MANIFESTO
OF THE SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY TO THE
WORKING CLASS OF AMERICA

CHANGING TIDES AROUND
THE ROCK OF GIBRALTAR

(December 1919)

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AMERICA

(Adopted by the NEC Sub-Committee, December 3, 1919)

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FOREWORD.

The following Manifesto issued by the Socialist Labor Party is not only a most timely résumé of the present situation in the American Labor Movement, but it is also a clarion call to the workingmen of the land to enlist in the ranks of the Party, for the inevitable and last stand against the openly gathering and attacking forces of decadent capitalism.

The Socialist Labor Party is, indeed, the Rock of Gibraltar of the American Labor Movement, the fortified stronghold of sound Socialist principles, which no enemy shell is able to penetrate. It is not that the Party in all these years has not changed, nor that it is unchangeable. There is indeed a far cry between the present-day Socialist Labor Party and that which entered the first national Socialist campaign in this country back in the early nineties, with a presidential candidate whose knowledge of Socialism was most negligible and of whom De Leon often laughingly asserted that he had no other claim to prominency than that “he looked like Uncle Sam.” But the point to note is that the changes in the S.L.P. have been those inevitable to all growth and progress. Starting its construction of an American Socialist party on the solid foundation of Marxism, it has laid stone upon stone, carefully, deliberately, and solidly, and has thus succeeded in erecting a fortification as safe and sound as the Rock of Gibraltar.
Facsimile of the Weekly People of December 27, 1919

(Extract from the Minutes of the NEC Sub-Committee meeting of December 3, 1919)

"Henry Kuhn was present and read draft of a manifesto prepared by him as per instructions of the N.E.C. at the May, 1919 session, entitled 'Changing Tides around the Rock of Gibraltar—Manifesto to the Working Class of America by the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Labor Party.' After a few changes had been suggested, it was ordered published in the Weekly People and as a pamphlet."

The pamphlet was printed immediately after the Weekly People of December 27, 1919, went to press and was reprinted one year later.

From this fortification it has persistently bombarded, not only capitalism itself, but every sham and fraud that in fantastic attire, imitating Socialist or labor union activity, paraded over the field of contest, causing confusion and dismay.

The first shot was fired at the multitude of reform movements which during the nineties paraded as "saviors" of labor, scattering to the four winds the droll champions of national and utopian "Socialism," single tax, populism, municipal and State ownership, etc. The next attack was launched upon the fortifications of pure and simple unionism, particularly the A.F. of L., its main column. This battle was
long and stubborn, but it was won. To the everlasting glory of the Socialist Labor Party, the A.F. of L. today stands discredited, unmasked, naked and disgraced, a laughing stock as well in the halls of capital as in the ranks of labor.

The next carnival party to arrive, attempting to play the labor savior game in the midst of the field where raged ever more furiously the battle of the class struggle, was that of pure and simple political “Socialists.” From the instant of their appearance as the Social-Democratic or Socialist Party, a ridiculous imitation of the European Social-Democracy, the S.L.P. heavy artillery was trained upon them. The pure and simple politicalists were scattered over the field, cutting the most preposterous capers, every new addition to their numbers making them more preposterous still. Unable to stand the S.L.P. fire, group upon group deserted and the main body of these brave knights, with their fifty-seven varieties of “Socialistic” reform planks, have been gradually driven toward shelter in any old camp deserted by populists, single taxers, and others who played the hero game of the past.

The deserters have gathered into groups—I.W.W., Communist, Communist Labor, Social-Democratic League, etc.—while others have already dashed for shelter with the new Labor Party. In every one of these groups the outstanding feature is noise, din, and confusion.

But it is not only explosive and destructive bullets which have been fired by the Socialist Labor Party from its fortification of sound principles and tactics. It has been scattering the seeds of information and sound teachings as well. These have fallen, some on the rocks, some in shallow soil, but millions of them in fertile soil and are today bearing fruit. Hence, in spite of much din and confusion, the present period is very far from all dark. Class-consciousness and the desire for scientific information on Socialism and the Labor Movement is penetrating into ever deeper layers of the American proletariat.

It is to the sincere and thinking proletariat of America in or outside of the various so-called labor and revolutionary organizations that the Socialist Labor Party addresses itself in this Manifesto.

N.E.C. Sub-Committee

December 3, 1919
CHANGING TIDES AROUND THE ROCK OF GIBRALTAR

ACTION AND REACTION.

It may be said that life—human life in its many intricate relations—consists of a series of reactions; that a certain tendency, developing in a given direction, over-reaches itself and then swings back to its opposite, just as a swinging pendulum will mount high to one side, only to be carried back by its own momentum to its opposite side. It is so with movements within human society and it is so, emphatically so, in the case of movements that aim at changes in the social relation and that represent, especially at their initial stages, forces not yet properly co-ordinated nor yet fully conscious of their ultimate purposes, to say nothing of the diversity of opinion regarding the means to attain these purposes. A plan view of the general Labor Movement of America may not bring out this conception except in crude and rough outline; a plan view of the Socialist Movement, the natural advance guard of the general movement, will bring out that conception with striking fidelity.

Let us take a general survey of the field and see how the various forces of the American Labor Movement have grouped themselves, or, to be more accurate, how Social Evolution in its various manifestations, industrial and political, has shaped these groupings. At one end, way in the rear, so to speak, we find the hosts of the organized portion of the American Working Class gathered in what is generally designated as “Pure and Simple Craft Unions.” They are “way in the rear” not only in a purely physical sense of the phrase, but also in an intellectual sense. As yet, these Craft Unions do not dream of combatting capitalism as such; they are concerned only with the effects of the capitalist system. Oblivious of the theory and fact of Social Evolution, they do not speculate at all upon the subject of social systems undergoing change; they accept as a matter of fact that which confronts them as final and wherewith one seeks to make the best terms that can be obtained. So dull and unresponsive is this element, that even the visible changes which capitalist development constantly brings forth and which are obvious to all who have eyes to see, such as the industrial transformation from small to mammoth production, from wide diffusion to rigid concentration, from puny manufacture of one-line commodities to trustified industry encompassing often a vast number of
“trades”—that all this causes but slight reaction upon the craft unionist mind so that, in even the mere form of organization, his mental processes will scarcely respond to these changes and seek to adapt themselves thereto.

