

The "Centre" Appears

THE development of a conscious left wing movement in the Socialist Party, a movement to conquer the party for revolutionary Socialism, has developed an intense struggle for control. The "rights," the petty bourgeois moderate Socialists who have officially determined the party's policy, are on the defensive, are actually shaken. Precisely as, in revolutionary Russia and Germany, the bourgeoisie used moderate Socialism to preserve itself, so the moderates in our party are using the "radical" Socialists of the "centre" to fight the left wing. And the "centre," as usual, allows itself to serve counter-revolutionary Socialism by its instinctive tendency to compromise.

In the New York Call of March 23, under the caption "A Basis for Discussion," there appears a letter signed by David P. Berenberg, F. G. Biedenkapp, Evans Clark, Walter M. Cook, Benjamin Glassberg, Jacob Lawn, Flore M. Line, Louis P. Lochner, Ludwig Lore, Scott Nearing, Moses Oppenheimer, Albert Pauly and Henry Sipsos. This letter, and the tendency it represents, is definitely centrist and is a direct attack upon the left wing movement. The letter follows:

The members of the American Socialist Party are face to face with a national and internal crisis. We who sign this letter, believe that the time has come for the party to re-state its principles and re-formulate its tactics. As a basis for discussion for the purpose of bringing about this result, we present the following suggestions:

1.—We believe in a uniform declaration of principles in all party platforms, both local and national, and the abolition of all social reform planks now contained in them.

2.—We believe that the party must teach, propagate and agitate exclusively for the overthrow of Capitalism and the establishment of an industrial democracy.

3.—A political party cannot organize the workers on the economic field; but we believe that the party should assist this process of organization by a propaganda for revolutionary unionism as a part of its general activities.

4.—We believe that the Socialist candidates elected to office should adhere strictly to the above principles under penalty of recall.

5.—We believe that the official party press, the educational institutions and all other agencies of the party should be under direct party control.

6.—We believe that the party should publish new literature in keeping with the policies and tactics above mentioned.

7.—We believe that the national executive committee should immediately call a special national convention for the purpose of formulating party policies and tactics to meet the present crisis.

8.—We believe that the Socialist Party should elect delegates to participate in any international congress to be attended by representatives of revolutionary Socialist parties of all countries, but that the party should refuse to participate in any conference called by "moderate Socialists and social-patriots."

9.—We believe in the immediate discussion of suggestions such as these in every branch and local, and trust that such discussion will put a stop to organized separatism and division, to which we are unalterably opposed.

The clear purpose of this letter, which its writers cannot camouflage, is to strike at the left wing movement in the Socialist Party of New York City, which means to strike at the revolutionary movement in the party everywhere.

The first fact of importance that appears in this "proclamation" is that its "demands" are taken from the Program of the Left Wing Section of New York City, with alterations that indicate the compromising tendency of the group it represents. The Left Wing Manifesto urges "party ownership" of the party press, etc.; the "centre" changes it to "party control"—which may be interpreted to mean any and all things. Then there is the clause concerning the international congress. The "centre" declares in favor of a congress of "revolutionary Socialists," but against a Congress of "moderate Socialists." The Left Wing Manifesto says: "We demand that the Socialist Party shall elect delegates to the International Congress proposed by the Communist Party of Russia (Bolshevik): that our party shall participate only in a new International with which are affiliated the Communist Party of Russia (Bolshevik), the Communist Labor Party of Germany (Spartacans), and all other Left Wing parties and groups." This is clear, unequivocal and requires no "interpretation." Compare it with the "proclamation" of the "centre." Why did the signers of the "centre" letter change this to something indefinite, something that may be "interpreted"? It is characteristic, and is a tendency toward confusing the issue. This is typical of the "centre."

