
Beware of Red Flag Exploiters!

An Editorial from *St. Louis Labor*,

Nov. 30, 1918

by G.A. “Gus” Hoehn

Unsigned editorial attributed to editor Hoehn; *St. Louis Labor*, whole no. 930 (Nov. 30, 1918), pg. 1.

Of course, you all read about the Red Flag Riot in New York, of which our public press published sensational reports. We are informed that about 1,000 soldiers and sailors attacked a peaceable crowd of people at the end of a big mass meeting at Madison Square Garden, at which Prof. [Scott] Nearing was the principal speaker. The object for which this meeting was called was to protest against the hanging of Thomas Mooney in San Francisco and to rejoice over the fall of Kaiserism and the proclamation of the Republic in Germany.

All reports we have read in the capitalist papers agree on one point: it was a peaceful and orderly meeting!

United States Marshal McCarthy and police inspectors were inclined to blame the uniformed soldiers and sailors for the trouble. These officials declared that the meeting would have proceeded peacefully had it not been for the soldiers and sailors.

The fact of the matter is that the meeting did proceed peacefully and adjourned peacefully, and it was not until the exits were opened to let the thousands of people out quietly and peacefully that the soldiers and sailors broke through the lines of police officers and brutally attacked the men, women, and children. Women were brutally beaten because they wore red roses in their hair or red carnations in their coats. Men were

knocked down because they wore red neckties, etc. This is what the capitalist papers here — *Globe-Democrat*, *Republic*, *Star*, *Post-Dispatch*, and *Times* — reported last Tuesday [Nov. 12, 1918].

This looks like rowdyism in uniform! Even the New York police were unable to control the uniformed rowdyism. This is what we are told by those papers. Now, let us not put all the blame on the young soldiers and sailors! Let us have a glance behind the curtains! Let us try to discover who was pulling the strings of the brutal “dolly shows”!

Papers like our St. Louis dailies are also published in New York. And they are published all over the country. Our boys are coming back from France; they are coming back from the camps all over the country. And we object to have our American soldier boys advertised all over the country and in foreign countries as “uniformed rowdies.” We object to this damnable work of the leading newspaper organs all over the country!

These newspaper organs are at this time very much in need of Red Flag Riots, because their masters need these riots. Because their capitalist masters want to exploit these riots as a means of propaganda not only against the European revolutions, but against the American Socialist and Labor movement!

We have had an example in St. Louis last Sunday [Nov. 10, 1918]. Twenty-five hundred men and women gathered at the New Club Hall

to celebrate the fall of Kaiserism and the victory of Republicanism in Europe. It was a splendid meeting, enthusiastic, orderly, peaceful, respectable. It was held under the auspices of the Socialist Party. The committee of arrangements, of which the editor of this paper was a member, decided that the Stars and Stripes should float side by side with the Socialist Party banner. The decision was carried out. The United States star-spangled flag and the Socialist Party banner were the only stage decoration.

But what happened? To our surprise, the *St. Louis Star*, in its last Tuesday's noon edition [Nov. 12, 1918], came out with the sensational announcement that the Stars and Stripes were hissed at the Socialist meeting at New Club Hall! There was no hissing. Of the 2500 people present no one seemed to hear anyone hiss the flag — except the miserable wretch of a penny-a-liner whom the *St. Louis Star* sent there as a reporter.

If there was any hissing it must have been done by the *St. Louis Star* reporter himself or by a paid hireling of his. Perhaps the wretch of a reporter was still suffering from the "hissing" influence of the influenza. And the later editions of

the *Post-Dispatch* contained the same lie!

We are not flag cranks of any kind. But we object to the war profiteer who owns the *St. Louis Star* to send his hirelings to Socialist meetings for the sole purpose of misrepresenting the Socialist Party and belying the public!

To make things worse, Editor Johns of the *Post Dispatch*, in his leading editorial, tells his readers the Big Lie that "the Bolsheviks of New York spit on the American flag." Well, the *Post-Dispatch* is "first in everything" — also in lying!

In our humble opinion, the New York outrage should be investigated. We are in possession of information from St. Louis boys who are stationed as soldiers in New York that a week and ten days ago they had been told by "men higher up" that they would have to "clean up this red flag business" before they could return home.

Who are the people that are attempting to disgrace our sons and brothers whom Uncle Sam called upon to defend world democracy? Don't blame those soldier and sailor boys in New York for what they did; but look for the powers behind the scenes that managed the "Red Flag Riots" for national and worldwide stage effect!

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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