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EDITORIAL

THE MEDUSA-HEAD.

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THE Hon. William Randolph Hearst, a member elect to the Federal House of Representatives, and a candidate for nomination for President before the approaching national convention of the Democratic party, has come out with a five-planked platform on domestic concerns, on “internal policy”, as he terms it. The five planks can be condensed into three. They are:

First—Public ownership of public franchises.

Second—A graduated income tax, and destruction of criminal Trusts.

Third—National, state and municipal improvement of the public school system.

This political delivery has thrown the so-called “Socialist,” alias “Social Democratic” party press all into a flutter. It is bubbling over with adverse criticisms. Quoting from the ablest of these papers—The Milwaukee, Wis., *Social Democratic Herald*—the following are the leading objections.

Against the first plank:

“As President, Hearst could not help it on, it being a local matter.”

—What!? Are railroads, are mines, are telephone, electric and telegraph plants “local matters”?! Are they not all-essential in national production and distribution?! What, could a President, favoring a certain policy, “not help it on”?!

Against the second plank:

“A graduated income tax calls the United States Supreme Court to mind. It has already declared the income tax unconstitutional.”

—What!? Is it imaginable that the tidal wave, that would carry into the White House a President committed to a certain policy, would split off on the

Congressional candidates, and carry into the Capitol Congressmen committed to an adverse policy?! Congress holds the Federal Courts in the hollow of its right hand. Woe to the Judge reckless enough to dare cross the will of the Legislative and Executive elect of the Nation. In less time than it takes to say it, he would be suspended and impeached, kicked down and out. What, afraid of the “capitalist Courts” with a President and Congress on one’s side!

Against the third plank:

“The school system is being improved all the time. What possible good can Hearst do in this line that the people will not themselves do?”

—What!? “The school system is being improved all the time,” when increasingly large shoals of the workingman’s children are kept out of school, partly for want of school room, partly for want of means on the parents’ part! What, even if, indeed, improvement were “going on all the time”, is the improvement imaginable except by means of organized political force, electing the proper magistrates? If “the people will do it all themselves”, and no such organized political activity, abutting in the polls, is necessary in the improvement of the school system, why should there be organized political activity, abutting in the polls, with regard to anything else? Why any political parties, at all? Why not leave the class struggle to see to itself? Why nominate any candidate for President at all: “What possible good could he do in that line that the people will not themselves do?”—What, Manchester School redivivus! What, Anarchy!?

Obviously, the Social Democratic, alias “Socialist” party objections to the Hearst platform are, of and in themselves, so many tubs without bottom. Now, look into the matter still closer. It will become positively edifying.

It is not Mr. Hearst alone who has been emitting political programs. So has the so-called “Socialist,” alias “Social Democratic” party. And what has its language been? It has pronounced itself “anti-cataclysmic,” in favor of “boring from within”, firmly devoted to “local autonomy”, unalterably opposed to “local quorum”, fond of gradual permeation till ultimate absorption”, abhorrent of “auto da fe”, aiming at “one thing at a time”, stuck upon “labor sekretariat”, etc., etc. Now, all this is very beautiful, and, we doubt not, very learned. But it sounds like a foreign tongue and is beyond the grasp of the common people; moreover, it has a wild-eyed look about it.

Compare it with the Hearst deliverance, and what leaps to sight? Mr. Hearst has simply translated the “Socialist” alias “Social Democratic” lingo into plain English; he has curry-combed it, polished it; he has made it intelligible,—and above all, rational.

When the press of the so-called “Socialist,” alias “Social Democratic” party now throws fits at the Hearst platform, the performance is but a repetition of the Medusa-head turning to stone at the sight of the mirror in which its own horrible features are reflected.

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