

Unity

By Daniel De Leon

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An Address Delivered by

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By DANIEL DE LEON

Workingmen and Workingwomen of New York:—

Almost immediately upon the issuing of the Unity Resolution by the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Labor Party,¹ a number of acquaintances, and many who were not acquaintances, approached me with the request for a public expression of opinion in *The People*, from me, on the move. I declined. My reasons were that, in my editorial capacity, I had no right to comment upon an act of the National Executive Committee; and that in my individual capacity I had no right to space in *The People* until the matter should come before the Party membership on referendum. I yielded, however, so far to the request of my friend Epstein, our chairman here tonight, as to express, from this independent platform, the views that I have on this subject. All this precaution notwithstanding, and seeing that, somehow or other, the adversaries of the Socialist Labor Party have incarnated in me my Party's virtues, I shall take the additional precaution of stating right here, at the start, and expressly, that I do not here represent the Socialist Labor Party; that I am not speaking in its name; that I do not stand here in my official capacity in the Party and not even as a Party member. I speak here simply as one of the many people active in the Socialist Movement, and merely exercising the right of thought and speech. In pursuit of this line of procedure I shall consider the subject of Unity the way a traveler from Mars would do—objectively, unbiased by the rancors that participation in conflicts frequently engenders, but equipped with certain general information as to basic Socialist principles.

¹ See "Resolution on Unity Question," page 19.

The first thing that that traveler, coming from Mars, landing upon earth, here in the United States, would notice on the field of Labor was the existence of two distinct political parties, both calling themselves Socialist, both having the word “Socialist” in their names, and both heralding the “Socialist Republic,” but each setting up opposing candidates, each actively taking the field with opposing propagandists, and each claiming that *it*, and not the other, is entitled to the voters’ support. The traveler from Mars must be supposed to be equipped with some general knowledge of men and things, and also of history. Such knowledge will warn him against considering such a sight, as the one I just described, as necessarily absurd. He will know that such a thing as two, or even more, bodies, having the same goal and yet bitterly combating each other as to methods, is nothing strange in history. Being versed in history and in the philosophy of history, the traveler from Mars will be aware that different sets of people will frequently believe their goal to be identical, and will give it the same name, and yet, unconscious to most, but conscious to some, the goals are, in fact, not quite identical, the difference in goals being fatedly manifested by the difference in methods. For instance, the traveler from Mars will realize that the concept of a “Socialist Republic,” whose central, or Directing Authority, that is, its Government, is to consist of the Representatives of the several industries and branches of occupations, must needs be a goal somewhat different from the goal presented by that concept of a “Socialist Republic,” the Government of which is to consist of a majority, or even a totality, of Socialist, instead of Democratic and Republican Congressmen, members of Legislatures, or Aldermen. The traveler from Mars, aware that only the former goal is Marxist, will, accordingly, experience no surprise at seeing in America two opposing parties flying the colors of Socialism. On the contrary, he would see in the opposing tactics the reflex of the different goals; and he would consider, not absurd, but perfectly legitimate, and true to history, the existence of the two warring political bodies. But surprise is in store for our traveler the moment he takes in a more comprehensive view of the two parties and of the Socialist field.

The traveler from Mars will not confine his observations to America. He will extend them over the International field. The moment he does, there will be a surprise for him, that will compel closer scrutiny, and will result in

revelations and conclusions that will cause him to change his opinion, and then wonder at the sharp division existing in America.

The first thing to strike our traveler's eyes will be the International Socialist Congress. As I am speaking here on the East Side, the term Sanhedrin² may be appreciated. He will see the International Sanhedrin of Socialism. Landing, as our traveler is supposed to do, quite recently, his eyes will alight upon the Stuttgart Socialist Sanhedrin, and upon that his attention will be next focused. The startling sight will immediately strike him of the two warring parties in America being both seated in the Congress, and even represented on the International Bureau. "What does this mean?" he would ask himself, astonished. His astonishment would compel further inquiries. Inquiry would reveal a number of facts. Three of these facts would be leading ones.

The first leading fact that he would discover is that the Russian Socialist Revolutionary Organization, the methods of which are essentially terroristic, has long enjoyed a seat in the Congress. One of the statutes of the Congress requires of its constituents the recognition of "political action," as expressly distinguished from the Anarchist claim that "physical force" is also of the nature of "political action." The "physical force" as "political action" Anarchists are barred from the Congress; the Russian Socialist Revolutionists are admitted.

