

Strike Against the Bosses!

By Carl Brodsky

The Right Wing is continually prating about Democracy. Let us examine the recent actions of the Party officialdom in the light of its own professed principles.

Suppose a group of Comrades in the Socialist Party decided to draw up a Manifesto and Program endorsing the Non-Partisan League, and demanded a referendum upon it.

Suppose the New York State Executive Committee decided that these Comrades were violating the constitution of the Socialist Party in offering this Manifesto and Program; and this Committee decided to revoke the charters of all Locals which had permitted Branches in their territory to endorse the Manifesto, and also to expel any member aligning himself with the group responsible for the document.

Suppose the Committee then decided to submit its action to a referendum of the ENTIRE MEMBERSHIP. You would then vote as you believed, for the best interests of the Party; and when the result had been announced you would agree, whatever your opinion on the question, that it had been treated honestly.

Or suppose one or two Locals had endorsed this Manifesto, and, feeling that they would like to interest the entire membership, had mailed copies of it all over the country, and aroused enough sentiment to have the question discussed at a Party Convention. Would you not agree that the proper thing for Party members to do would be to elect and instruct their delegates to this Convention? Would you not feel that high-handed methods had been used if the Party officials expelled some Comrades before they had a chance to send their delegates to the Convention?

The world has been through five years of the most terrible bloodshed. The International Socialist movement in all parts of the world has been effected by the war. In some countries the Socialist parties went over completely to the imperialistic groups, leaders betrayed the masses; in other countries revolutions took place, leaders stood true to the principles of revolutionary Socialism.

Finally the war came to an end.

We in America, as a part of the International movement, also decided that our Party had been effected by the war; that certain leaders and officials had not stood the test in accordance with our principles. EVERYONE agreed that a change in policies and tactics was necessary.

with a membership of more than 30,000—and this, says *The Tribune*, is part of a plan for "Americanization"!

"The Right Wing," says *The Tribune*, with the same tone of authority, "charges that the Left Wingers really believe in violence, but do not have the courage to come out and say so in the open."

In the *New York Times* of Saturday last there is another story headed, "Socialists Here Aim to Purge Party," which contains an interesting little interview with Alderman Lee, and another with an unnamed "prominent Socialist leader". Alderman Lee gravely informs the bourgeois journalists that "the questions involved are not questions of Socialist principle, but questions of whether the party organization shall be maintained along democratic lines, with the majority ruling and the minority abiding by the majority rule." The Alderman is evidently afraid that it will be.

As for the anonymous "leader", he intimates that the Left Wing is "indulging in loose talk about things they do not understand." He ends as follows: "But in my opinion no one who amounts to anything in our Party councils is in favor of 'direct action', involving the immediate seizure and nationalization of industries and other forcible measures of a revolutionary character."

The latest example is an interview with Julius Gerber in *The Tribune* of Tuesday, June 3d, in which he says that the Left Wing can "join the Salvation Army." He continues, in a truly provocative vein, "We don't want them in our Party. As far as we are concerned, they are out of the Party, and they will stay out. The Left Wingers are now calling Martens, the Bolshevik representative here, a 'counter-revolutionist', because he refuses to ally himself with them, which shows that they are not Bolsheviks but simply trouble-makers."

The repeated hints that the Left Wing is outside the law, given by Lee and Gerber to the capitalist press; the exploitation of Comrade Martens, in the columns of *The Tribune*, against the Left Wing—are on a par with the employment of the police by these Right Wingers against Socialist Party members. Scheidemann tactics, pure and simple.

And the capitalist press, which only a few weeks ago was calling these same Right Wingers "German spies" and "Bolsheviks", is now praising them warmly, and condemning the Left Wing.

Socialists are known by the company they keep.

A group of Comrades issued a Manifesto and Program, endorsing the Russian Bolsheviks, the German Spartacans, and other Left Wing elements of the International movement, and furthermore stating that in their opinion the tactics of these elements showed the way for the final emancipation of the proletariat of all countries. They unequivocally repudiated the other elements of the International Socialist movement, and demanded that the American Socialist Party adopt the policies and tactics of the revolutionary European groups.

After a few weeks of agitation within the Party they succeeded in interesting a few hundred Comrades in their Manifesto; and these Comrades, believing it for the best interests of the Party that the entire membership all over the country should be informed of their beliefs, decided to organize in order to co-ordinate the work and systematize the propaganda, and to that end elected committees and a corresponding secretary.

The New York State Committee decided to revoke the charter of any Local endorsing this Manifesto and Program, or permitting its Branches and members to endorse it. The Committee, on its own responsibility, decided that this Manifesto was "anarchistic". The Committee decided to submit the question to a referendum of the entire membership—but before the ballots were distributed hundreds of Comrades were deprived of their membership—whole Locals being expelled bodily from the Party and denied any redress. These are the facts. Has the State Committee acted according to "democratic" principles?

For the sake of argument, let us suppose that the Left Wing Manifesto—in the words of a Right Winger—is "reactionary, anarchistic and Utopian". Don't you think that with a free, open discussion and a FAIR VOTE, you are capable of deciding the question?

Do you want your thinking done for you by the Party officials? Don't you want to vote for delegates to the Emergency National Convention? Wouldn't you feel it your right to be able to discuss this matter in your Branch? And wouldn't you brand as COWARDLY any suppression of opinion in the Party by the Party officials?

