
Disarmament and World Peace: Proposed Manifesto and Program of the Socialist Party of America. [December 26, 1914]

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NOTE: At the last meeting of the National Executive Committee [Chicago: Dec. 12-13, 1914], the question of a manifesto and program for international disarmament and peace was given serious and extended consideration. It was finally decided to appoint a sub-committee to draft a suitable manifesto and formulate a proposed program to be submitted to the NEC and later to the National Committee and finally to the International, with the hope of securing a united action, along a definite line, of constructive measures for international peace.

The following is the first draft of the proposed manifesto and program as submitted by the sub-committee.

The supreme tragedy of human history is upon us.

European civilization is engulfed. The world's peace is shattered. The future of the human race is imperilled.

Immediate Causes of the War.

All are familiar with the more superficial and immediate causes of the war. Previous wars and the terms of settlement which created lasting hatreds and thoughts of revenge; commercial rivalries and colonial antagonisms; the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente dividing all Europe into two armed antagonistic camps; the remnants of a feudal system which retarded modern social and political progress; racial and religious prejudices; secret intrigue of diplomats and the lack of democratic control by the people; vast systems of military equipment; fear and suspicion bred and spread by a vicious jingo press in all nations; powerful armament interests that reap rich harvest out of

havoc and death — all these have played their sinister part.

The Fundamental Causes.

Back of all of those, however, lie the deeper, more fundamental causes which give rise to them. The fundamental causes are economic.

Every capitalistic nation on earth exploits its people. The wages received by the workers are always less than the market value of the goods which they produce. Consequently when the workers enter the market they cannot buy back an amount of wealth equal to that which their labor created and put into the market. A surplus accumulates. The capitalist class cannot consume it all or profitably invest it in a nation suffering from capitalistic exploitation. Thus sooner or later each capitalistic nation is suffocated with the surplus products resulting from its own exploitation. Having exhausted its home market, unwilling and unable to readjust its processes so as to eliminate exploi-

tation, every capitalist nation is compelled to enter the struggle for foreign markets.

All the rest of the tragedies of capitalism follow upon this fundamental feature. Each capitalistic nation enters the list to fight for foreign markets. Hence arise the commercial rivalries of nations, the policies of imperialism, the conflicts for commercial supremacy, ever growing more intense and fierce as the nations expand and the world's field of conquest narrows. Hence arise the policies of armaments, every year more immense and monstrous. Hence arise the strategy, the intrigue of secret diplomacy, till all the world is involved in a deadly struggle for the capture and control of the world market.

Thus capitalism, functioning through the modern nationalistic state with its vast armaments, secret diplomacies, and undemocratic governments, inevitably leads to war.

Socialists Warned the World.

For more than half a century the socialist movement has warned the world of this impending tragedy. With every power at their command the socialists of every nation have worked to prevent it. But the warning has gone unheeded and the socialist propaganda against war has been ignored and suppressed by the ruling powers and the majority of the people of all the nations.

Today our prediction has been only too swiftly and tragically fulfilled. War, with all its horrors, is upon us.

And it has come as the logical and inevitable outcome of the forces of the capitalist system. It has come in spite of the warnings and protest of the socialist and labor movement and indeed in spite of the personal desires of many of the capitalists themselves. The capitalist system is a modern Frankenstein which is destroying its own creators.

Will the World Learn the Lesson?

If now this unspeakable tragedy shall serve to teach the world the real, the underlying and fundamental causes of the war, so that by removing these causes the world henceforth may live at peace, the war may be worth the cost.

If, on the other hand, the people of the world shall remain blind to these real causes and continue ignorant or unaware of the underlying meaning of the tendencies of modern capitalistic society and leave all these forces still at work, then indeed is this world war an unmitigated curse. For, if the causes that brought on this war are left to operate, then the war will not be the last. It will be only the first of a series of wars more terrible and more tragic than this, until one mighty and monstrous imperialism has drenched the world in blood and subdued the peoples in an abject slavery more brutal and unbearable than the world has ever seen.

