

# The Pink Terror

## II. The Pillage of the 18-20th A. D.

HAVING tipped the policeman who safeguarded the looting of the 17th A. D.'s headquarters, and dusted off the moving-van with which the crime was accomplished, the Right Wingers met once more in the crypt of the Rand School. No longer were they obstructed by Democracy—the Central Committee had been indefinitely adjourned. Nothing remained which could hamper the free use of brass knuckles upon the persons of the rank and file.

A Committee was appointed to suggest ways and means for Preserving the Unity of Local New York. It was finally decided that the only way to preserve the Party intact was to expel most of the members.

The Comrade chairman of the Committee on Porch-Climbing reported that he considered it no longer necessary for his Committee to operate, since the Minutes of the Left Wing meetings were now openly published in the *New York Communist*. Committee on reading *The Communist* was then appointed.

Casting about for the next Branch to destroy, the 18th-20th A. D. was selected. This Branch lies next to the 17th A. D. whose demise we recorded last week. It has always been a particularly harmonious Branch, all meetings being conducted in the best of good feeling. However, the bacillus of the Left Wing had been infecting more and more of the Comrades, until there was a clearly a Left Wing majority in the Branch.

At the regular business meeting of the Branch on April 11th it was decided to hold new elections for delegates to the Central Committee, to take place at the next business meeting, on Friday, April 25th.

The next meeting was perfectly orderly. Both sides had mobilized all their supporters, and the hall was crowded. The Right Wingers, headed by Jacob Hillquit—who, although he lives in the Bronx, is treasurer of the Branch, which is in Harlem—declined nominations for the Central Committee.

The Branch is entitled to six delegates. Eight candidates were nominated; and the six Left Wingers were elected. Dr. Aronson, the highest, polled 68 votes, and the two lowest, 47 votes apiece. Comrade Markel, a Centrist, who said in the debate that the Left Wing "should be given a chance to show what it can do," was nevertheless defeated.

The unanimous action of the Right Wingers showed that there was some sort of scheme on foot, so after the meeting the Propaganda Committee proceeded to copy the records of the Branch, for fear that Alderman Calman and his moving-van might swoop down and carry them off.

Alas! Their forebodings were only too well founded. The next morning somebody broke open the door, jimmied the Financial Secretary's desk, and took away the records, which were afterward returned to the Branch by a small boy. That evening when the Yipsels came to headquarters for their regular meeting, they discovered the door fastened with a triple-bar Siegel lock costing nine dollars—the nine dollars evidently being receipts from the sale of dues-stamps; and window fasteners on every window. These had been placed there by the Executive Committee.

The Yipsels broke into the hall and began their meeting. Immediately a delegation of Right Wingers appeared, headed by Ex-Assemblyman Karlin, and composed of Shilb, Extract, Shpritzer and a friend who was not a Party member. Shilb offered to fight one of the Yipsels, while Karlin threatened to have the Yipsels arrested for breaking and entering. After the Yipsels' meeting was over, the Right Wingers again locked the hall, this time using an ordinary lock. (The item of expenditures

for padlocks must now be fairly large on the books of Local New York.)

On Sunday, April 27th, the Left Wing members of the Branch held a meeting in headquarters, and

### One Reason for an Organization Within an Organization

The following letter was sent by Julius Gerber, Executive Secretary of Local New York, to a few carefully-picked Right Wingers. The italics are ours. Some of the results of the Conference are now evident.

New York, April 19, 1919.

Dear Comrade:—

I am calling a conference of party members to meet at the office of Local New York on Monday evening, April 21st. We will meet at 9 P. M. People's House, 7 East 15th Street.

The situation in the party is rather critical at this time, and it is almost too late now to stem the tide.

We ought to be clear among ourselves what we will, or can do. The so-called Left Wing is determined to either capture or split the party. What the capture of the party by the Left Wing means ought to be evident to any one who has watched their performance.

On the other hand, is it worth while for the sincere Socialist to keep the fight up? While we are fighting among ourselves there is no work for the party. Our energies, our time, and the money is wasted in the fight among ourselves.

A split in the party will at this time do irreparable injury to our party and to the Cause, while the control of the Party by these irresponsible people will make the Party an outlaw organization, and break up the organization.

Tuesday evening, the Central Committee meets. At this meeting the die will be cast as far as Local New York is concerned. We ought to decide before hand. We ought to know what we are to do.

