

ARM & HAMMER PAMPHLETS

NUMBER ONE



SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY AND THE WAR

ADDRESS OF THE S. L. P.
TO PARTIES AFFILIATED WITH
THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST
BUREAU

PRICE THREE CENTS

1915

PUBLISHED BY THE
SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY
45 ROSE STREET NEW YORK

Delus Parns
5687.9
.5675
1915 p

INTRODUCTION

The capitalist class through its mouth-organs, the hired press, and through other channels, triumphantly announced to the world that when the war broke out the Socialists forgot all about their Socialism, that the INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT was proven to be a dream and an illusion, and that Socialism was utterly and hopelessly crushed. The object of this little pamphlet is to prove to the world, and particularly to the working class that not SOCIALISM, but certain parties and individuals miscalling themselves Socialists, have come to grief, and that Socialism lives as strongly to-day as ever before through the SOCIALIST LABOR PARTIES of the world, i. e., those parties that subscribe to the principles of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

This pamphlet is an address adopted by the National Executive Committee of the party at its January session, 1915, and was sent to all the Socialist parties throughout the world, in the three main languages, English, French and German. A special copy was also sent to the conference of Socialists from neutral countries, held at Copenhagen, January, 1915.

The address has been translated into the following languages: English, French, German, Swedish, Danish, Hungarian, Lettish, South Slavonian and Jewish.

It is a statement of the position of the Socialist Labor Party on what the basis of a revolutionary International Socialist movement must be if it is to lead the proletariat to victory, and was, as already stated, called forth mainly by the slaughter proceeding apace in Europe, with the old International lying crushed on the ground.

SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY.

March, 1915.

SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY AND THE WAR.

Address of the S. L. P. to Parties Affiliated With International Socialist Bureau.

To the Affiliated Parties of the International
Socialist Bureau.

Comrades:—

Greetings:—In this hour of supreme grief over the cause of international solidarity of the proletariat, in this the most trying and severest crisis of the International Socialist Movement, the Socialist Labor Party of America feels it its duty to communicate with the brother-parties of the various countries for the purpose of aiding in the clarification of the situation such as it presents itself to-day, and to endeavor to arrive at a solution of the problems confronting us.

* * *

For years the European Socialist Movement—and that means largely the movement in Germany, France and Austria—has been looked upon as being the vanguard in the International Movement. The vast numbers which the movement in Europe in general enlisted under the banner of Socialism, the great vote cast in the various countries, the numerically strong labor organizations, all lent seeming justification to this conception. Recent events,—the downfall of the International, the evident hopeless misunderstanding between the parties engaged in the present terrible war, the insistence that each side in the conflict is fighting for social betterment and the advancement of human progress—all prove that in some respects the parties in Europe, however successfully they may have grappled with the problems of the day, failed to take proper cognizance of certain fundamental principles of Socialism, and failing to take cognizance of

these principles, failed equally to provide measures for the situation as it has arisen in Europe today.

We of the Socialist Labor Party do not at this early date desire to discuss whether the German or other Socialists were justified in acting as they did in this crisis. It is not our desire to place the blame and responsibility for this senseless slaughter of the European proletariat on the one or the other, for the reason that we believe that the Socialists of all the countries involved in the war (with but few exceptions) in a greater or less degree share part of this awful responsibility. We hold, in other words, that—making due allowances for conditions as they are in Europe—certain measures could have been taken at least to minimize this terrible catastrophe, had the parties given their attention to the GOAL of Socialism to a larger extent, or at least as much as they gave it to the immediate obstacles that are placed in the way of the progressive elements in Europe.

The Socialist Labor Party principles, the position the party occupies in this country and its relation to what is known as the Socialist Party of America, have been stated on other occasions. Time and again we have through our reports to the various congresses, through correspondence and other means, endeavored to make clear to the European movement what we insist is the mission of a party of Socialism, and pointed out what we believe are the correct means to attain our common goal. It is to be presumed that you have all made yourselves familiar with these tactics and principles of ours, yet we feel that the present moment is one which justifies a reiteration of them, and we therefore ask you once more to give your attention to what we have to say.

As said, it is with due recognition of the difference between European conditions and conditions such as they obtain in the United States that we enter upon what may be con-

sidered a criticism of the European Socialist Movement. And it is not in a spirit of inward satisfaction because our predictions came true, nor in a spirit of self-satisfied complacency that we write this. Our desires for international solidarity of the working class are as ardent and sincere as any other Section's of the International, because we realize that only through the growth of true Internationalism may the artificial barriers of Nationalism (this Nationalism that has proven such a bane to the workers of Europe) be removed forever.

