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# Statement of Socialist Party of Philadelphia.

[published July 22, 1919]

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Dear Comrades:

We ask your most careful consideration of the following accurate statement of what has taken place in Philadelphia in the recent months.

No doubt you are aware that after the signing of the armistice, a small element which is un-Socialistic, and which quietly crept into the party, began to assert itself with the claim that it was the "Left Wing." Such a claim would have been ignored entirely, as the un-called for concert of a few who had never done any work for the party, were it not for the bitter fact that among those denounced as "Right Wing" were such Socialists as had stood in the front of the fight for our principles during the war and some of whom are now in jail; thanks to the ruthless enforcement of the espionage act.

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This is what happened in Philadelphia.

The methods pursued here as elsewhere by this so-called "Left Wing" consisted exclusively in condemning the former local Executive Committee behind their backs and removing them without trial at a small meeting of the County Committee. That seems to be the way this element works. Following that, people were admitted into the party wholesale, so that the majority of faithful Socialists were outvoted by the colonizers, who, ignorant of Socialist principles and policy, voted solidly at the beck and call of these self-constituted dictators at local and branch meetings and in referendums.

Political dances and trickery that would shame the Republican organization were resorted to to disgust faithful members, drive them from meetings, and

produce necessary majorities. With that, rowdyism was also practiced so that decent people, whose object was to serve Socialism, and who had no time to mix in street gutter politics and squabble would leave the misrepresentation and falsification to make it appear that those who were loyal to the party were enemies of Socialism. Finally the unheard of thing happened when this small clique of character assassins expelled members guilty only of being loyal to the party.

This in itself was a gross outrage such as we have never witnessed in Philadelphia. At the same time, the actual purpose behind these dealings, and which it was attempted to hide by this camouflage, came to light. That purpose was to sell out the party to a mongrel combination of anti-Socialist and anarchistic ideas and practices such as would put the party out of business.

When the former Executive Committee finally thwarted the contemptible scheme of this crowd, and succeeded in having the local grant them a hearing, the so-called "Left Wing" before permitting the committee to be heard, adopted a series of resolutions which discredited political action, ignore legal means, and open the party to the charge of favoring other methods of trying to establish Socialism; and upon the basis of the "new" ideas, which are only the disreputable offspring of anarchism, they proceed to recall the faithful Executive Committee, wreck the party machinery, and drive away the membership.

After that, the crowd in control joined with the so-called "Left Wing" organization, adopted their program, ignored and opposed Socialist Party decisions; thus their representatives attended a Socialist Party state conference to consider propaganda and organization work in the state. All the Philadelphia delegates did was to submit the "Left Wing" program for adoption. When it was rejected, as it had to be since it is in con-

flict with the party platform and constitution, they bolted. That was their only interest in attending. They care nothing about education and organization for Socialism. They were not concerned about building up the party. They were concerned only in tearing it down.

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When the National Executive Committee suspended certain federations for using anti-Socialistic methods in violation of the party constitution, Local Philadelphia officially recognized those elements of the Jewish branches that withdrew from the Jewish federations and have officially joined the Jewish "Left Wing," an organization which is in direct opposition to the party. They have refused recognition to the old Jewish branches which remained loyal to the Jewish federation, the true representatives of the Socialist Party among the Jewish workers. They have ignored the decisions of the National Executive Committee, continued to do business with the suspended federations, and went so far as to pretend to sell the Book Store, which took years of faithful work on the part of the old members of the party to build up, to the suspended branches. They have so far forgotten Socialist practices as to overlook the fact that when a branch or local has its charter revoked, all property goes to the higher body which granted the charter. However, such capitalist trickery is all that may be expected from this crowd.

Inasmuch as this crowd keeping themselves in control by such sinister methods could serve no purpose but to destroy the party, the loyal members, at the special meeting held July 9 [1919], asked that those in attendance who were suspended should not be allowed to participate in the business of the local meeting. This being refused, the loyal members in a body went to another hall and proceeded to transact the business of Local Philadelphia.

This official meeting was an enthusiastic gathering of comrades who felt that they are in a real Socialist atmosphere, and that no obstructions will be made by the so-called self-styled "Left Wingers."

Then the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

Resolved, By Local Philadelphia, in special meeting

held Wednesday, July 9 [1919], that we reaffirm our unswerving loyalty to the Socialist Party of America and Pennsylvania, as expressed in the platforms and constitutions of the party and the actions of the National Executive Committee. We repudiate as utterly detrimental to the good and welfare of the party the actions of self-constituted members of the party — calling themselves [the] "Left Wing" organization — because they are opposed to the expressed will of the party by their resolutions and actions, playing into the hands of the ruling class by discrediting political action, sneering at legal methods, refraining from building up a political organization, and in every way employing means that can serve only to split the party by their anti-Socialist ideas and methods, and thereby wreck the political movement of the working class.

A motion was made to instruct the Executive Committee. We repudiate as [...*missing line of text*...] ment regarding the situation in Local Philadelphia and to go on with the organization work.

We realize that entirely apart from the un-Socialistic and contemptible methods used by the so-called "Left Wing" crowd, a question of principle is involved. That question is whether we shall continue to use the methods of education and organization with a working class political party, or, by repudiating them, employ those discreditable and discredited tactics which have so often ruined the working class movement in the past. We prefer the well-tried Socialist tactics.

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Already the idiotic, if not police-inspired, utterances of some of the "Left Wing" spokesmen have resulted in the passage of repressive measures, such as would outlaw those who know very well that the working class can only free themselves under American conditions by having the possibility of receiving the great work of education the Socialist Party has set out to do.

We have no time to waste on the element that preaches internal disruption. The only enemy we know is the class which oppresses the workers and our only task is to bring about industrial democracy by methods which flourish in the light of day and which appeal to the best in mankind.

Comrades, we ask all of you who are loyal to the principle of Socialism, and the Socialist Party to stand up and be counted.

The would is in tears and ashes from the fearful calamity of the war made by capitalism. America no

less than Europe is turning to Socialism as the only salvation. Our work of enlightenment is tremendous. There is no time to waste and no issue for us but this.

Comrades, there never was a time when duty called so loudly, when the opportunity was more golden, when our responsibility to the working class and the future was so heavy.

Let each of us answer to the limit of our ability for the cause of human freedom.

Yours for International Socialism,

Executive Committee,

R.A. Mays, M. Polin, J.W. Wainwright,  
L. Zeff, J.H. Root, L.A. Goldberg, E. Maurer.

Dorothy Lupy, Treasurer;

Edward Maurer, Organizer;

Charles Sehl, General Secretary.

*Edited by Tim Davenport.*

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