
US Raids Socialist Headquarters: Tsarism Reigns in Indianapolis: State Secretary Henry's Wife Held Incommunicado by United States Officers, Who Seek Distributors of the Party's Majority Report on War. [events of May 15, 1917]

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INDIANAPOLIS, May 16 [1917].— This city came under the reign of tsarism yesterday, when the United States authorities, without warrant or observing any process of law, raided the state headquarters of the Socialist Party of Indiana and seized all literature bearing on war.

The wife of State Secretary W.H. Henry, who was in the office, was ordered to the federal building for examination.

The same methods followed in Russia before the tsar was deposed were carried out to the letter, Mrs. Henry not being allowed the benefit of legal counsel nor advice from her husband. The purpose evidently was to discover who distributed platforms of the Socialist Party dealing with war.

This morning M.L. Clawson, as counsel for the victims of this outrageous attack upon the liberties supposed to be guaranteed citizens under the constitution, submitted a demand for the return of the confiscated articles, and also refused to allow his clients to be interrogated with reference to their distribution, basing such refusal upon the rights guaranteed every citizen by the constitution.

After the "Higher Ups."

When the district attorney found that the

victims of these methods borrowed from tsar and kaiser could not be intimidated, they were allowed to go, with the intimation that criminal action would be brought by the authorities, and that they would get those "higher up."

Socialists here expect further trouble, as two citizens were arrested, accused of anti-war utterances.

The raid on the Socialist state headquarters is thought to be directly due to a speech made in the Senate of the United States by Hustings of Wisconsin Friday last [May 11, 1917], when he bitterly attacked the majority report on war and militarism of the national Socialist Party convention.

Hustings read a letter that had been sent him by W.R. Gaylord, formerly a member of the State Senate of Wisconsin, to which he had been elected as a Socialist.

Gaylord Fought Majority.

Gaylord fought the adoption of this majority report in the convention. In his letter to Hustings, Gaylord deliberately invoked the government of this country to prevent the general distribution of this report.

He also charged that the convention, to

which he was, nevertheless, a delegate, was irregularly called. Gaylord wrote Hustings, referring to the majority report:

“There is occasion for the discreet use of authority for the prevention of general circulation of this pernicious propaganda.”

Wants Report Limited.

Gaylord was willing, he told Hustings, to allow the members to get the report to vote upon it, but he did not want the party to be allowed to give it any wider distribution. He excused himself to Hustings for his appeal for government aid in suppressing the distribution of the report on the grounds that, while some attorneys in the movement had discussed the advisability of getting a restraining order, such a method “would be expensive,” and that it would take “time to get the movement for it organized,” and that meanwhile “the orders are probably going to the printer.”

Simons Endorses It.

There was a postscript to the letter which Gaylord sent to Hustings, signed by A.M. Simons,

informing the Senator from Wisconsin that he agreed with all that Gaylord had written.

Socialists here regret that Gaylord and Simons did not see the government police exercising the “discreet use of authority” which they were so anxious to put in motion that they had no hesitancy in appealing to a United States Senator nominated by a party which both of them had denounced almost to the limit of language.

Real Russian Setting.

Nothing has been lacking in this entire incident to give it a Russian setting under the tsar. Those arrested were of the best type of citizenship, loyal to the interests of the people, struggling to bring about a better day for all, while those who outraged their rights were the paid servants of those who rule the country in the interests of the industrial and financial lords.

In the background were the “informers” so familiar in old Russia, putting a false construction on the printed utterances of those they had called “Comrades” in order that the powers that be might wreak their vengeance on those true to the cause of human liberty.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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