
Division That Weakens:

Letter to the Editor of the *New York Call*, May 9, 1919.

by Charles Hardy

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Editor of *The Call*:

About two years ago, I was summoned to a job that required my devotion of 14 to 16 hours per diem.

Having family obligations, I withdrew from all my union and Socialist executive activities and became a mere “dues paying” member.

Eight weeks ago I returned to my old branch to resume my old activities.

Having been organizer of my branch and a student at the Rand School, I made quite a few friends among the comrades that were most active. Naturally, when I appeared at the meeting of the branch, comrades who knew me greeted me cheerfully and I heard them tell other comrades that I was a “Left Winger” of the reddest there is.

They immediately proceeded and assessed me one hundred dollars (\$100.00) towards the fund for a new home of the 3rd A.D., Local Bronx, which is my branch. Of course it was impossible for me to make good the assessment of \$100, so through hard bargaining I got away with \$25.

This was not all. I was confronted with the question: “On whose side are you? Are you a Left or Right Winger?” As I had some connections with the US Signal Corps, I thought it must be a joke, and I replied that I had no wings. I made up my mind to find out what it is about. I read the Left Wing Manifesto, and while it is seemingly “hot

stuff,” I eschewed it coldly.

However, I found some redeeming features in their manifesto. They promise to safeguard the small stock investors under their dictatorship (not saying how small) also the Liberty Bond holders. At the same time, they strenuously object to socialists who endorse the buying of bonds. They endorse industrial unionism, something that the Socialist Party has done long before they dreamed of it; but that is only a display of ignorance on their part, and we can readily forgive them since they are so short a time in the Socialist Party.

Local Bronx decided to hold a party membership meeting for the purpose of discussing the issue.

Three speakers were to express their views to the best of their ability — Ben Gitlow, for the Left; Moses Oppenheimer, for the Center; and Waldman, for the Right Socialist Party. Here, I felt, we will see the sources at work wherefrom we can derive our judgment. The only one who spoke on the subject properly was Waldman, for he has spoken on the issue and left out personalities. He has shown conclusively that we are being separated by a little egotistic group of men who are carried away with the enthusiasm of what is happening in Europe, overlooking the present economic conditions and the psychology of the workers in America.

He made the following, in substance, quite

clear: In Russia the means of making a livelihood were not highly developed, yet the masses were thoroughly imbued with the teachings of socialism. In America, the industries, the means by which we are making a livelihood, are highly developed, and the conditions are rotten ripe for a change, yet the minds of the workers are unprepared for it.

The Left Winger refuses to look facts in the face, but watches the Eberts and Scheidemans through the New York Times; then he engages in disrupting the party for tolerating the Scheidemans.

I cannot describe in detail what has occurred at the subsequent two meetings of the local for the lack of space. The behavior of the Left Wingers was uncouth and disgusting. They came to the meetings organized and prepared to cram into the throats of those assembled their manifesto at any price and without discussion.

A Mr. Himmelfarb was piloting around from place to place, incessantly passing steering slips instructing their different constituents what motions and amendments to make at different moments.

Dr. Hammer, the chairman, who was elected for the three meetings, disregarded all parliamentary ruling procedures and explained to all that he was trying to be fair, and, since "fairness" is a relative term, the majority at the meetings assembled

admitted that he was unfair.

They sustained the chair with the help of the votes from the members whom they recruited from the outside locals, on matters in which the chairman himself stated, technically, the appealing comrade was right, but he wanted to be fair.

I need not add that Dr. Maximilian Cohen made it his business to be present at two of the three meetings. Their slogan that dooms them to fail is: "We have organized within the party to capture the party, and if we cannot capture it, we will smash it."

In conclusion, the delegates attending the emergency national convention must formulate our platforms and restate the party policies and tactics to meet with the present conditions in America.

The above-mentioned convention shall provide the necessary equipment for the party that will prevent a few disrupters in the future from organizing within the party, which naturally leads to a division that weakens our forces and defeats our purpose when facing our real enemies — the capitalist class.

Fraternally,

Charles Hardy.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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