Moving forward, we come to that form of economic organization that represents the idea and principle of Industrial Unionism,—the inevitable reaction against the craft form which industrial evolution HAD TO BRING FORTH. On this field we encounter forces that challenge the capitalist system as such, forces that realize its transitory character and are, for that reason, more concerned with its total overthrow than with the mere mitigation of its effects or palliation of its evils. On that field we encounter ideas and, necessarily and inevitably, a conflict of ideas with a resulting division of forces.

Moving still further forward, we come to what is commonly considered the Socialist part of the American Labor Movement. On this field, the conflict of ideas rages still more fiercely and, necessarily and inevitably, leads to still greater division of forces. Since it is our purpose to depict the grouping and regrouping of these forces under the law of action and reaction, we shall take up the subject chronologically and begin with:

**SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY “ACTION.”**

During the first years of the last decade of the 19th Century, the Socialist Labor Party, then the only party in America claiming the name Socialism, began to evolve, largely under the guidance of our late Comrade, Daniel De Leon, a well-defined policy of action towards the economic part of the Labor Movement. That policy was a reaction against the inert, stupid, hidebound pure and simple craft union attitude which, utterly oblivious of the laws that govern social progress, denied to the political Movement of Labor even the right of existence and sought to chain the Working Class to the existing political parties of capitalism. In full fruition, the essence of the position of the Socialist Labor Party may be defined as follows: Human society is in constant flux, one social system succeeding another. This being so, the prevailing, i.e., the capitalist social system, is transitory in character and must needs be succeeded by another that is already shaping itself within the womb of society. The task of liquidating the old, and ushering in the new, historic evolution has assigned to the Working Class, the only force produced by Social Evolution that is equal to the task and that has, moreover, a live, palpitating material interest to accomplish the same. But this task involves a
severe struggle with all those elements in society that profit by and, therefore, seek to maintain or at least to prolong the existence of the prevailing social system. In this struggle, the Working Class must use what means and weapons in any given time and place the existing form of social organization places at its disposal. Thus, in this country, the Working Class must carry on that struggle on both the economic and the political field, animated by one aim and one purpose—the abolition of capitalism. The political and economic manifestations of the Movement of Labor, being but different forms of action of the same body—the Working Class—must be properly co-ordinated, must supplement one another, and must converge towards the same goal. Since the MIGHT of the Working Class lies on the economic field AND THERE ALONE, the ideal condition is that, once the Working Class Movement on the economic field has attained clarity of vision, has become conscious of its separate class interests, understands the trend of Social Evolution by grasping the full import of the laws that govern the same, in short, comprehends the kind of world we live in and the historic task before it—that then the economic Movement of Labor will project its own political expression in a manner that will reflect its social aspirations, and that it will then control and direct its political form of action in the same manner that an army controls its advance guards, its cavalry and aviation forces and its skirmishing lines. In the words of Karl Marx: “Only the Trade Union can set on foot the TRUE political party of Labor”; and in the words of Daniel De Leon: “The Working Class MIGHT on the economic field must reinforce the Working Class RIGHT on the political field.” On this tactical position, the Socialist Labor Party has stood in the past, and stands today, firm as the Rock of Gibraltar.

But until the aforesaid “ideal condition” comes into being, the political Movement of Labor, the Socialist Movement, such as the mill of Social Evolution has ground it out of the heaving forces of the general Movement of Labor, must function as best it can; fundamentally, however, it must have and must strive for but one aim: to bring about and to work towards the aforesaid “ideal condition.” That and acting as a shield to the forces gathering on the economic field—“raising a bulwark against the power of capital, as Marx put it,—is its TRUE function.

SOCIALIST PARTY “REACTION.”

Let us now proceed to the inevitable reaction produced by the S.L.P. “action.” No sooner had this position of the Socialist Labor Party begun to take definite shape
than the reaction against it began to raise its head. The placemen of the pure and simple craft unions within the Party, egged on by their confreres without, at once sought to hamper and bring to an end this new development and, failing in that, brought on a split.

The “split,” resulting at first in the formation of what was then called the “Social Democratic” Party and which later became the “Socialist” Party, exemplified in full the theory of action and reaction. The pendulum swung to the other side. The true function of the political Movement of Labor was discarded; political action became an end in itself, a means to attain power, place and pelf—for a coterie of cheap adventurers. Instead of the principle of the organic unity of the Labor Movement in regard to both its manifestations, economic and political, the spurious slogans of “Autonomy” and “Neutrality” were set up to emphasize the absence of such organic unity. The pure and simple politicalist “Socialist” Party became on the political field the more sophisticated counterpart of the pure and simple craftist on the economic field, and the two, being essentially of the same breed, sought to work out between themselves a modus vivendi whereby they could operate, within their respective spheres, with as little hindrance as possible.

But Social Evolution never stops. With this new tendency in full bloom for only a short season, short in the light of history, pure and simple politicalism with its vote-catching tactics, its political fusions and dickers to gain place and pelf, its corruption that smelled to heaven, its persistent opposition to every progressive tendency in the economic Movement of Labor—in short, its utter abandonment of the true function of the political Movement of Labor—soon ripened and brought forth the next reaction.

“REACTION” ON THE ECONOMIC FIELD.

That next reaction culminated, in 1905, in the formation of the Industrial Workers of the World. Against that movement, which embodied the tactical position of the Socialist Labor Party, already outlined, as nearly as could be expected in the whirl of conflicting forces, the pure and simplers of both camps, the political and the economic, promptly combined and sought to undermine and to disperse it. The struggle went on, uninterruptedly, for three years and, in the end, resulted in the next reaction—Anarcho-Syndicalism. Again, and violently, the pendulum swung over to the opposite side. Largely due to the conflict of ideas centering around the form and the essence of action on the part of the Movement of
Labor on the political field, the mental cripples who produced this latest reaction tumbled, head-over-heels, to the conclusion that, since disunity on the political field had an evil effect upon the economic field, the cure for that state of affairs was the abandonment of the political field. This, in effect, landed them in the same place where the pure and simple craftist had stood all along, to whom “politics in the Union,” meaning Working Class politics, had always been anathema—with this difference: the pure and simple craftist does not challenge the capitalist system; the pure and simple syndicalist does challenge it. The former opposes political action of the Working Class because in his dull, stupid way, he sees nothing ahead but the capitalist system; he is not concerned about organizing and coordinating the forces that would overthrow it. To him “politics in the Union”—Working Class politics, of course,—spells interference with what he considers the proper function of the economic organization of Labor, the collection of dues and assessments, the getting of concessions from the boss, in short, the getting of what may be gotten under a state of affairs which, to his mind, “always has been and always will be.” Hence it is that the pure and simple syndicalist, setting himself against the capitalist system, realizing that it must go in due time, and yet abandoning the political field, can not but land in the morass of physical force. That is precisely where he did land. This phase of the development, being intended for more specific treatment, may now be dismissed to be taken up later.