The Socialist Labor Party has for years preached the doctrine that the workers must organize into a revolutionary party of their own class. It has likewise preached that they must be organized on the economic field into an industrial organization of their own class.

It points out that without the political organization the forces necessary (the industrial organization) for the overthrow of capitalism cannot be organized, and that without the industrial organization the political victories of the working class will be but empty protests against the capitalist system. It points out the futility of petty reforms (especially in highly developed capitalist countries), and shows that these reforms, instead of leading toward Socialism, tend to confuse the working class on the importance of revolutionary activity, thereby postponing the day of working class emancipation. It points out that the mere election of one set of Socialist political officers in place of the present capitalist politicians does in no way change the fundamental basis of society, nor does it endanger capitalist society, unless such election of Socialists is accompanied by a healthy growth of the industrial organization of the working class.

In this connection we quote the resolution which the party's delegate introduced at the Stuttgart International Socialist Congress:

"Whereas, The integrally organized industrial organization of the working class is the present embryo of the Commonwealth of Labor, or Socialist Republic, and foreshadows the organic form of that Commonwealth, as well as its administrative powers;

"Whereas, Craft unionism, wherever capitalism has reached untrammelled full bloom, has approved itself what the plutocratic 'Wall Street Journal' of New York has hailed it, in hailing the Gompers-Mitchell American Federation of Labor, 'The bulwark of capitalist society,' that bred the officialdom which the capitalist Mark Hanna designated as his 'Labor-Lieutenant-ship'; therefore be it

"Resolved, 1. That 'neutrality' toward trades unions, on the part of a political party of Socialism, is equivalent to 'neutrality toward the machinations of the capitalist class';

"2. That the bona fide, or revolutionary Socialist Movement needs the political as well as the economic organization of Labor, the former for propaganda and warfare upon the civilized plane of the ballot; the latter as the only conceivable force with which to back up the ballot, without which all ballot is moonshine, and which force is essential for the ultimate lockout of the capitalist class;

"3. That, without the political organization, the Labor or Socialist Movement could not reach its triumph; without the economic, the day of its political triumph would be the day of its defeat. Without the economic organization, the movement would attract and breed the pure and simple politician, who would debauch and sell out the working class; without the political organization, the movement would attract and breed the agent provocateur, who would assassinate the movement."

Events in America have demonstrated the soundness of the position of the party. The events in Europe are likewise a demonstra-

tion of the principle, that a pure and simple political party of Socialism, however revolutionary it may be in its utterances, cannot be of real service to the proletariat, let alone accomplishing its emancipation.

The Socialist Labor Party in taking this position adopts the methods of twentieth century civilization, insisting that society must be given an opportunity to express its will through the ballot-box. But in giving equal prominence to the demand for the industrial organization of the working class, it restates and emphasizes the historic truth that right without might is as useless and meaningless as might without right is socially criminal.

Considering the general conditions in Europe, the Socialist Labor Party does not maintain that the European comrades have been entirely wrong. We are aware of the fact that the fundamental principles of the parties in Europe are essentially the same as those of the Socialist Labor Party of America. Where we differ is in the application of these principles. Nor does it follow that the application which the European parties have made of these principles is absolutely wrong. It may be so in part, and to a greater or less degree in the various countries.

We recognize the fact that the Socialists of Europe have been confronted with many problems which had to be solved before the real issue, Socialism versus Capitalism, could be decided. These problems have largely been of a political nature. Politically Europe as a whole is far behind the United States. Here the issue is clear and clear, Socialism versus full-grown capitalism. Not so in Europe. There large remnants of feudalism remained, blocking the path of Socialist revolutionary progress, and the attention of the European comrades has therefore been given almost exclusively to these problems, with the result that they have become so enmeshed in bourgeois pol-

itics that they have apparently lost sight, for the moment at least, of the ultimate goal of the Socialist movement. This is true to such an extent that where industrial union organization could have been effected, this important phase of the movement was and is practically ignored. The failure of the European Socialists to advocate and teach the principles of industrial unionism (a failure caused, as said, largely by unripe political conditions in general, and unripe economic conditions in spots) may be explained, though it cannot be wholly justified. For while it is true that the application of industrial union principles requires a high industrial and economic development, it is also true that a principle may be propagated and taught, pending the ripening of conditions when such a principle may be applicable. It is only necessary in this connection to remember that Socialist principles in general were propagated in Europe at a time when Socialism was manifestly impossible.

We have repeatedly referred to the industrial organization, and desire to deal with this important question in a somewhat detailed manner.