The next leading fact to be discovered by our traveler would be that the British Independent Labor Party, which demanded of the Congress that it amend its statutes so as not to require of bona fide Trades Unions the recognition of the class-struggle, was seated at the Congress. The recognition of the class-struggle, besides being an express statutory provision of the International Congresses, is a basic principle with Socialism. Christian Socialists, who deny the class-struggle, are barred from the Congress. Although obviously denying the class-struggle, the Independent Labor Party was seated in the Congress by a ruling of the chairman of the Bureau, Vandervelde, to the effect that economic organizations of Labor recognize the class-struggle *de facto*.

The third leading fact that our traveler would stumble against is, if

² An ancient court of Jewish elders and rabbis.

anything, more startling than either of the two others—the granting of a seat on the International Bureau to the Zionist-Socialists. Socialism is essentially international. Nativism or nativistic aims are repugnant to Socialist thought. Socialism, being essentially practical, does recognize the material fact of existing races and nationalities. Indeed, the constituents of its Congresses are grouped accordingly. But, at least not before the Stuttgart Congress, was ever a body of men, whose first aim is the restoration of a nationality like the Zionist-Socialists, or Socialist-Zionists, recognized as entitled to a place in the International Congresses of Socialism. In the very nature of Socialist-Zionism, the Socialism in its program can not be a thing to be striven after now; in the very nature of its program, the only thing upon which Zionist-Socialism can and must bend its present energies is the restoration of a nationality. That that can not be done without the “co-operation of classes” in that particular race goes without saying. Nevertheless, the Zionist Socialists are to-day an integral body in the International Sanhedrin of Socialism.

Our traveler from Mars would wonder at all this, and at many other and similar facts that would jar upon his preconceived ideas of Socialism. His wonder will be all the greater when he looks around, and sees walls and balconies plastered with Marxian mottoes that sound at variance with the facts of his discoveries. And still greater will be his wonderment when he notices that the only picture exhibited at the Congress is the picture, and almost the only name he hears conjured by is the name of Marx. But our traveler from Mars is a man of sense, and disciplined thought. He does not adjust facts to a theory; he adjusts his theory to the facts. Seeing the facts do not square with his theory, he lays his theory by, marshals the facts, and recasts his theory in accordance with them. In this task of re-formulating his theory our traveler is materially aided by two circumstances:

The first is the aspect presented by the continental parliaments, especially that of France—the one European country which our traveler from Mars knows proceeds with strictest logic, in the form as well as in the matter. He will notice that—differently from Germany, for instance, in whose parliament the various political groups, representing different grades of social development, are thrown in promiscuously—in the French parliament these groups are historically and scientifically assorted, presenting a picture that is an epitome of the country’s history. He will notice, for instance that,

at the Extreme Right, are the deputies who hold the views of the Ancient R \grave{e} gime—the “good old days” when the King was master, the people slaves—deputies whose program is that of an Ultramontane monarchy, and who, no doubt, would reintroduce Inquisitions and “Dragonades” for the salvation of the people’s souls. To the right of this little group, and moving toward the Left of the Chamber, the traveler from Mars would see the group of constitutional monarchists of various degrees and shades. To the right of these, and still further to the Left of the Chamber, he would see the republican bourgeois, and they, he will notice, extend over and hold the center. Again to the right of these, and still further toward the Left, he would perceive the more radical bourgeois republicans, shading off further to the Left into the Socialistic radical republicans. Finally, at the extreme Left of the Chamber he would perceive the “Mountain”—the Socialist deputation. Traveling his eyes from the Extreme Right to the Extreme Left he would see the condensed history of France pictorially reproduced,—at the Extreme Right the Ultramontane monarchy, that once swayed the whole parliament, crowded into a corner by the constitutional monarchy, which, one-time ruling supreme, has, in turn, been shoved to the impotent Right by the bourgeois republicans who now rule the roost and once extended from the right of the constitutional monarchy to the extreme Left, but who now have been crowded out of the Left by the new apparition of Socialism. Our Martian traveler will readily grasp the moral of the picture. It teaches him that the Left—the “Mountain”—heralds the future; that the center represents the present; and that the extreme Right is a memento of the past. The “Mountain” tells what will be; the Center what is; the Right what was.

The second circumstance that will aid our traveler in reformulating his theory is a term with which his ears would become familiar through the debates at the International Congress, the committees, and on the International Bureau. That term is—“The Socialist family”; or “The members of the Socialist family,” meaning thereby the groups of different views admitted to the Congress.

