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EDITORIAL

## THE USES OF POLITICAL ACTION.

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**A**WORD to those who, disgusted at the corruption that is rampant in politics, and, oblivious of the corruption that is equally rampant in physical force, have in all honesty thrown political action overboard. Those, of course, are excluded with whom anti-political action is but a pretext to cover ulterior personal and corrupt motives; also are those excluded whose sufferings have become so intense as to infuriate them. Reason is out of the question with the dishonest, or the irrational. The honestly erring are alone addressed.

Here is the case of Preston. A strike was on against a restaurant-keeper, Silva, for wrongful conduct towards a female employee. Preston was not a waiter, not a member of the Waiters' Union, he was a miner. The industrial system of organization, then in force in Goldfield, and which the Goldfield capitalist class justly dreaded and sought to shatter, caused miners and restaurant employees to act solidly. Silva's establishment had to be picketed. Preston was put on picket duty. Silva, acting in the spirit of the *Goldfield Gossip*, which counseled hanging every Socialist off-hand, ran out with a gun pointed at Preston. Of course Preston did not wait to be fired upon. he drew and shot Silva dead.

Preston was exercising a civic right when on picket and assaulted. More than that—no picket duty, no strike; no strike or boycott, no Union; no Union, no Co-operative or Industrial Republic is attainable. Thus the whole Labor or Socialist Movement may be said to be pivoted upon the vindication, or the crushing of Preston. The Silva class demands, requires the crushing of him; Labor, or the working class, voicing its views through intelligent Socialism, as imperatively demands and requires his vindication and liberation.

Thus stood matters when Preston was arrested, and then condemned by a drum-corps jury.

What progress had been made towards the vindication of Preston, up to July 5 when the Socialist Labor Party nominated him for President?

All the efforts put forth in behalf of Preston, and the cause he represented, by the economic organizations that are awake to the issues of the day proved ineffective. Collections were taken for the Preston and Smith Defense Fund, but these collections were slight, and slighter yet was the volume of the workers reached and roused by information upon the vital subject. It is no exaggeration to say that the cause that Preston and Smith symbolized threatened to be killed by silence—a silence that the capitalist press sedulously nursed, and that the general conditions contributed to bring about.

That is no longer so—thanks to Preston’s nomination for President by the Socialist Labor Party. Into the remotest corners of the land has the name of Preston been flashed since last July 5. It matters not how denunciatorily the capitalist press has mentioned the name. The bare fact of Preston’s name being mentioned with the frequency that it has been mentioned since July 5, and the increased frequency that the move of the S.L.P. insures the mentioning of his name down to and after election day, revives the dormant recollection of the outrage that capitalist perpetrated, over Preston’s back, upon that essential arm of the Socialist Movement—the Union. The revival of that recollection is tantamount to renewed efforts for redress; it is tantamount to at least some measure of success; possibly of complete success. And this could never have been attained but by utilizing the psychologic moment of a national political campaign, and placing Preston, as his conduct justly entitles him to, “besides Washington and Lincoln,” to use the slurring language of the capitalist press.

Can any honorable discarder of political action leave unavailed the opportunity that, true to its unterrified posture, the S.L.P. offers him in this campaign? Impossible! The agitation for Preston and Munro, together with the issue they represent, and the votes cast for that ticket—whether the votes are counted or not—is the most practical and the most effective blow, destructive and constructive, that can be dealt in behalf of the Social Revolution in these coming months. It goes to the very heart of the Great Issue—the Economic Organization of Labor.

Political action evidently has its uses. But, of course, it must be bona fide

Socialist political action—that political action that the S.L.P. is to-day the sole representative of, and that it has unflaggingly labored to set on foot in mass proportions by unflaggingly laboring for the foundation of that economic organization that will unify the workers upon the political as well as upon the industrial field.

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