The conception which the Socialists in Europe and elsewhere (i e., those who have neglected the industrial organization) usually hold of the economic arm of the movement is, that it is a purely transitory, though important enough affair. The Socialist Labor Party holds, on the contrary, that the economic organization, far from being this, is the permanent thing, and the political, though absolutely necessary and indispensable, is a purely transitory, a means-to-an-end thing. The Socialist Labor Party holds that the correct form of the economic organization (industrial unionism) is the embryo, the undeveloped form of future society. To illustrate:

Society today is organized on political

lines, i e., the representative bodies are composed of delegates from the various political (geographical) divisions. Thus, the "people" of New York state elect representatives to the "House"; these delegates representing (supposedly) the interests of the given territory. In capitalist society, rent as it is in twain by the struggle between the working class and the capitalist class, it is obvious that these delegates do not and cannot represent the interests of both classes; we know now that they represent the interests of capitalism. But even if we, for the sake of argument, would leave this point aside, it would still remain undisputed that no one man can truly represent the many and varied interests of the different industries which are found within a given territory. To represent any one of these industries in the interests of those actively engaged and producing therein, one must himself be engaged therein, understanding the needs and requirements of such industries.

It is not the function of political government to administer production. Its chief function is to maintain "order," which, in capitalist society, means to keep in subjection the modern slave class—the wage workers. Political government—the State—rose upon the ruins of primitive communal society, formed and directed obedient to the new basis of society, that of private property, which synchronously gave rise to class rule, and since then political government has been and is allied with the interests of the ruling class. And as further proof of the fact that the political government has outlived its usefulness and become, instead, an encumbrance upon the productive forces of modern industrial society, we point to the fact that since the theory of a true representative democracy is based upon proportional representation, and since, with the rapid increase in population, the represen-

tative body would become so large as to make it anything but a deliberative body, it would put society to the alternative, either to abolish the idea of democratic government by fixing the number of representatives arbitrarily,—in short, a government no longer having a true basis of representation; or, on the other hand, continue to increase the number of representatives in proportion to the population, making this body, as already said, so large as to defeat the very idea of representative bodies; namely, to assemble in one place for the purpose of deliberating and discussing. Whichever horn of this dilemma the pure and simple politicianist chooses, he will be running his head against the wall.

Instead, the Socialist Labor Party proposes to organize the useful producers of the land in industrial unions. Thus, for instance, the workers of the textile industry would organize into one industrial union with the local union as a basis. These local unions will be composed of all the actual wage workers in a given industry in a given locality, welded together in trade or shop branches or as the particular requirements of said industry may render necessary.

Delegates from these local industrial unions from the various localities in America in a given industry will form a national industrial union, and the delegates of national industrial unions of closely kindred industries will form an industrial department; these industrial departments with their general executive board constituting the Industrial Government, answering in a sense to the present government and House of Representatives.

We have based our illustrations on American conditions because the capitalist system has here reached its height of development and is becoming retrogressive, and the capitalist class is here becoming more and more reactionary, developing into an industrial autocratic and feudal class. Para-

phrasing Marx, we therefore say that if our European comrades shrug their shoulders at American conditions and in optimistic fashion assure themselves that Europe is not America, and that the Socialist Labor Party is utterly doctrinaire, orthodox, sectarian or what not—we say with Marx, "De te fabula narratur."* And we add this quotation from our great master: "The country that is more developed industrially only shows to the less developed the image of its own future." The application of this quotation to a party of Socialism is obvious.

Besides, we believe that after the war is over the political conditions will be so adjusted as to compel the European comrades to give their undivided attention to the question of industrial unionism.

We beg you not to misunderstand us. We declare most emphatically that we have no sympathies with what is known as the Anarcho-syndicalists in Europe. Our fight, on the contrary, has been waged against the Anarchists of ALL stripes. We only caution against such misunderstandings because imputations of this sort have been made to prejudice sincere people against our views.

Not being in sympathy with the views held by these off-shoots from the revolutionary movement, we have neither patience nor sympathy with their methods and tactics, from their general strike advocacy to their advocacy of "direct action." Not a "general strike" of the workers, but a "general lockout" of the capitalist class is our slogan. And this can only be done by organizing the workers industrially, to take and hold the means of production. Nor have we any patience with

*Quotation in full from Horace Satirae:

"Quid rides? Mutato nomine de te fabula narratur." ("Laughing? Why? Change the name and the story is told of you.")

such who are uttering meaningless phrases about "mass action in the streets," etc. "Mass action in the streets," if it means anything, can only mean barricade fights, and the days of these fights have passed with the passing of the Paris Commune. "Mass action" has only meaning for us when it is organized in revolutionary political and industrial organizations.

