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FIRST EDITORIAL

## SCUTTling DEBSISM.

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**T**he Sioux Falls Populist convention issued a platform that out-bids Debsism. Moreover, having cleverly coupled to the platform a Presidential nominee who will also be the nominee of one of the old parties, the convention effectively scuttled Debsism.

One must guard against being drawn into false conclusions by the noise-makers in a movement. These never are the movement itself, any more than flies are the carrion that attracts them, and on which they alight. So with the Debserie. Its noise-makers neither are the movement, nor do they represent it; in fact, they misrepresent it. Let us scrape off these flies, and look at the thing itself.

The unflagging, unflinching Socialist agitation set on foot in the country by the Socialist Labor Party, since 1890, has borne precious fruit. It gathered the best elements yet accessible, and organized Socialism. The effect of such work spreads wide. While it gathers within its folds only the fittest, it overpowers opposition beyond its ranks to a point that the tenets preached are gradually accepted in lieu of the false economic notions once held dear; but—yes, there is a serious “but”—but, the very characteristics that, for a time, still keep such converts out of the genuine Socialist organization, render them the victims of political and social delusions. Among the honest elements, whom the work of the S.L.P. has so far only touched with socialistic breath, a certain hallucination will be found prevalent: they fail to grasp the essential requirements for the achievement of a revolution; they indulge in the hope of taking the enemy by surprise; they succumb to the hallucination of the “trick” and the “shortcut.” And yet, numerous as this element is, it lacks all cohesive power, and is but sand, blown hither and thither in the political storm.

It is out of this element that, whatever there is worth noticing in Debsism, the “movement” is made up. And it is out of this element that the flies whom it attracts foolishly imagine they can gather a large vote.

The very characteristics that keep such elements still floating, outside of the S.L.P., render them in turn inaccessible to Debsism, yea, make Debsism ridiculous to them. It was no accident that the cradle of Debsism was rocked with sneers at the “slowness of the S.L.P.” and that the swaddling clothes of the infant Debsism were the cry, “We want Socialism NOW; right away; on to a colony 500,000 strong within a month!” Whoever fishes for that element, must have “immediate success” as the bait. Has Debsism that bait? No!

Were political capitalism in America the dull thing that it is in Europe, then such a visionary movement as that of Debsism would here have some chance. But American political capitalism is the expertest political swindler in existence. American political capitalism can out-radical any ranter; and what is more, it can offer that which will every time nab the gudgeon, to wit, the illusion of IMMEDIATE SUCCESS. This is what American political capitalism did last week at Sioux Falls, and that is what will be perfected next July 4 at the Kansas City Democratic National Convention of Capital.

BRYAN,—nailed by the Sioux Falls Populist convention upon a platform that is quite as “socialistic” as that of Debsism, as “socialistic” as the weak stomachs of the “floating Socialist element” can stand; and the candidate, subsequently furnished by the Kansas City Democratic convention with the requisite bait of good chances for immediate success,—BRYAN scuttles Debsism, and leaves it stranded like a clam at low tide. With a Pop BRYAN platform, the “floating socialistic element” can be lured away, and with a Dem.-BRYAN nomination this element can be hooked. The bait of “immediate success” dangled before the noses of the innocents will fetch them. What crazy loon, chasing across fields after the will-o'-the-wisp of “Socialism Right Away” will waste his vote on DEBS?

Long before the campaign is ended, the wretched Debserie will illustrate the fate of the jack-daw in the fable: plucked of its borrowed feathers by one set, sneered at by the other:—its “Socialism” proven to be dish-water by the Socialist Labor Party: its pretences of “Immediate Success” made ridiculous by the BRYAN-capped Democratic party, one of the two parties that will certainly win this year,—Debsism will stand out as a shivering monument to politico-economic imbecility.

The standard of a Revolution, its aims and tactics, cannot be upheld too firmly or too clearly; nor will it, or can it, achieve success but by elements virile enough, both politically and mentally, to stand squarely upon all that it implies.

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