INCUBATING THE NEXT “REACTION.”

But Social Evolution, never asleep and always busy to weave into the woof of time the warp of events, had a few more of the latter in her lap to be brought forth when the time was ripe. The pure and simple politicalists blithely continued in their pure and simple ways of betraying the cause of Working Class Emancipation. Towards the latest reaction, that of the Anarcho-Syndicalists, they maintained an official attitude of opposition and unofficial attitude of connivance, applying the latter whenever an opportunity presented itself to put a spoke into the wheel of true Industrial Unionism or of injuring the foremost of its propagators—the Socialist Labor Party. Pure and simple politicalism, proceeding along these lines, was forced to generate and even to nurse the forces that would, in time, react against its treacherous course. But before these forces could gather enough headway to produce the inevitable reaction, something else happened.

As the logical result of the capitalist system of production, there came upon us a
world war, the bloodiest encounter of huge armed forces this globe has ever witnessed. In the course of this war came about a train of events, some of which have a direct bearing upon the subject here considered. One of these was the outbreak of the Russian Revolution and its subsequent turning into the channel of a Social Revolution. This event, almost baffling description in its present and certainly in its future effects, produced a profound impression upon the Working Class mind in every country, brought on the as yet incomplete German Revolution, created revolutionary conditions elsewhere in Europe and, here in America, tore the pure and simple politicalist “Socialist” Party to pieces.

COMMUNIST “ACTION” AND “REACTION.”

It wasn’t a split; it was a compound fracture, resulting in not less than three and maybe four and, for all the future may yet bring, in even more pieces, each representing certain currents of opinion or of interests. Officially, the present divisions are: the old Socialist Party, a Communist Labor Party, and a plain Communist Party, the latter emerging from the fray with a Michigan attachment that does not seem to fit in anywhere and may, before long, split off again. The old Socialist Party need not here concern us. The shock it experienced has given rise to an effort to give it the appearance of having been slightly revamped, but it is the same old pure and simple politicalist concern that it always was, as careful as ever to evade the first true function of the political Movement of Labor, to wit, to help gather on the economic field the Working Class forces that will put an end to capitalism. But the two so-called Communist parties, representing the reaction against pure and simple politicalism, come within the scope of this discourse. It may be said that, again, the pendulum swung violently over to the other side.

The Communist Party, in point of time of formation, came first. We need not here enter in detail upon all the involved moves and counter-moves that caused the so-called “Left-Wing” movement within the Socialist Party to give birth to Communist twins. It is enough to say that what really divides them is not so much a difference in tactical position as it is the desire to govern. The “Communists,” barring their Michigan attachment, were composed largely of language federations, suspended by the Socialist Party organization prior to the holding of its national convention in August-September, 1919. They had a large membership, financial strength, and they had a leadership conscious of power and wanting to keep it. The other “Left-Wingers,” after they either had been shut out of or had bolted the S.P.
convention and finding that the “Communists” had slipped past them and had formed their party first, were in a predicament. The “Communists,” by doing so, had placed themselves in a position to say to the others, in effect: Here we are, a true blue Communist Party; if you are Communists it is for you to join us, and not to organize a party in opposition; we are an organization; we know what our membership is; and we are a party. You, on the other hand, don’t know what you have got and what portion of the remnant S.P. membership will support your bolt; join us but try not to impose conditions.

This attitude was not relished by the orphaned Left Wingers. To them it spelled unconditional surrender. There were other reasons that made the proposition unpalatable. For one thing, they had leaders of their own quite ready and willing to assume the burden of leadership. For another, they realized that to organize a political party so completely under the domination of the language federations would put upon them the stamp of being “foreign” and that, as an American political party, they would have a hard road to travel. And thus it came about that the bolting Left Wingers, unable to get into the Communist Party on acceptable terms, organized their own party,—the second of the twins—the Communist Labor Party.

Whatever may be the future fate of these two, whether they will merge eventually, or whether one will absorb the other, and which will be the absorber and which the absorbee or, whether portions of each will slide back into the old S.P.—all that does not here concern us. We can here deal with the “Communist” generically, with his position and attitude towards the various phases of the Movement of Labor. To us, the two look indeed like twins.

**THE S.L.P. VS. THE “COMMUNIST.”**

Occasionally, the question is asked: “Why don’t the S.L.P. and the Communists unite?”—and the assertion is added: “They both want the same thing.” Both the question and the assertion betray shallowness of mind, that quality of mind that flies to conclusions before examining premises. The maker of such an assertion probably does not know clearly what the S.L.P. wants and, surely, he does not know what the “Communists” want for the simple reason that these don’t seem to know themselves. There is no telling as yet how that new movement will shape itself after the boiling pot simmers down and stops throwing up violent bubbles. The S.L.P. certainly does know what it wants and its vision is crystal-clear as compared
with the as yet muddled mentality of American “Communism.”

Let us take for example the Communist Labor Party and see what this party stands for. To visualize its position, let us make a sort of cast-up on the Credit and Debit principle and take up first the Credit side. There we find:

(1) They have broken away from the S.P. pure and simple politicalism, and they seem to have at least an inkling of the true function of the political Movement of Labor. This implies recognition of the inevitable abolition of the political State by the triumphant proletarian revolution. But this also implies the organization of the Working Class on the economic field into a class-conscious revolutionary body and on that score they again vitiate their position, as will be shown when we come to cast up their Debit side.

(2) They have broken with the ambiguous, straddling position of the S.P. regarding international relations, have repudiated the Second International and endorsed the Third, and have taken their stand squarely on the subject of the Russian Revolution.

On the Debit side we find:

(1) In an official report of the Chicago convention of the Communist Labor Party we find a “Report on Labor Organization” which contains the following statement: “In any mention of revolutionary industrial unionism in this country, there must be recognized the immense effect upon the American Labor movement of the propaganda and example of the Industrial Workers of the World, whose long and valiant struggles and heroic sacrifices in the class-war have earned the respect and affection of all workers everywhere.”

