

The S. P.—Two Wings Without a Body

By John Pepper

SCOTT NEARING, one of the leaders of the Socialist Party, made a statement: The Socialist Party belongs to the past and the future belongs to the Workers' Party.

The Socialist Party had 104,822 members in 1919. In July, 1921, it had 5781 members.

The Socialist Party as an *organization* has collapsed.

The Socialist Party had a revolutionary ideology until the Indianapolis convention of 1912, but then the famous Article 2, Section VI, against direct action was adopted.

The Socialist Party as the bearer of a *revolutionary ideology* has collapsed.

At present the Socialist Party resolves itself into only two factors: First, Morris Hillquit, Victor Berger and their gang of leaders. Second, a revolutionary sentiment represented by Eugene Debs, and a fine culture represented by Scott Nearing.

Morris Hillquit, Victor Berger and their gang of leaders have the Party machinery completely in their power. The revolutionary sentiment which Eugene Debs can evoke from the masses is being shamelessly exploited by them. That craving of the worker for knowledge which Scott Nearing satisfies through his lectures and books, is being converted by the Socialist Party into nickels and dimes of vulgarity.

The Socialist Party is no real party. It has neither an organization, nor masses, nor an ideology, nor a program, nor any campaigns or actions.

There is not a single question on which the Socialist Party as a whole has any opinion. On every actual question concerning the labor movement, the Socialist Party always has two opinions—the opinion of the right wing, and that of the left wing.

What is the right wing of the Socialist Party? It is something definite that one can actually put his hands on. It consists of half a dozen leaders and a few scores of their henchmen. It is a petty Tammany Hall.

What does the left wing consist of? It has no organization at all. It consists only of a vague sentiment. And it may be a paradox, but true nevertheless, that if the Socialist Party at present still has any successes, it is not due to the petty Tammany Hall of Morris Hillquit and Victor Berger, but to that vague revolutionary sentiment expressed by the veteran fighter, Eugene Debs.

The petty Tammany Hall of Hillquit and Berger is clumsy, helpless, and has until now brought only failure for the Socialist Party. Morris Hillquit may ridicule and jeer at the "idealist" Debs, but he himself, instead of exercising the tactics and strategy of a realistic political leader, has simply practised the tricks and deceptions of an average lawyer. Hillquit, as representative of the Socialist Party's Tammany Hall at the Cleveland Labor Party Conference, has completely destroyed the confidence of the masses in the Socialist Party. But Eugene Debs, without an organization, and without a press, but simply with a few meetings, was able to capture 40,000 votes for the Socialist candidate for Mayor in Chicago.

If a warrant should be issued against the Socialist Party as a whole, it would not be found anywhere. Only the right wing or the left wing would be found. But only against the left wing would the warrant take effect. For, Morris Hillquit somehow knows how to fall sick at the right moment, while it is Eugene Debs who marches to prison.

A House Divided Against Itself

THE working class of America is facing great struggles. It must protect itself against the open shop drive of the capitalists, against the political persecution of the capitalist government. Only through the unification of all the forces of the labor movement can a successful defensive be carried on. What is the position of the Socialist Party? Eugene Debs and Scott Nearing are for the united front. But the *official* Socialist Party and its whole press are against the united front with the revolutionary Workers' Party.

The labor unions are losing one strike after another. The masses of unskilled workers are unorganized. The form of the craft unions is antiquated. Debs is for industrial unions, and endorses the amalgamation campaign of the Trade Union Educational League. The *official* Socialist Party supports the American Federation of Labor bureaucracy against amalgamation and against the "dangerous boring from within" policy of the Trade Union Educational League.

The *official* Socialist Party has only hatred and contempt for the Communists on trial at St. Joseph, Michigan. Debs, however, declared his solidarity with the persecuted revolutionaries.

The *official* Socialist Party organizes a systematic and shameless campaign of slander against Soviet Russia, and against the Bolsheviks. The basest lies of the capitalist press and of Czarist hirelings are good enough for the New York Call and the Forward to reprint, in defense of the counter-revolutionary clericals. Debs, on the contrary, expresses his enthusiasm for Soviet Russia, and says openly that the world will in the future erect monuments for the Bolsheviks, and the rank and file of the Socialist Party protests through hundreds of letters against the clericalism of the Socialist Party.

Debs and every self-respecting worker in the Socialist Party is for the formation of an independent class-party of the workers. And yet, at the Cleveland Conference, the *official* Socialist Party—Hillquit, Berger, and Oneal, made a common conspiracy with Johnston and Keating against the Labor Party, and for participation in the primaries of the old capitalist parties. Of course, a few months after the Cleveland Conference, Hillquit debates publicly with Keating. What irony! Hillquit for a Labor Party, and Keating against! The Socialist Party announces this debate as the "Big Battle of Giants." In reality it is a well-rehearsed act by two clowns. The slaps rang out loudly, but did not hurt. And everyone had the feeling that Hillquit could just as skillfully and with as much conviction, have spoken

against the Labor Party as for it. For after all, the clown Hillquit is a lawyer.

