

Daniel De Leon

Editorial: Another Murder

Carter H. Harrison, the Mayor of Chicago, was murdered last week.¹

From start to finish Mr. Harrison was as perfect a type as could be of the modern social system in a country like ours, where capitalism, unrelieved by any of the ideals of former civilizations, naked, brazen and high-handed, is holding high carnival.

With many natural gifts; with superficial acquirements; mistaking bigness for greatness; unscrupulous; conceiving the biggest schemes by which the biggest profits could be realized; unconventional, yet pandering to European snobbishness; pushing—he lived and died a type of capitalism.

Built on blood, capitalism is a thing of blood. Its system of bleeding is not the open, manly, though brutal, one of former days. It bleeds insidiously and cowardly. Yet every little while the brute its costly drapery covers up, asserts itself, and then one of its pillars is hit and goes down literally bathed in his own blood.

Prendergast, the murderer, seems at first sight to be the very antithesis to Harrison, yet more closely scanned, they are both found to be species of the same genus.

Driven by the greed of gain; with his head crammed full of confused and confusing reading; vain, aspiring and pushing, like

¹ Carter Henry Harrison, 24th mayor of Chicago, was shot and killed at his home on Oct. 28, 1893, by Patrick E. Prendergast.

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Harrison himself, Prendergast and his victim came into collision. The one was a wretched, the other a successful, buccaneer. Anger, envy, rage, despair—the whole hideous spawn of capitalist individuality—turned the wrecked specimen into a murderer, and made a victim of the successful one.

The multiplicity of such tragedies in our generation may be an omen of good or of bad according as our people do or fail to take warning of the alarm they sound. They will multiply immensely until there will not be gallows trees enough to hang the murderers on, and our feverish civilization will go down consumed in a general conflagration; or the people will in time apply the axe to the root of the evil, overthrow the crime and criminals breeding social system of to-day, and rearing strong and high the Co-operating Commonwealth, restore peace of mind to our people, cool down their fevered pulse, and cause them to breath the health giving atmosphere of a system where man's hand, instead of being raised against, will be, can be, raised only in support of his fellows.

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*A De Leon editorial transcribed and edited by Robert Bills
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