This laudatory mention of the non-political, aye, the anti-political physical forcist I.W.W., and the non-mention of the Workers’ International Industrial Union, which is planted squarely upon Marxian principles, is decidedly significant. It shows which way the wind is blowing. Whether the Anarcho-Syndicalist I.W.W. has “earned the respect and affection of ALL workers EVERYWHERE” certainly is open to considerable doubt, as we shall show when we take up that subject specifically. In the present connection it may, however, be said that when a political party which claims to be of Labor takes up such a position and becomes so inconsistent as to line up with an economic organization that not only denies the function of the “true political party of Labor” to “raise a bulwark against the power of Capital,” as defined by Marx, but which must, in logical pursuance of its position, deny to the said political party of labor the right to exist at all—then, surely, it becomes an open
question as to whether such a party does know what it wants!

(2) After having waded for all these long years through the mire of S.P. pure and simple politicalism and its manifold rascalities, condoning and sustaining every crime committed against the struggling forces of true Industrial Unionism, the volte-face “Communist” conversion to this all-important principle and tactical position is rather sudden and, as shown above, looks rather ill-digested.

(3) The Communist Laborites, judging them by their publications and by such personal contact with their membership as has been had, appear to suffer from auto-intoxication. They intoxicate themselves with phrases of their own making, or, it might be more accurate to say, perhaps of their own importation. Moreover, they are of a very literal turn of mind; also they are very imitative but in rather unimaginative, simian-like fashion. In England, under certain special conditions, the workers organized shop committees to block or at least neutralize the influence of their conservative leaders; that causes the “Communists” promptly to set the cry for the same thing here, although the vague, undefined shop committee or shop steward movement of England, improvised under pressure of conditions, can not be compared with the scientific precision of the Local Industrial Union already worked out in detail right here in America. In Russia, the revolutionary movement culminated in “mass action” as naturally as water runs down hill, because the masses were actually in motion and in action; but that phenomenon causes the “Communist” to demand “mass action” here and at once, though none of them is able to give one a clear definition as to what he means by that term and how he thinks the “masses”—entirely aside from the question of their make-up—can act in an organized and effective manner. In Russia, the revolution victorious, but the internal struggle with counter-revolutionary forces still going on, the exigencies of THAT situation demand the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat; the “Communist” wants that too, right here in America and without the least delay. In Russia the Communist Party (the party in power) exempted small taxpayers for reasons that can be understood by anyone who understands Russian conditions and who appreciates the situation confronting a party of revolution actually in possession of governmental powers. The “Communist” of the United States simply inserts a “plank” in his original “platform”—though later obliged to expunge the same—which exempts the small taxpayer, thus performing, or repeating, the role of the pure and simple political, petty bourgeois reformer. As a phraseur he may look funny to some people. He is more than funny, he is dangerous to the best interests
of the Working Class Movement, as is anyone with more blood in his head than brains and with enough of a following to lead numbers of the Working Class to purposeless slaughter.

Truly, and once more, has the pendulum swung very much in the opposite direction.

(4) The “Communist” instinctively recognizes the clear-cut, impregnable character of the S.L.P. position; and keenly envious is he of the frank and open recognition of that position on the part of Russia, evidenced by the repeated reports of utterances by Comrade Lenine to the effect that Soviet Russia is building its institutions along the lines mapped out by Daniel De Leon. He would like to imitate that too, but he does not quite know how to go about it. He might be willing enough to annex De Leon, who is dead, but he does not want to annex the S.L.P. which he knows is very far from being dead, no matter how often he might in the past have joined the S.P. chorus saying that it was. Accordingly, he avoids every mention of the S.L.P.—as carefully as the devil is said to avoid holy water—just as he has been taught to do while in the S.P.; when he deviates from that course, he only mentions the S.L.P. to slander it, as was evidenced by the mendacious report, emanating from that quarter, that the S.L.P. had repudiated the Third International, a report set afloat AFTER the National Executive Committee of the S.L.P. had met in regular annual session and had adopted resolutions that speak emphatically the other way. Such occurrences are not accidental; they grow out of an underlying spirit, as is again evidenced by the fact that, when the slander is publicly nailed, the net result is a profound silence.

The Debit side of the “Communist” might yet be charged with other items, but the foregoing is quite ample. It is ample to show to the man who says, “They both want the same thing,” that, if the S.L.P. strives for the political and economic unity of the Working Class Movement and considers it the chief function of the political Movement of Labor to bring about that result, and if, on the other hand, the “Communists” line up with an Anarchist-Syndicalist economic movement that is frankly anti-political and that denies to the political Movement of Labor the right of existence, then it becomes plain that both do not want the same thing; that, indeed, what the one—the S.L.P.—wants, consciously and determinedly, is the very opposite of what the others—the Communist Labor Party and the Communist Party—seem to be chasing after.

And it is also ample to show the spirit that animates this new movement.
Instead of lending their hands and bending their backs to the work of helping to organize the Working Class on the economic field, to help rescue the workers from the control of the labor faker, and so apply themselves in deeds and not in words, in sober, unremitting work which alone will bring results to the task that is before us all, it is the tom-tom of phrases that is deafening our ears. We live in a country with an enormous capitalist development, with a numerous Working Class possessing a tremendous, aye, an irresistible potential power. But not yet is that power organized for the task of Working Class emancipation—far from it. That potential power, so organized and capable of mobilization, would make the triumph of the workers’ cause not only a certainty, but would insure an orderly and almost painless transition from the Anarchy of capitalist production to the well-ordered processes of the Workers’ Socialist Republic. But as matters stand today, with so-called “revolutionists” shouting their ill-digested phrases from the housetops instead of applying themselves to the sober and not very exciting task of organizing the Working Class MIGHT towards constructive revolutionary ends, each seeking to outdo the other in gushing rodomontade, who knows but what the capitalist class may not be able to turn a goodly portion of that potential Working Class power against the revolutionary Working Class Movement, and, temporarily at least, trample it in the dust? It may be taken for granted that lunacy, or the appearance of lunacy, is not conducive to inspiring confidence in the broad ranks of the Working Class as to either the means or methods of those who so deport themselves.