Moreover, the letter repudiates reformism, demands the abolition of all social reform planks in the party platform. But consider the signers, particularly Evans Clark. Comrade Clark is employed by the "Socialist" Aldermen of New York City, and his whole function is to provide the research material upon which they base their social reform measures. At least five of the other signers are reformists of the worst sort. What confidence can we place in their demand?

A revolutionary, a left wing program for the party should repudiate the errors and crimes, the policy and

tactics, of moderate Socialism. This the letter does not do in a single case. But, they may argue, this repudiation is "implied." The day is not the day for implications, but for vigorous, unequivocal formulations: let the dead bury their dead. Positively, the letter offers only a part, and a very small part, of the policy of revolutionary Socialism. The heart of revolutionary Socialism is comprised in the policy and tactics of mass action and proletarian dictatorship—mass action as the dynamic means for the conquest of power, proletarian dictatorship as the organized form of the new proletarian state as the means of annihilating Capitalism and introducing the new system of communist Socialism. The comrades who have issued this camouflaged blast against the Left Wing ignore completely, in their "basis of discussion," the fundamental aspect of the whole problem. Most of the signers repudiate mass action; Scott Nearing, at least, repudiates proletarian dictatorship; while the whole tendency of the others, with the exception of Ludwig Lore, is directly antagonistic to mass action and proletarian dictatorship.

The whole letter is an act of treason to revolutionary Socialism. At the moment when world events call upon Socialism and the proletariat to adopt the uncompromising policy of revolutionary Socialism, these comrades hesitate and compromise miserably; at the moment when the Bolsheviks have refused to invite the Socialist Party officially to the international Communist Congress, these comrades act against the organized left wing which was invited by our revolutionary comrades in Russia. This is revolutionary consistency and audacity!

The miserable character of the appeal for "discussion" is that they adopt certain planks of the left wing Manifesto, camouflage others, while they act against the spirit of the Manifesto and repudiate the movement that issued the Manifesto. Why? They claim they are against "organized separatism and division." This is an evasion. The left wing movement in New York City, in the party everywhere, is not "organized separatism and division;" it is a movement to conquer the party for the party, for revolutionary Socialism. It is the opportunistic bureaucracy, the right wing in New York whom these comrades of eternal compromise are protecting, who are trying to split the party by throwing out the revolutionary elements, by preferring charges against active individual left wingers, by refusing to act favorably upon applications for membership in branches which accept the left wing Manifesto, etc. The betrayers of Socialism are eager for a split; and the tactics of the "centre" are playing their game.

The left wing movement in New York City is a mass movement *within the party*. Their whole organization consists of a city committee, representing about 20 left wing branches; and this centralized expression is absolutely necessary in order to unify their forces and direct their struggle against the reactionary forces. To call this "organized separatism and division" is false, is precisely what the right wing wants, is acting against revolutionary Socialism. It is again characteristic of the "centre."

The "centre" is the worst enemy of revolutionary Socialism and the militant proletariat. The "centre" Independent Socialists in Germany are much more dangerous to the Spartacans than the Ebert-Scheidemann gangsters; they hesitate, compromise, and betray the Revolution.

And what is Comrade Lore doing in this company of bourgeois intellectuals, compromisers and "centrists"? Has he abandoned his principles and policy? Is he so naive as to imagine that he is using the "centrists," while as a fact they are using him against the left wing? The *Class Struggle*, of which Lore is one of the editors, has done great work in developing the left wing; and now that it is in action, Lore acts against it. Has Lore definitely aligned himself as a "left centre"? Is he out to become a cheap American imitation of Hugo Haase?

The issue is clear: it is a struggle to the end. No compromise, no hesitation. The centre must be smashed as a necessary means of conquering the party for the party, for revolutionary Socialism. Life is with us and for us: revolutionary Socialism shall prevail.

For ways that are dark and tricks that are vain,

The Bolsheviks are peculiar...