Putting together all the facts that he discovered, and digesting them by the light of the picture presented by the French parliament, together with the light shed by the term “the Socialist family,” our traveler from Mars would conclude as follows—

“The International Socialist Congress is cast in the mold of considering as members of the ‘Socialist family’ all organizations—from the most rudimentary, like Zionist-Socialism, up to the most clearly and soundly revolutionary, like the Socialist Labor Party—provided they all aim, remotely or approximately, mediately or immediately, at the overthrow of the capitalist system of production. By the recognition of all such bodies as legitimate members of the ‘Socialist family,’ the International Congress establishes a basic principle of its own as the foundation for the unity of the ‘Socialist family.’ Basic principles, as a rule, are premises; in this instance the basic principle is not premises but goal. The International Congress considers the abstract goal to be the family bond for the ‘Socialist family.’ Upon that principle the Congress rears its organic structure. Furthermore, seeing that correct methods for the reaching of a goal are themselves a matter of development, the International Congress considers the ‘Socialist family’ as a nation, itself as the parliament of that nation, and the various constituent bodies of that parliament as reflecting the development of the several members of the ‘Socialist family,’ in the same manner that the French parliament reflects the development of the French nation.”

On the principle that truth is that which fits all the facts, it must be conceded that the conclusion of the traveler from Mars must be correct. The theory he sets up with regard to the “Socialist family” explains the broadness of the International Congress; it explains the tolerance in its midst of bodies in various stages of development. On the same principle that the parliament of the French nation tolerates as members of the “French family” a large variety of groups—from the “Mountain” down to the “Swamp,”—the International Congress throws her maternal arms around all those whom, aiming at the goal of the Socialist Republic, she looks upon as members of the Socialist family—from the most rudimentary up to the most completely developed. On the same principle that the French parliament, schooled by experience, knows that elements once dominant were successively crowded to the Right by elements once considered “impossibilist,” and which occupied the extreme Left, the International Congress takes in “Mountain” and “Vale,” leaving to time to demonstrate whether the “impossibilist” “Mountain” of to-day, or the “possibilist” “Vale” is to be the force of to-morrow.

These being the conclusions, this the theory that our traveler from Mars

would set up from the facts in the case, the result would be that he would cease to wonder at what he saw on the international field, but would immediately begin to wonder at what he sees in America. At first, before he took in the international lay of the land, and, guided by certain general historical experiences, he wondered not at the open hostility of the two parties in America, even thought such hostility to be true to history. Subsequently, however, having taken in the spectacle of the International Congress; having seen there the two warring American parties seated, without opposition by either; having taken cognizance of the attitude of the International Congress towards the Russian Socialist Revolutionary party, towards the class-struggle-questioning British Independent Labor party, towards the Zionist-Socialists, and on a number of other matters; having digested and interpreted all these facts together by the light of the principle regarding the “Socialist family,” set up and followed by the International Congress; having done this, it was inevitable that our traveler from Mars should change his mind with regard to America, and be puzzled at what he saw here. The two parties of America being participants of the International Congress, he is bound to hold that they both adopt the theory of the International Congress regarding the “Socialist family.” The theory of the International Congress regarding the “Socialist family” establishes the broad basis for concerted action. The application of the theory by the International Congress—proportional representation and freedom of agitational methods—points the way for the same application in America. Our traveler from Mars would wonder that the two American members of the “Socialist family,” conduct themselves as such at the International Congress, but proceed here in America from a principle that denies such familyship.

But our traveler from Mars would not wend his way back home upon reaching this conclusion. He would prolong his stay on earth, and wait and watch developments. Presently he would have learned of the Unity Resolutions adopted by the Socialist Labor Party, and forwarded to the Socialist Party. I do not believe our explorer from Mars would have wasted any time in deploring that the overtures were not made by the Socialist Party, or in trying to smell “secret motives” in the move of the Socialist Labor Party. From his premises the move was due. It was over-due. It had to come from either quarter. It was so natural that he would have only applause for it—that applause which a thinking mind always has for a logical sequence.

