

Daniel De Leon

## **Editorial: A Monumental Delusion**

We are not misled by the tremendous electoral majority of Grover Cleveland; least of all are we imposed upon by the false claims of his having received a stupendous popular majority. We know that his total vote was barely 33,000 more in 1892 than in 1888 when he was defeated, and above all we know that his percentage of the total vote last year was less than four years before. Nevertheless, the fact remains that, every thing considered, and keeping in mind the lines on which his campaign was conducted, his election was a victory, a pronounced victory, for the middle class. It was this class that directly and indirectly carried him into office; and it did so under the rallying cry of “Down with Monopoly,” “Down with the Plutocracy.” The middle class considered his election the triumph of its slogan; it licked its chops and felt happy; and this sentiment found expression, whether sincerely or demagogically, in that peculiar compound of ignorance and demagogy, the *New York World*—on the 4th instant, it shouted exultantly: “Plutocracy steps down and out, and the people rule.”

Yet what do we see when we turn to these representatives of “the people’s rule,” who have just taken the reins of government in Washington? We find around the Chief Magistrate, in cabinet positions, a railroad president as Postmaster-General; a general counsel at Boston for three great railroads as Attorney General; an experienced railroad diplomat, and president of, at least leading stockholder in, not less than nine roads, as Secretary of War; and a leading organizer of Western corporations as Secretary of Agriculture.

*Daniel De Leon*

Furthermore, outside of the cabinet, as the real powers behind the throne, we find an ill-omened coterie led by William C. Whitney, a beneficiary of the Standard Oil Trust, leading spirit in the Metropolitan Traction Company and extensive stock and bond holder; Fairchild, the mouth-piece of the Wall street gold bugs; and Henry Villard, the *deus ex machina* of the Northern Pacific, Western Wisconsin and kindred mammoth and shady corporations, and the representative of foreign bondholders, among whom Bismarck himself is one. Last, not least, and above all, the central figure in this wonderful collection, the President himself, towers above the rest in his monopolistic interests, at least holds his own. Proud of the fact, the Wall Street *Daily News* announces: “Grover Cleveland returns to the White House a much richer man than he left it. His profits in Consolidated Gas, Chicago Gas and Sugar are estimated in Wall street as close to one million dollars.”

All the monopolistic interests of the land are clustered around the present administration; interest in gold drawing bondholders, railroad, mining, manufacturing exploiters of labor—all are there; from the President down, they are all the owners, the representatives, the direct beneficiaries of monopoly.

The plutocratic, the capitalistic interests of the country, once confined mainly to the Republican, have, in the natural course of evolution, extended to its twin, the Democratic party. Even the tariff now no longer draws the line between the small and the big capitalists. Having reached its present degree of vigor, large capitalist production can only be hampered by a high tariff; it needs a thorough tariff “reform.”

Read by the light of all these facts, the tone and even certain concrete expressions in the President’s inaugural address acquire transcendent significance. His condemnation of “paternalism” is nothing less than an official announcement that the private powers of monopoly will not be interfered with; that “none of the powers with which the Executive is invested (military and all) will be withheld” from the plutocracy.

## *A Monumental Delusion*

That much for Plutocracy's "stepping down and out"; that much for the "people's rule" having been inaugurated last March 4.

Of all monumental illusions, the most monumental was that that led the small producers, the middle class, and the workmen to vote the Democratic ticket, and that still holds many of them spell-bound.

But this illusion will soon be dispelled.

*The People*, Vol. II, No. 50. Sunday, March 12, 1893

## **A Monumental Delusion**

*A De Leon editorial transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the  
Official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.*

*Uploaded August 2002*