Just when the American public was getting familiar with what our bourgeois artists think a Bolshevik looks like, these Russians go and appoint, as representative to America, a man who wears a clean collar, washes regularly and is even suspected of taking an occasional bath—to say nothing of the fact that he has no beard and was once seen in a barber's shop having his hair cut.

* * *

We learn that the selling agents of several of our big corporations have been instructed to join the Socialist Party in order that they may be able to begin their letters to the representative of the Soviet Government: "Dear Comrade."

Bolshevikjabs

IN view of the way the Peace Conference has provoked Bolshevism in Hungary would it not be possible to prosecute the American delegates under the Espionage Act?

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If it is found impracticable to take any action under the Espionage Act we would suggest that the anonymous organization which is spending so much money on newspaper propaganda against the Bolsheviks, direct its efforts towards the Peace Conference and leave the American public alone. If it could only convince the gentlemen in Paris that Bolshevism is as horrible as its cartoons make out perhaps they would be brought to see the wisdom of signing peace before they do any more damage.

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Anyhow it's beginning to appear likely that if these gentlemen do not sign peace and hurry to their respective homes, they will not have any homes to go to.

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Miss Civilization, about whose treatment at the hands of the Bolsheviks, Spartacans, I. W. W. and similar undesirables the press is manifesting such uneasiness just now, is an orphan whose parentage is the subject of much dispute, the general opinion being that, like Topsy, she "just grewed." However that may be she is a lady that has fallen much under the influence of Mr. Capitalism and as a result is constantly being menaced by various disorderly elements.

The recent unpleasantness in Europe resulted from the firm determination of each side to save her from the other, but the trouble is that she refuses to stay saved and immediately wanders into fresh trouble. Sometimes she is menaced in Mexico, sometimes in China, but generally she is in continual trouble in all small countries that are richly endowed in natural wealth. Wealth seems to exercise the same fascination over her as European titles do over American heiresses and she is continually wandering into all sorts of out of the way places, usually accompanied by religious missionaries. She no sooner lands than trouble begins and Mr. Capitalism rushes to her aid with soldiers and machine guns. Owing to the fact that she has already visited most of the countries of the earth and been saved from the natives, she has recently got into the habit of getting into trouble in those countries where she was supposed to be well established. Just now she seems to have a genius for arousing the wrath of the working people who have lately become enamoured of Miss Social-Revolution.

From her pictures in the newspapers she appears to be a very presentable and entirely harmless young woman with a penchant for wearing long flowing robes, draped to display a not unpleasing figure, and a fondness for carrying olive branches. But the workers say that this is an old photograph, taken when she was young and innocent, and in reality she is an old hag, drunk with power, whose face is disfigured by poverty, child labor, prostitution, hunger, wage slavery and mass murder.

The latest reports say that she has just got into trouble in Hungary and that the British workers have been carrying on a violent flirtation with Miss Social-Revolution and are contemplating banishing Miss Civilization from their affections until such time as she changes her ways.

The Oath of Enlistment of Soviet Soldiers

1. Son of the People, worker and citizen of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic, I enroll in the Workers' and Peasants' Army

2. Before the working class of Russia and the whole world I swear: to respect my position as soldier; to conscientiously undergo my military training; to safeguard the interests of the Army and the People, and to defend them with my heart's blood.

3. I swear to submit strictly to revolutionary discipline, and to obey without question the orders of my chiefs, designated by authority of the Workers' and Peasants' Government.

4. I swear to commit no action detrimental to the reputation of the free citizens of the Russian Soviet Republic; I swear to consecrate myself, in thought and in action, to our ideal of the emancipation of all the working classes.

5. I swear, that at the call of the Workers' and Peasants' Government, I will risk my life to defend the Soviet Republic against whatever dangers there may be, from wherever it may come, and that I will give whatever I have of strength and of life for the defense of the Soviet Republic, of Socialism and of the brotherhood of the people.

6. Let me be delivered to the contempt of the People and the severe punishment of the laws of the Revolution if I violate the oath!