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EDITORIAL

THE HEARST NEW PAPER WAGON.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE Independence Party has been launched. It was launched in Chicago on the 27th of July amidst a fair collection of neat epigrams. Among the delegates present there were not a few men of undoubted sincerity; and, no doubt, they represent many more, outside of the convention, likewise sincere—we should say credulous. Indeed, were it not for the credulous upon whom they fasten, schemers would have no standing ground.

The Independence Party is a unique apparition on the field of American politics. Of course, political movements ever are reflexes of economic interests, and so is the Independence Party. In this instance, however, and apart from the credulous who imagine they have “launched a Revolution,” the economic interests subserved are not those of an economic class; they are not even those of an individual; they are the interest of only one branch of the industries of a single individual. In short, the Independence Party is a political advertising medium for the journalistic ventures of William Randolph Hearst.

To put the matter in still simpler form, the Independence Party is but a tender to the Hearst papers.

Such a political party never was before. Whether it is the precursor of similar apparitions, to be born of the embrace of general social decomposition and daring capitalists' enterprise, remains to be seen. Already a shoe manufacturer of Massachusetts was seen to invest \$30,000 in a gubernatorial campaign for himself, and thereby, especially through his election, get his name, and thereby his special brand of shoes, advertised throughout the land. In the instance of Douglas, however, he simply “purchased a seat” in a political coach, the Democratic party, already in existence. The Independence party is a new political coach, gotten up to order by Hearst. In this lies the epoch-making feature of the Independence party.

The millionaire of to-day “buys” things. He buys railroads, women, yachts, office, newspapers, etc. These industries have, each of them, their subsidiary branches. Oil has ore mines and tin cans as subsidiary branches; railroads have coal mines, stock exchanges and newspapers as subsidiary branches. Sugar refineries have shipping and plantations as subsidiary branches. And so forth. The Hearst newspapers have the Independence party as a subsidiary branch.

When the millionaire Hearst turned his attention to the industry of manufacturing shoddy news he found it necessary to “extend” into subsidiary branches. One of these was the investing in wagons to carry his papers swiftly from the factory to the stands. The next step was an improved paper wagon—a wagon of national jurisdiction. Such a new paper wagon is Hearst’s Independence party.

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

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