The reason the Left Wing has grown and is making converts is because they have an organization that does nothing else. They have their organs that give their side. They act as a group while we have neither organization, nor press (The Call should not be used for factional purposes) and our comrades act as individuals. Result is chaos on our side, organization, discipline and success on their side.

As the official of Local New York, I have tried to do the party's work regardless of faction, have tried as much as possible to keep factionalism out of the party. But the time has come when I have a duty to the party, and my duty compels me to call this conference to lay the situation before the party members.

I have for myself decided as to my course and my action, but I feel I have no right to do anything without the knowledge and consent of my comrades. My comrades, who with me have helped to build, maintain and hold together our party, and for this reason I am calling this conference, and I hope you will come. Come about 9 P. M. as the Executive Committee meets that evening and we will meet soon thereafter.

I know this may inconvenience you. I know you are out nights and perhaps will have to be out again Tuesday at the Central Committee but believe me this matter is of importance enough so that you can miss an hour's sleep and put up with a little inconvenience.

Sincerely,

JULIUS GERBER.

decided to allow the Executive Committee to remove the furniture or take any other illegal action they pleased, but not to submit to the reorganization or dissolution of the Branch without a vote of the

majority of the members. The names and addresses of those against the action of the Executive Committee were taken down.

In the middle of this, Extract, Shilb and Shpritzer entered. Shpritzer said, "Take my name. I want to join the Left Wing." He was referred to 43 West 29th Street, where we eagerly await him.

Shilb then remarked that at Monday evening's meeting of the Executive Committee, the business of "reorganizing" the 18th-20th A. D. would be taken up; and that on Tuesday evening, April 29th, a meeting to "reorganize" the Branch would be held at Harlem Terrace Hall, on 104th Street, between 2nd and 3rd Avenues.

Afterward, however, Shilb denied that he had said this, but announced that he was going to prefer charges against the Propaganda Committee for breaking open the Financial Secretary's desk.

By the time this paper is off the press, we expect to hear that the 18th-20th A. D. has been thoroughly "reorganized," and that the great majority of the rank and file has joined the Party Bread-Line.

What further atrocities have the Semi-Comrades in store for us? By what machinations do they intend further to lacerate the poor, bleeding Left Wing? Time, and the next issue of *The Communist*, alone will tell.

### Socialist Politicians Please Answer

THE columns of this paper are open to Right Wingers to reply to this editorial in the *New York Times*—which is, so far as our knowledge goes, the only intelligent editorial which ever appeared in the *New York Times*:

The Socialist Congress at Paris on Tuesday voted, by a majority of 894, that it was willing to join the Second Internationale provided that those who were Socialists only in name were excluded. But the Congress drew a line against the Third Internationale, that is LENIN's, and a motion to adhere to it commanded only 270 votes. The denunciation of the Bolsheviks is good reading, and far be it from us to say anything in their defense. The dictatorship of the proletariat is hateful. But why should the Socialists denounce it when practiced by the Third Internationale, forgetting that it was the fundamental and original pronouncement of the First Internationale? In the words of the Communist Manifesto, never repudiated by any Socialist authority:

The first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of the ruling class . . . wrest all capital from the bourgeoisie . . . by means of despotic inroads on the rights of property.

The first test of the orthodoxy of Socialists by the First and Second Internationales alike was adhesion to the program of "conquest of the public powers by the proletariat organized as a class party." Admittedly, there are some peccadilloes chargeable to the Bolsheviks, but who can say that they have not conformed to the first requisite of orthodox socialism?

Who are the First or Second Internationalists that they should point the finger of scorn at their brethren guilty of excess of zeal? Excess profits, tax discrimination against the too rich, restriction of railways and banks—these are not the touchstones of socialism, whether they be good or bad. In short, socialism is not social reform, and there is equal need of disavowal of all the Internationales, as well as the Third, by those who are sticklers for propriety. The denouncers of the Third Internationale as a caricature of socialism are themselves guilty of the same fault, unless they disavow the dictatorship of the proletariat, the "conquest of the State," and the confiscation of capital. These tenets are not voided because those who practice them are guilty of other "errors," in the words of LENIN, in the interview cabled to the *Times*, in which he reiterated adhesion to the platform of the Internationale as quoted above. There is too much sailing under false colors.

Either a Socialist believes in the class struggle, the expropriation of the expropriators, and lines up with the Bolshevik and Communist movement of Europe; or he joins the Second International (now defunct) and definitely allies himself with John Spargo, Scheidemann, William English Walling, J. P. Morgan and Samuel Gompers.