

XXVIII

UNITED STATES

To the
INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST
CONGRESS AT VIENNA,
AUGUST 23-29, 1914

Comrades of the International Socialist Congress,
Greeting:

In submitting to you the report of the Socialist Labor Party we desire to present the situation in the working class movement in the United States of America so that you may all the better be able to appreciate the struggle which we are carrying on and realize the urgent necessity for a party such as ours in our country. We desire to acquaint you with the American situation all the more, seeing that the Socialist Party of the United States requests that our seat on the International Socialist Bureau be vacated in its favor. We declare that the position which we occupy in the proletarian struggle of our country makes it imperative, in the interests of that movement, that we be represented on the Bureau, and we therefore ask your careful consideration of the report.

Backward State of Socialist Movement in United States.

The Socialist Movement is the movement of Labor; it is the only organized movement of the working class which really can achieve permanent improvement in the conditions of the working class and accomplish the emancipation of Labor.

In continental European countries we see this movement asserting itself both on the political and on the economic fields. We there see the Socialist political organization and the Socialist economic organization. In the United States we are far behind in this matter.

In the United States we have a large union movement, it is true, but it is not a Socialist union movement. Here this movement,—represented by the American Federation of Labor and by the large railwaymen's organizations—which number perhaps 3,000,000 members—is emphatically opposed to Socialism. Here this movement finds no fault with capitalism; it aims not to overthrow capitalism, it is sworn rather to uphold it and its every action is directed in conformity therewith. Such a movement is dangerous to Socialism, and is therefore not to be glorified or hailed as THE economic organization of the working class.

It is just around this point, namely, the proper kind of an economic organization of the working class that the issue pivots: **Shall we have a thorough-going Socialist Movement in this country?** For after all, THE SOCIALIST POLITICAL MOVEMENT MUST DRAW ITS STRENGTH FROM THE SOCIALIST ECONOMICALLY ORGANIZED PROLETARIAT. On this head we quote from Karl Marx:

REPORT TO THE VIENNA CONGRESS

“Only the trades union is capable of setting on foot a true political party of Labor, and thus raise a bulwark against capital.”

The American Federation of Labor, however, as just said, is not a proper economic organization of the working class. Besides its numerous structural and tactical defects, such as advocating anti-immigration, contract-bonds, condoning craft scabbery, seeking only a “fair day’s wage for a fair day’s work,” and binding the working class to capitalism, it puts up a determined opposition to Socialist political action. And this is the serious problem which American Socialists must face. The great question for us, therefore, is that of giving the American proletariat a sound Socialist economic organization.

How shall that be done?

“Boring from Within” Futile.

We are aware of the fact that a number of Socialists say that this should be done by going inside the A.F. of L. organization and remaining there agitating until we turn them “inside out” for Socialism. This method is familiarly called “boring from within.” We are aware of the further fact that some prominent German Socialists from abroad who have toured this country have said the same thing. To all who talk like that we say they do not know the history of “boring from within” in this country.

This “boring from within” was long ago tried by the Socialist Labor Party, both within the American Federation of Labor and within the Knights of Labor, and in both cases and by a singular coincidence within the same years, 1894 and 1895, that “boring from within” came to a climax. The Socialist trade unionists were

SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY OF AMERICA

practically triumphant: in the one case they succeeded in carrying by a referendum vote a plank—Plank 10—to be inserted in the A.F. of L. program, declaring for collective ownership; in the other case they were about to take control of the K. of L.; in both cases corruption, trickery and deceit brought about by desperation of the labor misleaders—who saw their doom if they let these matters go through—prevented them from winning out. In both cases, also the Socialist unionists learned the futility of expecting to “capture” those unions for Socialism; they learned they would not be allowed to do so.

In view of these historical facts, pregnant with significance to anyone who understands the movement here, we say that anyone who still talks of “boring from within” and of sticking to that policy, as against boring from without, knows not whereof he talks. The futility of that method as a SINGLE LINE OF ACTION has been taught us, and no amount of theorizing can alter the facts.

Socialist Party Men Admit Failure of “Boring from Within.

While we are mentioning this point we might also call attention to the fact that never since 1894 did any Socialists approach as near as the Socialist Labor Party to winning the unions here for Socialism. Those Socialists who, after the year 1900, allied themselves with the then newly formed Socialist Party and tried further to “bore from within” the American Federation of Labor, have constantly lost ground. They have been so badly beaten that they have abandoned one attempt after another. They dropped the introducing of “Socialist” resolutions

REPORT TO THE VIENNA CONGRESS

at A.F. of L. conventions: they dropped the nominating of a rival candidate to contest Gompers's seat for president of the A.F. of L. In both these instances they cut poorer and poorer capers; their strength growing less and less.