The Supreme Duty Now.

The supreme duty of the hour is for us, the socialists of all the world, to dedicate ourselves anew to the imperishable principles of international socialism; to strengthen the bonds of working class solidarity; to deepen the currents of conscious internationalism; and to proclaim to the world a constructive program for permanent peace.

The socialists of America extend to the socialists of all the world our greetings and hail them all our brothers and our comrades.

To the socialists in lands still free from the blight of war we extend our greetings and the assurance of our readiness to join at once in the task of the reinforcement or reconstruction of the International upon such a basis that henceforth it cannot be shaken by the uttermost storms of nationalism and capitalist conflict.

To our comrades in the countries now rav-

aged by war, whose lands are bathed in blood and tears and bitterness — above the roar of cannon, we proclaim to you our firm unfaltering faith in international socialism.

We refuse to believe our comrades wholly false to the principles for which they have suffered so much and which they have labored so long to plant in the hearts of men. The tidal wave of nationalism may for the moment overwhelm, but it cannot destroy the ideals of international brotherhood which you have cherished. To you, also, we extend the summons of the constructive task that now awaits us.

To the socialist and labor forces in all the world and to all who cherish the ideals of justice and peace, we make our appeal believing that out of the ashes of this mighty conflagration will yet arise the deeper internationalism and the great democracy and peace.

As measures calculated to bring about these results, we urge the following:

OUR PROGRAM.

I. Terms of peace at close of present war must be such as to protect the nations from future wars and conserve the identity of the smaller nations.

1. No indemnities.
2. No transfer of territory, except upon consent and by vote of the people within the territory.

II. International Federation — United States of the World.

1. Court or courts for the settlement of all disputes between nations.
2. International congress, with legislative and administrative powers over international affairs, and with permanent committees in place of present secret diplomacy.
3. International police force.

III. National Disarmament.

1. National disarmament shall be effected immediately upon the adoption of the peace program by a sufficient number of nations, or by nations of sufficient power so that the international police force developed by the terms of the program shall be adequate to insure the protection of the disarmed.

2. No increase in existing armaments under any circumstances.

3. Pending complete disarmament the abolition of the manufacture of armaments and munitions of war for private profit.

4. International ownership and control of strategic waterways, such as the Dardanelles, Straits of Gibraltar, and the Suez, Panama, and Kiel Canals.

5. Neutralization of the seas.

IV. Extension of Democracy.

1. Political democracy.

- (a) The declaration of offensive war to be made only by direct vote of the people.
- (b) Abolition of secret diplomacy and the democratic control of foreign policies.
- (c) Universal suffrage, including woman suffrage.

2. Industrial democracy.

RADICAL SOCIAL CHANGES IN ALL COUNTRIES TO ELIMINATE THE ECONOMIC CAUSES OF WAR, such as

- (a) Federation of the working classes of the world in a league of peace.
- (b) Socialization of the national resources, public utilities, and fundamental equipment of industry of the nations.
- (c) Elimination of all unearned income.
- (d) Immediate and progressive amelioration of the conditions of labor.

V. Immediate Action.

1. Efforts to be made in every nation to secure the official adoption of the above program by the

governing bodies at the earliest possible date. The adoption of the program (contingent upon its acceptance by a sufficient number of the nations to ensure its success) to be immediately announced to the world as a standing offer of federation.

2. The federation of all the possible peace forces that can be united in behalf of the above program for active propaganda among all nations.

3. Efforts through the International and the national organizations of the Socialist Parties of all nations to secure universal cooperation of all socialists and labor organizations in the above program.



Socialism Must Triumph.

Comrades and workers of the world:

A new page of human history lies open before us. Upon it must be written the full message and meaning of Socialism — democracy, internationalism, and peace. No grater, nobler task has ever appealed to man.

With firm unfaltering faith in the future of our cause and the ultimate triumph of these principles, we call upon all who love justice and peace and human progress to join with us in this our effort to build a higher and nobler civilization.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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