The move came. That is all that would interest our traveler and investigator. Soon as the move came a new train of thoughts would be started in his mind, and the machinery of his intellect would forthwith begin to grind the fresh grist thrown into it. He would reason somewhat along these lines:—

The broad principles or basis for Unity is established by the International Sanhedrin; only details remain to be considered. These details affect only a *modus vivendi*. True, these details turn upon many a point that each considers vital; but, when true “members of a family” differ upon methods, it should not be hard for them to hit upon a means of agreement. No compromise even may be needed. If, indeed, they are “members of the Socialist family,” the inevitable conclusion must be that each may realize some sense in the other, however temporary the sense,—the sense that the “Vale” must, by experience, be ready to concede to the “Mountain,” and, inversely, the “Mountain” to the “Vale.” The Socialist Labor Party is unquestionably the “Mountain.” Ninety-nine per cent., if not the full hundred per cent. of its planks, methods and principles are certain to be in force when the Movement turns the lap to the “home-stretch.” But, essential to the ultimate success of a Revolutionary Movement as may be and is the upholding, constant and clear to view, of all the means necessary *on the day* of the “home-stretch,” just so necessary may, *before that day*, and simultaneously, be the looser methods of the “Vale.” Things that, superficially looked upon, are considered as abstract essentials by the two warring parties may, if indeed, the two are “members of the Socialist family,” be found to be, not so much a matter of abstract principle, as a matter of the practical distribution of functions—“Vale” and “Mountain” each fulfilling its special function, while the consciousness of working to a common end may act as an allayer of the inevitable irritation that the impatience, typical with “Mountains” to raise the “Vale” to “Mountain” height, and the sluggishness, typical with “Vales,” to prolong their flatness, may generate all the while.

Reasoning along these lines, our traveler from Mars, being a gentleman of an inquisitive and exploring turn of mind, would proceed to look into the several differences that each of the two parties considers as vital.

PRESS OWNERSHIP.

Though not, perhaps, because he thinks that the issue of the International Congress principle regarding the Socialist party press

ownership is supreme, but, probably, because that issue affects material interests—always a delicate and anger-provoking subject—our explorer from Mars would, in all, likelihood, explore that issue first.

The Socialist Labor Party position, he would discover, is that the press is the most potent weapon of a Movement. Word-of-mouth agitation is powerful and necessary; but it can be set up and stopped at a moment's notice. Not so with the press. It is the product of growth, of financial sacrifices, of long and strenuous endeavor. To forge such a weapon without the certainty of preserving control over it, is to forge a weapon that may at any time turn against the Movement; and then the whole work would have to be gone over again, and under greatly increased difficulties. The Movement must own its press, or the press will own it. Hence the Socialist Labor Party holds to the strict party-ownership of its press. Our explorer from Mars would not be likely to find any fault with this reasoning. On the contrary, he can not choose but accept it. But before deciding, he would turn to the Socialist Party and opposite position.

The Socialist Party rejects the principle of party-ownership of the press. Our traveler from Mars would at first find himself tangled up in what seems an inextricable tangle—such is the discord of the reasoning he would run across. He would run across the recognition of the importance of the press, and yet plump-and-plain opposition to party-ownership on the allegation that party-ownership spells “tyranny”; and he would run across declarations of devotion to party-ownership, and yet opposition to the Socialist Labor Party position. Our traveler would have too keen an ear to fail to detect in much of the opposition to party-ownership the ring of material interests that feel themselves rebuked by the Socialist Labor Party position, and, consequently, feel themselves endangered. But our traveler is too wise a man to imagine that the material interests of a few individuals and corporations could dominate the broad membership of a wholly voluntary organization like that of the political party, except in spots. Our traveler would, accordingly, discard the reasoning advanced from the quarters of material interests, and seek to fathom the seeming mystery of the Socialist Party opposition to the Socialist Labor Party principle on this matter. Patient and conscientious investigation will reward his efforts. He will discover the mystery, and, in discovering it he will alight upon the grain of sense that lies imbedded in it.

