

# Violence or Solidarity?

SCOTT NEARING has written a pamphlet with the curious title, "Violence or Solidarity?" or "Will Guns Settle It?" This pamphlet is a special plea against the use of violence in the Social Revolution, from the point of view of an extreme pacifist non-resistant.

The "institution of the dear love of comrades" must be built with love, comradeship, and the "instrumentalities of social organization." Force and violence, according to Comrade Nearing, can never bring the Socialist Commonwealth.

To illustrate the lengths to which Comrade Nearing goes, we must quote the essence of his argument applied to the present revolutionary period.

"The Hungarian Government has been changed from a monarchy to a Soviet Republic, so far as we know, without loss of life. By what means? By organization. The old world is dead; the new world is being born. Without violence the process is completed.

"In Germany, on the other hand, from the time that the revolution occurred until today, they have been fighting back and forth through the streets, the Spartacans attempting to establish a Soviet Government by the bayonet. When they succeed it will be in spite of their tactics, not because of them.

"The Russian Revolution was surrounded by a wall of bayonets at Brest-Litovsk. The workers, unarmed, found themselves face to face with the most powerful military machine that existed in the world at that time. Apparently they were at the mercy of militarism, but they began at home to establish an economic basis for comradeship. They gave the land to the peasants and the factories to the workers. When the facts became known, the German military was powerless, and in the end the German Revolution answered the infamous act of the imperialists at Brest-Litovsk.

"The Russians won their point through economic justice at home, propaganda and open diplomacy. Not their army but their philosophy and their example spread revolution over Europe.

"The Russians may fail in their great experiment of laying the economic basis for the institution of the dear love of comrades. If they fail in this the Red Army will help them fail. If they win the Red Army will stand in the way of the thing that they wish to accomplish . . ."

This is a unique interpretation of the European Revolutions—especially the Hungarian Revolution. The idea of Bela Kun as an apostle of "revolution by love" is slightly grotesque. How was the Hungarian Soviet set up? Simply by means of a vague "organization"? No. The Hungarian bourgeoisie abdicated in favor of the proletariat, for several very good reasons; first, they saw that the peace-terms of the Allied and Associated Powers would destroy them utterly, and Hungary with them—after all, proletarian rule would enlist the people to preserve the national wealth, which might later be restored to its original owners; second, capitalism was incapable of making war, or peace, or of reconstructing war-shattered society—and Hungarian capitalism didn't want to assume responsibility for the job; third, Karolyi and others saw the inevitability of the Social Cataclysm, and perhaps realized that there was only one way to prevent the confounding of all in one all-overwhelming ruin—only one constructive force in the world, the proletariat.

But before such lessons could be driven home, how much violence had been done, how many heroic proletarians had lost their lives on the barricades to prove their unalterable will! How had great Russia rocked on her foundations!

And was it accomplished peacefully after all? As we write the Tchekho-Slovaks and the Rumanians are attacking Soviet Hungary with arms furnished by the entente Powers. Capitalism is attempting to destroy the Hungarian Revolution by force, as it is the Russian Revolution. And Hungary, that millennial abode of brotherly love, has mobilized the revolutionary workers to defend the Socialist Fatherland.

What would Scott Nearing have Soviet Hungary do? Simply go out to meet the enemy with an olive branch in one hand and a pacifist pamphlet in the other? The destruction of Soviet Hungary and of Soviet Russia means that printing presses will be smashed, the teachers of "ideas" put to death; it means that a general massacre of the workers—pacifists as well as militants—will inundate the Revolution in waves of blood, as in Finland.

If there had been no Red Army in Russia, there would now be no Russian Revolution to stand as a beacon for the world's workers. Not the least part of the Russian Revolution is its ability to defend itself. It is true that the ideas of the Russian Revolution conquered Imperial Germany; it is also true that these ideas are the greatest defense of the Russian Revolution against the world. But in Russia

these ideas were put into life by an armed insurrection, and they are now being defended by a people in arms.

But let us examine what is the real incentive behind the Social Revolution. Comrade Nearing seems to think that the reason for revolution is entirely a moral one. He implies that the reason the working class wishes to take over the power, and ought to take over the power, is because such an action is right. The inference from his arguments is that all one has to do in order to persuade the vast majority of the people that Socialism is best, is to employ the weapons of peaceful argument and propaganda.

