

Manifesto of the Left Wing Section of

THE members of the Socialist Party are entitled to an explanation for the issuance of this pamphlet by the Left Wing Section.

We are a very active and growing section of the Socialist Party who are attempting to reach the rank and file with our urgent message over the heads of the powers that be, who, through inertia or a lack of vision, cannot see the necessity for a critical analysis of the party's policies and tactics.

The official Socialist Party press is in the main closed to us; therefore, we cannot adequately present our side of the case.

In the various discussions that arise wherever party members or delegates assemble, both sides grow too heated for calm dispassionate judgment.

Therefore we have decided to issue our Manifesto and Program in pamphlet form, so that the rank and file may read and judge our case on its merits.

Comrades—and this is addressed to members of the party—the situation is such that a careful study of our position is absolutely imperative.

MANIFESTO

Prior to August, 1914, the nations of the world lived on a volcano. Violent eruptions from time to time gave warning of the cataclysm to come, but the diplomats and statesmen managed to localize the outbreaks, and the masses, slightly aroused, sank back into their accustomed lethargy with doubts and misgivings, and the subterranean fires continued to smoulder.

Many trusted blindly—some in their statesmen, some in the cohesive power of Christianity, their common religion, and some in the growing strength of the international Socialist movement. Had not the German Social-Democracy exchanged dramatic telegrams with the French Socialist Party, each pledging itself not to fight in case their governments declared war on each other? A general strike of workers led by these determined Socialists would quickly bring the governments to their senses!

So the workers reasoned, until the thunder-clap of Sarajevo and Austria's ultimatum to Serbia. Then, suddenly, the storm broke. Mobilization everywhere. Everywhere declarations of war. In three or four days Europe was in arms.

The present structure of society—Capitalism—with its pretensions to democracy on the one hand, and its commercial rivalries, armaments rings and standing armies on the other, all based on the exploitation of the working class and the division of the loot, was cast into the furnace of war. Two things only could issue forth: either international capitalist control, through a League of Nations, or Social Revolution and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Both of these forces are to-day contending for world power.

The Social Democracies of Europe, unable or unwilling to meet the crisis, were themselves hurled into the conflagration, to be tempered or consumed by it.

THE COLLAPSE OF THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL

Great demonstrations were held in every European country by Socialists protesting against their governments' declarations of war, and mobilizations for war. And we know that these demonstrations were rendered impotent by the complete surrender of the Socialist parliamentary leaders and the official Socialist press, with their "justifications" of "defensive wars" and the safeguarding of "democracy."

Why the sudden change of front? Why did the Socialist leaders in the parliaments of the belligerents vote the war credits? Why did not Moderate Socialism carry out the policy of the Basle Manifesto, namely: the converting of an imperialistic war into a civil war—into a proletarian revolution? Why did it either openly favor the war or adopt a policy of petty-bourgeois pacifism?

THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERATE "SOCIALISM"

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, the Social-Democracies of Europe set out to "legislate Capitalism out of office." The class struggle was to be won in the capitalist legislatures. Step by step concessions were to be wrested from the state; the working class and the Socialist parties were to be strengthened by means of "constructive" reform and social legislation; each concession would act as a rung in the ladder of Social Revolution, upon which the workers could climb step by step, until finally, some bright sunny morning, the peoples would awaken to find the Cooperative Commonwealth functioning without disorder, confusion or hitch on the ruins of the capitalist state.

And what happened? When a few legislative seats had been secured, the thunderous denunciations of the Socialist legislators suddenly ceased. No more were the parliaments used as platforms from which the challenge of revolutionary Socialism was flung to all

FOREWORD

The Manifesto and Program of the Left Wing Section of the Greater New York locals of the Socialist Party, printed in *The Revolutionary Age* of February 8, was amended at a convention of the Left Wing held in New York City February 16. It was a mass convention of the membership, with fraternal delegates from Local Boston and other locals. The final version of the Manifesto is printed herewith.

The convention also adopted two resolutions. One was a resolution endorsing *The Revolutionary Age*, which follows:

"Resolved, that *The Revolutionary Age* be endorsed by the Left Wing Section of New York, and that our Executive Committee take up the details of co-operation with the management of *The Revolutionary Age*." The other resolution was on the "Amnesty Convention" which is to meet May 1:

"We denounce the action of the party's National Executive Committee in issuing a call for a so-called 'amnesty convention' in May, as a substitute for an emergency national convention and to baffle the will of the membership. This 'amnesty convention' is to be held by the party together with reactionary bourgeois 'liberal' organizations—but this issue, and all other issues, must be acted upon on the basis of the Socialist class struggle. An emergency national convention of the party is necessary. We repudiate the proposed 'amnesty convention'."

This manifesto has already been accepted by a number of locals of the Socialist Party. Communications should be sent to the Executive Secretary, Maximilian Cohen, 43 West 29 Street, New York, N. Y.

the corners of Europe. Another era had set in, the era of "constructive" social reform legislation. Dominant Moderate Socialism accepted the bourgeois state as the basis of its action and strengthened that state. All power to shape the policies and tactics of the Socialist parties was entrusted to the parliamentary leaders. And these lost sight of Socialism's original purpose; their goal became "constructive reforms" and cabinet portfolios—the "cooperation of classes," the policy of openly or tacitly declaring that the coming of Socialism was a concern "of all the classes," instead of emphasizing the Marxian policy that the construction of the Socialist system is the task of the revolutionary proletariat alone. "Moderate Socialism" in the hands of these parliamentary leaders, was now ready to share responsibility with the bourgeoisie in the control of the capitalist state, even to the extent of defending the bourgeoisie against the working class—as in the first Briand Ministry in France, when the official party press was opened to a defense of the shooting of striking railway-workers at the order of the Socialist-Bourgeois Coalition Cabinet.