Furthermore, those Socialist Party members, delegates at A.F. of L. conventions, were compelled to swallow worse doses at those conventions. They were compelled to accept the introduction of reactionary delegates representing "religious" orders, and against that they made no protests. They did even worse: their member, Duncan McDonald, as secretary of the credentials' committee in the 1912 convention of the American Federation of Labor, reported favorably on the seating of "religious" delegates, and his fellow-Socialists approved his action.

This "boring from within" policy has failed so miserably since it was taken up by the Socialist Party that A.M. Simons, a leading figure in the Socialist Party, confessed in 1909 that his party had "become a hissing and by-word with the actual wage-workers of America." See the *New York Call*, Dec. 11, 1909.

This statement of Simons's must be supplemented with a statement from Keir Hardie which was quoted in the *London Socialist Review* for April, 1909, to wit, that during the last ten years [1899-1909] no trade unionist of any standing in New York had been brought into the Socialist Party. That speaks ill for the "success" of "boring from within."

On the other hand, we can bring this history of the failure and the futility of "boring from within" right down to date. We can quote from an editorial in the *New Yorker Volkszeitung*, (Socialist Party organ) of Novem-

SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY OF AMERICA

ber 24, 1913, wherein that paper let the cat out of the bag. That editorial,—written directly following the convention of the American Federation of Labor in Seattle, 1913,—after summing up and apologizing for the acts of its Socialist Party delegates at that convention, states:

“In short, and if they [S.P. delegates] were in no position to do much positive work, they at least hindered a whole lot of reactionary measures.”

That statement is a statement of defeat for “boring from within.” It is a statement which is an admission that, from being on the aggressive side of the fight to turn the A.F. of L. into a Socialist union, the Socialist Party delegates have been thrown on to the defensive side. They are farther away from success than ever.

This admission of the *Volkszeitung*'s should be supplemented with an admission from the same Duncan McDonald previously mentioned, Socialist Party man and delegate to A.F. of L. conventions. At the United Mine Workers convention held in Indianapolis, Ind., in January, 1914, McDonald had the following to say with regard to the A.F. of L.:

“If anyone can get a progressive measure through the American Federation of Labor he will deserve a monument, for he will be as great a man as Washington. That body is reactionary, fossilized worm-eaten and dead.”—Reported in *N.Y. Call*, January 23, 1914.

Add to all this one more bit of testimony, that from the eminent Socialist Party man Victor L. Berger, who said:

“The American Federation of Labor is dying of dry rot. It is trying to establish a labor aristocracy and as a result it generally loses a strike when finally it does start one. It has been repudiated by the English labor

REPORT TO THE VIENNA CONGRESS

unions.—Reported in N.Y. World, April 29, 1913.

In view of this expert testimony—testimony which comes from leading and influential men and papers in the very party which preaches “boring from within”—we hold that the unfeasibility of “boring from within” is established. We say that the man who still preaches “boring from within” ignores the lessons of history. We made our experience twenty years ago, and the results of our experience are confirmed by Socialist Party sources. An unbiassed mind can arrive at no other conclusion than we did: “Boring from within,” and from within only, is not the way to put the present pure and simple union movement upon a Socialist foundation.

American Federation of Labor Will Not Be “Captured.”

Nor is there anything strange about that fact. Every organization, be it what it may, is, from the very nature of things, committed to a particular fundamental program. The Christian and the Catholic unions of Germany are organized against Socialism. They will not allow themselves to be turned into Socialist unions. If by chance any such turnover should be made, the very elements which organized them would immediately launch new “Christian” or “Catholic” unions. Our German comrades would not escape having to fight such unions.

The American Federation of Labor in this country is the sworn foe of Socialism; the Wall Street Journal has already stated the fact that “The American Federation of Labor is the bulwark against Socialism in America.” And the leaders of the American Federation of Labor have by their very acts confirmed that Wall Street journal’s

SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY OF AMERICA

statement. They have not only allied themselves with the capitalist National Civic Federation and with the Militia of Christ,—a Roman Catholic organization which is the outspoken foe of Socialism—but they have also fought, by treachery and other means, every attempt to give the working class a Socialist economic organization. They fought by hook and crook the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance; and they fought in the same way the American Labor Union, and they fought similarly the Industrial Workers of the World.

These instances are straws that show which way the wind blows. The American Federation is here not to be made into a Socialist labor organization, it is here **TO MAKE WAR UPON SUCH AN ORGANIZATION**. The American Federation is here, not to be “captured,” but to resist “capture”; and if by the slightest accident a “capture” of it should be made, there would immediately appear a new American Federation of Labor fathered by the same elements who are fathering the present organization. Need any more, therefore, be said upon the mistaken policy of trying to “capture” the A.F. of L. for Socialism? Contrariwise, need any more be said, either,—seeing the hostile and misleading attitude of the A.F. of L.—about the necessity of giving the American proletariat a Socialist economic organization? We should think not.

