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EDITORIAL

DODGING FATE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE third of Mr. Bryan's brilliant campaign addresses, the one on Trusts, delivered in Indianapolis on August 25, partakes of a feature of the previous two. It is proof and encouragement to the Socialist that Socialism is unanswerable.

Mr. Bryan cites the Republican platform and Mr. Taft's notification speech on the Trust Question; he proves conclusively that the one and the other contain simply general statements that promise nothing in particular; and he justly asks: "If Mr. Taft is not yet conscious of what is going on, and not yet aroused to the iniquity of these Trusts, how can the country hope for relief through his election?" With so clean cut a background, Mr. Bryan proceeds to state the Democratic position. By contrast, the Democratic party is expected to be specific. It proposes to extirpate "private monopoly." At reading this the reader's heart leaps with expectation, and the question rises to his lips—How? Disappointment follows. The gist of the method proposed to extirpate private monopoly is to prevent the duplication of directors among competing corporations. A license scheme that shall control the corporations doing interstate business is attached to the anti-duplication of directors idea. The latter is pivoted upon the former. The pivot is worthless.

There is no legislation imaginable that will prevent the directors of one competing corporation from placing their "cousins, their sisters and their aunts" as directors in other competing corporations with which merger is contemplated. The only legislation remotely conceivable would require a swarm of secret service men to pry into the family and other relations of one director with another. Even if such legislation were indeed feasible, it would be ineffective. The identical conditions that breed the spy balk him.

Taft may or may not know this; he loves the Trust; and he cautiously abstains

from being specific in the mention of “remedial legislation”—an impossibility. Bryan, who poses as an anti-Trustist, unqualifiedly, is less cautious. He attempts to be specific, with the inevitable result that his proposition breaks down upon inquiry—the fate of all propositions that are unresponsive to the issue they tackle. The final consequence is that Bryan lands, self-floored, on the identical spot where he floored Taft.

What but gratification can the Socialist derive from the spectacle of so able a man as Bryan concentrating all the power of his intellect and of his capacity for expression in an effort to dodge fate—the Socialist Republic—and failing so signally?

If the Trust were the unqualified calamity that Bryan holds it for, and which he correctly proves Taft to cherish with its present calamitous incident of private property—if such were the case with the Trust, then mankind would have no alternative other than to bow and make the best of it, as before an earthquake. Fact is that the concentration implied in the Trust can not be prevented, even if we would. Concentration of production is necessary for that amplex of production that civilization strives after and needs; being necessary, it is inevitable. The Trust must be collective property. Only that will extirpate private monopoly.

The real difference between Taft and Bryan is not that the one believes in Trusts and the other is against them. The difference is that, both being against Socialism, they are each performing different stunts to dodge the fate that awaits them. Taft praises the privately owned Trust and minimizes its iniquities, thinking that by shutting his eyes to the facts they will disappear; Bryan denounces the Trust and imagines he can escape Socialism by plasters on wooden legs.

Neither dodge will stand. In the ripeness of time the logic of Socialism will triumph.

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

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