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EDITORIAL

AT THE CLOSE OF THE CAMPAIGN.

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THIS year's campaign in the State of New York may be said to be closed. It will be twenty-four hours from now before the votes begin to be cast, and almost thirty-six hours before they are counted—or counted out. Nevertheless, with a certainty, impossible at any campaign during the last thirty years, the issue can now be safely foretold. William Randolph Hearst is elected Governor of the Empire State by a majority of not less than 200,000 votes; the victory is given him by an almost solid Working Class support; finally, ten to one, he will be counted out.

Any one of the three facts, more so the two first ones, especially all the three combined, mark this campaign the first of a series, which turns over a new page of such significance in the country's political life, that it throws into temporary shade the pregnant phenomenon, about to be re-attested, of the indestructibility of the Socialist Labor Party, and deserves now to be contemplated above all others.

Two fatuities are in possession of the bulk of the Working Class of the land—the first is that the ills they suffer are, not organic, or inherent in the present social system, and that, consequently, those ills can be mended by legislation; the second flows from the first, it is the fatuity that the upper Capitalist Class, in possession of the ballot-box, will itself count in the votes that are cast to its injury. If the Working Class whose daily experience in the slave-pens of capitalism steadily holds up before their eyes and bumps their noses against the fact of the class struggle, steadily holding up before them and bumping their noses against the necessity of the total overthrow of capitalism itself, and the method whereby to accomplish the feat—if that daily schooled Working Class can succumb to such a double fatuity, slight is the wonder of the fatuity being hugged to the heart by those

layers of the middle class whom, although upper capitalism is grinding them down to the level of proletarians, have not the proletarian schooling in the capitalist slave pens. In a country like this where, all the despotic and exclusivistic power of upper capitalism notwithstanding, the natural and social opportunities are so vast that there is still a broad zone across which the classes—proletarian and capitalist—are still in flux and reflux, the fatuity is an explainable mental phenomenon. What social manifestation was that mental phenomenon to breed? That is the question, which, what may be broadly called the “Hearst Movement,” is answering.

The personality of Mr. Hearst cuts no figure whatever in the matter, unless it be to add point to the answer that his Movement is giving. Caesar’s private life was no better, even worse, than Hearst’s—that is a full answer to the personal campaign of “immorality” against the man. The estimation, in which Caesar’s capabilities were long held by the land and purse-proud and the despotic patriciate of Rome, was no higher than the estimation in which Mr. Hearst’s capabilities have been held by the American counterparts of the old Roman aristocracy—that is a full answer to the campaign of “mediocrity” against the man. Caesar’s rank, himself a citizen of “senatorial rank” and a patrician of one of the oldest families, did not dig a deeper and wider cleft between himself and the Roman proletariat together with frayed-out Catilinarian upper class than does Hearst’s millions in land and stocks dig between him and the American Working Class together with the distressed small holders of property—that is a full answer, in the premises, to the charge, otherwise correct enough, that the man’s program will not, can not solve the Social Question. Caesarism welded into a mass plebs proletarian and frayed-out patricians—just as Hearstism is attracting the modern proletariat and distressed small holders; Caesarism drove together the extortionate and no less immoral upper patriciate—just as Hearstism is driving together, as if driven by a prairie fire, the Elihu Roots and the Dick Crokers, the Rockefellers and the McCarrens, the “Evening Posts” and “The Worlds,” in short, the reckless, the unsparing and the no less immoral plutocracy of to-day. Caesarism turned the club it fashioned into a contrivance that reared upon the ruins of the old Rome a new institution, a social structure for popular alms with an imperial alms-giver at the top—does the same result lurk in the folds of time within the folds of Hearstism?—No.

The Social Question—the abolition of class rule, human emancipation from economic thralldom—was not solvable in the days of Caesar. The Social Movement was turned awry, and all subsequent attempts have been but diversified failures. The human race has halted awaiting the material conditions for the actual solution. The material conditions exist to-day. The mammoth plants of production render wealth producible in that abundance which, in turn, renders popular want unnecessary; the mammoth plants of production also furnish the social structure for the solved Social Question. The parallel between Caesarism and Hearstism breaks down short of its culmination. Rather incorrect thought than no thought at all. The incorrect thought at bottom of Hearstism only Hearstism can disprove—and will disprove whether counted out, or found too strong a flood of votes to count out.

Hearstism thus heralds an era of intense mental activity, political earnestness, and constructive force. If counted in, the Working Class fatuity concerning the mendable qualities of capitalist society is bound rapidly to wear away; if counted out, that other Working Class fatuity, concerning the all sufficiency of the ballot to bring redress, will be dispelled still more rapidly. With the double fatuity dispelled, fatuities which the course of events prove are to be dispellable by Hearstism only, then the little speck of cloud on the horizon, too little to attract much notice to-day, the Socialist Labor Party, will spread and overcast the social firmament. Then, in the midst of the forks of lightning, discharged from that thundercloud, and which, “as the lightning that cometh out of the east shineth even unto the west,” the message of the Socialist Labor Party will be heard in notes of thunder—

“Proletariat of America, civilization depends upon your action. The capitalist system can not be mended; it must be ended, or civilization perishes. End it! The ballot is a means of civilized warfare. Use it! Swamp the ballot-box under your myriad votes, but march not fatuously to that ballot-box. He who would have peace must be ready for war. The ballot of Labor, if triumphant, can invite disaster only, a blood-bath for the Working Class, unless that ballot is backed by the Industrially organized proletariat of the land. Organize in the Industrial Workers of the World. Furnish yourselves in that way with the only, and the all-sufficient, weapon to enforce the fiat of your ballot, to secure its being counted.”

Hearstism is the first Movement in the land that will clear the atmosphere for

this Message. As such, the Socialist Labor Party welcomes the Hearst Movement, and the Party sticks to its colors.

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