We trust that this presentation will give our world comrades a bird's-eye view of a certain phase of the proletarian movement here, and show them the necessity of taking firm measures—different from the Socialist Party's measures—to change the situation. Those firm measures the Socialist Labor Party takes.

Socialist Party Crushes Socialist Unions.

We have put the question: How shall we give the American proletariat a Socialist economic organization? We might answer, saying: By giving it to them, that's all. By that we mean that when such a union is launched the Socialists should unreservedly stand behind it. That will force matters and bring about a consummation more rapidly than in any other way. The working class here is ready for it, and has been for many a year, but Socialist Party activity in the interests of the American Federation of Labor has always worked to crush and defeat such a Socialist union. We need not go very far for proof of this.

Those who know the history of the Socialist Labor Party know that its firm policy for a Socialist trade union organization was the policy upon which the Socialist Movement was split in 1899. The Socialist Labor Party in its national convention in 1896 overwhelmingly endorsed the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, a Socialist labor union. A certain group in the S.L.P. did not relish that policy and split from the party. That group was led by the New Yorker Volkszeitung. Ten years after the split the Volkszeitung in its issue of September 2, 1909, admitted that "it went so far in its defense of the A.F. of L. that it accepted the risk of a split in the Socialist Movement in America in order to prevent a split in the trades union movement of the land, and to keep up the American Federation of Labor as the united body of American unionism." This policy of The Volkszeitung, of defending the A.F. of L. and of opposing the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, was also the policy of the Socialist Party. They sought to crush it.

SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY OF AMERICA

Some years after 1899 when the American Labor Union—which was formed in 1902 in the western part of our land—declared for independent political action and endorsed the Socialist Party platform, the Local Quorum of the Socialist Party—its executive board—deprecated its action of forming a separate labor union organization, but never took into consideration the circumstances which compelled it to its step. This Local Quorum passed among other resolutions, a resolution “sincerely regretting their action [the A.L.U. action] in constituting themselves a rival trade union federation to the American Federation of Labor.” See *The Worker* [Socialist Party organ] of August 10, 1902, p. 2. That was more S.P. legislation in favor of the A.F. of L.

True enough, the Socialist Party National Committee, the highest control committee in the S. P., when it met in session in 1903, passed a resolution which seemingly repudiated the action of its Local Quorum, but it was in seeming only. The action of the Socialist Party national convention of the next year, 1904, interpreted that resolution, and placed itself once more clearly against labor organizations other than the A.F. of L. When the matter of the attitude towards labor organizations came up in that convention, Delegate Ott, of the State of Wyoming, offered a resolution which declared for industrial unionism and condemned the National Civic Federation—a body composed of capitalists and A.F. of L. leaders, with Samuel Gompers as vice-president of the Civic Federation. This resolution of Ott’s was defeated and a substitute resolution was adopted. What that meant we shall let a Socialist Party man, Ernest Untermann, testify to. In the *Stuttgart Neue Zeit* of May 28, 1904, Untermann

REPORT TO THE VIENNA CONGRESS

admitted that the S.P. resolution was "a covert indorsement of the American Federation of Labor, which meant nothing else than a thrust at the American Labor Union, which had seceded from the former organization in order to emancipate itself from the domination of the reactionaries and handmaids of the capitalists." And, speaking of the same substitute resolution, the American Labor Union Journal of May 26, 1904, said:

"The men who spoke in support of the resolution (substitute) from Ben Hanford to Hillquit did not attempt to reply to these arguments. They kept up a constant reiteration of the charges that those who opposed the resolution are opposed to trades unions, which was a thousand miles from the truth, the facts being that the opposition was not to trade union endorsement, but to the kind of trades unionism it was sought to endorse. As it stands the Socialist Party is committed to scabherding, organization of dual unions, misleading of the working class." etc.

Again, then, in this instance, the Socialist Party stands exposed as the foe of Socialist unionism and as the friend of the American Federation of Labor.

We must mention a third historical instance: the record must be made complete. This instance will show how unalterably the Socialist Party is opposed to giving the working class an independent Socialist economic movement. We mention the Industrial Workers of the World as this third instance. This organization, which was the grandest attempt yet made to give the American proletariat a Socialist labor union, was launched in 1905. There were even many Socialist Party members who attended as delegates: Eugene V. Debs himself was present, and he enthusiastically helped start the new

SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY OF AMERICA

body. But the Socialist Party not only refused to aid the new organization, it even refused to indorse the PRINCIPLE of industrial unionism. Twice subsequently to the formation of the I.W.W., at the Socialist Party's conventions of 1908 and 1910, the Socialist Party rejected resolutions declaring for this principle of industrial unionism. This rejection was "justified" by the S.P. on the ground that the party refused to "dictate" what policy the trade union movement should pursue. For our part, we should say that if pointing out to the working class the best method to organize economically is to "dictate" to that working class, then, by parity of reasoning, to point out to that same working class how to organize politically is equally to "dictate" to it. Such a defense is only a subterfuge.

