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EDITORIAL

“FOR BOTH.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

DISAPPOINTING on the whole as G. Tracy Rogers was {as} a witness before the New York Legislative investigating committee, there was one point on which he covered himself with glory. Having been asked whether the “best” men whom he confessed money had been used to send to the Legislature were “best” for the street railroads or for the people, he at first answered “For both,” but subsequently admitted that it was the interests of the railways alone which were in his mind.

So, were the veil torn off, would it be found from top to bottom with capitalist “friends of the people.” Professing the greatest love for all, they are ever on the lookout to stab public interest in the back in favor of their own interests. The protectionist crying for high tariff “for the safeguarding of American labor,” but having his mind solely on the safeguarding {of} his own profits; the free trader calling in the wilderness for no tariff, to the tune of “lower prices,” but having his weather eye peeled purely for the lower wages; the landlord passing resolutions for lower taxes on the plea of “lower rents,” but rubbing his hands in secret over the increased surplus lower taxes will enable him to pocket; the trust buster who would smash a wonderful engine of industrial economy to the shout of “free competition” meaning thereby only free competition for the little sharks against the big ones, but no chance for the other fish, the workers, against the sharks; all of these holding back the true solution of the turbulent class war in favor of their own temporary advantage—all are but first and second cousins of G. Tracy Rogers, but without his frankness.

The evils which afflict society to-day do not flow from high or from low tariff, from high or low taxes, or from trusts or lack of trusts. They flow from something much deeper, a constitutional malady of which these little excrescences are but the

local symptoms. That constitutional malady is the private ownership in few hands of the mechanical equipment of production which the race as a whole has built up and which should of right belong to the race as a whole. Inevitably under this private ownership, the mouths of the few are gorged with dainties while the mouths of the many are drawn with hunger; the bodies of the few are larded with idleness while the bodies of the many are broken with toil; the minds of the few are lush with extravagance, while the minds of the many are numbed with penury. Between these two classes there can be no harmony. Their interests are hostile; no man can be the friend of both at once.

In the very nature of the class structure of present society he who supports the dominance of one class can not also uphold the rights of the dominated class. Beware of the “friend of the people” who starts by retaining the cause of the people’s misery. He is a quack, if not something worse.

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