

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 1, NO. 308.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, MAY 4, 1901.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

IS THE CITY'S MONEY CROKER'S MONEY?

By DANIEL DE LEON

WHILE the self-respecting element of this city is on the alert against the insult of charity that the social plunderers not infrequently seek to heap upon it, it awoke yesterday morning to discover that, at least in the eyes of some folks, it has been the object of charity at the hands of Mr. Richard Croker.

The students of the College of the City of New York have a college publication, *The Review*, administered by a set of officers chosen by themselves out of their own ranks. The last issue of the publication contains an article by a student criticising Mr. Richard Croker. So soon as informed thereof, the president of the College, Mr. Alexander S. Webb, summoned the managing Editor of *The Review* before him, condemned his course in permitting such an article, and ordered the edition called in. And what was the reason for all this? Perchance that the article was not couched in academic language? No; the article did not lie open to such a charge. Or was the article condemned and the edition called in because the attack was false? Yet, again, No! The reason given by President Webb for his course was, now mark you:

“An institution supported by the people’s money can’t afford to antagonize the party in power.”

Translated into the vernacular, and cleansed of verbiage, the “reason” means that the students of the College of the City of New York are considered to be the beneficiaries of the charity of Mr. Richard Croker and his party. And this, in turn means that the city’s money is Mr. Croker’s and Tammany’s money.

Away with the stated and the implied affront done to the working people of this city by President Webb! Away with the ignoble and youth-emasculating policy that his stand would set up! Away with the absurd political or social theory implied thereby!

A party in power is not master, but servant. Out of power, criticisms upon it would be pure abstractions. It is when in power that a party should be criticised, if

it deserves criticism. A party in power is the trustee of the public moneys put in its hands. It is there to administer these according to the will, not of office-holders or their political organization, but of the people, in the hollow of whose hands are those officials, together with their whole party. So far from "being in power" being a reason why a party should not be criticised, its "being in power" justifies criticism, aye, makes it a duty on the citizen to criticise it, if it is open to criticism. The socio-political theory, upon which Pres. Webb proceeds, stands upon its head.

From time immemorial Colleges have been considered the fosterers of noble sentiments, and of the manhood needful to express them. The student's heart is proverbially the heart of generous impulses. If Mr. Richard Croker's public conduct or career has ought in it that is repulsive to civic virtues, whose heart, if not the true and pure student's is to throb the first note of condemnation? To repress this instinct is to chill the noble ardor of youth. To promote the instinct should be the care of those filling the responsible position of superintending the education of the future citizen. In throwing a wet blanket upon this instinct by rebuking *The Review*, Pres. Webb has seriously failed in his calling.

Finally, it is not thanks to Mr. Croker or his party that the moneys are there with which to support the College of the City of New York. The College is supported with wealth produced by the Working Class. If consideration is due to anyone for those funds, such consideration is due exclusively to the Working Class. It is an affront to the Working Class—the class that raises this wealth—to place the College of the City of New York in an attitude of gratitude to the Richard Croker class—the class that clubs and shoots it.

President Webb missed an opportunity, not merely to vindicate the right of a free press, but to shield and thereby promote the noble instincts of the student world.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded March 2006