

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 2, NO. 87.

NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1901.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

A DRAMATIC ENTRANCE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE supernumeraries of the stage fall into attitudes of surprise carefully rehearsed beforehand, and attitudes of delighted wonder, also carefully prepared beforehand, and shout in chorus, carefully practiced beforehand:—"Make way for the king! The king! The king comes!" The audience applauds, and the king dominates the stage.

The supernumeraries on the social stage—the press—are crying now that the king is coming, only their words are carefully disguised. The social audience does not want the king on the stage just now, but he must be announced, and he is being announced. Whether the audience will have its way, and the king will be prevented from making a dramatic entrance, or whether the supernumeraries are true prophets remains to be seen.

The latest evidence of this, or rather the evidence that comes most nearly home to us, is taken from an editorial published in the *Commercial Advertiser* on September 23. It calls its little royal proclamation "Socialism and Anarchism," and it hastens to distinguish in a hazy and confusing way between the two. It says that the crime of Czolgosz will intensify the reaction against anarchism, and "it will intensify the intellectual reaction that has begun against socialism as well." Socialism then, must have been an "intellectual" thing. By intellectual in this connection is always meant something that is not of the mind or body. It is an intangible unreality. It is a thing of air, a dream that does no harm and does no good. It is something that stands afar off and gives mild amusement, but never enters into the affairs of life. This is the "socialism" of the triflers. Socialism to the true socialists is a reality. It is intensely physical. It concerns the affairs of everyday life. It is personal, and involves the whole human race. Were that view taken by the triflers they would revolt against it, instead of believing the little dream that they dream is socialism. This aspect of the affair was forced home to some of them. The reality of Socialism is filtering into their minds. Hence the "reaction against

socialism” is simply the awakened instinct of antagonism to Socialism.

The line that this “reaction” is to take is shown by the *Commercial Advertiser*. The reaction is nothing more nor less than war against socialism. It is a crass, bold statement, and one on which there cannot be two constructions placed:

“Not only in Europe, where the monarchical idea of the divine rights of kings has its roots, but also in America, the masses are distrustful of their own capacity to govern themselves. The violent deeds of the anarchists of recent years have called in question many of the basal principles of democratic government, including of course those of socialism.

“In America there have been many symptoms, in spite of the glittering generalities of the usual political speaker, that show how much the American people are beginning to distrust themselves.”

Enter the king.

There has been a growing dislike to the frequency with which the American people pass upon the persons who are placed in office. There has been a steady and systematic effort to lengthen the term for which our mayors and governors are elected. There has been a systematic spread of the belief that the term of the president is too short.

Why?

Because capitalism, having reached its fulness and maturity is perturbed by change. It dislikes the upheaval that comes with an election. It is disturbed by the thought that an unfit man may come, and that the capitalist machinery of government will not run smoothly. It fears the growing tide of discontent. It fears the rising storm against its power and the abuse of that power. Therefore it would make permanent, stable, fixed, the head of the government. It would not be subject to the possibility of trouble that may come with a ruler who is not heart and soul of capitalism.

A king would give the steadiness that is lacking. Blindly and instinctively capitalism is turning against monarchy. Hence its supernumeraries cry that there is a distrust among the people of democratic institutions, and that democracy is dying out, that there is a reaction against democracy, and that the American people have come to mistrust their own power to govern themselves and conduct their own affairs.

When did the mass of the American people, the working class, govern itself? How can there be a mistrust of a function they have not yet exercised? Why should

they be discouraged when the fight is before them, when the victory is before them, when, for the first time, there is an opportunity for the people to conduct their own affairs, in their own way, and for their own benefit?

In France, Republican France, this same phenomenon is noticed. The recent visit of the Czar aroused the capitalists of France to a gasping, throbbing desire for a king or an emperor. They, too, would make the government more “stable.” They, too, prate of intellectual reactions and the failure of democratic ideals.

The cause for this is not far to seek. The capitalist class has wiped out the middle class. That insignificant and shivering handful of what was once the dominant class in the country is no longer to be feared, and no longer to be reckoned with. The victory of the capitalist is its own defeat. Having eliminated that once powerful class, they now come face to face with us—the working class.

It was a fool and not a philosopher who walked up and down the streets of Rome, who entered into the high places, and cried “Delenda est Carthago!”¹ Carthage must be destroyed. Its destruction meant the downfall of Rome. It was the rosin on which the cat sharpened its claws, the deep well from which the Roman people drew its virility. But it had to be destroyed. It was, and Rome fell. So with the middle class and the capitalist class. The latter destroyed the former. It had to destroy it. And the working class will work the downfall of capitalism.

From Republic to monarchy is but a step. The capitalist class would make that step—but, there stands in the way a class that is steadily awakening to a realization of its power, a class that is strong intellectually, a class that is strong numerically, a class in which there is no reaction against “democratic ideals,” no discouragement about the ability of the people to govern themselves. That class is the working class, with its staunch and fearless political striking arm, the Socialist Labor Party.

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

Uploaded June 2006

¹ [Delenda Est Carthago, or more exactly: “Ceterum censeo Carthaginem esse delendam”—“And therefore, I conclude that Carthage must be destroyed,” was the motto of Roman conservative senator Marcus Porcius Cato.]