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EDITORIAL

## “THIRD PARTIES.”

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**T**he Republican and Democratic politicians appear to be ever on the alert to display their ignorance, economic and political. The latest exhibition of the latter, prompted by the threatening appearance of the Socialist Labor Party, is the claim, elaborately worked up, that “third parties are failures.”

How far the facts have to be wrenched from their historical order, how much the course of political history has to be distorted in order to lend color to the new fangled theory can be gathered from a glance at the history of party movements in the United States since 1800.

These badly frightened politicians, with the usual silliness of their tribe, date political history from 1860, as who should say: There was no democratic-republic, and, consequently, no party history prior to that date.

The fact is that the reverse is true of what these gentlemen claim. The political history of the United States is a record of the success of “Third Parties.” Of course these were not parties of the silly season and job-hunting variety, like the Gold Democrats. Neither were they temporary fusions of all kinds of reactionary elements, vainly attempting to dodge the logical and inevitable results of a principle which all of the fusionists supported, like Popism, Grangerism, etc. Nor yet were these parties salmagundis of untutored, undisciplined discontent, aiming blows at the air, like the United Labor Party, and its latest variations—all, of course, bound to pop up, only to pop down again. They were genuine “Third Party” movements, with a historic mission to fulfill, and squarely taking the field against the foundation principles of both the two parties that they found in existence.

Such “Third Parties,” called into existence by the very fact that the principle which they came to battle for had no champion, the child of a political unrest which had its roots deep in the economic soil—such “Third Parties” always have been successful.

The first Democratic-Republican Party, the Whig Party and the present

Republican Party, are all proofs which any student of American history can easily verify. Each in its turn rose as a “Third Party” until it prevailed. From 1872, the year which the political pundits would have us make a sort of political Anno Domini of, but one “Third Party” has arisen, the Socialist Labor Party. All others were but shadows, on which it was only necessary to turn the light and heat of one or the other great party, to have them return like prodigal sons. They represented no vital principle as opposed to the others.

The Socialist Labor Party is the “Third Party” of to-day, and like its great predecessors is bound to become the ruling party of to-morrow. Absolutely opposed in principle to both the Democratic and Republican parties, the two now in power, and to all the trailers that hang on their garments, corner-stoned on the class struggle, bitterly opposing the rule of the class, which is the pivot on which both the Democratic and Republican parties turn, it will finally drive all parties opposed to it into the camp and then smash them. The grotesque ignorance of the wiseacre politicians to the contrary notwithstanding.

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