In these three leading instances, then, we have evidence of the Socialist Party's faithful subservience to the American Federation of Labor, and of its opposition to a Socialist labor organization, an opposition that can not always be justified on principle because it was too often betrayal. We can cite instances where the A.F. of L. scabbed upon Socialist unions, and the Socialist Party, by its silence, condoned that scabbery; and, on the other hand, we could cite instances where the A.F. of L. claimed that others were scabbing upon it, and the Socialist Party took up and echoed the slander. Such a course is certainly not one of "not dictating," or of "neutrality"; such a course exposes the duplicity of that party on this union question.

Socialist Party's Political Strength.

Even after all these facts have been detailed the

REPORT TO THE VIENNA CONGRESS

bird's-eye view of the movement here is not complete. We must take up the Socialist Party's career on the political field; the Industrial Workers of the World; and the Socialist Labor Party.

On the political field, and as a political organization, the Socialist Party, although polling 900,000 votes, does not present the strength that such a poll should make it. If a large vote, a vote of millions, is given for a party based upon a wrong position, that makes it so much the worse for the party and for its followers. That means simply that millions are going in the wrong direction and must be disappointed eventually if not sooner. And this conclusion has been confirmed by the Socialist Party itself.

As a consequence of its false position with regard to the economic organization, the Socialist Party has become entangled in the mesh of Anarcho-syndicalism, and dissension has wrought havoc in its ranks. In one year 75,000 of its members, it was stated in the *New Review* (Socialist Party paper) of August, 1913, dropped out because of the Socialist Party's stand on the question of sabotage. But this fact, properly interpreted,—the fact that the S.P. had to legislate against sabotage—was only an evidence that the cancer of Anarchy had entered its ranks because of its wrong attitude on the matter of a Socialist labor union. That party invited that cancer in its attempts to destroy a real Socialist union, the Detroit Industrial Workers of the World. It nurtured that cancer in that its press espoused the Anarcho-syndicalists after these split the Industrial Workers of the World in 1908. Previously to that year the S.P. press had no use for the I.W.W. And in that policy the S.P. played a vicious

SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY OF AMERICA

course, but this time it injured itself.

But there are other ailments which afflict the Socialist Party and which carry the germs of destruction with them. That party's course of playing for the A.F. of L. vote having failed, as Simons and other S.P. leaders confessed, it turned itself into a reformism organization. The "Milwaukee Idea"—reformism rampant—was adopted. And when a party of Socialism preaches reform here it will get, not a clearheaded Socialist following, but a distinctly chaotic mass of followers, who understand anything and everything except Socialism or how to obtain it. Preach reform and you get state ownership, municipal ownership, national ownership, all kinds of petty palliatives and a confusion of the issue. Besides that you play right into the hands of bourgeois reformers. Such a course does not lead to Socialism; it leads the opposite way, and it prolongs the consummation of our ideal.

Moreover, the Socialist Party in laying stress only upon the ballot as a means to the Social Revolution—which it must do since it ignores the necessity of building up a class conscious economic organization—is leading the American proletariat to disaster; because, first of all, the workers must be prepared to carry on production when they win out at the polls; secondly, they can not win out if they are not given the industrial backing of an economic organization to enable them to operate the industries when the time comes and the capitalist class should decide not to abdicate. The Socialist Party reckons with neither of these facts.

For all these reasons we say that the 900,000 votes of a Socialist Party do not testify to revolutionary strength. So long as the S.P. is thus falsely grounded, its large

numbers spell simply large disaster.

The Economic Movement.

On the purely economic side of the American proletarian movement there is not much further to be said so far as the American Federation of Labor is concerned. We have stated its fundamental policy, that of accepting the capitalist system as a finality. It does aim at labor legislation, it goes begging for this to capitalist legislators instead of organizing its own political party; it has its glaring faults in having its different more or less skilled crafts in quarrels over jobs; it hesitates not to scab on other organizations to gain a vantage point over them; and it has its contract-bonds with employers which destroy solidarity of labor. Yet in spite of all these defects of the A.F. of L., the Socialist Labor Party lends that organization all friendly aid in its bona fide strikes or other bona fide labor troubles. The Socialist Labor Party does that, not because it seeks to gain the "friendship" and the "votes" of A.F. of L. men; the party does that in such cases because it recognizes that the working class is involved in a struggle for better conditions, and realizes that where the working class is affected the Socialist Labor Party is affected. Aside from that circumstance, the S.L.P. opposes the A.F. of L. on principle.

