

The People.

VOL. VI, NO. 32

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1896

PRICE 3 CENTS

EDITORIAL

The Logic of It

By DANIEL DE LEON

Major McKinley has swept the country. If it had been at all humanly possible, the reverse would have happened. McKinley would now be in bed with a wet towel around his head, while the avalanche of telegraphic messages would be converging upon Bryan.

McKinley was a grotesque figure in this campaign.

He is the incarnation of "Protection;" upon those lines the campaign was conducted for delegates to the convention that nominated him; that, and not the financial question, was the issue that his managers had maintained was the only one before the people; and it was only the pressure brought to bear upon the St. Louis convention by the Eastern delegates that forced down the throats of both Hanna and McKinley and into the Republican platform the demand for the gold standard. McKinley represents "Protection," which was not the issue.

Furthermore, McKinley was a free silver man. Large numbers of those who now sing praises of him for "patriotically maintaining the national honor," vigorously opposed his nomination on the ground of his former demagogic free silver speeches, and pronounced him a most dangerous candidate on that score. McKinley did not, in his person, represent the gold standard, but just the reverse.

Again, as far as he is personally concerned, he is a queer upholder of the national honor. "The syndicated candidate"—that was the appropriate name given to him, by all the gold bug papers before his and Bryan's nominations. The title was appropriate because it is an open secret that he is deeply indebted financially, to those who started the boom for him, and that they sought, by his election, to be reimbursed and rewarded. Take it all in all, McKinley as the paladin of national honor was a political travesty.

But, it not only the personality and principles of McKinley that spoke in favor of Bryan

and gathered around the boy orator all the lightweights in the country. The nature of the arguments in McKinley's favor after Bryan's nomination would have sufficed to defeat the victor and enthrone the vanquished were not social movements ruled by laws as inexorable as those that rule biology or even mathematics. All the papers and all the leading speakers for McKinley spoke of Bryanism as though it were a bona fide revolutionary movement, and defended in the most brutal language all the crimes committed by the class of large capital—its political, its economic and its judicial crimes were not only extenuated, they were defended, justified and praised. But, however sympathetic all this tended to make Bryanism to the overwhelming majority of the people, it could not counteract the principle that capitalism will resist all shocks except the shock of the revolution that demands its total overthrow. Bryanism was a graft on capitalism. It sought to mitigate its evils; it was a reform movement; capitalism is one of those institutions which to "reform" is to bring down in a crash over the ears of the "reformers" and the "reformed." To shake its props without intending to overthrow it is to shake the props of an edifice and stand by to be crushed by its fall. The horse-sense of the nation guarded it against such an act of folly; and not all the brutal speeches and articles of the capitalist class, nor McKinley's own grotesque figure could drive the people out of their senses. Untutored as yet upon the causes of their deep sufferings, the masses were yet too intellectually unripe to boldly march under the banner of the Social Revolution and overthrow Capitalism with the Socialist ballot. They wheeled about and preserved the existing order.

McKinley's sweeping victory, Bryanism's crushing defeat are the logical outcome of the situation. The lesson they teach has nothing in it from which the capitalist class can derive the slightest comfort; much though it may shout with joy at present. That lesson will be taken to heart by the masses; it will invigorate the Socialist army and will give a point to its future agitation from which the best results may be confidently looked for, as the immediate future will prove. That lesson is:

"NO FLANK MOVEMENT, NO 'ONE THING AT A TIME,' NO FUSION OF ADVERSE PURPOSES, NO COMPROMISE, NOTHING SHORT OF THE PLUMP AND PLAIN DEMAND FOR THE TOTAL OVERTHROW OF THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM CAN EMANCIPATE THE NATION AND RESCUE HER FROM THE FELON CLASS THAT IS NOW BLEEDING HER TO DEATH AND TARNISHING HER HONOR."

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

August 2003