

The Left Wing in the American Socialist Party

By Nicholas I. Hourwich

THE great epoch through which we are passing; an epoch of the breaking up and destruction of everything old, old foundations and forms of life, old conceptions and principles; has not spared the old Socialist parties.

The war and the consequent revolutionary events have proved to be that acid test at which the former "unity" of the Socialist parties has been broken, and those social elements and groups which so recently were observed to live peacefully and in "solidarity" under one Socialistic roof, under the guise of a common Socialist name, are found to be now in different, and at times, opposing camps.

On one hand, to the left Socialist camp have gone those real revolutionary elements which during the long years of preliminary "peaceful" activity have not lost their proletarian banners, for whom the great principles and slogans, which know no compromises or reconciliations in the struggle of the working class for the ultimate emancipation, have not changed into a decorative adjutant without any sense or practical significance. On the other hand, to the right, were found those traitors to Socialism who have gone over to serve the bourgeoisie, who for the pottage of imaginary fleeting successes and gains sold out the birth-right of the ultimate aspirations and aims of the working class, who concluded "a civil peace" with the bourgeoisie thereby declaring war against the working class. . . .

This process of internal decomposition which inevitably leads, and in many cases has already brought about an open split, touched all Socialist parties without exception. In Russia and Germany, for instance, the elements thus split, elements which had hitherto

"united" in the social democratic parties, stand now arrayed against each other on opposite sides of the barricades, arms in hands,—one part defending the revolutionary gains already obtained by the proletariat and clearing, as it were, the road to further victories over world Imperialism; while the others function in the inglorious and shameless role of the defenders of Imperialism and the bourgeoisie.

And, precisely the fact, that in the two countries where the revolution is in action, where the proleta-

riat have dealt an especially strong blow at the domination of the bourgeoisie,—the split between the "left" and the "right" phalanxes of the at one time united Socialist parties has reached the stage of open war,—is deeply significant. This fact destroys the fetish that a "united" Socialist Party was the all important necessity and on the contrary proves that such an "unlawful union" of elements fundamentally different in an "united" party is the chief weakness of the Socialist movement and is a continual burden on the revolutionary wing of the party. The split in the Socialist parties of Russia and Germany, did not weaken, but on the contrary, strengthened the left wing and made it capable of revolutionary actions. The same applies to the other Socialist parties.

The war has dealt the first mighty blow at the structure of the Second International. Now before the social builders and architects of the future lies the hard, but nevertheless inevitable, task of completing the process of destruction and building upon the ruins the firmer and more stable structure of the Third International.

The same task lies before the American Socialist Party, and as the first step towards the realization of this task I heartily greet the creation within its ranks of the bearer of the revolutionary message—the left wing of the party.

The timely creation of this wing and its successful growth will be the guarantee that at the proper moment the party will be enabled to reach the accomplishment of the task imposed upon it by history and will not be tied hand and foot by the old, rust-eaten opportunism or the collaboration of elements which are no longer Socialist.

To Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg

By Maximilian Cohen

*They slew you in their beastly rage,
Because you dared the struggle wage
With tyrants and with traitors too—
The traitors feared and so they slew.
Deluded knaves! Your lifeless tongues
More potent now in martyr songs
Will trumpet forth the truth until,
The very earth will rock and thrill
And thrones and states will crash and fall—
And labor triumphs over all.*

* * *

*So comrades sleep—your work is done;
Sleep on! The battle will be won.*