

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 4, NO. 115.

NEW YORK, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23, 1903.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

THE POOR PROSTITUTE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE sight of Seth Low and George B. McClellan—the leading candidates of the Republican party and of the Democratic party political wings of the capitalist class—on the subject of the “Red Lights” is typical of capitalist cruelty.

Prostitution is not an incident of capitalist society. It is not a “thorn,” unavoidable to the “rose of capitalism.” It is not a leakage, such as no vessel, constructed by man, can expect to be free from, man’s works being imperfect. Prostitution is not that in capitalist society. In the social system that the Low-McClellan class upholds, prostitution is a buttress, aye, it is more than that, it is a pillar, without which the capitalist superstructure would topple.

Without prostitution, all the intelligent medical and philosophical authorities of capitalist society agree, their much vaunted “sacrament of marriage” would be a heap of wrecks.

Without prostitution, all their intelligent alienists agree, the insane asylums would not be large enough to accommodate the applicants.

Without prostitution, all their honest statesmen realize, that the capitalist principle of using woman as a breeder of heirs for the capitalist would be shattered.

Prostitution is a capitalist institution to which the Lows and the McClellans owe the very breath in the nostrils of their class. But prostitution, besides being a deliberately raised social institution of capitalist society, is a stream that the capitalist class feeds. To prostitution the capitalists point their female labor as a means to supplement its meager wage. And, the stream being started, it is from the capitalist class that the bulk of the funds proceed to keep it up. Not workingmen patronize the houses of ill fame. “Dust thou art to dust returnest” is a motto that the capitalist class paraphrases and applies into “From prostitution you draw your

essence, return your essence to it”—and thither it travels both in point of their marrow and in point of their cash.

And yet in the midst of this campaign, what is it that these two representatives of the Republican and Democratic parties are vying with one another in? It is in outdoing one another in promises to suppress, and uproot and abolish—the “Red Light”!!!

A social pariah of capitalist society, the wretched prostitute is now being used as a pretext for mutual defamation by the capitalist candidates. Jointly, they, as capitalists, exist by virtue of the institution of prostitution; separately, they seek to undo one another by kicking her, and each seeks to mount into power by clambering over her prostrate, kicked-down body.

A vote for either is a vote of sanction for prostitution; is a vote of encouragement for capitalist hypocrisy. A vote for the Socialist Labor Party, a cross under the Uplifted Arm and Hammer of Labor, is a crack over the head of capitalist crime, indecency, hypocrisy and cruelty.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded January 2007