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EDITORIAL

THE PARAMOUNT ISSUE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

The average voter loves a many-syllabled, rotund phrase—especially as a campaign cry. If you have a three-syllable word your chances are good; with a four-syllable word your chances are better. Bryan passes the hot weather in his Nebraska home, and announces that the “paramount issue is imperialism.” We have never had that before, and as it sounds all right it cannot but make good.

A campaign issue is not like a disease that calls for a certain, definite treatment. It serves one purpose, and one purpose only, that of attracting the votes of the working class. The paramount issue is to run the working class vote into the ground. That vote is the only disturbing element in capitalist politics. A thing never becomes an issue, paramount or otherwise, until the thing upon which it is founded is past history. The course of action is settled, and if the Democrats were the instigators, the Republicans find their issue in opposition. If the Republicans determined the course the Democrats make opposition their line of argument.

This does not prevent either from sharing the results. It does not prevent them from jointly seeking to accomplish their object of nullifying the working class vote, and of vitiating the working class strength.

There is no great question with an employer except controlling the men whom he employs. So in the political field, where the employing class is most threatened, there is no issue but to get rid of the votes of the proletariat.

That is the true “paramount issue” with the Democrats and the Republicans.

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

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