
Long Live the Communist Party!

2,500 Seized in Raids

[events of Nov. 7 to 11, 1919]

by Maximilian Cohen

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Attributed to editor Max Cohen.

“Long live the Communist Party!” That is the universal answer of the comrades to the government’s attempts to establish a reign of terror. If to be a Communist is a crime, then the whole membership of the Party pleads guilty.

The authorities raided almost every headquarters in the city, smashed up offices furnished, gave everybody they found a free ride, seized records and literature, but the organization remains intact, and the Party membership unafraid or even astonished.

The City Police and Detective Bureau; [Detective Sgt. James] Gegan and his Bomb Squad who are experts at “finding” explosives; Major Frederick W. Rich, Archibald Stevenson and his colleagues on the Lusk Committee; Deputy Attorney General Samuel Berger, and hundreds of assistants, using every police patrol in the city, cooperated here with the Federal Secret Service and federal operatives in a nationwide panicky raid, which was the government’s way of celebrating the overthrow of Tsarism and the Second Anniversary of the Soviet Republic. Two thousand, five hundred persons were seized in New York alone, and 2 women and 35 men were actually held. And the end is not yet, for the 10 days that shook the world are to be celebrated here by 10 days that will shake the United States (with laughter), and according to schedule, 7,000 more people must be seized regardless of rhyme or reason before the celebration is complete.

Of the thousands of Communists, CLP-ites, Anarchists, Socialists, and innocent bystanders (including 2 Italians who were in the Russian People’s House trying to collect a bill and who were badly beaten up and arrested because of their inability to speak En-

glish, 3 — Gitlow, and Larkin of the CLP and Pearl of the Communist Party — are held on definite charges; the other 34 held are charged with violating some federal statute, but the raiders have not been able to decide just one as yet.

The police, according to some reports, claim to have “found” 2 revolvers and 6 boxes of cartridges in the home of Henry C. Pearl of the Communist Party, but the *Tribune* reports the same magic number, 2 revolvers and 6 boxes of cartridges, have been “found” in the home of Benjamin Gitlow. The names of the other 34 who are being held is being kept secret at present by the Secret Service, but it is reported that there are 2 women among them.

Foreign Birth Chief Crime.

The chief crimes charged were those of being of foreign, especially Russian, birth and of being a member of either the Communist Party or the Industrial Workers of the World. Most of those who said they were of native birth were promptly released. Many of foreign birth who were roped in through a federal raid on Friday night [Nov. 7, 1919] on the Union of Russian Workers were rushed to Ellis Island where, if the government plays true to form, they will have to stay for the next few years. Archibald Stevenson declared that he considered the Communist Party (which he estimated as having 7,500 members in Greater New York) with being the most “dangerous” of the organizations, and that wherever a Communist Party card was found, the person having it was held.

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Men in Tombs

The following are reported to be in the tombs:

Irving Potash, 220 Roebling St., Brooklyn.
 Michael Zavarich, 66 S. 6th St., Brooklyn.
 Taft Novack, 104 N. Portland Ave., Brooklyn.
 Robert Fried, 205 S. 6th St., Brooklyn.
 B. Goldberg, 107 Forsythe St.
 Julius Janusky, 93 S. 2nd St., Brooklyn.
 Louis Shapiro, 367 S. 5th Street, Yonkers.
 Nathan Schechter, 347 Monroe St.
 Moses Zimmerman, 135 Forsythe St.
 Elias Marks, 75 Orchard St.
 Herman Pfeffer, 51 Forsythe St.
 Joseph Szwezal, 210 E. 13th St.
 Nicholas Turkowich, 13 St. Marks Place.
 Abraham Aronowitz, 176 Forsythe St.
 Abraham Schaeffer, 70 Forsythe St.
 John Jauschusky, 13 St. Marks Place.
 Mike Stichna, 321 E. 16th St.
 Harry Israel, 347 Monroe St.
 Boris Dirik, 535 E. 11th St.
 Jay Lovestone, 856 E. 172nd St.
 Herman Bleiweiss, 1412 Charlotte St.
 Isidor Cohen, 225 Ellergy St.
 Abraham Weinberg, 635 Prospect Ave.
 John Holland, Steamship Buford.

At the preliminary hearing Tuesday [Nov. 11, 1919], Magistrate McAdoo was furnished with a manifesto of the Communist International. He read it very studiously.

“It is quite evident,” he said, “that the Communist Party is intended to destroy organized government. It appeals for class hatred. The Communist Party is an organized conspiracy against the United States government and the government of the State of New York, and each member of the party is guilty and responsible for the acts, writings, or sayings of each and every member. This point of law was embodied in the decision handed down years ago in the famous Lord George Gordon case following the “No Popery” riots in London, in which each member of the mob that followed him through the streets was held guilty.

“I hold that the Communist Party has declared a state of war against the United States and the government of the State of New York, and that the establishment of the Communist Party in the State of New York is the highest crime known to our law, and I will not reduce bail one dollar.”