The United States, a country nearly as large, in point of area, as the whole of Europe, does not yet present a homogeneous economic aspect. Capitalism has spread in all directions, but so young is the country that primitive opportunities still occasionally crop up even in regions where capitalism is strongest, and, so vast is the country's territory, that primitive conditions still assert themselves over extensive regions. Being versed in Socialist science, our traveler knows that such diversity of conditions, implying different stages of economic development, is bound to be reflected in a variety of mental stages of development. Such varying mental stages require different treatment. Being versed upon the process of sociologic formations, as well as upon economic phenomena, our traveler knows that a strong organization is dependent, not merely upon identity of class interests, but upon the degree of development that these interests have attained. A proletarian element, that still has strong navel-string connections with bourgeois interests, can not be as solidly welded as an organization of proletarians with whom such navel-string ligaments have been sundered; and, obedient to the biologic law of "natural selection," the non-proletarian element, attracted by the two sets of proletarian developments, will share the features of the respectively attracting bodies. The less class-developed a revolutionary element is, the less homogeneous it will be; the less homogeneous it is, the more torpid will be its sense of sacrifice; the more torpid its sense of sacrifice, the less focalized will be its efforts. Inversely, the more class-developed a revolutionary element is, the more homogeneous will it be; the more homogeneous it is, the more active will be its sense of sacrifice; the more active its sense of sacrifice, all the more focalized will be its efforts. These facts and reasoning would illumine the whole field to our traveler. They would explain to him why the Socialist Party strikes a posture of opposition to the Socialist Labor Party in the matter of the press.

The Socialist Labor Party being the "Mountain," has gathered in its camp a class-developed revolutionary element. That renders its membership homogeneous; their homogeneity quickens their sense of sacrifice; their sense of sacrifice focalizes their effort—with the consequence that they have been able to set up and uphold a press owned by themselves—not only a Weekly, but a Daily English Socialist paper—a magnificent monument of what organized well-developed class-consciousness can achieve. Our traveler

would realize, on the other hand, that the less class-developed composition of the Socialist Party, lacking the homogeneity that quickens the sense of sacrifice and focalizes efforts, could not possibly set up a press owned by itself. Incapable of that achievement, the Socialist Party was put to the alternative of either remaining tongue-tied, or accepting a press owned privately by individuals and corporations in their midst. Man adjusts his principles to his material possibilities. Seeing that the material possibilities of its composition disable it from producing its own party-owned press, the Socialist Party sings the praises of a privately-owned press. Furthermore, our traveler would realize that the very reason why the Socialist Party could not produce a party-owned press—the less-developed class-consciousness of its composition—is the reason why it believes that party-ownership spells “tyranny.” The tactical and theoretic agitation of a “Mountain” can not choose but appear tyrannical to the “Vale,” and the excusable confusion of thought is incurred of imputing the “tyranny” to the system of ownership.

Clarified on the matter, our traveler would conclude that, at least upon this head, his theory was correct as to the press question’s offering no insuperable barrier for the establishment of a *modus vivendi*—always, of course proceeding from “familyship.” The united party, recognizing the respective field of the “Mountain” and the “Vale,” consequently, also their respective capabilities, can leave each to regulate its own system of ownership. Mutual criticism would continue—sharp, if you please, but, being thenceforth conducted by bodies who practice the International Congress theory regarding the “Socialist family,” the harshness of the manner might be chastened to the profit of the matter. And as time passes and class-conscious clearness increases, such increasing clearness would lead in its train the qualities that will cast off the private-ownership and set up the party-ownership principle. At present when such development takes place, friction is the consequence, or rupture. In the united party the transition would be accompanied by no such disagreeable consequences. Accordingly, upon the head of the press, our traveler would conclude that unity can be effected without sacrifice of principle by either side.

AUTONOMY.

The next subject of division that our traveler would place upon the dissecting table is that of “autonomy.” The investigations made by him on

the press-ownership would greatly facilitate his understanding of the reason back of the Socialist Labor Party and the reason back of the Socialist Party position, and arriving at a conclusion.

Our traveler from Mars has some knowledge of mechanics and a good deal of knowledge of the history of the American people. Mechanics teaches him that there is in Nature a force called “centripetal”: that force drives matter toward the center; and that there is in Nature another force, called “centrifugal”: that force drives matter apart. He knows that these two forces are not opposed, but are supplementary to each other. It is due to the joint action of the “centrifugal” and the “centripetal” forces that our planetary system is kept in shape. Our traveler’s knowledge of American history tells him that America has solved, in the matter of terrestrial government, the problem of yoking together the “centripetal” and the “centrifugal” forces, and making them promote the country’s existence. Our system of Federal and State governments, respectively represent “centralization” and “autonomy.” The local self-government enjoyed by the several States is “autonomy”; the Federal government is “centralization.” Each system has its own sphere of action. The two combined keep the top spinning. Equipped with this knowledge our investigator from Mars will tackle the problem of Socialist Labor Party “centralization” and Socialist Party “autonomy” with a hopeful heart. As I just said, his investigations concerning the issue of press-ownership will lighten his work greatly. For the identical reason that an organization of “Mountain” elements will necessarily move in focalized shape, and, accordingly, exhibit the aspect of “centralization,” an organization of “Vale” elements is bound to move divergently, and exhibit the aspect of “autonomy.” It is not that the former starts with “centralization” as a matter of principle, and the latter with “autonomy,” also as a matter of principle. The traveler from Mars would realize that the fact is just the reverse. The one acts “centrally,” the other “autonomously,” as a result of their different compositions. He would also realize that, for the same reason that private-ownership of the press is a necessary transitional period with a “Vale” element, and party-ownership the necessary condition for the successful, or safe, “home-stretch,” “autonomy” has its transitory, and “centralization” its permanent function. Our traveler would furthermore and finally realize that, at the present stage of American mental conditions, only harm could come to

