

The Chicago Communist Propaganda League

A GROUP of Socialist party officials and active party members came together for consultation as to ways and means for giving the American Socialist movement a revolutionary character, in harmony with all the significance of November 7th, the most glorious date in all history. At the hour of that little meeting bedlam reigned in the streets of Chicago by premature celebration of peace. The calling of this meeting during the mass tumult of November 7th is prophetic of the revolutionary vision which brought these comrades together. On that day the seething proletariat ruled Chicago by sheer force of numbers. One thing alone was needed to give this mass expression identity with the proletarian uprisings of Europe—one thing: the revolutionary idea!

The Communist Propaganda League is an organization for the propagation of the revolutionary idea. The civilization of tomorrow is with the unorganized masses who greeted the news of peace and revolution in Germany with what may safely be described as the greatest spontaneous expression of mass sentiment ever witnessed in America. To give direction and inspiration to the advancing and irresistible army of the proletariat is the mission to which this League is dedicated.

PROGRAM

We speak as members of the Socialist Party to other Socialists, primarily in the interests of the party itself, fundamentally in the interest of a truly revolutionary proletarian movement in the United States.

Those who have organized this League, in common with like-minded Socialists throughout the country, are imbued with the thought that the Socialist Party, as it at present functions, falls short of its possibilities in giving leadership and unity to the revolutionary proletarian elements in the United States.

There are certain well-defined lines of criticism of Socialist Party tactics and principles which have long been familiar to all thoughtful American Socialists: that the party proceeds on a too narrow understanding of political action for a party of revolution; that its programs and platforms have been reformist and petty bourgeois in character, instead of being definitely directed toward the goal of social revolution; that the party has failed to achieve unity with the revolutionary movement on the industrial field; that the party organization of itself is too cumbersome for quick response to new situations and opportunities for propaganda; that the stand against proletarian participation in imperialistic wars has not gone the full length of its own logic; that there has been compromising reservation in accepting the international leadership of the Bolsheviks of Russia; and, generally that the modes

of Socialist functioning have not taken sufficiently into account the mass action of the proletariat which alone can bring revolution, but instead there has been blind reliance on balloting and pure parliamentarism as the weapons of revolution—a reliance which the experience of the past two years makes particularly empty.

Converting these different criticisms into affirmative propositions, we present the following program as the immediate basis of our activities:

1. Alliance and cooperation only with revolutionary Socialist and labor elements in international affairs, such as the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of Russia.
2. Socialist propaganda only on the basis of the

Oral Note

The Plenipotentiary of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Below we reprint from the "Pravda" as an extremely curious historical document, the "oral note" of the representatives of the Russian Soviet government, which was addressed to the "Imperial government of Germany" a short time (about two weeks) before the German revolution.

THE plenipotentiary representation of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic respectfully submits to the ministry of Foreign Affairs the following:

"Repeatedly the attention of the plenipotentiary representatives has been called to the desirability of publishing in a German translation the decrees and the most important laws of the Soviet Republic. This caused the plenipotentiary representatives of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic to undertake the publication of the laws of the Soviet Republic in German. Representatives of the ministry of Foreign Affairs were informed of this intention, and it was approved by them. Through the ministry of Foreign Affairs was received the paper necessary for the publication. The translation is already being printed in the Pass and Garleb printing, Berlin, W., 57 Bulow Strasse, 66.

"Yesterday two officials of the criminal police came to the printing plant and demanded, on the basis of the decision of the chief command of the district, the arrest of everything that has already been printed and the destruction of the composition. The printers declared that they have guaranteed that the printing of this matter will be stopped, and the criminal police merely sealed and locked up all the printed and set up material."

Bringing this to the attention of the ministry of Foreign Affairs, the plenipotentiary mission requests it to take appropriate steps and to inform the mission of the results.

revolutionary class struggle; a Socialist movement built only on revolutionary proletarian adherents. An end of petty bourgeois reformism as the basis of Socialist Party activity.

3. Party policies and platforms free from hypocrisies and "planks" to catch votes; platforms only as statements of revolutionary aims.

