
The “Workers” Party

by Joseph Sharts

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The self-styled “left wing” elements who left the Socialist Party — or never joined it — because it was too “slow,” are trying to form a Real R-R-Red R-R-Revolutionary Party in New York. It is to be the “lawful” and above-ground political section of the Moscow International, as distinguished from the “unlawful” underground fiasco in America. The Get-Socialism-Quick gentry are not satisfied with the lesson taught them by bitter experience: that there is no such thing as forcing Socialism. American workers did not respond to their “left wing” stuff for the simple reason that industrial development here, with comparatively easy and cheap access to the soil, has been along different lines from that of Eastern Europe, and the political development has also taken a different and much more decentralized form.

Instead of viewing the American situation in a scientific way, as informed Socialists ought, the “left wingers” yielded to emotional impulses. They wanted the Socialist Party, back in 1918, to take a more “militant” attitude. The absurdity of a “militant” attitude on the part of a mere handful of the masses, while the vast majority of American workers are not even class-conscious, didn’t strike them then, and doesn’t strike them now. This new “Workers Party” still peddles the old phrases: “militant,” “action,” etc. Movements do not make themselves militant by slinging “militant” phrases; nor do they get “action” by shrieking “action.”

A really militant man, a real fighter, so long as he is not in position to strike, will talk softly, will bide his time; he does not unpack his heart of pompous phrases of war with knowledge that he cannot translate

his boasts into action. And this, we think, is the true difference between the Socialist Party and these “left wing” rebels.

The Socialist Party is not in love with phrases as phrases; its phrases it is determined to turn into deeds just as soon as opportunity offers; it cultivates therefore a certain moderation of language, in keeping with its present strength and prospects, because it means to “make good.”

But the American Communists seek out the biggest and boldest phrases in the spirit of the little boy at the upper window yelling defiance to the big boy down the street — he has no intention of coming down and trying to “make good”; he loves the phrase for the phrase’s sake; the one who can form and fling the most perfect revolutionary phrase is, for him, the most perfect “revolutionist.”

We shall await with interest the career of this newly formed “militant” revolutionary “Workers Party.” If the trouble with the Socialist Party is that it is too “slow,” and the masses of American workers have been waiting for a party more “militant,” more “revolutionary” in its utterances — then the rapid growth in membership and votes of this Workers Party ought soon to enlighten us.

But if the Workers Party — as we surmise — will continue to consist of a handful of raging radicals hopelessly out of touch with the native-born American working class, we shall stick to our opinion that the Socialist Party fails to grow more rapidly not because it is too “slow,” but because it is still too far in advance of the masses.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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