

SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY OF CANADA

WHAT MEANS THIS STRIKE?

The Socialist Labor Party, being the only Party of Socialism in Canada, has no affiliation or association with the CCF, UPP, nor with any other party or group in this country.

The masses confronting the working class can be met only by organized resistance to the exploiting, ruthless masses of industry. But that resistance, to become effective, and in order to place the workers in an offensive instead of a defensive position, must manifest itself through powerful Socialist Industrial Unions as urged by the Socialist Labor Party, and the goal of Socialist freedom must be proclaimed by the working class thus organized. For there can never be peace, plenty and general social well-being without Socialism.

—ANNOA PERUMEN.

What. No Class Struggle?

So, there is no such thing as a class struggle in Canada. In poor, benighted Europe, perhaps, but not in Canada. Here the capitalists are workers and the workers, capitalists. We are all just one, big, happy family!

So say the defenders of "free enterprise." So say the apologists of wealth and privilege.

You striking workers know, or should know better. This strike is the clearest evidence that there is a class struggle in Canada, an irreconcilable and irresolvable class struggle, with the capitalists and their hangers-on aligned on one side and the workers on the other.

Do you doubt this? Then regard the hostility with which the whole capitalist class is united against you. Note the eagerness with which they respond to demands for anti-strike laws. Note how the capitalist press with one voice heaps abuse upon you, how the spokesmen of capitalism — the college professors, commentators and apologists — poison the so-called "popular" mind with nasty insinuations and vicious plans to "protect the public interest."

And who, pray, is the "public"? The great American Socialist and working class champion, Daniel De Leon, once answered this question. He said:

"Specious is the attempt to divide society into employed, employers, and a neutral 'public' between them. The division is false. There are no such three classes. There are but two, the employed class and the employing, and every individual must be in either one or the other. The 'public' is not a body aloof, and foreign to the interests of the struggle. As to the handful of employers, they know where their class interests lie. They are a unit against the strike. They will slander it, rant against it, print false news against it, and even, if necessary, levy contributions upon themselves to defeat it. No divisions there. Why, then, should the workers hold aloof?

"As has been seen, every branch of labor may become by turn engaged in a struggle to better its conditions. To speak of 'disinterestedness' and 'aloofness' under such circumstances is to speak of 'disinterestedness' and 'aloofness' to one branch of an army while its comrades are under fire. Every battalion of an army is directly concerned in the victory and defeat of every other battalion. The repulse of one is the repulse of all; the advance of one is an advance for all; the duty of each is to stand ready to support by all possible means every effort of all."

Fact is, the employing class just proceeds that it is the "public interest" they are worried about. The "public interest" gives them the pretext to pass repressive laws. It is useful, too, in intimidating strikers and in turning exhibiting, non-striking workers against them.

Why Capitalists Stick Together.

In reality, the employers have appraised the significance of these strikes better than the strikers themselves. They know that if the automobile and packing house industries and the other Leviathans of Canadian capitalism don't hold the line on wages, the line will give in other places, too. The more the line gives, the more it will encroach on their profits. It's like dividing an apple in half. If one half is larger, the other must be smaller. This is why the capitalists stick together. They know, if the workers do not, that strikers are manifestations of a fundamental conflict of interests between the workers, who perform all useful labor, and the owners of industry and their managerial stewards, who exist as parasites.

The capitalists are united against the workers. Why aren't the workers also united against the capitalists? Why, instead of being organized into a closed list capable of striking a blow, are they "organized" like five sore fingers on a hand — as De Leon once put it — and, therefore, fit only to show the flies away from the face of the capitalist class?

"Five-Sore-Fingers-on-a-Hand" Unionism.

The Socialist Labor Party has the unique distinction of being the only organization with the courage to face these questions squarely and to answer them forthrightly. The reason the working class is divided today like five-sore-fingers-on-a-hand is because its "unions" are not unions at all, but caricatures of capitalism. See for yourself. Does not your union teach the foolish theory — to which this strike gives the lie — that "capital and labor are brothers"? Isn't it true that, even now, when the labor leaders have climbed off their moral chairs and are playing at being "indignant," they never attack the capitalist system as such? Of course they don't! Instead, they denounce "bad employers," a "managerial clique," as being responsible for the strike! They try to make you think that if the corporation were run by "good employers," the wage issue would be settled promptly and all would live happily ever after.

