
Socialist Tactics?

by John Reed

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Attributed to Editor John Reed. Associate Editor was Eadmonn MacAlpine.

Local New York Executive Secretary Gerber caused a mild sensation in the State Committee meeting on Sunday last [April 13, 1919] by suddenly producing and reading copies of the minutes of the Left Wing City Committee. That the minutes disproved what he sought to prove: that Comrade Gitlow had been sent out by the Left Wing as State Organizer, is of little moment. The question is: Where did Gerber get the minutes?

The Left Wing is not a secret organization. Its Central Committee meets openly and now that the Left Wing is in possession of a medium of expression, the minutes will be published. We are informed that Gerber had an actual copy of the minutes, and this precludes the possibility that he was acting on a report of the meeting. Where did he get his copy? But even the means that Gerber employed to obtain a copy of our minutes is not for the moment important. The important point is that an official of the Socialist Party reads from copies of minutes that he had no title to possess, to one of the highest delegate bodies of our organization. It was obvious to everyone present that

he had not come by his copy openly, yet he was allowed to proceed without anyone making a protest.

The party has been protesting vigorously against the espionage carried on in this country both by official government agencies and by unofficial stool-pigeon organizations. Yet when information obtained by methods manifestly similar to those employed by the espionage agencies is laid before our "Comrades," no protest is made, but on the contrary the Right Wing sits open-eared and prepares to act on the information.

On what ground does the party protest against government espionage? Is this an example of socialist honor? Is this typical of the revolutionary integrity of the party?

The possession of a copy of our minutes did us no harm and consequently we are not suffering under the sting of defeat. Are these the methods the Right Wing intends to use in the future? Does the membership of the party support these methods? Forewarned is forearmed.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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