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EDITORIAL

THE LONE STAR STATE S.P.

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FROM the Lone Star State of Texas issues a Socialist party document that just barely preceded the scores of propositions which, since the election day S.P. slump, have cropped up from the S.P. in many parts of the country.

The Lone Star State document correctly records the torn-up condition of the S.P. as “practically everywhere”; it pithily refers to its party’s highest body as the “fool National Committee,” and to the performances of the same as “stupid”; it quotes Mr. Debs approvingly to the effect that “by county autonomy we can segregate the rows in localities and confine each disturbance within its own cell”; but, not being quite ready to seek safety from rows in “solitary confinement,” it proposes a remedy by calling for a general vote upon the concrete proposition to abolish the National Committee and establish “State Autonomy.”

The Lone Star State document gives the reasons for the faith that is in it. History, as the Lone Star State document reads it, locates in “centralized power” the source of all evils. The Socialist Labor Party, which is referred to as having gone to “the political graveyard” is cited as a horrible example, and the American Constitution with its “State Autonomy” is quoted as the light to follow.

There can be no doubt of the sincerity of the Lone Star State’s documentors. People who have long repeated an error wind up by becoming the dupes of their own words. So often have the S.P. repeated that the “S.L.P. has gone to the grave-yard” that they actually believe it. How thoroughly convinced the present documentors are of that may be gathered from the circumstance that the only original thought their document contains—the comparison of the conduct of the Dutch immigrants in the matter of canals with the conduct of some Europeans who come to America and here insist in applying habits that are not applicable to American conditions—is a brazen plagiarism from S.L.P. literature. People do not usually rifle the pockets

except of those they deem too dead to claim their own. Another proof of the documenters' sincerity lies in their abiding faith in the fallacy concerning the establishment of State Sovereignty by the American Constitution. To all those who are obsessed by neither superstition a word of sense will here be welcome.

An organization, especially a revolutionary organization, requires two things for success: it must be sound in point of principle, correct in point of form. Of the two, the first is supreme. Correctness of principle goes to the existence of the body; the matter of form, important tho' that is, is of secondary moment: it only goes to the body's degree of effectiveness. A body, correct in principles, may be incorrect in form. In such a case the body's effectiveness will be impaired, but not its existence. On the other hand, the form of a body's organization may be ideal, but if its principles be false, or defective, then its very existence is in danger, and the capabilities of its form go for naught. A body, correct in principle but incorrect in point of form, will not go under: out of it correct principles the correct because effective form will eventually take shape. On the contrary, a body, correct in form but incorrect in point of principle, can not choose but suffer utter shipwreck: the idealst of forms will not save the defectiveness of principle. It matters not whether the form of a body is centralized, or made up of independent sovereigns, in order to determine its chances of existence. The body that will survive the struggle for existence is that that is sound in principle; and sound principle is one, not legion. Whatever the form of a body, whether centralized or "autonomous," it can never hold wild cats together. That is what history teaches; that is what the Federal Constitution establishes; and that is what the history of the S.L.P. corroborates—with S.P. history as the horrible obverse to the medal.

The Federal Constitution set up certain fundamental, central principles, which it guarantees to the whole people. Outside of these principles the States can each follow their own particular genius. Inside of these principles—hands off! toe the chalk-mark! When the Lone Star State, for instance, misinflated in 1860 by "autonomous" notions, sought to exercise them, she was called to order with a sharp turn. So would any State be brought to order which, construing its "autonomy" into "sovereignty," were to set up a monarchy, or were to coin its own money, or perform any other act of actual sovereignty, that is, set up principles at war with the central

ones. The principles of the American social structure being the correct ones at the time of its construction, and the form being effective, the thing has held together, despite more than one shock, and will continue to hold together until its legitimate successor, the Industrial or Socialist Republic, is ready to supplant it.

It has been so with the S.L.P. Superficial folks rant about “S.L.P. turmoil.” Nothing of the sort. The S.L.P. has experienced just one commotion, the affair of 1899. It was a legitimate commotion. Within the S.L.P. forces had gathered, or developed, whose goal, though named “Socialist” by them, was nothing of the kind; whose goal, accordingly, demanded different tactics. The S.L.P., that is, the Socialist, goal, being the Industrial Republic, required the formation of the economic organization fit or to accomplish the revolutionary act, and take the reins of Government. The goal of the elements that had gathered within the S.L.P. being a Government in which Socialist politicians were to supplant capitalist dittos, those elements ignored the necessity of the revolutionary Union, and laid all their stress upon “getting votes.” Forms of organization do not breed differences in fundamentals. Whatever the form of organization of the S.L.P. the rupture of 1899 became inevitable. That rupture once effected, the S.L.P. has remained solid—so solid that it has resisted all conspiracies plotted against it from the outside; with a press vastly more powerful and effective than ever before; with its principles ever more triumphant, despite all odds.

And what about the S.P.? That did happen that to happen was inevitable. Its press, its spokesmen, all its vocal organs are now singing one tune, from Montana to New York, from Massachusetts to Texas and California—“Disruption,” a song to which the basso profundo accompaniment of the universal slump in its vote adds swing and cadence. Was the S.P. “form” of organization the cause? Whether centralized or scattered, whether nationally, Stately, or countily framed together, the issue had perforce to be the same. The gunning for votes superinduces the sacrifice of principle. Different language in different localities follows inevitably. Gathered under a thousand and one different allurements, a membership can not meet but to kick one another to pieces. Then follows the throwing out of sops which the capitalist politician forthwith out-sops, with the final conclusion of widespread demoralization. Wild cats can not be held in harmonious organization.

The S.L.P. form of organization may or may not be the most effective: the soundness, because unity, of its principles insures its existence, and will afford time for whatever tinkering at the form may be found advisable.

The S.P. essence will baffle the most ideal of forms, and scatter it to the winds leaving not a rack behind.

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