

## Report of Louis C. Fraina, International Secretary of the Communist Party of America, to the Executive Committee of the Communist International.

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As the war continued and the betrayal of Socialism became more apparent, and particularly as the American comrades learned of the revolutionary minority elements in the European movement, there was a revolutionary awakening in the Socialist Party, strengthened by new accessions of proletarian elements to the party. The first organized expression of this awakening was the formation of the Socialist Propaganda League in Boston, in 1916, issuing a weekly organ which afterwards became "The New International," with Louis C. Fraina as Editor and S. J. Rutgers as Associate. The League emphasized the necessity of new proletarian tactics in the epoch of Imperialism. In April, 1917, was started "The Class Struggle," a magazine devoted to International Socialism. In the State of Michigan, the anti-reformists captured the Socialist Party, and carried on a non-reformist agitation, particularly in "The Proletarian."

The enormous exports of war munitions, the development of large reserves of surplus capital, and the assumption of a position of world power financially by American Capitalism forced the United States into the war. There was an immediate revolutionary upsurge in the Socialist Party. The St. Louis Convention of the Party, in April, 1917, adopted a militant declaration against the war, forced upon a reluctant bureaucracy by the revolutionary membership. But this bureaucracy sabotaged the declaration. It adopted a policy of petty bourgeois pacifism, uniting with the liberal People's Council, which subsequently accepted President Wilson's "14 points" as its own program. Moreover, there was a minority on the National Executive Committee in favor of the war; in August, 1918, the vote in the N. E. C. stood 4 to 4 on repudiation of the St. Louis Declaration. The Socialist Party's only representative in Congress, Meyer London, openly supported the war and flouted the party's declaration against the war; but he was neither disciplined nor expelled, in fact secured a renomination. Morris Hillquit accepted the declaration against the war, but converted it into bourgeois pacifism, being a prominent member of the People's Council. In reply to a question whether, if a member of Congress, he would have voted in favor of war, Hillquit answered ("The New Republic," December 1, 1917): "If I had believed that our participation would shorten the world war and force a better, more democratic and more durable peace, I should have favored the measure, regardless of the cost and sacrifices of America. My opposition to our entry into the war was based upon the conviction that it would prolong the disastrous conflict without compensating gains to humanity." This was a complete abandonment of the class struggle and the Socialist conception of war. The war was a test of the Socialist Party and proved it officially a party of vicious centrism.

The Russian Revolution was another test of the party. Officially, the Socialist Party was for the Menshevik policy and enthusiastic about Kerensky; while the New York "Call," Socialist Party daily newspaper in New York City, editorially characterized Comrade Lenin and the Bolsheviks, in June, 1917, as "anarchists." The party officially was silent about the November Revolution; it was silent about the Soviet Government's proposal for an armistice on all fronts, although the National Executive Committee of the Party met in December and should have acted vigorously, mobilizing the party for the armistice. But the revolutionary membership responded, its enthusiasm for the Bolshevik Revolution being magnificent. This enthusiasm forced the party representatives to speak in favor of the Bolsheviks, but always in general terms capable of "interpretation." After the Brest-Litovsk peace, there was a sentiment among the party representatives for war against Germany "to save the Russian Revolution."

The Socialist Party carried on an active campaign against intervention in Russia. However, this campaign did not emphasize the revolutionary implications of the situation in Russia, as making mandatory the reconstruction of the Socialist movement. A campaign against intervention must proceed as a phase of the general campaign to develop revolutionary proletarian action.

### 3. The Left Wing Develops.

During 1918 the Socialist Party was in ferment. The membership was more and more coming to think in revolutionary terms. Then came the armistice and the German Revolution. The response was immediate. On November 7, 1918, a Communist Propaganda League was organized in Chicago. On November 9 Local Boston, Socialist Party, started to issue an agitational paper, "The Revolutionary Age." This paper immediately issued a call to the party for the adoption of revolutionary Communist tactics, emphasizing that the emergence of the proletariat into the epoch of the world revolution made absolutely imperative the reconstruction of Socialism. In New York City, in February 1919, there was organized the Left Wing Section of the Socialist Party. Its Left Wing Manifesto and Program was adopted by local after local of the Socialist Party, the Left Wing acquiring a definite expression. The Left Wing secured the immediate adhesion of the Lettish, Russian, Lithuanian, Polish, Ukrainian, South Slavic, Hungarian and Estonian Federations of the party, representing about 25,000 members. The official organs of the Federations did splendid work for the Left Wing.

In January, 1919, the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party decided to send delegates to the Berne Congress of the Great Betrayal. This action was characteristic of the social-patriot and centrist bent of the party administration. There was an immediate protest from the membership, the Left Wing using the Berne Congress as again emphasizing the necessity for the revolutionary reconstruction of Socialism. In March we received a copy of the call issued by the Communist Party of Russia for an international congress to organize a new International. "The Revolutionary Age" was the first to print the call, yielding it immediate adhesion; while the Left Wing Section of New York City transmitted credentials to S. J. Rutgers to represent it at the congress. Local Boston initiated a motion for a referendum to affiliate the party with the Third International; this was thrown out by the national administration of the party on a technicality; but after much delay another local succeeded in securing a referendum. (The vote was overwhelmingly in favor of the Third International.)

The Left Wing was now, although still without a definite organization, a formidable power in the Socialist Party. Previously all revolts in the party were isolated or consisted purely of theoretical criticism; now there was this theoretical criticism united with a developing organization expression. There was not, as yet, any general conception of the organization of a new party; it was a struggle for power within the Socialist Party.

About this time the call for the new Socialist Party elections was issued. The Left Wing decided upon its own candidates. The elections constituted an overwhelming victory for the Left Wing. The national administration of the Socialist Party, realizing the impending disaster, decided upon desperate measures. Branch after branch and local after local of the party, which had adopted the Left Wing Manifesto and Program, was expelled. Morris Hillquit issued a declaration that the breach in the party had become irreconcilable, and that the only solution was to split, each faction organizing its own party. At first the expulsions were on a small scale; then, the danger be-

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