Today, the vast bulk of the American Working Class is without organization of any kind. Again, the bulk of those that are organized we find under the more or less direct domination of more or less direct agents of the capitalist class—the labor fakers, or labor lieutenants of capitalism. The very existence of these organized forces, as at present conducted, makes impossible the organization of the unorganized, for every attempt to take this work in hand will meet with the strenuous opposition of the labor faker agent of capitalism; every such attempt will be met with the howl of scab! scab!! scab!!—as has been amply demonstrated in the past. It is the duty of the true political Movement of Labor to help organize the Working Class forces on the economic field, to free them from the domination of the labor faker. Once realizing the viciousness of that domination, the masses of the organized workers will fall in line, instinctively, with their class position, and will lend valuable assistance in drawing into the Movement of Labor the still vaster masses of the unorganized. When all that happens, then, at last, will the American
Working Class be on the march towards its historic goal—the abolition of capitalism; and its resultant fruit—the Emancipation of Labor.

Who, at all familiar with the conditions prevailing in this country, will deny the correctness of this presentation? And who, failing, because unable to deny its correctness, will hold that the question of the day and hour is to prate about the dictatorship of the proletariat? The question of the day and hour is to meet the onslaughts of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, in the only way in which they can be met: the organization on the economic field of the power of the Working Class, to which task the political Movement of Labor must bend its every effort. That movement must open a smashing campaign, a sustained offensive, against the faker leadership of organized Labor, an implacable, unremitting fight, until these outposts of the capitalist class have been driven from the Labor Movement. When the day and hour has come for society to say good-by and God-speed to a capitalist system about to depart, the Working Class of that day, organized, enlightened, conscious of its class interests and in a position to defend them, will know what measures to adopt to enforce its will—and the choice of these measures will largely depend upon the conduct of the capitalist class. It is not important to forecast and seek to predetermine these measures; it is important to gather the Working Class MIGHT so as to make possible the application of any measures that may be needful to safeguard the Working Class RIGHT.

The Socialist Labor Party yields to none in the unqualified endorsement of the Russian Revolution; it yields to none in the full recognition of the immeasurable service which the Russian comrades have rendered and are rendering to the proletariat of the world; it yields to none in its admiration of the steadfastness with which the Russian workers have defended the revolution against a world of foes and under conditions well-nigh unbearable. Yet, and because it values so highly the achievements of the Russian Revolution, it will yield to none who, either because they do not understand or because they are animated by fireworks emotionalism, would carry confusion into the American Movement of Labor when more and ever more clarity is the need of the hour. It will not yield to those who would seek to sway that movement with the empty “revolutionary” phrase; and, least of all, will it yield to those who would seek to establish an entente cordiale with Anarcho-Syndicalism. Both the policy and the tactics of the Socialist Labor Party of America have been developed and are being shaped and determined by the conditions prevailing here—in America. There can be no linking up, in America, with an
element that flies in the face of this policy and these tactics, no matter whether in affairs that have no direct bearing upon the specific needs of the American Movement of Labor, such an element appears to hold a position similar to the one held by us. No better service can be rendered to the cause of the proletariat in this country, nor to the same cause the world over, than to maintain and hold on high the principles and tactics of the Socialist Labor Party, which,—such is our firm conviction—alone are capable of placing the American Movement of Labor where the high industrial development of the country should long ago have placed it, had not the difficulties and cross-currents here depicted stood in the way.

ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM.

We have already shown that this movement, in America, is represented by what is known as the I.W.W., the Industrial Workers of the World. A brief sketch of the origin of this organization will not be amiss, for it can not be assumed that every present-day reader is familiar therewith. The I.W.W., as originally organized in 1905, was an organization which, so far as its theoretical foundation is concerned, stood squarely upon the ground that the Socialist Labor Party had occupied long before the I.W.W. came into being. But the larger portion of its original membership scarcely measured up to that position. This became apparent during the first year of its existence and when the second convention of the organization was held the internal struggle led to the abolition of the office of President. Still later, in 1907, the largest component part of the I.W.W., the Western Federation of Miners, withdrew under the influence of its pure and simple leaders, aided and seconded by the pure and simple political Socialist Party elements that were ever ready and always busy to undermine the industrial organization.

With a much diminished membership, the organization struggled on, constantly beset by every foe of the Industrialist Movement within and without the organization, of whom the aforesaid “Socialist” Party was easily the most venomous and unscrupulous, until, in 1908, by means of a packed convention manipulated by its national officers, the organization was captured by a tatterdemalion element known as the “Overalls Brigade” that had been shipped from the far West for that particular purpose. It is needless at this day to enter in detail upon the shady methods that were employed to capture the convention; it is sufficient to say that these methods were in keeping with the past and present character of the organization that sprang from that convention—the Anarcho-Syndicalist I.W.W.
Properly to appraise that organization, one must examine it under two different aspects, first, as an organized body, and, second, as a movement. Considered under the first aspect, it may be said that the I.W.W. as an organization has had a rather checkered career. After an existence of over ten years it is claimed that it has had a turn-over of over 200,000 members and that it stands today just about where it started. This would indicate that the comparatively large numbers that entered it and did not, for one reason or another, remain, must have found that the organization, either in a material or in a spiritual sense, or both, did not offer them enough to induce them to stay with it and build it up. The why and wherefore thereof will appear when we consider this subject under its second aspect, but one explanation is that the organization, largely by virtue of its sensational and often Salvation Army-like methods, never had much of an appeal for the industrial worker and was forced to recruit much, if not most, of its membership amongst the migratory workers of the far West, the harvest-hands, the lumber-jacks, etc. Thus it bobbed up here and there, disappeared again, bobbed up again, like hills of sand formed and reformed by the wind. It is doubtful whether its very headquarters ever knew the real size of the membership because of this constant flux and reflux, this come and go. We are not here much concerned with the I.W.W. as an organization and would refer any reader who is interested in that phase of the subject to the rather exhaustive and, on the whole, unbiased work of Dr. Paul F. Brissenden, The I.W.W., a Study of American Syndicalism, where he will find ample material even if the conclusions and sometimes the facts are not always correct. We are primarily concerned with the I.W.W. as a movement, a body of ideas, that has sought to impress itself upon the American Labor Movement and has endeavored to shape its course.