the Movement from the prolongation of the dislocated operation of the “centripetal” and the “centrifugal” forces, which, at the present stage, should operate together. It would be no rare occurrence for our traveler from Mars, as he travels over the country, to meet thoughtful Socialist Party men, who dread nothing so much as the verification of the jubilant prophecy, so often heard from flighty Socialist Party quarters, that “the Socialist Labor Party is about to die.” It would be no rare occurrence for our traveler to hear thoughtful Socialist Party men and women declare: “The Socialist Party needs the Socialist Labor Party to keep our party straight.”³

Our traveler from Mars would conclude, always proceeding from the International Congress theory regarding the “Socialist family,” that the two American members of that family, if they are really of one family, should find no difficulty, on this subject also, to find a *modus vivendi*, to the advantage of both, seeing that an agreement would result advantageous to the Movement.

TRADES UNIONS.

Even the theory of the International Congress, regarding the “Socialist family,” might have failed to prove a workable foundation for our traveler from Mars to discover common ground, sufficiently solid, for the two American parties to arrive at a common agreement on the Question of Unionism. On this subject the “Mountain” and the “Vale” stood upon irreconcilable ground, and the International Congress had not yet reached sufficient maturity to bridge the chasm.

The Socialist Labor Party holds, and will ever hold, that, convenient, useful and even necessary though political action is to Socialism, the ballot alone is impotent to accomplish the Social Revolution.—The Socialist Party holds that the ballot is all-sufficient.

³ A striking confirmation of this passage is furnished by the English organ of the Finnish S.P. members—the *Wage-Slave* of Hancock, Mich., of Feb. 14, 1908. In an editorial article that strongly urged unity the *Wage-Slave* said:

“We are very much confirmed in this position by reading the arguments against uniting with the S.L.P. that are to be met with in some quarters in our own party. They may be summarized as follows: That the S.L.P. have been in the past ‘a disturbing element.’ . . .

“We are very much inclined to think that the S.L.P. have been a disturbing element, and that it is a good thing for our party that they have been. We are inclined to think that the debt we owe them, for keeping our movement out of the bogs and quagmires of Opportunism, is very great.”

The Socialist Labor Party holds, and will ever hold, that the only physical force, without which no ballot ever was or ever will be effective, available to the proletariat, and ample for its purpose, is its class-conscious and industrially organized economic Union.—The Socialist Party holds that the political organization is the all-sufficient revolutionary organization.

The Socialist Party looks upon the Union as a transitory affair; as an organization that capitalist development tends to wipe out; as a sort of Kindergarten in which to train Socialist voters; as a drilling ground for the class-consciousness of the working-class.—The Socialist Labor Party looks upon the Union as a permanent institution; the Socialist Labor Party looks upon the Union as an organization that capitalist development does not tend to wipe out, but that, on the contrary, capitalist development, on the one hand, deliberately seeks to perpetuate in its obsolete craft Union shape as the strongest bulwark for the continuance of capitalism, while, on the other hand, capitalist development unintentionally and unwillingly forces the workmen forward to reform their economic organizations upon a fit system, by itself marshaling the workers into the industrial battalions that ever more industrially organized capitalism itself furnishes the mold for. Accordingly, the Socialist Labor Party does not look upon the craft Union as a drilling ground for the class-consciousness of the workers, but, on the contrary, as bodies in which the class-consciousness, learned in the shop, can be, and generally is, stamped out.

All this our traveler from Mars would know. He would have seen the horns of the two parties locked. Not an inch of common ground perceptible. Thus, he would know stood things a year ago. But he would conclude that since then the declaration of the Stuttgart International Congress on Unionism had thrown a bridge across the chasm, which before then, seemed impassable.

