
The Pink Terror, Part 3: Frightfulness in the 2nd and 6th AD Branches.

by John Reed

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Unsigned article attributed to editor John Reed.

There was terror in the ranks of the Right Wing Buccaneers. At the regular meeting of the 2nd AD, on the evening of Friday, April 25th, in spite of the presence of that Grand Old Man of Socialism, Meyer London, a Left Wing majority developed.

Mitchell Loeb, Nagin, Alexander Kahan, Judge Panken, S.P. Kraemer, and the *Forward* bunch, were in almost constant communication with Mr. Gerber over a private wire, and several times during the evening it was seriously debated as to whether or not the police ought to be called in.

Comrade Kessler, delegate to the Central Committee, rose to report concerning the last meeting of that body, when the unsuccessful attempt was made to “reorganize” the 17th AD. The Semi-Comrades above-mentioned did not want to hear the ghastly details. Comrade Loeb insisted that it was customary first to read the typewritten report of the meeting sent out by Gerber, before the delegates reported — and Comrade Kahan backed him up. However, fortunately the chairman was a Left Winger, Comrade Marks, so the report proceeded. When it came to the part about the looting of the 17th AD, the Right Wingers tried their best to stop Comrade Kessler by raising points of order. Unable to accomplish this, Loeb screamed that Kessler was reporting lies — but he had to withdraw the charge. Not satisfied with that, he stated on the floor that Comrades Max Cohen and Brahdy had summoned the police to the Central Committee — a statement which once again Loeb was forced to withdraw.

After considerable ruction, during which our ex-Congressman is said to have scratched and bit the chairman because his honor was not invited to speak on Rutgers Square, the discussion of the report of the Central Committee was postponed until the next meet-

ing.

As I said at the beginning, there was terror in the ranks of the Right Wing Buccaneers. Here was another branch gone Left Wing — another branch which must be reorganized and the high cost of furniture moving still on the increase.

While all this was going on in the 2nd AD, the Right Wing was holding a parliamentary massacre in the headquarters of the 6th AD at 106 Avenue C. The meeting opened with the election of a dummy chairman, Semi-Comrade Alexander, who during the meeting went through the motions of a regular chairman while in reality Beckerman dictated the procedure.

After Beckerman had set the stage to suit his fell designs by altering the regular order of business, he rose to report as a delegate to the Central Committee. Old-timers of the Right Wing gaped in open-mouthed admiration as he jumped from misstatement to misstatement, omitting in his verbal leaps everything that would reveal the real character of the machine’s purpose at the Central Committee. He dealt at length with the “reorganization” of the 17th AD, representing that the branch had dissolved itself, concealing the fact that dissolution of a branch can only occur with the consent of the Executive Committee of the Local and neglecting to mention the Left Wing motion for a committee of seven (three from the Right, three from the Left, and an impartial chairman agreed upon by the other six) to investigate the matter of the 17th AD.

After he had warmed up to his subject he proceeded to slam the Left Wing in a manner that made his audience sigh with regret that the atmosphere in the Aldermanic Chamber is not so conducive to eloquence as that of Avenue C. In a tremendous peroration that so entranced the chairman that he recognized

a Left Winger immediately afterward in a moment of forgetfulness and had to be rescued by a well-placed point of order from the Right, Beckerman pleaded that action be taken upon his report.

It is said that the timid suggestion from a Left Winger that the recall of Beckerman from the Central Committee would be appropriate action was met with howls of denunciation, and action was forgotten. Several other delegates rose to “report” but their work was clumsy compared with Beckerman’s and they were hastily silenced lest they give the game away.

Comrade Frost, who was given the floor because he is not affiliated with the Left Wing, made a motion that the branch do not concur with the State Committee’s resolution to expel Left Wing locals and branches. The motion was seconded and a pause ensued, during which the chairman glanced fearfully at the right, who could ill conceal their annoyance at his blunder in allowing anyone not known to be “safe” to get the floor. Nods, winks, and whispered comments soon showed the chairman the way out of the difficulty, and grasping the gavel firmly in his hand he announced in a voice tense with emotion that the motion was out of order, on the ground that the report of the Central Committee was before the house.

Almost immediately afterward a Right Winger got the floor and, after consulting his written instructions, moved that the branch concur in the State Committee’s resolution and that all members of the branch affiliated with the Left Wing be suspended until such time as they renounce their allegiance thereto. Although the report of the Central Committee was still before the house, and although the motion was contrary to the bylaws of the local and to the state and national constitutions, the chairman did not declare the motion out of order, but, with eyes flashing with the light of firm resolve to do his duty, proceeded to recognize Right Winger after Right Winger until fortunately someone called the previous question and thus averted the necessity of having the Right Wing mem-

bers speak twice each to the same motion.

The motion was then put to the house and with the able assistance of the Right Wing tellers, whose eyesight is reported to be variable — sometimes they see double and other times they can hardly see at all — was carried 60 to 40. The entire Left Wing membership of the 6th AD was thus completely wiped out of existence and the branch “made safe for democracy.”

Now comes the real tragedy of the affair from a Right Wing standpoint. In the moment of victory they have to acknowledge defeat, not only in the branch but throughout the entire local. In order to carry out their own motion they are forced to resort to that Right Wing horror of horrors — organization within an organization.

Scarcely had the meeting adjourned when dispatch riders were seen speeding up Avenue C in the direction of the nearest job printer, and in less time than it takes to tell the printing presses were humming at high speed turning out pledge cards, whereon the Right Wingers will inscribe their devoted adherence to the principles of Scheidemann Socialism, receiving in return the right to vote on all matters coming before the branch.

Thus organization within organization is vindicated for all time and those who have hitherto lain awake o’ nights thinking out speeches against this vicious method are now among its warmest adherents. It is reported that the branch has engaged Julius Gerber, at enormous expense, to lecture on how to perfect this duplication of organization, and that he will show drafts of secret letters to “faithful” members, original minutes of secret meetings, and will wind up with some useful suggestions as to passwords and subterranean passages.

Bonfires, it is said, will be lighted along Avenue C next Friday night to celebrate this complete victory for the forces of Lawanorder and democracy over the black menace of Bolshevism, which for a time reared its ugly head in the 6th AD.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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