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EDITORIAL

THE S.L.P. IN NATIONAL CONVENTION.

By DANIEL DE LEON

TO-DAY the Socialist Labor Party meets in its fifth {sic¹} Presidential Convention.

At the first Presidential Convention in 1892, the “lay of the land” presented hardly more than a theoretical problem. To-day, sixteen short years since, facts have crystallized so fast that the concretest of propositions face the Party.

The Trust, already in 1892 a gigantic apparition, has since developed in such form that a merely platitudinous allusion, made by the President of the Nation, to the “necessity of enforcing the laws” raised a howl from the camp of “Property,” such as one would expect from a den of thieves only.

That fact gives the keynote to the situation, a situation that the existing crisis fully illumines.

Capital has rounded the cycle of its historic mission. It has brought about co-operative labor and rendered the same a racial necessity. Its mission being accomplished, putrefaction has set in.

The aspect of society in the land to-day is that of general dissolution.

In the face of such a state of things concrete problems confront the generation that Madison foretold nearly a hundred years ago would have to readjust the institutions of the land.

These problems, though reducible to one great problem, Socialism, manifest themselves in scores of different ones—

The problem of soothing the angered feelings of an outraged working class; of soothing it by that knowledge that disciplines, and that discipline that enlightens, that organizes discontent into a constructive force, and prevents its exhausting

¹ [Presidential conventions prior to 1908 were held in 1896, 1900 and 1904. In 1892, a special conference that was not a National Convention nominated the SLP's first presidential ticket.—R.B.]

itself in wrath;

The problem of leading into the channels of the Movement the intellect that is rebelling against the thrall of modern Usurpation, and that, running on parallel lines with the wrath of the proletariat, threatens to exhaust itself in idle reforms;

The problem of rescuing the economic organization of Labor from disintegration by being a bulwark of capitalism, and raising and drilling it to its proper sphere—"the army of occupation" of the Social Revolution;

The problem of purging the civilized aspirations of our people, that leads them to the path of political contention, from the soilure of pure and simple politicianism;

The problem of saving the Movement from the vermin that capitalism breeds and that Socialist science warns "is ever ready to join whatever promises turmoil, and is ever the first to betray a revolutionary movement."

Such, in the rough, is the nature of the problems that confront the national convention of the S.L.P., which meets this day, in this city, in Arlington Hall.

The history made by the Party since these last sixteen years; the tenacity with which the Party has stuck to its colors; the purity that it preserved despite temptation and tribulation; the effectiveness of its unswerving propaganda—all these are pledges given to the future and that assure the Party's grappling, at this its fifth Presidential Convention, with the complicated issues of the day, and taking the determined steps that the occasion bids it take.

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

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