But the question is not whether Socialism is morally right, the point is that the Socialist Commonwealth is the only possible way to save civilization and reconstruct human society. And, while five or six centuries of peaceful argument, unhampered by the capitalist political state, might conceivably convince a majority of the working people to get together in a general strike accompanied by passive resistance, such tactics are Utopian now, when the Social Revolution is upon us.

The capitalist class is not going to be convinced of its moral duty to abolish itself, no matter how great a majority of the workers decide that this is right. The general strike is in itself an act of violence, and provokes violence in return, which must be resisted by the strong hand of proletarian dictatorship. Capitalism is rushing toward its doom with tremendous speed, and the crash will not wait upon the peaceable education of the working class. Even in its death throes, capitalism is not going to allow the workers to take hold of the shattered machinery of civilization without a battle.

Comrade Nearing offers the original opinion that the reason why the German Communists failed to seize the government, was because they attempted an armed insurrection; and that if they do succeed it will be in spite of their use of force. At the same time he slurs over the fact that the Russian Bolsheviks accomplished their seizure of the power by force of arms. In Germany the Spartacist risings were not against the government as such, but against the capitalist class, which, through the treachery of the Majority Social Democrats, had been included in the government,—in spite of its long and bloody history of repression and imperialistic exploitation. There is no way to meet the violence of the capitalist class except with violence. And it was the Scheidemann Socialists who performed the role of executioners of the workers in the interests of the German bourgeoisie.

In the *Milwaukee Leader*, Victor Berger's paper, an editorial accuses the Left Wing of wanting "violence"—of aspiring to "bloody uprisings." The appearance of Comrade Nearing's pamphlet at this time, when the Socialist movement is split into two factions—that of Scheidemann Socialism and that of Revolutionary Socialism—has the same effect of saddling the Left Wing with the anarchistic tactics of the Black International.

We resent the implication that we stand for violence because it is violence; and that we are against "solidarity". The Left Wing advocates the strong and close organization of the working class in order that it may assume the State power for the working class, and that it may defend the Social Revolution from the brutal violence of the capitalists.

And if Comrade Nearing is opposed to this—if he thinks that he will be allowed to preach "the Social Revolution by Brotherly Love," he is mistaken, and what's more, he is no Revolutionary Socialist.

"Violence or Solidarity"? *Solidarity is violence*, and is met with the black-list, police clubs, and machine guns.

The economic foundation for "the institution of the dear love of comrades" is not to be won without blood and tears. Pacifism disarms the working class, and exposes it to the most fearful dangers.

There is no place for pacifists in the Social Revolution.

## The Telescope

WHEN ordering your copy of *The Socialist*, be sure and get what you ask for. Don't be put off with "something just as good". Look your copy over well before giving any money. Insist on getting what you ask for. None genuine without the label.

It appears from the last issue of *The Socialist* that the stuff it has been putting out is too raw even for the members of the Right Wing, and so the editors of the official organ of "The Pink Terror" are attempting to lead their readers to believe that they are not responsible for what they write—something by the way, which we could have told them long ago. The whole front page of the last issue is devoted to what purports to be an expose of a "fake" number—as if each issue was not a fake.

We suggest that the so-called "fake" *Socialist* was an attempt of the Right Wing leaders to see how much in the way of "sausage Socialism" their followers would stand for.

*Pathetic Figures, No. 2: Berenberg reading the "fake" Socialist.*

We wish to apologize for our mistake when we ventured the opinion that Oneal would be elected as an International delegate. We have seen some of the returns since.

Judging from the returns so far made public it would appear that when the National Executive Committee was picking men to represent the Party in Europe, it was very successful in picking those in whom the membership had least confidence.

Louis Waldman indignantly denies that he was presented with a bouquet of pink roses. He says the bouquet was composed of carnations and that they were originally red in color, only they had become slightly withered owing to the heat produced by the vigor of the applause.

אברהם יצחק שיפילאנק that denounce Yenkes, is boasting that he made the motion to suspend the foreigners from the Socialist Party.

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