There is next the industrial union movement which is to be considered. The industrial union movement is the structural form of Socialism. We mean, of course, that movement which builds on the class struggle and aims to overthrow capitalism. We do not mean that which the American Federation of Labor advertises as "industrial organization."

SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY OF AMERICA

The idea and the demand for industrial unionism have taken firm root in this country. They are not to be denied or frowned down any more. The Socialist Labor Party has pressed for this idea in one way or another ever since 1890, and the seed which we have sown is bearing fruit. We have cited the instances of the launching of the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, the American Labor Union, and the Industrial Workers of the World. In each of these instances the idea of a separate Socialist economic organization was successively embraced by greater and greater numbers; it rose each time stronger, which forcibly reminds us of the passage in Karl Marx's "Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte": namely:

"Proletarian revolutions . . . criticize themselves constantly; constantly interrupt themselves in their own course; come back to what seems to have been accomplished, in order to start over anew; scorn with cruel thoroughness the half measures, weaknesses and meannesses of their first attempts; seem to throw down their adversary only in order to enable him to draw fresh strength from the earth, and again to rise up against them in more gigantic stature; constantly recoil in fear before the undefined monster magnitude of their own objects—until finally that situation is created which renders all retreat impossible, and the conditions themselves cry out: 'Hic Rhodus, hic salta?'"

This constant proletarian reorganization which we have mentioned also is pregnant with significance of another kind; it is an answer to those who stick to "boring from within"; it is a protest that you can accomplish nothing by remaining inside the pure and simple unions; and it is a demand that a separate Socialist economic

REPORT TO THE VIENNA CONGRESS

organization be developed.

That the American workingmen are acting this way is a salutary step, and we welcome it. Unhappily, however, there has been an element which has crept into the Industrial Workers of the World,—the latest expression of this demand for Socialist unionism—and has succeeded in making the I.W.W. obnoxious. We have reference to the Anarcho-syndicalist element. This element, which caused the split in the I.W.W. in 1908, went forth throughout the land under the name Industrial Workers of the World, and by its advocacy of Anarchy, sensationalism, sabotage, “direct action,” “free speech” riots, and similar disorderly and violent tactics, has cast an odium upon the name of the I.W.W. For a time this Anarcho-syndicalist group flourished,—very much by the grace of capitalist newspaper notoriety, however—but its destructive tactics and absence of all constructive measures or inclinations, aided by its falling into slummary control, as such an organization must fall, soon brought about its own collapse. Wherever the working class made its experience with this element it also rejected it. These Anarcho-syndicalists, or Anarchist I.W.W.’s, are thoroughly discredited now.

There are the Detroit Industrial Workers of the World, who occupy the position of a real Socialist union. They endorse political as well as economic action for the purpose of fighting the battles of the proletariat and of emancipating it from wage-slavery. The Detroit I.W.W., of all the economic organizations here, has the most difficult path to travel. Against it are opposed the American Federation of Labor, the Socialist Party, the Anarcho I.W.W., as well as the capitalist class. In the big tex-

SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY OF AMERICA

tile strike in Passaic, N.J., 1912, this organization was fought by both the Socialist Party and the Chicago I.W.W.ites, with Haywood leading this opposition, and the capitalist press ably supporting their flank. Needless to say that strike of 4,000 men, women and children was lost through such treachery.

In Paterson, N.J., a few months earlier in the same year of 1912, the Detroit I.W.W. won a great strike of 6,000 silk weavers. It conducted its organization work to other cities in New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania, where the workers were waiting to be organized.

At the present time, June, 1914, the Detroit I.W.W. is aiding the great strike of the 12,000 Westinghouse employes in East Pittsburgh, Pa., and is doing good work in teaching the best methods of fighting the capitalist class; namely, by industrial organization and by eschewing all suggestions or acts of violence.

Socialist Labor Party Tackles the Problem.

We now are in a position to survey the working class field. We now can understand the activities of the various branches of the proletarian movement here. We see the American Federation of Labor corralling and binding the working class to capitalism; we see the Socialist Party playing right into the hands of the A.F. of L.; we see the proletariat disorganized—or, where organized, wandering about aimlessly—and making no progress toward emancipation; we see every proletarian uprising for a Socialist economic organization opposed by the Socialist Party, though those uprisings increase in magnitude; we see only one labor group, the Socialist Labor Party and the Detroit Industrial Workers of the World,

REPORT TO THE VIENNA CONGRESS

standing their ground firmly to bring clearness and strength out of this chaotic condition. The problem which confronts the Socialist movement here is to weld the chaotic proletarian masses into a strong compact organization which shall be a Socialist power. How is that to be done? we ask again. And we answer: The working class must be given a proper economic organization, a Socialist organization. Nor can there be any doubt as to how it is to be given that organization. Our analysis has shown that it cannot be done solely by "boring from within"; it must therefore be done by supporting those workingmen who demand the independent Socialist union. To this purpose the Socialist Labor Party addresses itself.

