the two lectures entitled “Two Pages from Roman History,” published in these columns in the spring of the year, the point was made that the Labor Leader held in modern society the identical post held by the Plebs Leader in ancient Rome. As the latter availed himself of his “plebs status” to sell out the plebs masses, and as that “plebs status” of the Plebs Leader was the handle which the Roman patriciate found most available in their tactics to hoodwink, cajole, and exploit the plebs masses, so the former avails himself to-day of his “labor status” to betray the labor masses into the hands of the Capitalist Class, and this Capitalist Class finds that “labor status” of the Labor Leader the most available handle in their tactics to hoodwink, cajole and exploit the labor masses, the modern Working Class. The further point was made in that lecture that a complete collection of instances, where the Labor Leader got political preferment in consideration of his Judas conduct towards the worker, in the identical way that his prototype the Plebs Leader had received political promotion for his Judas act towards the plebs masses, would be a valuable contribution to the Labor Movement of America. Both points in one are underscored by the following passage from the *Railroad and Locomotive Engineering* for May of this year:

“Fairness of Labor to Capital may be set down as Frank P. Sargent’s fundamental rule of action, and so wedded is he to this principle, that it amounts to a hobby, and it is probably for this that President Roosevelt has selected Mr. Sargent to be Commissioner-General of Immigration, and to better the conditions that prevail in that important part of the public service. Mr. Sargent has always been a strong, conserving influence. He never spoke in the language of the agitator, whose catch phrases he abhorred and condemned. He has argued that the rights of employers were to be respected, and that thus workingmen would gain more surely, recognition of their own rights. The President expects that Mr. Sargent will give the same personal, patient attention to the reception of immigrants, etc., etc. While Mr. Sargent may be

depended on to enforce the laws, he will also put an end to abuses, so far as an energetic and indefatigable Commissioner-General can.”

The Sargent herein eulogized and who has been given a political job is Grand Master of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, an occupation that is as risky as the average post in an army under fire.

No further comment necessary.

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