The declaration of the Stuttgart International Congress on Unionism, our traveler from Mars would know, is seriously defective in more than one respect. He would know that that declaration places the political abreast of the economic arm of the Movement, and thereby places the two in false perspective, seeing that the economic arm is the more important, first, because it is indispensable to the revolutionary act, and next, because it is the frame of the Government of the Co-operative Commonwealth. But our

traveler would be fully aware of the fact that the Stuttgart declaration is the longest step the International Congress had yet taken in that direction. He would be aware of Vandervelde's introductory remarks to the volume of the reports to the Stuttgart Congress in which, taking a bird's-eye view of the situation, he observes that the fact is salient from the bulk of the reports that the question of the economic organization has assumed an importance not recognized even four years ago; that this fact is the phenomenon of greatest importance since the Amsterdam Congress; and that militant Socialism to-day sees in Unionism a fact of greater moment to the Revolution than the conquest of a few seats in the political parliaments. With these facts before him, our traveler from Mars—would not be slow to perceive solid ground for a common understanding in America.

It is true, our traveler would be aware that the Socialist Labor Party voted against the Stuttgart Resolution on Unionism, but he would not be confused by that circumstance. Our traveler is versed in parliamentary practice. He is aware of the inferiority of the parliamentary system followed at the International Congress—its inferiority to the American; and he knows the false position such inferior parliamentary practice often places the voter in. Let me illustrate. Suppose that, in view of the disgracefully dirty condition of the streets that we have all had to wade through in order to reach this hall, some one were to move that a committee of twenty of us be appointed to call upon the Mayor to-morrow morning and remonstrate with him. I would immediately move to amend that the committee consist of only three men, upon the ground that I have seen large committees appointed who were wound up by the Mayor around his finger, and then, the committee being so large, each member threw upon the other the blame for their having been humbugged by the Mayor, and in that way all escaped responsibility for their poltroonery; whereas, if the committee is small, then such shifting of responsibilities is not so easy, and the committee is more likely to keep a stiff upper-lip before "His Honor." What is our, the American parliamentary method? It is to put the amendment first; if my amendment is lost I would then support the original motion as the next best thing. To put the original motion first is bad practice. If that is done, then I would be compelled to vote against the motion, and preserve my vote for when the amendment was submitted. Whereas in that other case, all those who favor my amendment

would vote for it; and, if it is lost, we would all be unanimous for the original motion. Our traveler from Mars would know that the practice is upside down at the International Congress. He would, accordingly, know that the Stuttgart Resolution was the original motion, the joint S.L.P. and I.W.W. Resolution an amendment to the original motion, and that, according to the practice of the International Congress, the original motion, being put first, the S.L.P. was compelled to vote against it, and, seeing that it was overwhelmingly carried, the S.L.P. had no further opportunity to express itself; whereas, had the amendment been put first, and defeated, the S.L.P. would have supported the original Resolution as the next best thing. Our traveler, knowing all this, would discount the fact of the S.L.P. having voted against the Stuttgart Resolution on Unionism. He would see in that resolution and the circumstances of its adoption a long step forward in the right direction—the recognition of the necessity of the Union for the revolutionary act—a recognition which, though not yet accompanied with all the recognitions that flow therefrom, nevertheless, removed in fact the chasm between the two parties in America, and presented a common ground upon which to negotiate an agreement for the future conduct of both. Accordingly our traveler from Mars would have seen no impassible barrier under this head—always, of course, presupposing that both are loyal to the International Congress theory regarding the “Socialist family.”

Our traveler from Mars would, in this way, consider one by one the other and minor details, and his final conclusion would then be—

That the action of the Socialist Labor Party in adopting the January Unity Resolutions and presenting them to the Socialist Party was a proper, was a wise, was a noble act; it was an act of loyalty to the International Congress, of loyalty to the international proletariat in general, of loyalty to the American proletariat in particular. It is now up to the Socialist Party whether it, in turn, will act as properly, as wisely and as nobly; whether it, in turn, will act as loyally to the International Congress, to the international proletariat in general, and to the American proletariat in particular. (Loud and prolonged applause.)

[The resolution published below was the first move toward Socialist unity made by the Socialist Labor Party. It was superseded in January, 1911, by the S.L.P. Unity Memorial, an address to the International Socialist Bureau stating the position of the Socialist Labor Party on this question, and outlining a plan for unity.]

