

A "Socialist" Prosecuting Attorney

By Nicholas I. Hourwich

At the joint session of the central committees of all New York locals of the Socialist Party, held Monday, March 17, representatives of the Labor Defense Union (for the defense of political prisoners), stated officially, for the first time, it seems ("unofficially" it had become known a great deal earlier), the "Socialist" prosecuting attorney, the Milwaukee "Socialist" prosecuting attorney. This guardian of "law and order," elected on the Socialist Party ticket about a year ago, arrested in Milwaukee and imprisoned for "seditious activity" fifteen persons—Socialists and Anarchists. During the confinement of these comrades an explosion took place in the prison, which resulted in the death of eleven policemen. The explosion was, of course, laid to the imprisoned "seditious persons," and though there were neither data nor proofs of their guilt, the "Socialist" prosecuting attorney, with zeal and ardor that would give credit to any of the capitalist "guardians of order," decided to investigate the "case" and to secure a verdict "guilty." "The case" was conducted according to all rules of the prosecuting attorney's art. All means were resorted to—means which have given so much "honor" to the San-Francisco prosecutor, Fickert, who accomplished the sentencing of Thomas Mooney. The laurels of Mr. Fickert, apparently, secured the envy of his "Socialist" colleague in Milwaukee!...

In search of "evidence," the residences of all suspected persons were raided, by order of "our" Milwaukee prosecutor; correspondence was seized; also Socialist literature, and portraits of Marx, Engels, and other Socialist workers and writers.

The hearing was scheduled for the very day when the funeral of the eleven policemen was to be held, at the time when the disposition of the man in the street was especially excited against all sorts of "seditious persons" and all sorts of "sedition." At the trial, the "Socialist" prosecutor delivered a pathetic speech, during which he flourished before the eyes of the jury the portraits of Marx, Engels and Bakunin, and So-

cialist brochures found at the residences of the men under trial, asserting that all this "circumstantial evidence" established beyond dispute the "criminal state of mind" of the men on the stand, and their participation in the explosion....

As might be expected, the prosecutor won a "brilliant victory," and "justice" triumphed. All the men on trial were found guilty, and were sentenced to imprisonment, the terms reaching 25 years!....

And since virtue is always rewarded in this best of all possible worlds, the virtue of the prosecutor and the abilities of this "Socialist" representative of the "good Socialist city" of Milwaukee were also rewarded. At the last November elections in Milwaukee, the hero-prosecutor, who had upheld the honor of the Socialist Party, and who had proved to the dismay of its enemies that a "Socialist" prosecutor is never lagging behind a bourgeois prosecutor, was, as recognition of his "services" to the party, again renominated by the party, and again elected as prosecuting attorney.

Such is the brief but instructive story of how a "Socialist" prosecutor of Milwaukee "fought for" the emancipation of the working class!....

We do not doubt that this story will evoke a feeling of repulsion and indignation in all members of the Socialist Party. We do not doubt that even the right wing of the party (with the exception, perhaps, of Milwaukee, for whom, apparently, Socialism does not exist) will turn its back on an individual who so openly and unceremoniously transgresses Socialist "ethics;" and as Pontius Pilate washing his hands, will bring him to the party court. We do not entertain very much assurance—there are too many things that makes us pessimistic in this respect—but we are ready to hope that the party court will expel this "Socialist Prosecutor" from the party.

The moderates of the right wing of the party will then come to us with a sigh of relief and with the

noble consciousness of a duty performed, and they will say: "You see, we have expelled him. The party is purified and its honor vindicated."

But we shall answer these party moralists: "Is it really so? Can it be, really, that the expulsion of this or that individual party member who has violated Socialist principles will 'save' and 'purify' the party? And is it appropriate that you should express your indignation at this ill-fated 'violation'? Look at London, Berger & Co., whom you have been in the habit of ardently defending and praising at all times. Indeed, all these leaders of yours are, in greater or smaller degree, daily doing the same thing which has provoked your indignation in the Milwaukee 'comrade-prosecutor': they are traitors to Socialism and to the cause of proletarian emancipation."

No! By merely expelling this or that member of the party you will not cleanse the party and save its honor. Paraphrasing the materialistic formula of Marx, it is not the individual party members who determine the party consciousness, but, on the contrary, the consciousness of the individual member is determined by the party life. In other words, the "collapse of Socialist morals" in the party, treason to Socialist principles by individual members of the party, are the result and the symptoms of the general disease in the whole party organism. The party as a whole has not yet learned the revolutionary lessons of proletarian experience in Russia and Germany. In spite of these lessons, the party as a whole continues to follow the old worn-out policy of opportunism, compromise and cheap "reformism." But that which did not comparatively affect the party in the past during the period of peaceful development, must necessarily result in acute diseases in this period of revolutionary transition.

To really cure the party of its diseases, the party must abandon the environment of opportunism for a healthy "revolutionary climate." This is the problem of the recently formed Left Wing of the American Socialist Party. The cure for the diseases of the party is prescribed by the Manifesto and Program of the Left Wing. There is no other cure.

On Bolshevism, Russian and American

By John Reed

(Letter to the New York Times, refused publication)

I USUALLY take no notice of what appears in the kept press, but the attitude of all the capitalist papers—of which your journal is undisputedly the most powerful—toward the investigation of Bolshevism now proceeding in Washington, is so outrageous, and involves me personally so directly, that I feel called upon to protest.