We hold with Marx that capitalist society must have reached a certain point in evolution before Socialism is possible. But we also hold, and in keeping with the true essence of Marxism, that this evolution does not stop at the means of production, etc., but that it continues with equal force on the labor unions; that these must take such shape that they will form the structure of future society.

In view of what we have said we urge you to give your most earnest consideration to our principles and views. We believe, as we said at the outset, that had the various brother-parties listened to our voice and adopted our suggestions, the present catastrophe now crushing the proletariat, might—if it had happened at all—have been turned to the defeat of the capitalist class, the overthrow of this barbarous capitalist system, and caused the ushering in of the Co-operative Commonwealth,—the Industrial Republic of Labor.

We trust that the International Movement, crushed as it is now, will soon arise, stronger and wiser than before. And if the International Movement is put on a more scientific, a more secure basis, then this bloody butchery shall not have been without its redeeming feature.

With fraternal greetings, we remain,

Yours for international solidarity,
National Executive Committee of
the Socialist Labor Party.

Arnold Petersen,
National Secretary.

APPENDIX

SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY PLATFORM

Adopted by the National Convention
of the Party, April 10, 1912.

The Socialist Labor Party of the United States of America in National Convention assembled in New York on April 10th, 1912, re-affirming its previous platform pronouncements, and in accord with the International Socialist Movement, declares:

Social conditions, as illustrated by the events that crowded into the last four years, have ripened so fast that each and all the principles, hitherto proclaimed by the Socialist Labor Party, and all and each of the methods that the Socialist Labor Party has hitherto advocated, stand today most conspicuously demonstrated.

The Capitalist Social System has wrought its own destruction. Its leading exponents, the present incumbent in the Presidential Chair, and his "illustrious predecessor," however seemingly at war with each other on principles, cannot conceal the identity of their political views. The oligarchy proclaimed by the tenets of the one, the monarchy proclaimed by the tenets of the other, jointly proclaim the conviction of the foremost men of the Ruling Class that the Republic of Capital is at the end of its tether.

True to the economic laws from which Socialism proceeds, dominant wealth has to such an extent concentrated into the hands of a select few, the Plutocracy, that the lower layers of the Capitalist Class feel driven to the ragged edge, while the large majority of the people, the Working Class, are being submerged.

True to the sociologic laws, by the light of which Socialism reads its forecasts, the Plutocracy is breaking through its republic-democratic shell and is stretching out its hands toward Absolutism in government; the property-holding layers below it are turning at bay; the proletariat is awakening to its consciousness of class, and thereby to the perception of its historic mission.

In the midst of this hurly, all the colors of the rainbow are being projected upon the social mists from the prevalent confusion of thought.

From the lower layers of the Capitalist Class the bolder, yet foolhardy, portion bluntly demands that "the Trust be smashed."

Even if the Trust could, it should not be smashed; even if it should it cannot. The law of social progress pushes toward a system of production that shall crown the efforts of man, without arduous toil, with an abundance of the necessities for material existence, to the end of allowing leisure for mental and spiritual expansion. The Trust is a mechanical contrivance wherewith to solve the problem. To smash the contrivance were to reintroduce the days of small-fry competition, and set back the hands of the dial of time. The mere thought is foolhardy. He who undertakes the feat might as well brace himself against the cascade of Niagara. The cascade of Social Evolution would overwhelm him.

The less bold among the smaller property-holding element proposes to "curb" the Trust with a variety of schemes. The very forces of social evolution that propel the development of the Trust stamp the "curbing" schemes, whether political or economic, as childish. They are attempts to hold back a runaway horse by the tail. The laws by which the attempt has been tried strew the path of the runaway. They are splintered to pieces with its kicks, and serve only to furnish a livelihood for the Corporation and the Anti-Corporation lawyer.

From still lower layers of the same property-holding class, social layers that have sniffed the breath of Socialism and imagine themselves Socialists, comes the iridescent theory of capturing the Trust for the people by the ballot only. The "capture of the trust for the people" implies the Social Revolution. To imply the Social Revolution with the ballot only, without the means to enforce the ballot's fiat, in case of Reaction's attempt to override it, is to fire blank cartridges at a foe. It is worse. It is to threaten his existence without the means to carry out the threat. Threats of revolution, without provisions to carry them out result in one of two things only—either the leaders are bought out, or the revolutionary class, to which the leaders appeal and which they succeed in drawing after themselves, are led like cattle to the shambles. The Commune disaster of France stands a monumental warning against the blunder.

