

Labor and Organization

The Function of the Federated Labor Party

[By M. S.]

WHEN a proposition to form any new organization in a community, such as a church, a Kiwanis or Rotary club, a new chapter of the I. O. D. E., or even a labor political unit or organization I think that we are justified in questioning the need for such a centre of activity. So far as local branches of the Federated Labor party are concerned, I am convinced that they can become a valuable factor in the social, intellectual and economic life of the people in the district in which they are formed. I therefore propose, in this article, to submit to you my reasons for this conclusion, and ask you to give them your consideration, especially if you are in doubt as to what your attitude towards this movement should be.

The Federated Labor party is a unit of that young and virile political force known as "labor." As such it promised and proposes in its platform, and by its ideals to govern the people by constitutional and parliamentary methods, free from graft, corruption and capitalistic dominance, because its platform is founded on socialism, and socialism is an idealism of industrial and political economy, cherished by an educational democracy in opposition to the present system of human exploitation as practised by a capitalistic autocracy.

It must be obvious to the most casual observer, and especially those of us who have viewed conditions existent in the crowded industrial centres of the European and eastern countries, that the capitalist system has failed to utilize natural resources and productive power, and to provide from them a standard of existence in harmony with the natural aspirations of an intelligent people.

When we remember the glib promises given by our hoary politicians and diplomats in the early days of the great war, how, when our manhood marched to death, and our women and children remained at home to face lives of lonesome sorrow, when through the fires of Armageddon and through the torture of a million souls on the battlefields of Europe, a fairer existence would arise, we question their knowledge or sincerity. They promised that in the serenity of peace, labor would receive its just reward, and the world would be made a place fit for heroes, for men and women to live in. When we remember these promises, and look about us to see their fulfilment, what do we find?

A world crushed by a load of debt, from which it would seem impossible to arise. Our children's children saddled with the responsibility of the interest on that debt, which goes on and on in a vicious circle from which we can never escape. Unemployment in unprecedented volume, sapping the life blood and ambition from the workers. The rumblings of war, and the invention and manufacture of fiendish engines of destruction becoming more prevalent day by day. Commissions and enquiries in every country sitting in futile efforts to place responsibility for graft and

bare-faced exploitation, and above all, a system of education deliberately planned and maintained for the purpose of fostering and increasing the power of the vested interests that sit enthroned in every legislature. Examine the composition of the so-called democratic governments, Italy in the hands of the Fascisti, openly pledged to the perpetuation of capitalism, and the degradation of organized labor in every shape and form. France and Germany still controlled by the militarist castes that launched the cataclysm of 1914. America, the land of freedom, with its conglomeration of Wall street financial junkers, swaying the lives and destinies of millions from Washington. In Britain we find the "die-hards" of an obsolete system, based on the superiority of autocracy and wealth, fighting desperately to retain their prestige against the onslaught of a new democracy, while Russia alone among the nations, facing the opposition of a world with its capitalist-owned military forces arrayed against her, pursues her definite path, towards the goal of an idealistic objective. There is, no doubt, that the Russian soviet government, though an uneducated democracy, when it was hurled into power, on the crest of one of the bloodiest revolutions that has ever shaken the foundations of humanity is, as it gains intelligence and experience by the responsibilities of its position, demonstrating to the political monopolies of capitalism, that evolution, even though evolution must finally displace and supersede that older system of oppression which our socialism seeks to abolish by capitalistic methods.

Do not mistake my eulogy of Russian sovietism for advocacy of its revolutionary propaganda. I am still proud to believe that we of the Anglo-Saxon race have long passed the stage where force appeals to reason. The parliamentary labor party, as we know it, in Great Britain and the dominions, points the way to emancipation through a cultural revolution, based on the education of the people. The citizens of today are the men and women of the factories, the workshops and the offices, of the forests, the fields and the mines, the workers and the thinkers. The social order of today must meet the challenge of this citizenry. There can be no compromise with the exploitation of men and women and children, with long hours and low wages. There can be no compromise with the denial of education. There can be no compromise with unemployment arising out of social conditions, because such conditions are a disgrace to the nations that suffer under them.

These problems and their solutions is the platform of the labor party. The solutions demand a complete change in our social and economic life. How, when and where this change can be made, is part of the educative programme which political labor submits to its followers.

The Federated Labor party seeks

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to place this educational propoganda in the lives and the homes of those who live in the districts in which this movement functions. If we are in full sympathy with the movement, let us prove it by our diligence in study. Let us prove it by our loyalty at the ballot-box. Let us prove it by our energy and enthusiasm displayed in the interests of humankind. No other movement affords us so great an opportunity for real service to our fellowmen.