The Socialist Labor Party takes the position that the emancipation of the proletariat must be the class conscious work of that proletariat; that, in order to achieve its emancipation, the proletariat must be organized industrially and politically upon a Socialist basis; upon the former lines, to give shape and structure to the Socialist, or Industrial, Republic, as well as to conduct the industrial skirmishes of the workers within capitalism; upon the latter lines, to seize governmental control from the ruling class and thus decree the downfall of capitalism. The Socialist Labor Party conducts its agitation and organization in accordance with these lines of procedure.

Socialist Labor Vote Increases.

Since the Copenhagen International Socialist Congress of 1910, we have had a national election in this country. That took place in 1912, and the results of the election showed a 132 per cent increase in the S.L.P. vote; the vote for our Presidential candidate being

SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY OF AMERICA

33,070. In 1908 our Presidential candidate received 14,237 votes. These figures of 1912 were further increased in several states last year where the Socialist Labor Party had state tickets. Thus in Massachusetts our vote for President was 1,102 in 1912; in 1913 our candidate for governor received 1,932 votes. In New Jersey we had 1,321 votes in 1912; in 1913 our vote was 2,460. In Maryland we increased our vote from 322 in 1912 to 2,882 in 1913 in the city of Baltimore alone. In this latter city our candidate polled more votes than the Socialist Party candidate, whose vote was 2,186. In Virginia we had 50 votes in 1912; in 1913 our vote was 2,110. All this makes a decidedly progressive showing for our party.

S.L.P. Membership.

The Socialist Labor Party has four language federations organically affiliated with it; namely, the Lettish, South Slavonian, Hungarian, and Jewish. These federations each have their official organs. The Swedish Socialist Labor Federation is not organically connected, but owes allegiance to the S.L.P., and its press and all property is vested in the National Executive Committee of our party. There are, besides, a number of German Branches, which are parts of our regular Section organizations.

The official papers of the Socialist Labor Party are seven in number. These are: Weekly People (English weekly); Volksfreund und Arbeiterzeitung (German weekly); Arbetaren (Swedish weekly); A Munkas (Hungarian weekly); Proletareets (Lettish weekly); Radnicka

REPORT TO THE VIENNA CONGRESS

Borba (South Slavonian weekly); Neue Zeit (Jewish monthly).

Our membership is about 3,200, to which should be added 800 in the Scandinavian Socialist Labor Federation, who, as already stated, though not organically connected with us, nevertheless endorse our position fully.

In this connection, we desire to report a loss which we have sustained in the death of our Comrade Daniel De Leon, who for twenty-two years was editor of the Weekly People, and for fourteen years editor of the Daily People, and who was our secretary on the International Socialist Bureau. In the death of our comrade not only the American Socialist Movement, but also the International Socialist Movement, has sustained a severe loss. Comrade De Leon was the one gigantic Socialist figure which our country has produced; he gave the American Movement the structural and the tactical principles upon which the success of the revolutionary movement depends, namely, uncompromising political action along with revolutionary industrial unionism. The correctness of these principles is gradually becoming more and more recognized. Our comrade sent the Movement here years ahead by his arduous labors for the cause, and his passing away was a loss felt in all quarters. He labored too well, however, for his work to have been done in vain, and the proletarian movement will increasingly draw upon his teachings for its guidance in the fight against capitalism.

Socialist Unity.

The Socialist Labor Party, though recognizing the differences between itself and the Socialist Party, nevertheless has done its share to bring about a unity of the So-

SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY OF AMERICA

cialist forces in our country. In 1908, following the action of the Stuttgart International Socialist Congress on Unity, we adopted Unity Resolutions which asked for a National Unity Conference with the Socialist Party, and which laid down a certain basis of agreement on Unity, namely, the Stuttgart Congress Resolution on the Trade Union Question. The Socialist Party rejected that offer of a conference.

In 1911, following the action of the Copenhagen International Socialist Congress of 1910, on the Unity Question, the Socialist Labor Party again, through its National Executive Committee, drew up a plan for Unity in this country, and submitted the same to the International Socialist Bureau, as the Bureau was charged with offering its good services toward aiding to establish Socialist Unity in countries where such Unity did not exist. The Bureau published our Unity Memorial in its Bulletin, but beyond that we heard no further of its reception.