"SAUSAGE SOCIALISM"

This situation was brought about by mixing the democratic cant of the eighteenth century with scientific Socialism. The result was what Rosa Luxemburg called "sausage Socialism." The "Moderates" emphasized petty-bourgeois social reformism in order to attract tradesmen, shop-keepers and members of the professions, and, of course, the latter flocked to the Socialist movement in great numbers, seeking relief from the constant grinding between corporate capital and awakening labor.

The Socialist organizations actively competed for votes, on the basis of social reforms, with the bourgeois-liberal political parties. And so they catered to the ignorance and prejudices of the workers, trading promises of immediate reforms for votes.

Dominant "Moderate Socialism" forgot the teachings of the founders of scientific Socialism, forgot its function as a proletarian movement—"the most resolute and advanced section of the working class parties"—and permitted the bourgeois and self-seeking trade union elements to shape its policies and tactics. This was the condition in which the Social-Democracies of Europe found themselves at the outbreak of war in 1914. Demoralized and confused by the cross-currents within their own parties, vacillating and compromising with the bourgeois state, they fell a prey to social-patriotism and nationalism.

SPARTICIDES AND BOLSHEVIKI

But revolutionary Socialism was not destined to lie inert for long. In Germany, Karl Liebknecht, Franz Mehring, Rosa Luxemburg and Otto Ruhle organized the Spartacus Group. But their voices were drowned in the roar of cannon and the shriek of the dying and the maimed.

Russia, however, was to be the first battle-ground where "moderate" and revolutionary Socialism should come to grips for the mastery of the state. The breakdown of the corrupt, bureaucratic Czarist regime opened the flood-gates of Revolution.

Three main contending parties attempted to ride into power on the revolutionary tide; the Cadets, the "moderate-Socialists" (Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionists), and the revolutionary Socialists—the Bolsheviks. The Cadets were first to be swept into power; but they tried to stem the still-rising flood with a few

abstract political ideals, and were soon carried away. The soldiers, workers and peasants could no longer be fooled by phrases. The Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries succeeded the Cadets. And now came the crucial test: would they, in accord with Marxian teachings, make themselves the ruling class and sweep away the old conditions of production, and thus prepare the way for the Cooperative Commonwealth? Or would they tinker with the old machinery and try to foist it on the masses as something just as good?

They did the latter and proved for all time that "moderate Socialism" cannot be trusted.

"Moderate Socialism" was not prepared to seize the power for the workers during a revolution. "Moderate Socialism" had a rigid formula—"constructive social reform legislation within the capitalist state" and to that formula it clung. It believed that bourgeois democracy could be used as a means of constructing the Socialist system; therefore, it must wait until the people, through a Constituent Assembly, should vote Socialism into existence. And in the meantime, it held that there must be established a Government of Coalition with the enemy, the bourgeoisie. As if, with all the means of controlling public opinion in the hands of the bourgeoisie, a Constituent Assembly could or would ever vote the Socialists into power!

Revolutionary Socialists hold, with the founders of scientific Socialism, that there are two dominant classes in society—the bourgeoisie and the proletariat; that between these two classes a struggle must go on, until the working class, through the seizure of the instruments of production and distribution, the abolition of the capitalist state, and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, creates a Socialist system. Revolutionary Socialists do not believe that they can be voted into power. They struggle for the conquest of power by the revolutionary proletariat. Then comes the transition period from Capitalism to Socialism, of which Marx speaks in his "Critique of the Gotha Program" when he says: "Between the capitalistic society and the communistic, lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. This corresponds to a political transition period, in which the state cannot be anything else but the dictatorship of the proletariat."

Marx and Engels clearly explained the function of the Socialist movement. It is the "moderate Socialists" through intellectual gymnastics, evasions, misquotations and the tearing of sentences and phrases from their context, who make Marx and Engels sponsor for their perverted version of Socialism.

PROBLEMS OF AMERICAN SOCIALISM

At the present moment, the Socialist Party of America is agitated by several cross-currents, some local in their character, and some a reflex of cleavages within the European Socialist movements. Many see in this internal dissension merely an unimportant difference of opinion, or at most, dissatisfaction with the control of the party, and the desire to replace those who have misused it with better men.

We, however, maintain that there is a fundamental distinction in views concerning party policies and tactics. And we believe that this difference is so vast that from our standpoint a radical change in party policies and tactics is necessary.

This essential task is being shrieked by our party leaders and officials generally.

Already there is formidable industrial unrest, a seething ferment of discontent, evidenced by inarticulate rumblings which presage striking occurrences. The transformation of industry from a war to a peace basis has thoroughly disorganized the economic structure. Thousands upon thousands of workers are being thrown out of work. Demobilized soldiers and sailors find themselves a drug upon the labor market, unless they act as scabs and strike-breakers. Skilled mechanics, fighting desperately to maintain their wage and their industrial status, are forced to strike. Women, who during the war have been welcomed into industries hitherto closed to them, are struggling to keep their jobs. And to cap the climax, the capitalists, through their Chambers of Commerce and their Merchants and Manufacturers' Associations, have resolved to take advantage of the situation to break down even the inadequate organizations labor has built up through generations of painful struggle.

The temper of the workers and soldiers, after the sacrifices they have made in the war, is such that they will not endure the reactionary labor conditions so openly advocated by the master class. A series of labor struggles is bound to follow—indeed, is beginning now. Shall the Socialist Party continue to feed the workers with social reform legislation at this critical period? Shall it approach the whole question from the standpoint of votes and the election of representatives to the legislatures? Shall it emphasize the consumers' point of view, when Socialist principles teach that the worker is robbed at the point of production? Shall it talk about