

The Pink Terror

1. The Rape of the 17th A. D.

LAST week we told about the unleashing of the Pink Terror against the Left Wing by the State Committee at Albany. This week we have to record the actual massacre in full swing.

One dark and gloomy night the Cossacks, Bash-Bazooks and Opritchniki of the Right Wing swooped down on the 17th A. D. Branch, slaughtered the rank and file, and carried off the Branch into captivity.

The 17th A. D. Branch is—or was—the largest Branch of Local New York. It contains—or contained—about four hundred members in good standing. It elected Claessens to the Assembly twice, and Calman to the Board of Aldermen once.

About two months ago the "poisonous propaganda" of the Left Wing began to work among these innocent and unsuspecting Comrades. The dastardly and criminal idea occurred to them that there was something the matter with the Socialist Party—and especially with the Right Wingers who control the machine of Local New York.

Finally this feeling crystallized in an attempt to recall the delegates of the 17th A. D. Branch to the Central Committee. On this the Right Wingers persuaded the Branch to postpone action until a special meeting. They then combed the town for Right Wing members, rounded them up, and herded them to the meeting. Many of these Comrades had not attended a Branch meeting within the memory of man, and there were some present who had forgotten where the hall was. The Right Wing rejected the recall of delegates by a majority of *thirteen votes*.

At the following meeting of the Branch, April 10th, 1919, another resolution was introduced by the Left Wingers—to recall all Branch officials, to have extended discussion on the question of Left and Right Wing principles, and then to elect new officers, the old ones to function until the new elections. *This resolution was carried 27 to 7.*

Now began an exhibition of Right Wingism unexampled in the history of Local New York.

The Right Wing delegates turned up at the Central Committee, and whenever they could assist the political bosses on any question, they voted as *regular delegates from the 17th A. D.* At the same time, acting as no longer officials of the 17th A. D., a group of these same individuals appeared before the Executive Committee of Local New York, and asked that the Branch be "reorganized." Comrade Codkind, a member of the Executive Committee, attempted to protest. He was beaten up and expelled from the meeting; after which, with cheers and hand-shaking, the Executive Committee "ordered that the 17th A. D. Branch be "reorganized."

On April 17th the members came to their regular Branch meeting and discovered that a bright new padlock had been placed on the door of the hall. They broke the door open, however, and held the meeting, which declared that the Branch did not recognize the right of the Executive Committee

either to dissolve or to "reorganize" the Branch without the consent of the majority of its members.

The Right Wingers bit their mustaches in rage and chagrin. "Foiled again!" In a secret chamber of the Rand School, fitted out with grindstones for sharpening snickersnees, the conspirators gathered one by one. The pass-word was "Scheidemann!"

The next morning, April 18th, the members of the 17th A. D. Branch received a letter, which read as follows:

Socialist Party, New York County

April 18, 1919.

Dear Comrade:—

The Executive Committee of Local New York at its last meeting decided to re-organize the 17th Assembly District Branch.

The committee was forced to take that step on account of the actions of a group of members in that branch who at every meeting created a fight, and by their continuous squabbling have reduced the branch, one of the largest, to insignificance.

Many of the members disgusted with the actions and activities of these squabblers stayed away from the meetings, and the organization fell in the hands of a few. At the last meeting on April 10th, they recalled all the officers of the branch, leaving the branch without any functionaries to look after the affairs of the branch.

A letter signed by a large number of members of the branch was received, wherein these members complain about the actions and treatment accorded to the members by a small group.

The Executive Committee was forced by the course these comrades have taken to re-organize the branch, and has appointed a committee to do so. As a member of the 17th A. D. you are requested to come to a meeting to be held Friday, April 18th at 8 P. M. at the Juliette Hall, 103 West 117th Street. Bring your party card. The committee will be at this meeting to re-organize the branch and put it on a solid and working basis.

We hope that every good Socialist and comrade who has the interest of the party at heart will be at this meeting and assist the committee to get a good working branch in the 17th Assembly District.

Yours for the Cause,

Committee: EMANUEL BLUMSTEIN, ALEXANDER COPSTEIN, CHARLES GROSSMAN, HERMAN VOLK.

The "letter signed by a large number of members," referred to, was in fact signed by the *thirty-two Right Wingers in the Branch—all the Right Wingers who were members*. Now the Branch contains *400 members in good standing*, and the quorum is *forty-six*.