Stuff and nonsense! It is not a question of "good employers" or "bad employers." It is a question of what all employers are compelled to do as a result of the competitive laws inherent in their system. Under this system, labor — or our ability to labor — is a commodity. The capitalists are under the compulsion of external, coercive economic laws to keep the price of labor power (wages) as low as possible. We workers, on the other hand, are under the compulsion of dire necessity constantly to fight against wage reductions (as we are doing now) and even to increase our price.

The Wages Struggle — A Vicious Circle.

And there's the rub! Being commodities — for our ability to labor resides in our muscles, brain, blood and bone — we also are subject to economic laws. One of these laws is supply and demand, and at this stage of capitalist decay this law operates adversely against us. Except in wartime (when the labor leaders collude with the capitalist and politicians to hold our wages down), there is always a surplus of workers on the market, which tends to depress the price of labor power just as a surplus of pigs tends to depress the price of pork. By a gallant effort, such as you are making now in waging this strike struggle, wages may be forced upward despite the weight of this labor surplus. But experience has shown that such victories are not enduring. Sooner or later, wages "adjust themselves to the market," and the struggle to raise them must begin all over again.

As long as we are organized on the basis of accepting capitalism as a *finality* (and all our present unions do accept capitalism as a *finality*), we are caught within this vicious circle. Worse, we are compelled to wage their skirmishes against the capitalist class with unions which are, essentially, job-trusts and which are controlled by capitalist labor fence-men who are, in fact, labor merchants.

Smash the Pro-Capitalist Union!

We say the time has come to junk these capitalist caricatures which tell us the capitalist is entitled to a "fair" profit! We say the time has come when we must face the fact that all profit is robbery, and that the wealth in the hands of the capitalist class represents past stealings! We say the time has come to organize a union based on realities — a union which aims to wrest from the robber class its accumulated plunder, a union whose goal is not a "fair day's wage" but the abolition of the wage system!

As such a union unites the workers economically, so will it unite them politically to use the ballot, not to elect "friends" who betray us, but to demand that the capitalist class get off our backs. It is a union with a vision and an aim in keeping with this industrial age of potential plenty. Finally, it is a union which projects a new form of government, a complete economic democracy, in which Industrial Union Councils, elected and controlled by the rank and file, replace the outworn organs of the capitalist political State.

Build the Workers' Power!

Revolutionary Industrial Unionism is the workers' power! It organizes the working class, employed and unemployed, skilled and unskilled, wage slaves of all races and colors, into ONE BODY aiming for ONE GOAL — an Industrial Republic of Labor. It is the only unionism in which the lofty slogan, "an injury to one is the concern of all," can have practical application.

Consider it, you who brave the rigors and dangers of the picket line! Reflect! Here we are, fighting bravely for a living wage, just as our fathers and grandfathers before us fought for a living wage — —and just as our sons will fight if class rule is prolonged. And we are aiming for this paltry goal at a time and in an age when security with super-abundance, plus the most complete democracy man has ever known, are ours for the taking. Consider it! Reflect! Join in this enlightened struggle for a Workers' World! ORGANIZE THE SOCIALIST INDUSTRIAL UNION! Organize to take over the industries to operate them for the producers, for the benefit of society, and to save civilization from a catastrophe!



The ARM AND HAMMER symbol originated in America. It was adopted by the S.L.P. as an election emblem late in the last century, possibly about 1902. Consequently it has no connection with the 1917 Russian Revolution-created strike and banner which now represents Russian slavery and despotism. The S.L.P. ARM AND HAMMER emblemizes labor, that is, all those who work for wages. Therefore it stands for the workers who produce all social values and, so rich, contribute the least developed and the most useful class revolution has ever turned out.

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