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EDITORIAL

EXIT THE PEOPLE'S PARTY.

By DANIEL DE LEON

With the acceptance of Adlai E. Stevenson,¹ the Democratic nominee for Vice-President, by the Committee of the Sioux Falls convention, upon the withdrawal of Towne, the People's Party passes out of existence. It becomes defunct in name as well as in fact. And thereby hangs a moral and a lesson to the learning of which we invite all those well-meaning people who were determined to take the patrol wagon gait to the Co-operative Commonwealth.

The People's Party sprung into existence as the political echo to the cry for help which the impoverished small producer was sending up all over the West and South. To this party flocked all those who had failed in the struggle for a place within the old parties, who scented the prospect of pie galore in steering the enthusiasm of the honest discontents in the proper channel. These unclean birds of prey of the Peffer² type were not mistaken. They exploited the spirit of revolt so well that to-day they sit secure in the saddle on the backs of their dupes.

The rank and file, who honestly meant the curses they hurled at tyranny, but who were unenlightened as to the real cause of that tyranny and the only way to remove it, were easily caught in the net spread by those who fish in the troubled waters of misery. The party grew by leaps and bounds and by the time it had reached balloon-like dimensions, it had attracted to itself all the feather heads and freaks who dubbed themselves "me-too socialists," and who sneered at the Socialist Labor Party as "too slow," and said: "the S.L.P. tactics repel Americans," "the People's Party is a short cut to Socialism," etc., etc. Most of this was mouthed parrot-like by flighty folk who did not realize what nonsense they were talking, but it was originated by the leaders who sought to destroy what they could not

¹ [The People's Party nominated Stevenson (1835–1914), the Democratic Party's candidate for vice president, as their own vice presidential candidate when Charles A. Towne of Minnesota withdrew his name from consideration. Stevenson, an Illinois capitalist, had been Vice President during Grover Cleveland's second term of office (1893–97).]

² [A reference to William Peffer (1831–1912), U.S. Senator from Kansas (1891–1897) and a leader of the People's (Populist) Party.]

exploit—the Socialist Labor Party.

The men who were teaching the doctrine that the emancipation of the people must be achieved by the working class, politically united upon class-conscious lines, refused to be swept off their feet by the popular wave. Despite entreaties from good-hearted but weak-headed friends, vilification from strong-headed and evil-hearted foes, treachery from within and assaults from outside the ranks, they steered the battleship of the proletariat clear from any entanglements and the course of events has demonstrated their wisdom in standing “True to the Truth and faithful tho’ the world was arrayed for the Lie.”

In its fall the People’s party drags down with it two political lies whose legs are worn out, i.e., the “coming our way,” lie and the “step at a time,” lie. The first proceeded on the theory that, if you ram a lot of Nonsense into a man’s head you thereby push out the Nonsense already taught him and make it easy to show him the Sense. This second lie denied the class-struggle and assumed the possibility of compromise between the slave and his master.

There is no place in American politics to-day for more than three parties. The plutocrats who own the powerful machinery of production; the cockroach capitalists who uphold the private ownership that is destroying them, and the revolutionary working class that fights for possession of the machinery. The People’s party was an effort to unite these latter two on a platform which would not help the working class at all and would only delay the doom of the middle class. It was the old story of the proletariat being used to pull chestnuts out of the fire for the would-be exploiter.

The workingmen who were buncoed by these populist leaders, together with the young wage-workers, who are just entering the political fight, should benefit by this object lesson. The People’s party was so “broad” that anybody could find room in it; its vote went over a million and it elected Governors, Senators, etc.; it sneered at the class-struggle—and IT DIED. The Socialist Labor Party fights only for the working class, it is as narrow as logic and as uncompromising as truth; its vote increases steadily year after year, and—IT LIVES.

The Democrat swallowed the Pop. Next we will make the Republican swallow the Democrat and then—then the true struggle will start, a titanic struggle between the Robber Class under the banner of the Republican party, and the now plundered Working Class under the standard of the Socialist Labor Party.

The future and final result is no less certain than the intermediary result, the

malodorous downfall of the People's party prophesied by the Socialist was.

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

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