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EDITORIAL

LISTEN TO THE HYPOCRITES.

By DANIEL DE LEON

AFORE-TASTE of the lines along which the regulation anti-Tammany combination expects to carry on this year's municipal campaign is given in the following passage from the *Evening Post*:

“The rich can pay their needlessly swollen taxes, they can flee from the city, they can provide for themselves those comforts and safe-guards of life which the city neglects to furnish. But the working people who live on the East Side are the helpless sufferers from Tammany misrule. They see their children shut out of schools. They see their streets left filthy, their tenements made horrible in violation of law, their daughters exposed to nameless infamy, their health endangered by uninspected food and epidemics unchecked by an inefficient Health Board, and the police, instead of being their protectors, striking hands with the promoters of that vice and crime which surrounds them as a festering atmosphere. And for them there is no respite from it the year round.”

What hypocrisy!

Not one of the ills mentioned above but has its roots in State and National legislation.

Why do working people crowd into pest-holes? Is it that they like it? Or could those pest-holes be removed without State, aye, even National legislation? The tenement house, in the sense of the domicile of the workers, is backed by State laws, the product of the very class the *Evening Post* speaks for. Nay, even were the State Laws on the subject to be tampered with in behalf of the “poor working people,” the tampering would soon be stopped by the Federal Courts on the ground of “impairing the validity of contracts.” The overcrowding, with its resultants of filthy streets and epidemics, is pre-eminently not a municipal, but a National issue. And so could one go through {the} list of ills; not one is remedied by “good government”: or “change of government”: one and all are dusts raised from the mud of Capitalism.

Nor is that all. How comes it that “the rich can flee from the city and provide for

themselves the comforts and safeguards of life”? The very assertion of the fact constitutes a flat denial of all the premises that the regulation anti-Tammanyites proceed from, and knocks them flat. Is it, perchance, a subject of municipal regulation that the Labor Market is so overstocked as to leave no domicile accessible to the working class except those where overcrowding is inevitable? Is it a municipal regulation that strips the workers of the means to “provide for themselves the comforts and safeguards of life,” and places such means in the hands of both the Tammany magnates and the gentlemen who would “harpoon the Tiger”? Evidently not. The cause lies not in the municipality, the cause lies in the National system that, by leaving the tool of production in the hands of the Anti as well as the Pro-Tammany class, plunders the workers and enriches the capitalist class with the spoils of the working class.

Nor yet is this all. The passage quoted above from the *Evening Post* denotes clearly the class, whose suffrage the labor-fleecing reformer knows he needs in order to “get there.” In other words, the “Morality Brigade” for whom the *Evening Post* speaks, adds to the criminality which it has in common with the Tammany labor-fleecers, the further crime of seeking to profit by its own wrongs: It helps to produce the filth and misery that it complains of, and then it seeks to turn the fact to its private profit.

Tammany is bad enough; it is a stench to the nostrils. The *Evening Post* Anti-Tammany reformers, however, are, besides, hypocrites and a stench to the intellect.

Neither nuisance can be abated separately; they must be abated jointly. Nor will aught ever perform the feat but that popular political tidal wave, whose slow but forceful surge is rising to the rhythm of the Fighting S.L.P.

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

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