The Juliette Hall, where the "reorganization" was effected, is outside the 17th A. D. On the appointed night about one hundred and fifty members of the Branch gathered, and were marched up one by one before he self-appointed "committee," to "register." First they were asked to turn in their red cards. Then questions were put to them, such as the following:

"Do you believe in an organization within an organization?"

"Are you a member of the Left Wing?"

Of the one hundred and fifty present only *thirty* were considered *pure enough to register in the new Branch*, together some Right Wingers who were not present, but who were registered by their friends on the "committee." After the meeting the Left Wingers in a body—not one having registered—adjourned to their own headquarters, took a pledge not to recognize the right of any minority to impose their will on the majority, and declared themselves to be the only legal 17th A. D. Branch.

The next morning all who registered received the following letter:

Socialist Party, New York County

April 18, 1919.

Dear Comrade:—

There will be a meeting of the members of the 17th A. D. who accept the party platform as a basis of the organization, and who are not members of any organization within the party organization, and are opposed to any such organization, for the purpose of re-organizing the branch, and to put a working Party branch in the district free from factionalism and cliques.

This meeting will be held on Sunday, April 20th, at 2:30 P. M. at the Juliette, 103 W. 117th Street.

All comrades who are with the Socialist Party and have the interest of the party at heart should attend.

At this meeting officers and delegates will be elected, and a permanent organization in the district established. If you have the welfare of the Party at heart, come to this meeting.

Yours for a united and solidified Socialist Party.

REORGANIZATION COMMITTEE OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, LOCAL NEW YORK.

Admission by Letter Only.

On Sunday evening, the 20th, the fortunate few, clutching their admission letters firmly in their hands, went to the Juliette. Some of the Left Wingers went also. There an astonishing sight met their eyes. At the door were two policemen, and in the back-ground, with several professional thugs, hovered the Committee, pointing out the Left Wingers to the cops, and ordering them excluded.

Cried Blumstein, to the police, "They're a bunch of anarchists! They don't believe in the Constitution! They ought to be deported!"

Even some of the faithful, who held letters of admission in their hands, were mistaken by the cops and gunmen, and told to "Beat it!" or they'd get clubbed.

On April 21st, ninety-six members of the 17th A. D. addressed a signed letter to the Central Committee of Local New York, which read as follows:

"We, the undersigned members of the 17th A. D. Socialist Party, do hereby protest against the attempt of the Executive Committee of Local New York to dissolve our Branch against the will of the majority of the members."

The sequel of the affair is to be found in the story of what happened at the meeting of the Central Committee on Tuesday evening, which was adjourned, with the assistance of a police captain.

All this indicates the desperation of the Right Wingers, knee-deep in the rising tide of the rank and file, which will eventually clean our Party of thugs and strong-arm politicians, and establish within the ranks of the movement, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Now comes the horrid finale, when the mailed fist of the Right Wing appears in all its ruthlessness.

On Wednesday, April 23rd, without authorization by the Executive Committee or any body else, Alderman Calman and Assemblyman Claessens, in a moving van, swooped down on the 17th A. D. headquarters and began to remove the furniture.

Comrade Max Cohen, who happened to be passing, protested. Whereupon Calman stepped to the telephone and called up police headquarters.

"I'm Alderman Calman," he said, "Send a policeman up here to preserve order!"

In a few minutes a cop came up, and under his supervision the inoffensive desks and chairs of the 17th A. D. were loaded on the van and removed.

Where? Alderman Calman said, to a storage warehouse. But observers report that the van was seen heading in the direction of the second-hand furniture quarter in the Alderman's Ward.

ENTERTAINMENT AND PACKAGE PARTY

Given at the

5th A. D. HEADQUARTERS
1034 Southern Blvd., Bronx

SATURDAY, APRIL 26th, at 8 P. M.

Admission 15c.

Fine Pastel Portrait of 'Gene Debe
Will Be Ruffled Off.

Meeting to Commemorate the Irish Revolution of 1916

and the sacrifice of Comrades Jim Connolly, Michael Mallin, Richard O'Carroll, Sean Connolly, Rosemary MacKen and extend greetings on behalf of the Irish Revolutionary Working Class to the Representative of the Russian Soviet Government, Ludwig C. A. K. Martens, who will speak, supported by J. Beakin, Jack Reed, Louise Bryant, Nicholas Hourwich, Ludwig Lore, Isaac McBride, Edmond MacAlpine, Jim Larkin. Emmet O'Reilly of California will preside.

BRYANT HALL, 725 Sixth Avenue

MONDAY, APRIL 28th, at 8 P. M.

"He who would be free Himself must strike the blow"
West Side for Socialism.