Considering the matter under this, its second aspect, it must be said that, at the very outset, the organization eliminated from the Preamble or declaration of principles of the original I.W.W., the so-called “political clause.” That political clause stated, after outlining the class-divisions in society, that “between these two classes a struggle must go on until all the toilers come together on the political, as well as on the industrial field, and take and hold that which they produce by their labor through an economic organization of the working class, without affiliation with any political party.” It must be observed that the last clause, “without affiliation with any political party,” represented an inevitable concession made at the time of its formulation to the conditions then existing. More than one political
party claiming the name Socialism was in the field. To endorse or to affiliate with either one or the other would at once have carried the apple of discord into the new organization. The only way to avoid that, if it could be avoided, was to endorse neither. It was the best that could be done under the circumstances until unity on the political field would come about, or until the revolutionary industrial organization had developed to the point of projecting its own political expression and rendering superfluous any other political party of Labor.

The Anarcho-Syndicalist element, in eliminating that political clause, discarded the principle that the political Movement of Labor is a necessary, an indispensable adjunct of the economic Movement of Labor; and—as pointed out before, inasmuch as that element, unlike the pure and simple and anti-political craftist, challenges the capitalist system and foresees and works towards its downfall, by abandoning the political field—proclaimed in so many words that it regarded physical force as its first and last weapon against the capitalist system. Let us examine more closely what theoretical and what practical consequences flow from taking that position.

As to the former it may be said:

(1) By setting up that principle, and seeking to impress the same upon the economic Movement of Labor, the I.W.W. thereby abandoned all the achievements of civilization, discarded the historic traditions of the country and spurned the possibilities that these offer to the Working Class to conduct its struggle for emancipation on a civilized plane and that enable the Working Class, in case the capitalist class itself abandons that civilized plane by resorting to physical force, to throw the onus of such action upon the foe. Since we live in a land the fundamental law of which provides for its own amendment, it is not only good policy, it is the highest form of wisdom and in thorough accord with the dignity of the Movement of Labor to assume that, theoretically, the Social Problem CAN be solved peacefully, aye, even lawfully and constitutionally; that, therefore, the Working Class is ready to conduct its first battle for the abolition of capitalism at the hustings. But, should the capitalist foe, beaten on that field, himself abandon these achievements of civilization, discard the historic traditions of the country, seek to scrap the fundamental law of the land and decide that force shall be the arbiter between the two opposing social tendencies, then and only then must the MIGHT of the economic Movement of Labor get into action. Then the function of the political Movement of Labor is ended. Then the advance guard and the outposts are drawn in and the industrial army itself engages the foe. And that “army,” class-conscious,
self-reliant, its overwhelming numbers organized and drilled in industrial divisions to “take and hold” the means of production, will be the rock upon which the force of the foe will shatter itself.

(2) The Anarcho-Syndicalist position does not conform, in point of ultimate aim, to the position of the true Movement of Labor. One can not readily determine, from their own utterances, the goal of the Anarcho-Syndicalists, but in so far as the simon-pure Anarchist has been able to impress himself upon an organization the constituent parts of which are like the shifting sands of the desert, they appear to aim at the establishment of autonomous industrial groups and through them conduct their “future society.” This, were it possible of attainment—WHICH IT IS NOT—would be a distinct loss to civilization. The complex processes of wealth production under modern conditions—to be extended still further under a future state of society—imply an ever growing interdependence of industrial relations which call for ever higher forms of organization. Moreover, Social Evolution does not tend the Anarchist way. Social Evolution moves in the direction of ever greater wealth production that will free mankind from the material fetters that have hitherto bound it to the earthy part of the earth and will lift the human race to the higher plane upon which future society will stand. And, willy-nilly, consciously and unconsciously, the true Movement of Labor moves in obedience to the dictates of Social Evolution. Against the trend of Social Evolution there lies no appeal on the part of man. He moves in harmony with it towards his destiny; or he opposes it to be crushed and flung aside. In the final settlement, the Anarcho-Syndicalist can not be a factor; and in the meantime he can only be an irritant, a fly in the ointment.

When one turns from this, the pure Anarchist tendency of the I.W.W., to take up the utterances to be found in its current publications, then the shallowness of its “reasoning”; the depth of its ignorance; the flippancy of its viewpoints; the utter lack of understanding the true character of the Movement of Labor—all these become apparent. It must be borne in mind that the I.W.W. is not coherent, that it has no central guiding principle and, therefore, no central guiding policy. Its current utterances are, for that reason, disjointed and often contradictory. They do not always conform even to its alleged anti-political position. We find, for instance, in The Rebel Worker, of May 15, 1919, in a general article that purports to set forth the I.W.W. position, the following utterance: “The I.W.W., as an organization, is not concerned with the political powers of the State or of the nation. It is an organization of workers who are trying to establish Democracy in Industry.
Members in the organization are not restricted in voting, and they may vote for any political candidate or party that appeals to them as fit to be their servant.” To be “not concerned with the political powers of the State and nation,” which powers today are in possession of the capitalist and are used by him against the political and the economic Movement of Labor and certainly are used against the I.W.W. itself, would, nevertheless, seem to conform to its alleged anti-political attitude; but when, in the closing sentence of the paragraph quoted, we meet with the statement that members of the I.W.W. “may vote for any political candidate or party,” a glaring contradiction stands exposed that implies an abandonment of its alleged anti-political position. Voting for ANY political candidate or party includes voting for capitalist candidates and parties; it includes support at the polls of the capitalist political State, adding to its power, a power that always is and always must be directed against the Movement of Labor. The worker who is struggling towards the light, seeking to understand the true position of the Movement of Labor in capitalist society, is thrown hopelessly on his beam-ends.

The “Communists,” who even prior to their formation into several parties, sought to sidle up to the I.W.W.,—a rather incongruous procedure, since they pretend to be a political Movement of Labor—evidently were not welcome and were repeatedly rebuffed by their sought-for “affinity.” A case in point is an utterance of the I.W.W. paper One Big Union, quoted by The New York Communist, of May 24, 1919. It appears from the quotation that the aforesaid I.W.W. organ had made an attack upon the S.P. Left Wing in an article from which The New York Communist quotes as follows: “Besides, why should we be in such a hurry to imitate the Bolsheviks? What have they done that should make us jump off our track and follow their lead? They have overthrown autocracy and established political democracy for the proletariat. Political democracy has existed in this country for a long time. We do not have to make a revolution to get it. If we want the political power, control of the parliamentary state, all we have to do is to vote ourselves in power.” It is indeed difficult to imagine how more ignorance, more flippancy, more shallowness of reasoning, more lack of understanding of what is going on in this world and, last, but not least, how more sheer downright insolence may be compressed in one short paragraph. It is a pen-sketch, a flashlight-photo of “Bummery” or “Wobbly” psychology. No wonder that The New York Communist, rather dolefully be it said, is “driven to wonder whether, after all, there may not be a difference between I.W.W.-ism and Socialism more profound than we dreamed of,”
which wonderment is productive of the further observation that, “after all, we did not imagine that in fundamentals we of the Left Wing were so far away from the revolutionary I.W.W.” This “after all,” twice repeated, is in turn a pen-sketch of “Communist” psychology and understanding—or the absence thereof. They are, both of them, mental cripples unable to grasp the true import and social significance of the Movement of Labor and, for that reason, unfit to play a part therein except in such early stages of that movement when the prevailing confusion still leaves room for such noxious freak growths.

