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EDITORIAL

“LEADERS” AND “LED.”

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THE torn-up condition in which the Republican and Democratic parties in this State find themselves has furnished the text to Democratic, Republican and Insurgent papers to indulge in sundry Jeremiades over the past, when a “Republican leader like Platt” held the Republican factions united, and an equally “powerful Democratic leader, David B. Hill,” led the Democratic hosts in solid phalanx. The Jeremiades of these philosophers are but exhibitions of bourgeois shallowness.

It is not leaders who make movements; it is movements that make leaders. While, no doubt, there is quite a perceptible element that is blindly led in all movements, the movements themselves would not be but for an element among the led that really leads, and whom the visible leader symbolizes rather than leads.

What makes leadership possible is the unity of interests in those that are led. Platt could lead the Republicans, Hill the Democrats, and, before these leaders, their predecessors, the Tildens and the Dixes, the Seymours and the Thurlow Weeds, could lead their respective parties, because each group was of itself held together by the hoop of their special economic interests.

Socialists justly contend that Democrats spell R-e-p-u-b-l-i-c-a-n, and Republican spells D-e-m-o-c-r-a-t. The economic interests of the two are one—but only in fundamentals. For instance, both are solid against the Working Class. Apart from this and some other fundamentals, the bourgeois is not a solid but a mob of mutually competing units. Even to-day, when concentration has reached its seeming climax in individual industries, it has not yet reached the point of perfection where all the industries are under one hat. These several industries, being mutually tributary, and still being held separate in many instances, naturally fight one another. In order to conduct their fight with organized effectiveness these interests have

grouped themselves roughly and respectively under the Democratic and the Republican banner. So long as the grouping has approximately an economic foundation for unity, the grouping is solid—and the leader can lead. What is happening to-day is that, everywhere in the land, the State of New York foremost, the original economic foundation for the two groupings is melting away. The hoops that held the two groups being sundered, the one time solidarity of each is no more. Hence the leader is absent.

From the present distracted condition of the two old parties the Socialist derives comfort only. Not the comfort that one foe feels for the distress of another, but the comfort that comes from the proof that his foundation is solid. Only the Socialist Movement has a constituency that time can only solidify, never loosen—the Working Class. While the foundation for the capitalist parties needs must shift and sink, the foundation for the Socialist Labor Party can only gain in breadth, in depth, and in firmness.

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