
Letter to the Editor of *New Times*

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by A.L. Sugarman

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Editor, *New Times*.

Dear Comrade:

A few issues ago appeared in your paper a communication signed Henry Ollikainen, in which the writer attempted to explain the difference between the Reds and the Yellows. The poor fellow had a hard time of it indeed, for his knowledge of what the Reds stand for is zero, and what is more, his knowledge of what the Yellows accept is far more thorough.

His charges against a gentleman named Laukki may or may not be true. Whichever is the case is immaterial. O.M. Wassing, Anna Maley, and others at the National Convention [St. Louis: April 7-14, 1917] urged that the constitution be so amended as to allow fusion with non-socialist parties; Charles Edward Russell, John Spargo, Allan Benson, and others advocate a brand of patriotism that is entirely foreign to our internationalism. But I do not condemn the writer of Mr. Ollikainen's letter for the crimes of these individuals. I do not accuse all Yellows of being as bad as some Yellows are. The quarrel is a quarrel, not of aim, but of tactics. I agree that most of the Yellow element are as desirous of the adoption of socialism as are the Reds. But their methods are inimical to their own ends.

The difference lies chiefly in the fact that whereas the Reds want to educate the proletariat, the Yellows wish to elect aldermen. The Reds say

that a political campaign is essentially a device of education, a trick to take advantage of the state of the public mind at elections to pound home the message of revolt; the Yellows say it is chiefly an attempt to gain power. The former adopt the logical course; an educated working class will not need to be told how to vote. The latter puts the cart after the horse; secures a vote, and then tries to teach the voter.

The Reds believe that Karl Marx was at least as good a man as Carl D. Thompson. The Yellows hold that "Seventy Cent Gas Under a Socialist Mayor" is superior as propaganda to the "class struggle."

It is a quarrel between the tactics of the politician and the methods of the educator.

As to the charge that the Reds are all syndicalists and enemies of political action: this is a deliberate misstatement of fact. Again, I repeat, that some individuals may so think, but the revolutionary socialists who so hold are very few. They recognize the value of the state as a weapon; they are eager that it be captured by labor. Laukki belongs to the "anti" element, it is true. His views are ridiculous insofar as political action is concerned. He is in a very small minority.

Again, the difference lies in the fact that whereas the Reds and Yellows both now favor industrial unionism, the latter after years of accepting the inevitability of it, the Reds prove that they sincerely desire it by endorsing the one organization that stands for it, while the other element

contents itself with vague generalities about the advantage of a theoretical action. The germ of a great industrial union is here now in the IWW, and a healthy germ it is, too. Why not get behind it, you socialists who believe in industrial unionism, and help it grow?

Do the Reds wish to destroy the party? The writer is being recalled from the office of State Secretary because he is aligned with the Red element, yet in his two months of office he has increased the membership in the party 20 percent. Not 3 days ago, he organized a new local of 18 charter members. Did the Reds on the State Board ever vote to expel 6 locals, as is claimed? They did not. They refused to disrupt the organization by granting charters to 6 locals in towns where locals of the same language already existed. They might have expelled the existing locals had these locals refused to admit the applying members, but such was not the case. And the contempt of the Yellows for the membership, their mad desire for control, is well illustrated by the action of their State Secretary, Stafford, in personally granting charters to 6 locals, despite the fact that the State Board refused to grant them, and in direct viola-

tion of the party constitution, adopted by the membership, which states definitely that the State Board and the State Board alone has the right to grant charters to locals. Whom, do you think, comrades, is anxious for control?

As to the existence of a Finnish machine, a glance at the Bulletin, with returns of the convention delegate election will prove the case. Would 500 Finns scattered many miles, and of differing occupations, vote unanimously for the same 8 of 33 candidates without the work of a political machine? Does the fact that a ballot was posted in the Finnish Hall in this city and the members copied it prove that there was intelligent discussion of the candidates? There may be some members of the party so unsophisticated as to be unaware of the existence of this machine. If there are I am sorry for them. And if there is a sufficient number of them to carry the referendum to recall, I am indeed sorry — for the party.

Fraternally,

A.L. Sugarman.

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