This is all that the Left Wing has demanded. And the answer of the Party officials is:

BEFORE the ballots on the referendum expelling Left Wing Branches had been distributed, hundreds of Comrades were expelled or refused ballots.

For the moment the issue has shifted from a simple question of opposing principles, to the question of Party control and bossism. Whether you agree with the Left Wing Manifesto or not, you will certainly resent these wholesale expulsions, the Boss Dictatorship of the Party. It is up to YOU, COMRADES, to make clear to the Party bosses and officials that no such action will be tolerated. All Comrades should vote on this question, and should cast their ballots for delegates to the National Emergency Convention, at which the Left Wing Manifesto will be discussed and the question settled one way or another—but not before the rank and file has been heard.

COMRADES! A scab is the most contemptible creature on earth. Consciously or unconsciously, he is used against the workers who are trying to better his lot.

Forty thousand Comrades have been locked out of the Socialist Party, because they championed the revolutionary working class. The National Executive Committee has expelled the Michigan State organization, the Russian Federations, and many English Branches. All Comrades who support the action of the Party officialdom are SCABBING ON THE RANK AND FILE.

Demand from your Branch resolutions condemning this action. Don't scab on us! Demand that the vote on all referendums and delegates be made public! Demand a reinstatement of all expelled Party members at once, or go out on strike against the Party officialdom until this action is rescinded!

If you do not stand with us now, you pave the way for your own expulsion at some future time, when you differ with the Party leaders.

You are either for a Party under the dictatorship of the rank and file, or a Party under the dictatorship of the Party bosses.

WHERE DO YOU STAND?

The Party and the Berne Conference

By Edmond MacAlpine

IN the last issue of *The Socialist* Comrade James O'Neal contributes an article under the above heading, in which he attempts to justify the N. E. C.'s actions with regard to the Berne Conference. In the course of his defense he cites a conversation with me in *The Call* office some few days before he sailed. I was at that time Associate Editor of *The Revolutionary Age*, which had continuously attacked the N. E. C.'s attitude and actions from the moment that body appointed three men to attend the Lausanne Conference (as it was then called).

As far as I am aware the N. E. C. has never publicly repudiated its initial action, and it is common knowledge that Lee made vigorous efforts to obtain a passport, and that only the action of the American Government prevented the Party's being represented at Berne. In *The Revolutionary Age* it was suggested that at least the Party could send delegates for information, in the same way that the Italian Socialist Party sent representatives to the Interallied Socialist Conference in London during the war; as at that time we had no information about the Conference whatever, except that it was officially called by a group which had betrayed Socialism.

The statement by Comrade O'Neal is the first intimation we have had that the National Executive Committee voted to repudiate any international in which the Bolsheviks and Spartacides were not included; and as far as we can ascertain it is the first time the Party membership has heard of any such decision.

With regard to Comrade O'Neal's visit to Europe, he is entirely mistaken about our conversation. I did express my belief in Comrade O'Neal's personal integrity, and stated that I considered that he personally would be a satisfactory delegate if he were properly elected. I further stated that I believed he would probably be elected on a referendum, but that I was morally certain that Lee would not stand the ghost of a chance; and that the only delegates the membership would choose would be instructed to have nothing to do with the Berne Gang of Social-traitors. In addition I told him that no matter what his instructions were, the rank and file of the Party would believe he was going to the Second International, and that the N. E. C. had absolutely no right to send a delegate to Europe without the sanction of the membership.

If Comrade O'Neal left a statement with Ramsay MacDonald, why does not the Party membership know what is in that statement? Even now we are in ignorance of what position the Party has been committed to with regard to the European movement. *The Call* and the National Office both have the channels of publicity at their command. Comrade O'Neal is one of *The Call's* editorial writers, yet *The Call* has never repudiated Berne so far as we are aware. Comrade O'Neal's stories about his European trip are merely the stories any radical newspaper correspondent would write; they give no hint of his official mission. No official report has been received from Comrade O'Neal, either through the press or through the regular branch meetings of the Party.

Even after Comrade O'Neal's article in *The Socialist*, we are still in the dark. As far as the rank and file is aware the National Executive Committee has not repudiated its first action, which was to accept Huysmann's invitation and illegally appoint delegates to the Berne Conference; nor have I any private information on the subject. At the time I spoke to Comrade O'Neal the Berne Conference was a thing of the past, and neither he nor anyone else could attend its meetings. It is quite true one could have gone to Holland, but at that time the Second International was thoroughly discredited.

The whole question of which International the Party should join has agitated the movement for some months. The Left Wing has kept up a continuous criticism of the National Executive Committee's attitude on this matter, and until this last statement—which states nothing—nothing has been known of its decision to do what the Left Wing agitated for. The National Executive Secretary replied to an article I wrote in *The Revolutionary Age* entitled, "We must have a National Emergency Convention." His reply was printed there some two months ago, and says nothing about any resolution repudiating the Second International.

If Comrade O'Neal is correctly informed about the N. E. C.'s action, why was it necessary for the Central Branch of Local Boston to initiate Referendum "D," which reads as follows: "That the Socialist Party shall participate only in an International Congress or Conference called by or in which participate the Communist Party of Russia (Bolsheviks) and the Communist Labor Party of Germany (Spartacans)?"