
The Reds and the Yellows

by Henry Ollikainen

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To the Editor of the *New Times*:

It is generally understood in the Socialist movement that the Reds represent the revolutionary Socialism and the Yellows the reactionary Socialism. But the names do not always represent the true spirit of the movement. Or do you think that the man who always claims to be the most revolutionary, but always works against the revolution is truly revolutionary, and do not think that the man who does not claim in every turn to be a revolutionary, or Red, but always works for the revolution is a Yellow? I make these questions because there seems to be an opinion among the English speaking comrades that the Finnish Socialist Federation of America is a yellow organization, and that the syndicalist faction which separated from the Federation, and mostly from the Socialist Party too, is the only movement which represents the revolutionary spirit among the Finns.

Seemingly the English speaking comrades are misled by the syndicalists, who are spreading all kinds of slanderous charges against the Finnish Socialist Federation among the English comrades. The English comrades do not know that the syndicalists are spreading some kind of charges among the Finnish workers against the Socialist Party as a whole. Their watchword is "Down with Socialist Party and the Labor Unions except the IWW," and they are working for that purpose by all means. The starter and the leader of that faction is Mr. Leo Laukki (he is known among Finnish Socialists as the ill-famous Laukki) who has changed his mind, his principles, and tactics so many times that he scarcely remembers himself how many principles he has had in the few years he has been in this country.

There has always been some doubt about his being a Socialist. When he came to this country there was no other organization in this country among the Finns where he could get a position but the Socialist organization, therefore, he claimed to be a Socialist by words to keep his job. He tried to explain the Socialism, but it was not the kind of Socialism that Marx, Engels, Kautsky, and other well known Socialists had advocated. Therefore some of our best known comrades started to criticize his Socialism, and they wanted him to produce the facts against the Marxian Socialism. But instead of producing the facts he merely explained what the workers are doing here and now. That's the explanation he always gave when our individual comrades or organization forced him to the point where he had to either produce the facts or yield.

But he was a shrewd politician and he used every chance he had to poison the minds of workers against our best comrades and our organization. He and his followers argued that the criticism directed against him was only personal matter of jealousy because he was the ablest man to serve the organization in every line. This trick was used to sidetrack the main question which was: Socialism or Syndicalism?

When the Federation at its National Convention at Smithville, Minn., in July 1912 decided to stand firmly for international socialist principles and by a great majority rejected the syndicalistic ideas, Mr. Laukki, and his followers started the cry that the whole organization is rotten, and that it is lead by a few blind leaders who do not know and do not care anything about Socialism. An underground movement was started by syndicalists for the purpose of capturing *Työmies*, one of our Socialist dailies, and the organization as a whole for the syndicalists, but they did not

succeed in that.

Then they established a new paper [*Socialist*] with the money collected by the locals of the Middle District Committee, which committee was controlled by the syndicalists. The paper claimed to be a Red Socialistic paper at start, and many workers who were honest Socialists supported that paper. They captured about 30 locals, mostly in Minnesota, and they controlled the Socialist Party of Minnesota for the last two years and a half and the result was that the membership fell down nearly 3,000. Now they charge the Finnish Federation for their own fault.

But the paper which was established on false ideals could not hide its real purposes very long, and before it was a year old the syndicalists captured the paper from the so-called political radicals and started the fight against any political action and the political radicals were denied the right to state their opinion in the paper. If these are the kind of Red Socialists you want then further discussion is useless, but we think they are the blackest kind of provocateurs. Furthermore if you think that the Finnish Federation is yellow because it firmly stands for the principles of the international Socialism laid by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, you can call us anything you please. We are not fighting merely for the names, but we are fighting for Socialism, for the cause of the working class.

Yours for Socialism,

Henry Ollikainen,
187 Irving Ave. No.
Minneapolis, Minn.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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