An equally iridescent hue of the rainbow is projected from a still lower layer, a layer that lies almost wholly within the submerged class—the theory of capturing the Trust for the Working Class with the fist only. The capture of the Trust for the people implies something else, besides revolution. It implies revolution carried on by the masses. For reasons parallel to those that decree the day of small-fry competition gone by, mass-revolutionary conspiracy is, today, an impossibility. The Trust-holding Plutocracy may successfully put through a conspiracy of physical force. The smallness of its numbers makes a successful conspiracy possible on its part. The hugeness of the numbers requisite for a revolution against the Trust-holding Plutocracy excludes Conspiracy from the arsenal of the Revolu-

tion. The idea of capturing the Trust with physical force only is a wild chimera.

Only two programs—the program of the Plutocracy and the program of the Socialist Labor Party—grasp the situation.

The political State, another name for the Class State, is worn out in this, the leading capitalist nation of the world, most prominently. The Industrial or Socialist State is throbbing for birth. The Political State, being a Class State, is government separate and apart from the productive energies of the people; it is government mainly for holding the ruled class in subjection. The Industrial or Socialist State, being the denial of the Class State, is government that is part and parcel of the productive energies of the people.

As their functions are different, so are the structures of the two States different.

The structure of the Political State contemplates territorial "representation" only; the structure of the Industrial State contemplates representation of industries, of useful occupations only.

The economic or industrial evolution has reached that point where the Political State no longer can maintain itself under the forms of democracy. While the Plutocracy has relatively shrunk, the enemies it has raised against itself have become too numerous to be dallied with. What is still worse, obedient to the law of its own existence the Political State has been forced not merely to multiply enemies against itself; it has been forced to recruit and group the bulk of these enemies, the revolutionary bulk, at that.

The Working Class of the land, the historically revolutionary element, is grouped by the leading occupations, agricultural as well as industrial, in such manner that the "autonomous craft union" one time the palladium of the workers, has become a harmless scare-crow upon which the capitalist birds roost at ease, while the Industrial Unions cast ahead of them the constituencies of the government of the future, and, jointly point to the Industrial State.

Nor yet is this all. Not only has the Political State raised its own enemies; not only has itself multiplied them; not only has itself recruited and drilled them; not only has itself grouped them into shape and form to succeed it; it is, furthermore, driven by its inherent necessities, prodding on the Revolutionary Class by digging ever more fiercely into its flanks the harpoon of exploitation.

With the purchasing power of wages sinking to ever lower depths; with certainty of work hanging on ever slenderer threads; with an ever more gigantic swelling army of the unemployed; with the need of profits pressing the Plutocracy harder and harder recklessly to squander the workers' limbs and life; what with all this and the parallel process of merging the workers of all industries into one interdependent solid mass, the final break-up is rendered inevitable and at hand.

No wild schemes and no rainbow-chasing will stead in the approaching emergency. The Plutocracy knows this—and so does the Socialist Labor Party—and logical is the program of each.

The program of the Plutocracy is feudalistic Autocracy, translated into Capitalism. Where a Social Revolution is pending, and, for whatever reason, is not enforced, REACTION is the alternative.

The program of the Socialist Labor Party is REVOLUTION—the Industrial or Socialist Republic, the Social Order where the Political State is overthrown; where the Congress of the land consists of the representatives of the useful occupations of the land; where, accordingly, a government is an essential factor in production; where the blessings to man that the Trust is instinct with are freed from the trammels of the private ownership that now turn the potential blessings into a curse; where, accordingly, abundance can be the patrimony of all who work; and the shackles of wage slavery are no more.

In keeping with the goals of the different programs are the means of their execution.

The means in contemplation by REACTION is the bayonet. To this end REACTION is seeking, by means of the police spy and other agencies, to lash the proletariat into acts of violence that may give a color to the resort to the bayonet. By its manoeuvres, it is egging the Working Class on to deeds of fury. The capitalist press echoes the policy, while the pure and simple political Socialist Party press, generally, is snared into the trap.

On the contrary, the means firmly adhered to by the Socialist Labor Party is the constitutional method of political action, backed by the industrially and class-consciously organized proletariat, to the exclusion of Anarchy, and all that thereby hangs.

At such a critical period in the Nation's existence the Socialist Labor Party calls upon the Working Class of America, more deliberately serious than ever before, to rally at the polls under the Party's banner. And the Party also calls upon all intelligent citizens to place themselves squarely upon the ground of Working Class interests, and join us in this mighty and noble work of human emancipation, so that we may put summary end to the existing barbarous class conflict by placing the land and all the means of production, transportation and distribution into the hands of the people as a collective body, and substituting for the present state of planless production, industrial war, and social disorder, the Socialist or Industrial Commonwealth—a commonwealth in which every worker shall have the free exercise and full benefit of his faculties, multiplied by all the modern factors of civilization.