Attorney [Charles] Recht, who is handling the cases, charged maltreating of the prisoners but this was denied by Deputy Attorney General Berger.

Magistrate McAdoo decried the belief of some persons that the men were held merely “because they hold membership cards in the Communist Party.” He declared that “when these men joined that party they entered recruiting barracks being maintained in this city pledging themselves to aid in the overthrow of this government.” The Magistrate, disclosing a copy of the Communist Party’s constitution, pointed to a clause which read, “the objective is the conquest by the proletariat of the power of the state.”

50,000 Pounds of Literature.

“The search warrants were not obtained for the purpose of taking prisoners,” declared Senator [Clayton] Lusk in a statement to the press.

“It was the purpose of the committee to obtain literature (which they might have had free for the asking as it was being distributed as fast as we could get it out) and records of the Communist Party.

“In our raids on Saturday night [Nov. 8, 1919] we seized about 25 tons of literature (and they broke one of the typewriters used by *The Communist World* to smithereens) intended for use in a campaign now being waged in the United States for the overthrow of our government.”

Senator Lusk declared that any person joining the Communist Party violated the “Criminal Anarchy” law, passed after [Leon] Czolgosz shot President McKinley, and now revived and used against anybody and everybody.

According to Lusk, whenever there was an industrial dispute, the district affected was flooded with Communist Party literature and that “highly paid agitators immediately were sent to the scene. Some of them receive \$100 a night,” the Senator claims.

Raiders Will Teach Communism.

The One Big Union of Federal, State, and Municipal raiders declare that they are ready to go into the business of teaching Communism, for they intend to publish specimens of the literature seized as soon as they have sorted and classified it (and it will then be circulated through the medium of the press).

A few of the places raided in the last 3 days were: *IWW Headquarters*, on 10th Street.

Novyi Mir, 10th Street, where the raiders wanted to know, “Where’s them guns yer gonna use at Rutgers Square? Where’s that \$90,000? (?) Where’s Gregory Weinstein? (!)”

Headquarters of the Communist Party on 10th Street, where a dance was in progress and the “criminal terpsichoreans” were all taken to the gymnasium at police headquarters and where one perfectly good typewriter was smashed.

5th A.D., Communist Party, Bronx.

17th A.D., Communist Party, 46 E. 104th Street.

Brownsville Russian CLP.

Ukrainian Branch, Communist Party.

Hungarian Workers’ Home.

Kings County Right Wing Central Committee, which was left seriously alone as soon as I.M. Chatcuff produced the charter of the Socialist Party. (“Stumped by the request of Harry Kritzer that they produce the proper search and arrest warrants, the agents could make no arrests,” is the way the *New York Call* reports it.)

Package Party of the YPSL, 17th A.D., Communist Party. The raiders took everybody’s name, arrested 2 people, and [took] pictures of Lenin, Trotsky, Marx, and others, also every book in the branch li-

brary.

Branches of the Union of Russian Workers in New York and all over the United States. In New York the raid on the Russian People’s House occurred on Friday night [Nov. 7, 1919], and was more brutal than any other. Men and women, many of whom were in a classroom where they were taking lessons in English, were clubbed and battered until the blood flowed freely, and then 200 of them were dumped into patrol wagons and taken over to “headquarters.” The federal drives were chiefly aimed at this organization of Russian anarchists, and their manifesto was published in full in all newspapers on Sunday and Monday [Nov. 9 & 10, 1919].

Branches of the Communist Party and other organizations in Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit, Bristol, Ansonia,, Bridgeport, Lawrence, Pittsburgh, Monessen, Hartford, Cleveland, and other industrial centers, where numbers ranging from mere handfuls to several hundred were held.

“Chemicals Found.”

In several places it was announced that quantities of “chemicals” were found, but it is not clear whether vaseline or castor oil is meant. The warrants were issued by Magistrate McAdoo, and based upon affidavits of Luskers who swore in part of the testimony they had gotten from recent interrogation of those summoned from various organizations. According to the *Morning World* of Monday [Nov. 10, 1919], there are 75,000 of the Communist Party in Greater New York alone. A large bag of “black powder” (pepper?) was “found” in Cleveland. No sugar boards were found anywhere. It is safe to predict that the next series of raids will be pulled off on May 1, 1920.†

†- The May Day 1920 mass raids jokingly predicted here did actually come to pass — but these turned out to be the third and smallest of the 3 coordinated anti-Red operations of the Great Red Scare of 1919-20. Sandwiched between the Revolution Day 1919 and May Day 1920 mass raids were the so-called “Palmer Raids,” launched on the night of Jan. 2/3, 1920 (with arrests continuing sporadically throughout the next several days.) The “Palmer” New Year’s campaign proved to be far and away the most massive of the 3 coordinated operations, with arrests running into the multiple thousands. The Communist Party of America and Communist Labor Party were specifically targeted in both the January 1920 and May 1920 operations.

Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport.

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