For your information, we here publish an extract from that Unity Memorial, which will show you the working method which we proposed for Unity. The extract reads as follows:

First—We do not believe that the time has come for the complete organic amalgamation of the membership of both parties in America into one body. Too serious are the differences on serious questions at issue. The present membership of the S.L.P. would not and could not be willing to be responsible for the views held and advocated by some of the leading representatives of the S.P.; and, we presume, vice versa. So long as experience and further education have not definitely settled those questions at issue, the bringing of the holders of opposite views into one organic body would only create new friction and increase animosities.

REPORT TO THE VIENNA CONGRESS

Second—We believe, however, that the time has come when the two parties of America should combine into one on a federative basis for the express purpose of nominating one joint set of candidates, running on one joint platform and appealing for support of the workers in the name of one United Party. Those very comrades who introduced in Copenhagen the Unity resolution, the Socialists of France, are united on such a basis, the basis of federative unity, proportional representation, and autonomy of the different component parts of the United Party. For instance, the former, Parti Ouvrier Français (French Labor Party) of Guesdists maintains its own organization, publishes its own papers and literature on its own responsibility, holds its own conventions where its particular views are expressed in resolutions and submitted to the joint conventions of the United Party, and where they are defended by its own delegates. The principle, in that regard, is somewhat similar, though not going so far in autonomy, to the State autonomy of the S.P. of America.

Third—If such a plan is adopted the S.L.P. members would have to pay through their general secretary into the treasury of the United Party the same monthly dues that members of the present S.P. are paying through their State Secretaries and, like such State organizations, the S.L.P. would retain its jurisdiction over its own membership, scattered, like that of a federation of foreign speaking comrades, over the whole country, but having the same voice and vote on general Party matters and entitled to the same number of members of National Committee and of delegates to the National Conventions and Congresses of the United Party as a State organization of a like number of members.

Fourth—Under this plan the S.L.P. would retain its own Secretary on the International Bureau, and its own delegation to the International Congresses; and it would remain the owner of its publications, such as the Daily and Weekly People, foreign organs and Labor News publications, like individuals

SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY OF AMERICA

and associations publishing the "Appeal to Reason," "New York Call," etc., are the sole owners of those papers, and the S.L.P. alone will be responsible for whatever views on questions of Immigration, Industrial Unionism, etc., it may advocate—the same as Haywood and his fellow industrialists within the present S.P. are alone responsible for their criticisms of A.F. of L. trades unionism, Debs for his views on that and the subject of Immigration, etc.

Fifth—Under this plan the S.L.P. would surrender its right to nominate separate candidates for public offices, and its sections and members would co-operate in the conduct of electoral campaigns with the membership of the rest of the United Party in their respective cities and States according to mutual understanding arrived at by the combined membership within those cities and States.

The above five paragraphs express the essential features of the plan of federation of the two parties as the preliminary stage to the more complete and organic amalgamation in the future, when closer agreements on basic questions may be developed by comradely co-operation and discussions. This plan makes the co-operation of the two parties conditional not on agreement by the bulk of the combined membership on such important questions as immigration, trades unionism, etc., but on a minor and more easily solvable question—the question of form of organization—a question that implies that the two parties, for the present, "agree to disagree" on the above question of tactics and leave each other at liberty to advocate their own particular views on these subjects on their own responsibility.

Explanation Asked from Scheidemann, Socialist Member of Reichstag.

During the fall of the year 1913, Philip Scheidemann, German Socialist Reichstag Deputy, visited the United States on an agitation tour in behalf of the German

REPORT TO THE VIENNA CONGRESS

Branches of the Socialist Party. Although he came here under auspices different from ours, he was nevertheless cordially treated by our Party wherever our membership came in contact with him. As he declared on his opening speech in this country, that he came here to learn, and not to play the school master, our members took occasion to supply him with literature that he might learn our side of the case. It was on one of these occasions that Scheidemann replied to this courtesy with an ugly statement and accusation. Our National Executive Committee learning of Scheidemann's conduct, thereupon asked him in an open letter to substantiate the accusation he made or else withdraw the charge and unfriendly language. Scheidemann has done neither. His action of refusing to do either the one thing or the other is a sufficient answer to the attack he made, and is an indication of the reliability that is to be placed on anything he may have to say regarding our party.

We herewith publish the open letter which our National Executive Committee addressed to Scheidemann on this matter:

Mr. Philip Scheidemann,
Berlin, Germany.