I am certain that you will not publish this letter in full. I send it, however, so that you may suppress it, after which I can publish it in another paper.

After falsifying my testimony before the Senate Committee so as to make it appear that I approved of the "ideals" but not the "practices" of Bolshevism, you make an editorial statement to that effect. As a matter of fact I do not disapprove of Bolshevism for the United States—I heartily approve it. What I said before the Senate Committee was that I did want the industrial Commonwealth established here, but that in all countries necessarily its forms would be somewhat different—just as in all Republics at present the forms are different, while the principle remains the same. As for the principles of Bolshevism, I hope they will be applied in every country on the face of the globe—workers' control of industry, socialization of land, and the temporary dictatorship of the proletariat necessary to accomplish these things.

My one complaint against you and the other paid agents of the capitalist class is, not that you oppose Bolshevism, but deliberately pervert and suppress the truth about it, and about what is going on in Russia. It is all very well to state that Bolshevism means wholesale murder, socialization of women, robbery unrestrained, and then say that I stand for it. It is all very well to say that the Bolsheviks are anarchists (although anarchy in Russia and in America is openly opposed to the strongly centralized proletarian state built up in Russia), and then call us, who defend Bolshevism, anarchists. This of course is a very convenient method of carrying on a sinister propaganda for the benefit of those ruthless interests who plunged the world into a war which cost more than seven million lives, and who are rich with blood-money. But it is not the truth—and you know it is not the truth.

You know, for instance, that the Reverend George Simons made false statements in Washington. You know that Ambassador Francis made false statements before that Committee. You know that the Committee investigating Bolshevism deliberately set out to hear nobody but witnesses against the Soviet Government,

and accepted as gospel truth the cheapest sort of ignorant denunciation poured out by all the opponents of the only government of, by and for the people now on earth. We, who supported the Soviet Government's side of the case, were allowed to do so because we insisted, and made a row—and then our testimony was falsified, and cut, and deliberately misinterpreted by the newspapers—even as much of it as was allowed by the third degree methods by which the Committee's investigation was conducted.

My wife, Louise Bryant, was carefully questioned as to her belief in God; in order, so the Committee said, to ascertain her regard for the sanctity of an oath. According to the testimony of the witnesses opposed to Bolshevism, it seems to me that it might have been a good thing to question them, rather than us.

You have said on your editorial page that I am "a paid agent of the Bolsheviks." That is a straight lie, and I have no doubt that you know it. In a country where German propaganda has been heavily financed, and no one punished for receiving money for spreading it—in a country where British and French propaganda has been openly spread and openly paid for, not only since we entered the war but before it, unrebuked, and where every little national group has its paid publicity agents—even those groups of Finns and Ukrainians who represented and represent now governments set up by the Imperial German Government,—in a country whose own expenses for official propaganda in Russia against the Soviet Government run into hundreds of thousands of dollars, the accusation sounds a little hypocritical.

The business of spreading what you call "Bolshevik propaganda" is not very lucrative, as you yourself must know. There is no money in speaking to working class audiences, or writing in working class papers, which are the only audiences and papers open to any advocacy of the truth about Soviet Russia. The Soviet Government, to my knowledge, has never sent a cent here for propaganda of any sort—except to Santeri Nuorteva, official representative of the People's Government of Finland, who demanded a hearing before the Overman Committee in Washington, and whom the Committee was afraid to call. Even my rather heavy witticism about the "wealthy ladies of New

York"—misquoted into the bargain—which was presented in such a solemn matter by your paper, does not indicate any source of support for the Soviet Government's propaganda, for I do not know a single lady, wealthy or otherwise, who ever contributed a single cent for the worthy purpose of opening a Soviet Information Bureau.

All persons who work for an unselfish purpose for little or nothing are incomprehensible to persons who never work for nothing, and who can be hired to work for anything. The capitalist organs of publicity impute to us their own tactics. It is known to everyone that any kind of publicity work requires funds, for an office, for stenographers, stationery, a typewriter, stamps and so forth. But all that necessary expense is transmuted by you into salaries which permit us to take vacations at Palm Beach. I may say here that if the American Government would allow funds to come to us from Russia, we would gladly use them to open an Information Bureau about Russia. You are correct when you call this "Bolshevik propaganda," for the great majority of persons who learn the truth about Russia become convinced Bolsheviks. Nothing else is needed.

But the American Government does not allow funds to come from Russia, and therefore it is wrong to call us "paid agents." You are perfectly well aware that all the vast machinery of the Department of Justice, the Department of State and the secret detective services of public and private organizations have been and are at work to find some trace of money coming from Russia to Socialists and others here; and you know that they have not found it, nor will they ever find it.

Another statement on your editorial page deserves notice. After falsifying or omitting parts of Raymond Robbins' testimony, to make it appear that he supports the cheap defamers of Soviet Russia, you triumphantly mark that the "parlor Socialists counted on Robbins to uphold their contentions, and that he failed them."

This is not true. No one of us ever thought that Raymond Robbins would support Bolshevism or Socialism, of which he has been a determined opponent for years. We said that he would tell the truth about what went on in Soviet Russia; and if you dared to publish his full testimony, and not discredit it by editorial comment, you would find that we have been completely justified.