

The American Left Wing in Action

By N. I. Hourwich

THE hitherto scattered efforts and manifestations of personal dissatisfaction and discontent with the opportunistic policy of the Socialist Party, are now assuming a definite and organized expression. The development of the Left Wing Section of the Socialist Party of New York City, the adoption of its Manifesto and Program by local after local of the Socialist Party,—all this is unifying the opposition and the revolutionary elements, developing a common struggle to turn the party into its proper revolutionary course. And this course is the course outlined by the creators of the proletarian International, Marx and Engels.

In common with the majority of the modern Socialist Parties, created and developing in a *milieu* of bourgeois parliamentarism, the American Socialist Party in its present official form and policy, is the product of an "adaptation" of the revolutionary ideals and policy of a Socialist Party to the capitalist state, the product of "growing into" Capitalism of the Socialist movement, becoming a "lawful" and integral part of Capitalism. The "parliamentary state" must have political parties. And one of these parliamentary (but in no sense revolutionary) parties is the present Socialist Party. It represents, in itself, nothing but a form of opposition to "His Majesty"—bourgeois society.

Precisely as all other social-opportunist Socialist parties, the American party is, in the words of the Manifesto of the Left Wing, the product of mixing real Socialism with bourgeois reforms; it is "sausage Socialism," in the apt words of Rosa Luxemburg.

As the Left Wing Manifesto again phrases it, the American Socialist Party, in common with its European affiliations, hopes to "legislate Capitalism out of office." It hopes to "win the class struggle in capitalist legislative institutions."

The complexity of the mass struggle of the proletariat, which, in the words of the Communist Manifesto, is at the same time a political struggle; the political struggle of the proletariat the meaning and object of which should be the seizure of power, the abolition of the bourgeois class state and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat,—all these vital phases of Socialism the party has officially cramped into the narrow and stultifying limits of the parliamentary struggle, of the Socialist "parliamentarians." The lesson of the Paris Commune, summarized by Marx in the words, "The working class cannot lay hold of the ready-made machinery of the bourgeois state and use it for its purposes," has been lost completely to the official leaders of the Socialist Party, to moderate Socialism in general. Neither did they learn from the collapse of the second International, from the four and a half years of the world war. Truly it can be said of them that they have forgotten nothing and learned nothing. As a protest against this degradation and profanation of Socialism, there has developed the mass movement of the Left Wing within the party. To this mass movement belongs the future, and it imposes an obligation on all revolutionary Socialists, on all Bolsheviks in the party, to rally to its cause—to conquer the party for revolutionary Socialism.

eral cost—and the preacher. Just \$9 coming from the company, and you owe the grocer \$13? And no bread in the house when you come back from the....

And there are thousands like that—millions.

* * *

Yes I heard them in their secret chambers—I heard them plot the big butcher program. It was Capitalism in league with Satan. Sometime I shall tell you the whole story.

Now the boys are coming home. We greet you and cheer you. Your heart was right and you placed your life on the altar of Democracy. You were on the square—but Capitalism didn't play square with you. Capitalism aimed at your heart when you went out and Capitalism is stabbing you in the back as you return.

I was with you in the camps where you endured the humiliation of slaves under the uppish idiocy of snobs, and in the trenches where you tried to dodge death among the corpses of your comrades.

And I am with you now when you are hunting jobs among your masters and where you are sitting full of sores at the rich man's feet, picking crumbs that perchance may fall from his table, while the profiteering dogs are licking a few more drops of blood from your bleeding bodies.

And there are millions of you—nearly four million of you.

I am not going to the homes that Capitalism has wrecked—the hearts it has broken that can never heal. I can't.

I am not discouraged. For the fetters of this dungeon are wonderfully elastic—and generous. They let me out upon the mountains of vision and let me roam over the plains of reality. I go to the Bethlehem stable—to the inn at Petrograd and Moscow—to the hillsides of Riga and Archangel where the Russian shepherds have seen the star and where the hosts of the proletariat are shouting their great hosannas to the new-born Comrade of Peace—the new-born spirit of good will to men—the new-born passion of a new love.

I shout with you in the ecstasy of joy. I clasp you in my arms and cry and shout. I sing and dance and weep and laugh and behave as you do. For we have been bound and oppressed and hounded so long, and now we have torn down the throne of the Czar and his tyranny, and hurled Capitalism from its citadel into outer darkness where there is gnashing of teeth. We have reared up the monument of Liberty and established the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

And with you I go into all the world and preach this gospel to every worker—beginning with Germany—then to Italy and France—England and America—to every race and kindred and tongue.

And, behold, the all-conquering power of the new affection shall sweep like a mighty wind over the earth, and the masses shall be stirred to action against every onslaught of the master class.

Unflinching, determined, inspired, victor-proud,—resolved to snap our chains—we rush headlong against all the hell and all the demons of tyranny and oppression.

We have won.

We come rejoicing—we have gained the world—we lay it at the feet of a free humanity.