In regard to the practical consequences flowing from the Anarcho-Syndicalist position it is well to point out:

(1) That a movement so poised and so conducted as is the I.W.W., with “Hallelujah, I’m a bum” song books, its advocacy of theft and of sabotage, its “direct action” propaganda, and its admonition “to strike at the ballot-box with an axe,” in short, its circus-stunt methods, will attract the unstable, the immature, the crack-brained, and vicious, as the light will attract moths, and, although it is, by the adoption of these very methods, prevented from ever amounting to anything in the general Movement of Labor, it will act like gravel in the shoe, an annoyance, an irritation and, sometimes, an impediment to the general Movement of Labor.

(2) Had it been possible for the Anarcho-Syndicalist I.W.W. to impress its position upon the economic Movement of Labor with any degree of success, regardless of the state of Social Evolution attained and regardless also of all the other considerations pointed out before, then a condition of virtual Civil War would have ensued. Then the onus for bringing on that war would have fallen upon the Working Class Movement, a tremendous handicap in its struggle toward proletarian emancipation, as some not uninfluential and not unsympathetic constituent parts of society would then turn or be forced to turn against it. Even as it is, with every well-informed, sane human being of mature years knowing full well that it is not possible and NEVER WILL BE POSSIBLE for the I.W.W. to so impress the economic Movement of Labor, it is apparent that the capitalist class has skilfully turned to account and is every day turning to account in its own behalf the very NON-SUCCESS of the I.W.W. Every move of the Working Class, every move of the advanced portion of the Working Class, however anti-Syndicalist such move may be, is by the strumpet press of the country ascribed to the I.W.W., is labeled “I.W.W.” and is interpreted in the light of the I.W.W. position. Upon the superficial reader of that press the impression is created that tremendous numbers are
gained in that organization, that its influence is spread far and wide and that it constitutes an immediate danger to social peace—all this when the very opposite is true; when it is a notorious fact that the influence of that organization upon the economic Movement of Labor is next to nil; when it is known that, as an organization, so negligent is its cohesive power that it can not hold even small numbers for any length of time, but is forced to recruit its ever shifting numerical strength from the most unstable, the constantly drifting and shifting part of the Working Class. Since, however, it is well-established by the experience of the true Movement of Labor that the Anarchist movement is always fated to act as the saboteur of the proletarian revolution, always busy placing weapons into the hands of the capitalist foe, always honeycombed with the police spy and always ready to create situations that enable the capitalist, through his stool pigeons, to stage “pogroms” and in many other ways injure the real Working Class Movement, since all this is known and must be regarded as inevitable—the only way to deal with this element is to expose it whenever opportunity offers.

(3) The persecution to which, by the very law of its existence, the I.W.W. becomes subjected, often will divert in its favor the sympathy, passive and active, of emotional elements of society who, oblivious or careless of fundamentals and seeing only the surface of things, will reason that he who draws upon himself the persecution of the capitalist class must be deserving of their sympathy. To the extent that portions of the Working Class are emotionally affected by this species of false reasoning, the support, active and passive, they may give to the I.W.W. is a distinct loss to the true economic Movement of Labor in two ways: first, in that it deprives the true economic Movement of Labor of that support; and, second, in that aid and comfort is given to something that ever must and ever will be an annoyance, a hindrance and a detriment to that Movement.

(4) The crack-brained methods and violent shouting of would-be “revolutionary” phrases, employed by the Anarchist Syndicalist I.W.W., furnish the capitalist class with a pretext and enable the Political State to employ that pretext for repressive measures not against the I.W.W. alone, but also and to a far greater extent against individual and corporate constituent parts of the general Movement of Labor. It is a cloak that covers a multitude of capitalist sins; violation of law, invasion of civil rights, brutal outrages and even murder. Thus we see fostered in this country the private detective agency, the notorious “deputy sheriff,” the strike-breaking thug, the plug-ugly. It is more than likely that we would have all of these even if there
were no cloak, the employment of violence being the natural capitalist panacea for the cure of social ills, but the true Movement of Labor has no cause to look with a forgiving eye upon those who furnish the capitalist with the opportunity to pose in the role of a paladin of law and order; to claim that the Movement of Labor is a breeder of violence; to assert that he, the capitalist, is forced, much against his will, to meet violence with violence. Unlike the capitalist system, the true Movement of Labor is not a breeder of violence. Once grown to full stature its power will rest not upon military and police organizations, not upon arms, not upon anything that implies the use of violence. Its “force” will rest upon ECONOMIC STRUCTURE, upon the actual, physical possession of the means and the processes of production, and it is against that fortification that the capitalist force-wave will dash itself into spray.

**CONCLUSION.**

Before ending this discourse we shall endeavor to summarize what has here been set forth. In order to obtain the greatest possible amount of clarity in the summarization we shall, in a manner of speaking, address ourselves to each of the elements that have been dealt with.

* * *

The first of these is the pure and simple craft Unionist. To him we say:

Wake up! Bestir yourself! Get in line with the spirit of the time! Social Evolution has made you a constituent part of the economic Movement of Labor, but your mental backwardness has made you a hindrance rather than a help to its true development. You must either move in conformity to the spirit of the age or your organizations will be shattered to make room for new formations in line with the requirements of this day and hour. The system of capitalism is disintegrating; a new social order is laboring to be born. In this hour of social travail, it is your duty to understand, to aid, to assist. It is your duty to understand the social forces that are at work; it is your duty to aid in leading these forces into such channels as will insure an orderly and, if possible, a peaceful transformation when the hour of the capitalist system of production has struck; and in order to make possible such a peaceful transformation, it is your duty to assist, with all the means within your power, the organization of the vast mass of the unorganized of America’s Working Class along the lines of America’s industrial development, so that, with them, ALL OF YOU will constitute THE TRUE ECONOMIC MOVEMENT OF LABOR,—the
“army” that will take and hold and operate the means of production and will forever put an end to the planless Anarchy of capitalist disorder.