Comrade:—

Various utterances of yours in regard to the Socialist Labor Party, made by you in public meetings and in the press of the Socialist Party during your sojourn in our country induce us to write you this open letter. You owe it to truth, justice and the ethics of the Socialist labor movement,—to us and at the same time to the whole movement, to furnish the proofs with which to substantiate those utterances of yours which tend to belittle the Socialist Labor Party in the eyes of the International Socialist movement; or, in case you lack proofs, to retract these assertions just as publicly as you made them, that is, in a let-

SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY OF AMERICA

ter to us, which we shall publish in the press of our Party.

The Socialist Labor Party cannot allow false accusations to besmirch its escutcheon, be the accusations the sequence of vicious and wilful defamation, purely error, or reckless repetition of the slanders emanating from others.

When you entered upon your tour of agitation through the United States last fall, our English organ, *The People*, as well as our German organ, *Der Volksfreund und Arbeiterzeitung*, welcomed you most heartily, although your tour was arranged by another party; and when you said, at the reception tendered you in New York, that you "had come to learn and not to teach," we heartily approved. Everywhere you spoke you met comrades of the Socialist Labor Party who showed their willingness to assist you in your task of learning by asking appropriate questions and by handing you copies of our Party press and other literature. Of course it would have been simpler if you had at least utilized a little of your time for the purpose of informing yourself by turning to our Party's executive committee, but as you failed to do that nothing else was left for our comrades to do but to turn to you.

The way you received these endeavors has prompted this letter. The fact that a certain copy of our German Party organ, *Der Volksfreund und Arbeiterzeitung*, was handed to you repeatedly induced you to characterize that paper as "Mist" (dung). Had a simple, unschooled workingman used that expression one could pass it by; but a man who lays claim to education and decency; who is honored in filling an important and leading position in the party, and even represents the same in parliament, must surely be able to explain why a Socialist paper is "Mist." This explanation we demand of you.

The respective copy of the *Der Volksfreund und Arbeiterzeitung* contained Edward A. Cantrell's exposure of the horrible corruption within the Socialist Party of California, especially in Los Angeles, in connection with an election in that city. Cantrell's assertions were supported by documentary proofs, such as copies of letters, official financial reports, sworn testimony, etc. But despite all that you declared in a public mass meeting, held on November 9, 1913, at the Labor Lyceum in Philadelphia, Pa., that the respective article in the *Der Volksfreund und Arbeiterzeitung* of September 20, 1913, regarding the said corruption of the S.P. was "a slander and a despicable lie."

REPORT TO THE VIENNA CONGRESS

Comrade, that is a very serious assertion, which concerns not alone the veracity of an individual party organ, but the honor of the whole Socialist Labor Party, inasmuch as that Party is responsible for the contents of its press. The Socialist Labor Party has never yet knowingly published in its press an untruth; has never yet refused, when an error slipped into the columns of its press, to rectify such error when its attention was called to it. Had you been serious in your intentions to learn, then it would surely have surprised you to find that despite all noise and howl about "an S.L.P. lie," not a single one of the numerous papers of the Socialist Party was to be found that would make the certainly to be wished endeavor to contradict Cantrell's exposures. **To this day the Socialist Party has left those exposures unanswered and uncontradicted**, except that they may regard the simple howl "Lie" as a contradiction.

We are sorry that a man of your standing in the movement in Germany should foolishly and without examination have imitated that absurd howl, "Lie!" However, the case is of too serious a nature for us to confine ourselves to a simple expression of sorrow; the more so as the assumption is only logical on our part that in your foolhardy judgment regarding the Socialist Labor Party and its press you will express the same views to the German comrades across the sea, when the opportunity offers itself, and thereby cause our German comrades to secure a wrong conception of the Socialist Labor Party.

We must therefore insist, for the sake of our Party honor, that you either furnish the proofs that Cantrell's exposure of the corruption of the Socialist Party in California, published in our Party press, is "a slander and despicable lie," or that you retract this accusation. We await your answer by July 1, 1914.

With Socialist greeting,
National Executive Committee,
Socialist Labor Party.
Arnold Petersen, Nat'l Sec'y.

Conclusion.

The Socialist Labor Party, in facing the task of giving the American proletariat a sound revolutionary Socialist

SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY OF AMERICA

movement, is fully conscious of the largeness of the undertaking. The party has no illusions on the strenuousness of the struggle required to make that proletariat class conscious and organize it accordingly, both on the political and on the economic fields. Nor is it unmindful of the fact that the Socialist Party course is making our efforts all the more difficult. But we are not dismayed at the bigness of the task; we know that any other course will not produce a triumphant Socialist Movement and we are prepared to keep our course until success crowns our efforts.

ARTHUR E. REIMER,

Representative of the Socialist Labor Party of America on the International Socialist Bureau.

By order of the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Labor Party.

ARNOLD PETERSEN,

National Secretary.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the
Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded March 2006