

# The People.

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FIRST EDITORIAL

## ORDER WITH PROGRESS, PROGRESS WITH ORDER.

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**F**inally, tho' not least, there should be mentioned, among the positions that the Socialist Labor Party conquered last election day for the Revolution in this country, that which maintains ORDER WITH PROGRESS, while promoting PROGRESS WITH ORDER.

For reasons that would here be a digression to go into, the people of America have been a favorite subject for superficial writers of superficial ethnography. As a result of that, the most contradictory qualities—good, bad and indifferent—have been ascribed to this people, each writer writing as the maggot happened to bite him. Accordingly, the American people have been alternately described as the “freest” and the most “slavish”; the “most highly intelligent” and the “stupidest”; the most “versatile” and the most “Anglo-Saxon” or “bovine”; as the “bravest” and the most “timidly calculating”; and so forth and so on. These qualities are so contradictory that the one would exclude the other. And yet the writers who have so expressed themselves have not romanced wholly. Their error lies in having mistaken incidental manifestations for essential qualities; in other words, they have failed to trace, whatever popular manifestation struck them at the time, to the root-quality from which all drew their origin, and which, once understood, not only qualifies all the periodical strikingly-visible manifestations, but fraternizes them, proves them to be supplementary.

As the most luxurious vegetation goes accompanied with the most poisonous reptiles; as the healthiest of climates are found to promote deadly diseases, peculiar to their own;—in short, as opposing qualities are obverse and reverse of the same, certain medal, so likewise are popular qualities, which, taken alone, seem not only contradictory, but excessive, yet utterances of one certain and central feature. What is this one, this certain, this central feature of the “American medal,” that all these

opposing qualities are the obverse and the reverse of? MASS-ORGANIZATION.

Whatever other and important ingredients organization needs, in order to be lasting and successful, organization is based upon the pre-requisite of numbers. According to the numbers of the organized, so are their aggregate manifestations. “Representative government,” for instance, is an inevitable—certain and first fruit and requirement of numbers that are too large to meet in “Committee of the Whole,” and thus exercise “direct government”; the larger the numbers acting together, in other words, the more extensive the organization, the more pronounced also are the fruits and requirements thereof. Now, the largest civic-political organization known to civilization is the United States of America. The MASS-ORGANIZATION that the country consists of produces on the one hand a spirit of national uniformity that is striking, despite all seeming evidences to the contrary, a uniformity without which the country could not move; while, on the other hand, it produces, as natural obverse to the reverse of uniformity, a popular light-heartedness that runs into emotionalism. The tendency of the political issues, ever tending to divide between only two large political parties, despite the hugeness of the American constituency, may be cited as an illustration of the popular tendency to UNIFORMITY, on the one side; while, on the other, the recent death of the revivalist Moody is a reminder of a series of men, seen in no country but this, cutting a swath unknown in any other, that may serve to illustrate the popular tendency to EMOTIONALISM. The first manifestation may be summed up in the word ORDER, the latter in the word PROGRESS.

No country—due to the exceptional size of the mass that composes it—is so in need of ORDER, lest it go to pieces; or of PROGRESS, lest it petrify.

Political parties are not the creation of the human brain; they are children strained from the loins of the nation from whom they spring. If even in the statutes of statics, political parties in America must unite ORDER with PROGRESS so as at all to operate, it is evident that a party in its dynamic state, a revolutionary party—the liveliest child of a nation, already sufficiently impelled by the reason of its very being towards PROGRESS,—such a party must have ORDER as a cardinal principle in its mechanism.

Long did the emotional trait endanger the ranks of the Socialist Labor Party. Such was a natural ill of infancy. That period is now passed. “Dug from central gloom, heated hot with burning fears, dipt in baths of hissing tears, and battered with the shock of doom, to shape and use,” the Socialist Labor Party emerged from the gloom, the fears, the hissing tears and the shock of the last year, culminating in

the trials of the last campaign, in shape and use—unflinching aiming at PROGRESS, firmly planted upon ORDER.

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