To perform this true function of the economic Movement of Labor, get rid of your misleaders, the labor fakers; place your organizations squarely upon the principle that capitalism must go, and that ALL the means of production must go to ALL the people, with the capitalist class-divided form of society ended, and with the class-dominated capitalist political State abolished; and, to accomplish all this, work hand in hand with your fellow-workers throughout the land, extending to them the help that is yours to give. Social Evolution demands this of you. There is no evading this demand, no side-stepping the obligations it imposes. Obey, and you will move in line with the spirit of the age toward a greater and better future. Disobey, and you will be discarded and flung aside as useless.

* * *

To the second of the elements, the pure and simple politicalist, we say:

You have turned your back upon that function of the true political Movement of Labor which demands of you to help organize the forces of the social revolution on the economic field. Because of your petty bourgeois connections and ideals and your desire to fish for immediate support among the pure and simple craft unions of the land, you have cowardly, abjectly, shunned this task, and you have thereby betrayed the cause of labor. Due to that betrayal, the second function of the political Movement of Labor, embodied in the Marxian mandate to “raise a bulwark against the power of capital,” becomes on your lips a hollow mockery. You are a traitor, you have the heart of the traitor, you will meet the traitor’s fate. You may yet seek to take on the semblance of the true political Movement of Labor. You will fail. Social Evolution will take care of you in due time and season. No matter how puffed up you have been—and may yet come to be for all we know today—your doom is sealed. History has assigned to you the role which, for a time at least, is played by the social patriots in the movements of Europe, a role for which nature has evidently intended you and which alone fits you.

* * *

To the third of these elements, the ranting, phrase-mongering “Communist,” we say:

Beware! You are traveling the wrong road! You do not understand the true functions of the true political Movement of Labor—or is it your purpose knowingly to disregard them? Assuming that it is your sincere intention to be what you claim
to be, a true political Movement of Labor, it is not your function to “mass-act”; it is your function to obey the Marxian mandate to “raise a bulwark against the power of capital,” and to raise that bulwark in order to shield, to protect, the economic Movement of Labor. Ranting about “mass action” does not so shield and protect; on the contrary, it invites and furnishes a pretext for new and more vicious assaults by the power of capital upon the economic Movement of Labor, while you, BY YOUR VERY CONDUCT, render yourself impotent to raise that bulwark. It is not your function to “mass-act” at all. Action, “mass” or otherwise, is the function of the economic Movement of Labor when the time is ripe and when you, in the proper performance of your true function, have aided, soberly and intelligently, the building up of that power which the economic Movement of Labor alone can CONTAIN AND WIELD. Raising a bulwark is not a permanent, it is a temporary, a transitory function, a function that comes to an end when the time for action arrives, of which the economic Movement of Labor alone is capable. When that time arrives, then you have played your part, then the advance guard and the outposts are drawn in, then the “army” comes to grips with the foe.

You don’t seem to know where you are. Stop shouting for a moment. Try to think. Examine yourself and your position. Find out what you are and what you really want to be and then lay out your course.

* * *

To the fourth of these elements, the great mass of America’s unorganized workers, we say:

Do not be confused or disheartened by this seeming confusion created by this conflict of ideas. That conflict is both necessary and inevitable and out of it will be evolved, in due time, a general recognition of the correct principles and correct tactics that will stand the test. Social Evolution will see to that; it can not be otherwise. Be mindful, however, that you too will have to play your part in the great events that are to come. To you, too, Social Evolution has assigned a part, a very important part in view of your numbers. You are the great balance wheel of the engine that supplies mass and weight, the great reservoir from which the unfolding Movement of Labor will ever draw new strength for the accomplishment of its ever mounting task. In the measure that you will seek to understand that which today is going on all about us, will you be able to assist the Working Class Movement wherein the fate of all of us is bound up. It is your duty to aid Working Class organization on sound and correct lines wherever possible rather than retard
it by unreasoned opposition.

* * *

To the fifth and last of these elements, the I.W.W. Anarcho-Syndicalist, the Socialist Labor Party has nothing to say.

He can not be regarded as being of, but only as an excrescence upon, the Movement of Labor—a cancerous growth, a noxious weed, that must be uprooted and destroyed wherever possible. When we meet the marplot, it can only be at the point of the sword, and quarter will neither be asked nor given. He who would maim the Movement of Labor by deliberate atrophy of one of its arms, would lame it in one of its spheres of action that may not be shunned, would make impossible the movement’s organic unity, would seek to lead that movement onto the field of Anarchist “direct action,” there to be wantonly bled by the capitalist foe; and he who then adds insult to injury by seeking to impose upon the movement the methods of the clown, deserves no consideration, however much he may be deserving of contempt.

The weapon of violent repression, employed by the capitalist under the pretext and cloak furnished him by the direct action syndicalist, may have all the attributes of a two-edged sword. That weapon may, in the long run, turn its other edge against its user and injure him more than he has been able to injure that against which it was turned in the first instance. But that will not diminish the guilt of him who furnished the pretext and the cloak.

In point of “principle” the Anarcho-Syndicalist is an impossibility whom Social Evolution rules out of court. In point of tactics he is a danger—a danger that would tend to lead the Movement of Labor into rat-hole conspiracies when one of its first tenets must be to carry on ALL its work and ALL its processes in the open light of the day.

The Anarcho-Syndicalist must be fought wherever found—fought bitterly, relentlessly, without respite and without quarter by every man and woman who has at heart the sublime cause of the Working Class struggling towards Emancipation.

RÉSUMÉ.

And thus, amid the ebb and flood of the changing tides, now rising, now subsiding, now threatening to engulf, there stands, now as of yore and FIRM LIKE THE ROCK OF GIBRALTAR, the only political Movement of Labor in the land that HAS a message for the Working Class—the Socialist Labor Party of America.
To aid in its work, to assist in carrying out its mission, and, for this purpose, to enter its ranks, is the duty of every class-conscious member of America’s Working Class.

[THE END.]