4. Furtherance of such changes in political forms as are in line with the needs of proletarian-controlled industries, not of political changes based on bourgeois "democracy."

5. Identification of the Socialist Party with class-conscious industrial unionism.

6. Unity of all kinds of proletarian action and protest forming part of the revolutionary class struggle. Political action to include political strikes and demonstrations, and to be in cooperation with industrial mass action.

7. No compromising with any groups not inherently committed to the revolutionary class struggle, such as Labor parties, People's Council, Non-partisan Leagues, Municipal Ownership Leagues, and the like.

8. The proletariat to be organized to oppose all wars of imperialism, though declared for "defense of country" or for "democracy", and to carry this opposition to the extent of refusal of service under conscription, and to general strikes. The workers to engage only in wars of proletarian revolution and to wars to repel attacks against proletarian governments.

9. A sense of realism as to the limited possibilities of the ballot as a weapon of revolution or fights for "justice" in capitalist courts, and dependence primarily on mass power and the mass action of the proletariat.

10. Centralized party organization, corresponding to the highly centralized imperialist control to be overthrown.

- a. Organization for quick action and immediate response to new situations by having a National Executive Committee composed of paid party officials and propagandists with offices in the National Headquarters.
- b. Definite and easy control by the party membership of all party officials.
- c. Control by the party organization of all Socialists elected to public offices.
- d. Control by the party membership, through the regular executive committees, of all official party publications; not by independent special committees of trustees.
- e. Establishment of a Central Lecture Bureau, and of a Press and Information Bureau.
- f. Standardization of party platforms, propaganda, dues, and methods of organization.

Manifesto and Program of the Left Wing of the American Socialist Movement

forget that the Social Revolution must in part grow "within the capitalist shell." They forget that the state, the engine of oppression employed by the capitalist class, must be destroyed through capture by the working class.

In equally characteristic utopian fashion, the "moderate Socialist," with his pure and simple parliamentarism forgets that "because of its destructive object and because of its structure, which is arbitrary and determined by geographical lines, the Political Arm of Labor cannot be used as a means of taking away from the capitalists and holding for the workingmen the means of production."

Thus the utopian Syndicalist fails to utilize the political weapon; and the 20th Century Utopian Socialist misuses the political weapon and fails altogether to utilize the industrial weapon.

A combination of these two methods is necessary to the revolutionary Socialist movement, and this combination the Left Wing intends to effect.

Program

1. We stand for a uniform declaration of principles in all party platforms both local and national

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and the abolition of all social reform planks now contained in them.

2. The party must teach, propagate and agitate exclusively for the overthrow of Capitalism, and the establishment of Socialism through a Proletarian Dictatorship.

3. The Socialist candidates elected to office shall adhere strictly to the above provisions.

4. Realizing that a political party cannot reorganize and reconstruct the industrial organizations of the working class and that that is the task of the economic organizations themselves, we demand that the party assist this process of reorganization by a propaganda for revolutionary and industrial unionism as part of its general activities. We believe it is the mission of the Socialist movement to encourage and assist the proletariat to adopt newer and more effective forms of organization and to stir it into newer and more revolutionary modes of action.

5. We demand that the official party press be party owned and controlled.

6. We demand that officially recognized educational institutions be party owned and controlled.

7. We demand that the party discard its obsolete literature and publish new literature in keeping with the policies and tactics above mentioned.

Immediate Demands

1. We demand that the National Executive Committee call an immediate emergency national convention for the purpose of reorganizing party policies and tactics to meet the present crisis.

2. We demand that the American Socialist Party shall not participate in the proposed Lauzanne Conference engineered by "moderate Socialists" and social patriots.

3. We demand that the Socialist Party of America issue a call for an international congress of those groups of the Socialist movement that participated both in the Zimmerwald Conference in September 1915, and the Kienthal Conference in 1916, and those groups that are in agreement with them today.

4. We demand the unequivocal endorsement of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic.

5. We demand the unequivocal endorsement of the Spartacus Group of Germany.

6. We demand the unequivocal endorsement of Left Wing movements of Europe.