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FIRST EDITORIAL

Take Note, and Don't Forget.

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The disciplinary methods and organic construction of the Socialist Labor party are frequently considered tyrannical and narrow. That "tyrannical" should be translated by "wise," and "narrow" by "long-headed," recent occurrences in Kansas are helping to illustrate.

In Kansas, the Populist party has succeeded in ousting the Republican. That it matters not which is on top, as far as the working class is concerned, theory, based upon previous facts, has foretold; and, subsequently, subsequent facts have confirmed. No observer or careful student of the situation cares one way or another whether it is by a Republican or a Populist administration that the working class is outraged. There is no difference between the two. But, to the two, there is a very great difference which is on top; the difference is the difference between going hungry or going full. The two are struggling for supremacy, each looking out for itself, which is to say, striving to get the larger share of the workers' hide. In this struggle corruption plays its rôle, and a leading one it is. The Republican party has beaten the bushes and raised a large "campaign," read "corruption" fund, and, upon the heels of this news information reaches this office that a "reform" editor, or two, is, or are, to be paid \$20,000 by the Republican party of Kansas to issue a straightout Socialist Labor party paper in the State during the campaign; the object being to divide the Populist ranks and give the Republicans a better chance.

As stated above, the fate of Populism leaves the Socialist as cool as the fate of Republicanism; if either can not be downed without setting up the other, the game is not worth the candle; not one step forward has been made; all that would interest us in such a case would be the manœuvre by which the one set of political frauds worsted the other. But in this instance the Republican manœuvre is of special interest. It serves mightily to point a moral.

The country has regularly, from campaign to campaign, seen the prostituted editors change their "views," and think as their paymasters clink. So long as the paint

they put upon their nasty faces kept them within the capitalist ranks, the mischief they could do was none,—no one could take them for bona fide representatives of the workingman. But when they put on the external shows of Socialism, the thing is different. The advocacy of the S.L.P. in Kansas, or anywhere, by a paper bought by a capitalist party in the expectation of injuring its capitalist competitor, is a conduct that cannot fail to leave its poisonous trail behind. The carrion crow never swoops down upon the quick; the obscure bird scents and picks out carrion only. The “reform” editor in Kansas, chosen by the Republican corruption fund managers, must be, cannot choose but be, political carrion. To-day, for hire, he will write Socialism; to-morrow, for hire, he will write Capitalism. Whether he prove a wise investment or not to those who invest in him in this campaign for the specific purpose he was invested in, one thing is certain, that his conduct will do incalculable mischief in that it will arouse suspicion of insincerity, even of corruption elsewhere, and raise a cloud over all our party propagandists,—if not immediately, later on.

It is not in the party's power to prevent the Republican corruptionists from buying their man; hence it is not in the party's power to wholly prevent the evil. Nevertheless, it is in the party's power to greatly counteract the danger, and thus reduce it to a minimum. The method to that end is to extend a step further the party's principle on the subject of its press. To-day, the party's press is the party's property, and the editors the party's appointees out of its own ranks, consequently, subject, at any time that the party in its wisdom may decree, to be yanked out of office and even expelled from the ranks. The extension of this principle, rendered urgent by the danger that threatens from Kansas, is the open, emphatic repudiation by the party—local, state and national—of any paper advocating the S.L.P. ticket, whose editor and managers are not party members, thus subject to party discipline; and over whose columns the party has not supreme control.

Only thus can our Kansas comrades pull the sting out of such a capitalist corrupt scheme, because only thus could they frustrate the scheme. Emphatically repudiated, no carrion editor could draw his hire; the party, having washed its hands of such a filthy character, would escape his contamination; and the capitalist parties will be slow to resort to such devices in future.

Only thus could our Kansas comrades keep unsullied the party's flag around which the Kansas proletariat is already assembling.

No false broadness!

No sentimental tolerance!

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