Debs always speaks openly against the cowardly and treacherous trade union bureaucrats who, in the summer of 1922, betrayed the great strikes. The *official* Socialist Party and its entire press had not a word of criticism against the open betrayal.

The *official* Socialist Party and its press had enthusiastically defended Ramsay MacDonald who dined and supped with royalty in fancy ball-costume. But the rank and file of the Socialist Party protested indignantly against this cynical stand.

The right wing of the Socialist Party is sinking lower and lower. In the year 1920, the Socialist Party sent a request for affiliation to the Communist International. In 1922, the Socialist Party joined the Second-and-a-Half International. In May, 1923, the Socialist Party will without a doubt join the Second International. But against this official betrayal, the left wing within the Socialist Party protests and demands the impossible—that the united Second and Second-and-a-Half Internationals should admit only such parties as reject the “Burgfrieden” policy of truce with the bourgeoisie. In the May convention of the Socialist Party, two resolutions will stand opposed to each other on this question.

Such is the image of the Socialist Party on every question in the labor movement—a right wing, a left wing, but no body.

Peddling the Drug of Anti-Bolshevism

THE Socialist Party is at present in a tragic situation. The Socialist Party was at one time the political expression of the *revolutionary, semiskilled and unskilled workers of the East Side*. The expulsion of the left wing in 1919, by the Tammany Hall of Hillquit, meant that the Socialist Party threw out the revolutionary workers. The Socialist Party no longer possesses the confidence of the semi-skilled or unskilled workers of the East Side. The Workers' Party has fallen heir to this confidence.

The leadership of the Socialist Party sees with consternation these masses who once supported them, now going over to the Workers' Party. The Socialist Party leaders are therefore now seeking a new basis, namely, the support of the *American labor aristocracy*.

The ideal of the Socialist Party leaders to-day is the German Social Democracy. They desire a large mass party. A party which compromises with the bourgeoisie. A party whose only action is election campaigns and the capturing of Congressional seats. A party which has deep roots in the trade unions. A party of the labor aristocracy. That is the dream of Hillquit, Victor Berger, and Oneal. But they can never reach this ideal. They are like the child which runs towards the rainbow, and in the end breaks down from fatigue. They are running towards the rainbow of Scheidemannism, but they will never reach it. Hillquit will never be Scheidemann. Victor Berger will never be Fritz Ebert. Oneal will never be Kautsky. All the *material conditions* are lacking for the realization of this dream.

The German Social Democracy is deeply rooted in the trade unions. The Social Democrats were the *founders* of the trade unions in Germany. A personal union exists between the Social Democratic party-bureaucracy and the trade union

bureaucracy. The American Socialist Party has an entirely different tradition. It has been *outside* the trade union movement. It has been an advocate of dual unionism. The Socialist Party contains on one hand an element of workers who have become petty bourgeois, and on the other hand some foreign-born workers with a revolutionary inclination.

But it has no elements of the native-born, American, English-speaking labor aristocracy.

The political and social situation has made it possible in Germany for the Social Democratic leaders as ministers or deputies to sell out the workers to the bourgeoisie. Naturally, the German Social Democracy had to win the confidence of the masses, through years of organization and political work *before* it could perpetrate this historic betrayal. In the United States to-day every possibility is lacking for a working class party to capture the presidency or positions in the Cabinet. And it is of course ridiculous for a party of workers which is striving to win the confidence of the masses to *start off* with compromise and betrayal. The German Social Democratic Party was already a mighty mass party when it completely betrayed the masses, whereas the American Socialist Party wants to *become* a mass party *by means* of selling out and betraying the masses.

The Socialist Party has lost, as a basis, the *revolutionary, unskilled and foreign-born workers*. It cannot win over, as a basis the *American labor aristocracy* because all the necessary historical conditions to make that possible are lacking. Therefore, the leaders of the right wing have turned somersault, and are now trying to gain the confidence of the *trade union bureaucracy*.

The whole official policy of the Socialist Party is but a desperate effort for gaining the favor of the conservative trade union bureaucracy. In order to win over Johnston, the Socialist Party has sabotaged the formation of a Labor Party. In order to win a friendly smile from Gompers, the Socialist Party betrays the idea of amalgamation. In order to sit at the same table with the bureaucracy of the American Federation of Labor, the Socialist Party has transformed its whole press into a lie-factory against Soviet Russia. The mighty trade union leaders do not allow the Socialist Party to enter into the trade union movement through the front door, but they allow the Socialist Party to come in secretly by the delivery entrance, like a drug-peddler, with the single article which he still has—the drug of anti-Bolshevism. But this poor drug-peddler is having hard luck. He has himself become a dope-fiend. The class-struggle in America is becoming daily sharper. We are going through revolutionary changes in American political life, and the Socialist Party has only one answer on every question—anti-Bolshevism, anti-Communism, counter-revolution.



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