RESOLUTION ON UNITY QUESTION

Adopted by the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Labor Party at Its Session of January 6, 1908, and Rejected, Without Consulting Their Membership, by the Business and Professional Interests Who Dominate the National Committee of the Socialist Party.

WHEREAS, The International Socialist Congress, held in Amsterdam in 1904, adopted under the title of “Unity of the Party” the following resolution:

“The Congress declares:

“In order to give to the Working Class all its force in its struggle against Capitalism, it is indispensable that in each country there should be but one Socialist party against the Capitalist parties, just as there is but one proletariat.

“Therefore, all comrades and all factions and organizations which claim to be Socialist have the imperative duty to do all in their power to bring about Socialist Unity on the basis of the principles established by the International Congresses and in the interest of the International proletariat, to whom they are responsible for the disastrous consequences of the continuation of their divisions.

“To help reach this aim, the International Bureau and all parties of Nationalities where Unity exists place themselves at their disposal and offer their good services.”

WHEREAS, After this call was issued the various warring factions in the Socialist Movement of France—the Socialist Party of France, the French Socialist Party, the Revolutionary Socialist Labor Party and four Independent Socialist Federations of different parts of France—after some preliminary work of a Unity Conference, met in a joint Unity Convention in

Paris and established the present Socialist Party (French Section of the Workers' International); and, likewise, the warring factions in the Social Democratic Movement in Russia—the “majority” and “minority” factions of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party and the General Jewish Labor Union of Russia, Poland and Lithuania (The Bund) met in a joint Convention in 1906 at Stockholm, and organized the united Russian Social Democratic Labor Party; and,

WHEREAS, The experience of the Socialists of the above two countries, as well as that of other countries, where a united and developed party of Socialism exists, demonstrates—first, the possibility for all Socialists, recognizing the principles and decisions of the International Socialist Congress, to present with immensely increased effect a united solid front against the common enemy, the Capitalist, and to address a united, harmonious appeal to the Working Class which is so much more responsive when confusion, distrust and demoralization, created by internal strife and division in the Socialist camp are eliminated; and, second—it demonstrates the possibility of such co-operation based upon the recognition of the right of minority divisions of a United Party, to advocate their particular views through their own publications, and their own minority delegates to National Conventions and International Congresses; and,

WHEREAS, The necessity for a United Socialist Movement in America is ever more keenly felt, and the demands for it are ever more persistently and insistently voiced by the most active workers, the rank and file of both parties; and,

WHEREAS, The decisions of the recent International Socialist Congress, held at Stuttgart—both upon the matter of immigration, which recognizes the soundness of the Marxian motto for the Working Class, “Proletarians of all Countries, Unite!” and, even upon the vital question of Unionism, which, while the Congress has not yet taken the advanced Industrialist position, does take a position that clearly rejects the principles that the economic organization is a “transitory affair,” accordingly a position that holds that the economic organization is something more than simply a recruiting ground for votes and funds, but is essential to the revolutionary act of the proletariat—are, in so far as they affect the issues of the American Movement, of a character to present a more acceptable common working basis for the two

parties; and in view also of the greater necessity for unhindered constructive Socialist work and greater opportunity for it furnished by the spreading of the present industrial crisis in America; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That we, the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Labor Party, in semi-annual session assembled, desiring to free the Socialist Labor Party in the eyes of the Working Class of America and of the International Proletariat, of its seeming share of responsibility for the divided, demoralized and retarded state of the Movement in this country, hereby take the initiative toward remedying such conditions, by electing a committee of seven members and inviting the National Headquarters of the Socialist Party to elect a committee of like number to a National Socialist Unity Conference, to meet not later than the third week of the month of March of this year, in order to consider whether Unity of the two parties of Socialism in America is possible, and on what special basis; and be it further

RESOLVED, That if such conference takes place and succeeds in agreeing on conditions for uniting the two parties, such decisions of the Conference be immediately submitted to a general vote of the membership of both parties for approval, and the date for the closing of such vote be such, that, in the event of the vote being in favor of the proposed basis of unity, steps be immediately taken that one joint National Convention, instead of two separate ones, be held to adopt—on behalf of the United Party and in conformity with the Unity basis accepted by the general vote—a platform, constitution and resolutions, and nominate candidates, etc., and finally,

RESOLVED, That copies of these resolutions be sent to the National Headquarters of the Socialist Party of America, the International Socialist Bureau at Brussels, and the leading Socialist and Labor publications in the United States and other countries.

Please report errors to

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