
Against Fusion (May 14, 1898)

Spring Valley, Ill., May 14, 1898.

Notwithstanding our repeated declarations as to the attitude of the Social Democracy in respect to fusion with other political parties, there are still those who persist in misunderstanding our position.

The Social Democracy is a socialist party and is pledged to the principles of socialism. It can not and will not fuse with any capitalist party, by whatever name it may be called. As special allusion to the Populist party¹ is made by our inquirers, let it be said that the Populist party is a capitalist party and the Social Democracy will not fuse with it any more than it will with the Republican or Democratic party.

It is urged by some that we should encourage alliance with the Populist party because it inclines in our direction. Their advice, if followed, would wreck our party. If socialism is right, Populists should become socialists and join the Social Democracy. If they are not ready to do this they are not socialists, and hence opposed to socialism, and fusion with their party would result in inevitable disaster.

The only object of such fusion would be the securing of office — the loaves and fishes. We are not after office, we want socialism. We care nothing about office except in so far as it represents the triumph of socialism.

Therefore, be it understood once and for all that the Social Democracy will not fuse with any party that does not stand for pure socialism, and there will be no departure from this policy.

There are thousands who are not swept from their feet by the war craze.² They realize that war is national murder, that the poor furnish the victims, and that whatever the outcome may be the effect is always the same upon the toiling class.

In 1894 the press denounced us [American Railroad Union] for the alleged reason that we were murderous and bloodthirsty, and now the same press denounce us [Social Democracy of America] because we are not.

We are opposed to war, but if it ever becomes necessary for us to enlist in the murderous business it will be to wipe out capitalism, the common enemy of the oppressed and downtrodden in all countries.

We are not afflicted with the kind of patriotism which makes the slaves of our nation itch to murder the slaves of another nation in the interest of a plutocracy that wields the same lash over them all.

It seems not a little singular that thousands are so patriotic (!) in a country in which the only interest they have is six feet in a potter's field.

Workingmen of America, do not be deceived. Do not permit the booming of the cannon to silence your agitation. Beneath it all the real warfare for humanity is being waged. The millions of suffering poor in America appeal just as strongly for emancipation from the hellish conditions inflicted by capitalism as do the starving reconcentrados³ on the ill-fated island of Cuba.

A splendid branch with a charter membership of 34 was organized here last night. They are all bright and active young fellows and will give a creditable account of themselves. Other branches will follow rapidly until we have the whole mining district solidly organized.

Our first national convention meets June 7. It is hoped that each branch will be represented. A national platform will be adopted and the constitution will be amended to meet demands. We confidently look forward to our first national convention as a socialist convention of such character and proportion as to immensely strengthen the movement and inspire the whole membership with fresh zeal in the cause.

Published in *The Social Democrat*, vol. 5, no. 20 (May 19, 1898), pg. 1.

¹ That is, the People's Party.

² The Congressional declaration that launched the Spanish-American War was passed April 25, 1898. Hostilities ended on Aug. 12 of that same year.

³ *Reconcentrateds*, a name given by the Spanish military occupation to those members the non-combatant Cuban rural population who were forcibly moved to new locations clustered around fortified cities during the 1895-1898 armed struggle for Cuban liberation. The reconcentration campaign, an effort to isolate anti-Spanish guerrilla forces in the countryside, resulted the death of 30 percent of those so relocated due to inadequate food and bad sanitation .