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EDITORIAL

WE SAIL WESTWARD.

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BRYAN claims he has now unraveled the “mystery of 1908,” it was “money.” Bryan’s “discovery” emphasizes, the quandary he is in. It does more. It also turns the light upon the ducks in thunder state in which the Socialist party leaders are seen in. The post-election figures are so shockingly at variance with the pre-election figures which both Bryan and S.P. leaders considered themselves justified to build upon and to expect from the “tremendous enthusiasm” with which “crowds, often running up to ten thousand,” greeted the magnetic outbursts of their respective spellbinders, that, worse even than ducks in thunder, these gentlemen have, since election night, been fluttering about like chickens without a head. And well they may; and instructive it is that they do. Their joint perturbation turns the light into another direction also. That light falls into the closet of the victorious Taft crew, and there reveals a political skeleton which is bound to embitter the juiciest meat of their political Thanksgiving turkey.

To say that “money” did it is like saying a man died for want of breath. The truism is too true to be of any use. The important thing to know is what caused the man who died to be short of breath. Only the ascertaining of this fact can furnish instruction. So with “what did it” last election.

Before 1896 the threat of hard times to follow, if the Republican party was not elected, was not unknown. There is a radical difference between the cry then and the cry since. Before 1896 the threat was mainly of capitalists to capitalists; the threat to workingmen played only a secondary, or routine rôle. Since 1896 the threat has been mainly of capitalists to workingmen; the threat of capitalists to capitalists has become secondary. It was in the 1896, or first Bryan campaign that what may be called the new departure set in. Hanna trumpeted the threat loud and long: “If Bryan is elected there will be a general shut down.” The trumpet blast of

Hanna announced the passing of an old, the arrival of a new era in the politico-social make-up of the electorate.

Since 1896 the truly or top capitalist element in the land has become aware that the vast majority of the electorate consists of their own dependent wage slaves. Under such conditions, all that was needed for political victory was to give a jerk to the fetters that bound that majority to the top capitalist, that is, the Republican chariot wheels. No more effective jerk there could be than the threat of a shut down. A dependent proletariat, organized upon the principle that the capitalist has a right to his property and is entitled to profits, is itself stripped of the right to find fault if the capitalist chooses to shut down; such a proletariat has nothing left but the recourse of the beggar—beg to be allowed to work; and, if driven by the blinding rage of despair, such a proletariat were to make any move, it would soon find itself unable to move to a purpose, its limbs being dislocated by its craft Union system of organization. Accordingly, every time Bryan ran the cry of a shut-down went up—and will continue to go up with deadly effect every time a Bryan, that is, a radical or reform bourgeois nuisance to top-capitalism rears his head threateningly. In this fact is written not only “what did it,” but also the death of the Democratic party.

As stated above, Bryan’s quandary and “discovery” throws light upon the chickens-without-a-head state in which the S.P. intellectuals find themselves. If a candidate with assured millions of votes, and, therefore, theoretically with excellent chances of success, can so easily and scientifically be jiu-jitsued flat upon his back, nothing is in store for any minor candidate or party, however “magnetic,” or “broad,” or “fly-papery, but a chill “would you have believed it?” after election puzzle, seeing that such party or candidate does not wield the knife which alone can cut the fetters that firmly bind the proletariat to the top-capitalist band-wagon. Indeed, to such parties or candidates the disappointment cannot choose but be all the more bewildering seeing that such candidates and parties will ever be found to have lived in a pre-election fool’s paradise of extensive “recognition,” even “booming,” by the top-capitalist press—a booming and recognition which the moon-calves imagine is a homage to their strength, but which, in fact, is only a “second bow” to the top-capitalist fiddle—a manoeuvre to make assurance doubly sure that the bourgeois

radical shall not be elected—a proof positive of worthlessness, not strength, on the part of the “recognized” and “boomed.”

Again, as stated above, the joint quandary of Bryan and Debs reveals the skeleton in the Taft closet—a skeleton that undoubtedly impairs the flavor of the Taft Thanksgiving turkey. Instinct often does the work that reason fails to accomplish. Victories known to have been won by means that instinct tells cannot always remain available, victories instinctively known to be unwinnable without such means, have a rancid taste. Of such a nature is the top-capitalist, or Taft victory. Without a proletariat, that can be “rounded up” on election day by the ready manoeuvre now employed by the Tafts, Taft victories become impossible. That the proletariat will not continue in the dependent state that its present class unconscious system of organization keeps it in, capitalist instinct—the ever alert instinct of the doomed—is alive to. The specter in the Taft political closet is the instinctive presentiment—a presentiment that nothing so much stirs as the knowledge of the trick which top-capitalism needs to win its political victories—that a day will come when the trick will no longer avail—and that the rays of the rising sun of that day already are seen to illumine the brow of a political party in existence—the S.L.P.

Alone of all the political parties that have been in this year’s fray—from the victorious Taft party down to the “Would you have believed it?” S.P.—the Socialist Labor Party celebrates this Thanksgiving day unalarmed by the pangs of fears that instinctively assail the Taftites, undisturbed in mind by the “puzzle” that preoccupies the Debsites, and conscious of ascendancy.

To the S.L.P. the election figures present no puzzle; they furnish only cause for joy. The S.L.P. principle that capitalism cannot be “trimmed,” but can be overthrown only, and that its overthrow is possible not at all by magnetic, however “revolutionary,” nor by revolutionary, however “magnetic” oratory, nor yet by a mass, however “enthused” for Socialism, unless that mass is ORGANIZED in the only organization conceivably capable of wrenching the proletariat from the top-capitalist chariot wheel to which now it is lashed—in short the S.L.P. principle that capitalism can be overthrown only by a united proletariat, class-consciously united upon the political as well as the economic field—that principle stands confirmed by

and explains the election figures.

Undisheartened by the stupidity, theological and lay, of his time; his heart unsickened by the chicanery of unclean ignorance; his mind unshaken by the intrigues of vicious mediocrities—Columbus reasoned from the correct premises that, the earth being round, land must lie to the west of the Atlantic. Nothing could shake him; neither sneers, nor rebuffs, nor mutiny; and he sailed intrepidly westward.

Likewise the stalwart S.L.P. Reasoning from the correct premises that Right without Might is a fool's pastime, and that Might without Right is the sport of the savage, the S.L.P. concludes that the revolutionary ballot without the revolutionary Union is a fool's dream, while the revolutionary Union without the revolutionary ballot is the wild chimera of a pre-historic labor movement—and the S.L.P. bends to the oar of the task to agitate, educate and organize that united Movement, which the conditions demand, and which science establishes as the prerequisite for the next step in human progress, the overthrow of capitalism, the rise of the Socialist Republic.

We sail steadily westward—join all the stout of heart, and clear of mind!

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