

Daniel De Leon

Editorial: Hawaii

A comedy is about to be performed in our political circus that bids fair to beat hollow the most laughable burlesque of Gilbert and Sullivan. The stage will be profusely decorated with “patriotic” bunting; jingo settings will predominate; the American eagle will be stuck up in all nooks and corners, stuffed into a variety of postures, indignant and jubilant; and of course, our national flag itself will not escape doing duty, as it has never yet escaped from any of our plutocratic merry-go-rounds. The *dramatis personae* will be our “leading” citizens, the professional clowns of the plutocracy—politicians and press; they will strut about majestically; Patrick Henry will be nowhere; and floods of declamation, especially of the jingo variety, will pour from their tremulous lips—the real personages, the parties really concerned, to wit, the Louisiana Sugar Planters’ Association and the Hawaiian Commercial Company, keeping behind the scenes, but all the while pulling the wires, shifting the curtains and doing the prompting.

Hawaii, or the Sandwich Islands, has rapidly evolved—in the hands of the American adventurers and their descendants and successors, who went there years ago on board whalers to convert the “benighted heathen” and make their own fortunes—from the small, into the large, the very largest stage of capitalist industrialism. The interests of the islands, i.e., of the capitalists who are exploiting them, are now wholly concentrated in the hands of a syndicate styled the “Hawaiian Commercial Company”; the principal industry of this company is sugar raising; its leading spirit is the celebrated or notorious

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Claus Spreckels. Until two years ago the Hawaiian capitalists had smooth sailing; they needed the American market for their staple, and they got it through a reciprocity treaty. But suddenly there came the McKinley bill with all its furbelows, one of which was a system of bounties to certain domestic producers. The sugar planters of the South, controlled mainly by the Louisiana Sugar Planters' Association, got the whole benefit of this; millions of dollars flowed in their pockets by the operation; the Hawaiian Commercial Company was knocked out, millions of dollars were lost to it. To regain the American market for its staple was from that time on a vital object with the Hawaiian Commercial Company; hence the recent "revolution" in Hawaii; hence also the application for admission in the American Union. On the other hand, to retain the market, i.e., to keep it away from the Hawaiian competitors, is the moving spring of the Louisiana Sugar Planters' Association. These two are the parties directly interested, and this is the issue directly involved.

But these parties will rarely, if ever, be seen in the comedy that is about to be mounted; only their hands will be felt. Both will appeal through their paid spokesmen to the same sentiments, and both will belabor each other through their hired histrions with the same cudgels.

The Hawaiian Commercial Company will cause to be invoked the Genius of Liberty and the Guardian Angel of the American Republic to "extend over the myriad islands of the Pacific the domain of freedom," carefully concealing the fact that the bulk of the population, some 58,000 souls, consisting of natives and imported laborers, are held in Hawaii in abject slavery and dependence.

The Louisiana Sugar Planters' Association will cause the performers on its side of the stage to turn up their eyes, and put out their hands with unspeakable horror at the unpatriotic thought of bringing, through the annexation of Hawaii, thousands of dagos, Malayans, Chinese and other such elements within the sacred precincts of this land of freedom,

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carefully concealing the fact, however, that the Louisiana Sugar Planters' Association itself is doing that very thing, is steadily replacing in its mills, factories and plantations the domestic laborer with the "more tractable" Chinese.

We have already heard during the last week several rhapsodies in these several strains. They were but initiative rehearsals. The full burlesque will be presently in full swing.

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Hawaii

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