
The Socialist Party Manifesto

by James Oneal

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CHICAGO, Sept. 4 [1919].— It is no exaggeration to say that the manifesto adopted by the Socialist Party convention in Chicago [Aug. 30-Sept. 5, 1919] is one of the most important documents ever adopted by the party in this country. While it is in no sense a platform, and is not intended as such, it contains much one would expect in a party platform. It is evidence of the change, the new orientation, forced upon the Socialist movement of this country by the world war and the issues the war raises.

The main theme of the manifesto is the new era of imperialism that faces the world. The isolated and competing imperialisms of the antebellum period are followed by the consolidated imperialism of some four or five of the great powers. It is an imperialism not only enlisted in the service of Allied investors and bankers, but for the purpose of crushing popular revolutions wherever they appear.

Whether this consolidated imperialism can last, whether it will split into a number of fragments, is a matter that only the future can determine. But it is certain that it is an attempt to do for the capitalist exploiters of the world what they trust has been done for the capitalists of the United States.

There is no frenzied phraseology and no emotional reaction to the war in this manifesto. It is based upon the reality of the world of today. It is a clear analysis of what has happened, the problems raised by the war and the peace treaty, and a frank recognition of the tasks before the workers of all countries. It indicates that Socialists of this country must face questions which hereto have in the main concerned European workers.

The old isolation of the United States is gone, gone for the Socialists and the exploiters of the country. Both are drawn into the whirlpool of world events and are a component part of the whole international structure of militarism, foreign policies, navalism, and colonial adventure. The manifesto is a recognition of this, and henceforth American Socialists will have to give as much attention to these questions as the European Socialists have.

The American movement can congratulate itself on having produced such a splendid document. It will tend to rally members who have been uncertain of the outcome of the convention, and will eventually bring to us many who are sick of the hypocrisies, the shams, and the illusions that have held them in chains for nearly three tragic years.

Edited by Tim Davenport

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