

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 4, NO. 317.

NEW YORK, THURSDAY, MAY 12, 1904.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

WHERE EXTREMES MEET.

By DANIEL DE LEON

COMMISSIONER McAdoo issued on the tenth instant a statement in which he proved the connection between the poolrooms and the Western Union Telegraph Company and the New York Telephone Company. Thereupon the New York *Evening Post* produces the names of the two directorates and proceeds to say:

“To put the matter in plain English, here are thirty-eight of the most prominent men in the country, who are responsible for the conduct of two companies that systematically abet a felony for the sake of profit. No one of these gentlemen can justify himself on the ground that, scourged by poverty, he must snatch at every dollar in sight, whether he wins it by fair means or foul. That defence is reserved for the outcast who steals bread for his starving family. No; the only pretext which President Clowry of the Western Union and President Cutler of the New York Telephone can suggest is that they want to swell the receipts of concerns that are already highly prosperous.”

In other words, the financial interests that control the *Evening Post*, whose felonies the *Evening Post* habitually upholds, but whose interests are in conflict with the directorates of the Western Union and the Telephone companies, land the paper flat upon its back alongside of the justly ridiculed wild-eyed reform freaks who see in the iniquities of capitalism only the result of the “greed of capitalists.” The fact is that the “justification” of the outcast who snatches at every dollar in sight, will essentially hold good with the capitalist who swells the receipts of his “already highly prosperous concern.” From the premises of capitalist society, the one and the other is scourged by a whip that is essentially the same.

Driven, scourged by poverty felony is committed, is not the capitalist also scourged? Can a million dollars, gathered under capitalist rule be kept safe without

they are buttressed up by two millions? Do not the requirements for keeping the buttresses safe call for further millions? How could these out-works of rapine, styled “individualism” be protected without a lavish expenditure of bribe and corruption funds? In short are there not, in direct ratio to the prosperity of a capitalist concern, new, imperative and absorbing wants forced upon it? Finally, is not “a dollar in sight” for the physical outcast with a starving family, quite as much as a million in sight for the moral outcast who owns a “prosperous concern,” all the more clamorous in the measure that it is “prosperous?” and inversely, is not, to such a concern, a million in sight as imperative as a “dollar in sight” to the outcast?

The felony committed by the Western Union and the Telephone Company illustrates where and how the extremes of capitalism meet. The underlying law of capitalist society is a scourge that scourges its members to felony—both extremes land at the same spot; nor is the body the lies between the extremes free from guilt—it inevitably sheds the two. As the outcast of capitalist society commits felony to escape starvation, the pillars of capitalist society are forced to the same course lest they become outcasts. In all of which lies a beauty of capitalism—its suicidal feature.

Happily under the toppling tree of capitalism the acorn of Socialism is shooting up, ready to take the suicide’s place and with its sounder growth afford a sounder social system.

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

Uploaded June 2007

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