

B. C. Socialist Party Headquarters,  
120 Powell St., Vancouver, Dec. 28, 1901.  
Editor Socialist:

While the executive appreciate the fatherly interest you take in our local movement, as shown by your scare-head article of last week, yet we think it unfortunate that you were not more familiar with all the facts of the case and jumped to wrong conclusions upon insufficient knowledge. The executive in submitting the proposed platform of immediate demands for this province has no intention of ignoring the fundamental principles of Socialism or repudiating the action of our convention in adopting a modified form of U. S. Socialist Party platform as a statement of our principles. The local demands are not intended to supplant but to supplement our main platform.

The executive have made arrangements to have our general statement of principles printed on the reverse side of the leaflet on which will be stated the local platform and constitution, when the latter shall have been adopted.

There was no necessity for prefacing our local demands with a repetition of stock phrases concerning the international Socialist movement and the class-conscious proletariat, because these were already embodied in the declaration adopted by our convention in October last. As the time of this convention was limited, there was no opportunity to draft a platform of immediate demands to meet local conditions or a constitution for the party, the executive were empowered to draft these and submit them to the membership for approval or rejection. This is what we have done. Whether this local platform is adopted or not, the U. S. platform as adopted by our convention will remain the official statement of principles until supplanted by action of a convention or a referendum vote of our membership.

Now for a few words apart from my official capacity. My Socialism is of a more elastic quality than that of some ultra-orthodox comrades, who have reduced Socialism from a philosophy to a creed, and regard the slightest questioning of their tenets and dogmas as heresy of the most outrageous type. We have now entered upon an era when the principles of Socialism will have to be applied to our daily life. This work is right before us and will not commence—as so many of the comrades imagine—after some industrial catastrophe has occurred in which the economic fabric of capitalism will fall to pieces, leaving the ground free and clear for Socialism: on the contrary, we have to grow into Socialism from present conditions, just as feudalism grew into commercialism, clearing away the rubbish of obsolete capitalism on the one hand and laying the foundations for the temple of industrial democracy wherever we can find chance to work. This concurrent process of development and decay takes place in all organic life, not excepting the institutions of society itself.

Constructive practical work is of far more service than revolutionary air fanning or unintelligent repetition of stock phrases or revolutionary jargon.

Yours for Socialism,  
ERNEST BURNS, Secretary.

"MIDDLE AND UPPER CLASSES," TOO.

Vancouver, B. C., Jan. 5, 1902.  
Editor of Socialist:

Dear Comrade: I think it only fair and right that I should be allowed to reply to your criticism of B. C. provincial platform in my own language. Therefore, if my letter was crowded out through lack of space in your last issue, I hope to see it printed in the next. The word "people" to which you take exception is an error; the word "producers" was the one adopted by the executive. I corrected this mistake in most of the copies sent to locals, but I suppose must have failed to do so in your case. As your paper claims to stand for free discussion of Socialist principles, I wish to take exception to some of the positions stated in your article on "Socialism as Politics."

In the first place, I contend that Socialism does draw its adherents from all classes. What little personal experience I have had of this movement in Great Britain, the United States and Canada, has shown that the middle and upper classes contribute just as large a percentage of their class as workers for our cause as the proletariat itself. Socialism, while primarily a movement for the benefit of the wage-earning class, is in its ultimate conclusion a movement for the benefit of humanity. Excessive wealth and power is just as destructive of the highest physical, intellectual and moral well being of the plutocracy as poverty and oppression are of the highest interest of workers. In other words, the class interest of the proletariat coincides

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with the highest and best interests of humanity. Therefore, those of the exploiting classes who are fortunate and wise enough to see their ultimate self-interest (as apart from their apparent class interest) are just as liable to work heroically for the cause of industrial freedom as the most down-trodden class-conscious wage-earner.

One word more in conclusion. There is in our large industrial centers a section of the proletariat that is not only useless but reactionary to the revolutionary movement. The slums are the recruiting grounds for Pinkertons, scabs, deputy sheriffs and other defenders of capitalism. This large class of proletarians, usually designated as the "whisky vote" made up of paupers, prostitutes, pimps, criminals and gamblers, while in every sense proletarians and victims of unjust social conditions, still can never furnish any strength to our cause, and will usually be found voting obediently to the dictates of their oppressors.

It is the more intelligent of the working classes, and those farmers and small traders (the latter paying vast tribute to the trusts and combines) that will constitute the main battalions in the army of industrial emancipation.

Yours for a broader Socialism,  
ERNEST BURNS,  
Secy. B. C. Exec. Com.

(Comments on these two letters will be found on second page.—Ed.)

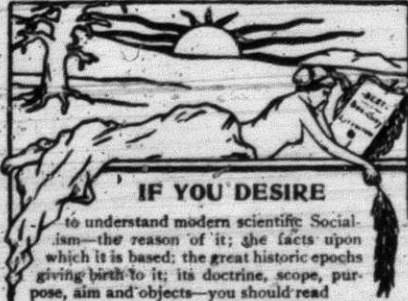
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