

Snakes in the Mexican Movement

By Geo. Barreda

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THE Mexican Socialist Party, at a meeting of its Executive Committee held on or about the first of December, voted to change the name of that reactionary organization to "Communist Party," and is now endeavoring to masquerade in stolen clothing. Being fully discredited because of the action of its national convention in permitting Louis N. Morones, agent of Samuel Gompers, to dominate it, the Mexican Socialist Party deliberately takes the name of the Communist Party of Mexico and will endeavor to deceive comrades in foreign countries into thinking it is the real, bona fide Communist Party here.

In order that American comrades may understand the facts clearly, I will briefly re-state them, although some of them have been published in the Communist and Socialist Press of the United States.

The first national convention ever held by the Mexican Socialists in this city, took place during the last 10 days of August, 1919. A fight arose at the outset over seating Morones as a delegate. International Secretary Adolfo Santibanez, Editor Linn A. E. Gale of Gale's Magazine, National Secretary F. C. Lopez, Fulgencio C. Luna and other comrades opposed seating Morones. Comrade Gale made a fierce attack on Morones and was called to order by M. N. Roy, who some months ago began financing "El Socialista," the Socialist Spanish paper. Subsequently, two tie votes were taken. In the third ballot, Roy, who had refrained from voting, cast the deciding vote for Morones. From that time on, Morones dominated the convention most of the time, although the Left Wing won occasional victories.

The call for the convention, provided for electing a delegate to the Second International. This call was drafted by Roy and signed by a committee consisting of Lopez, Santibanez, Garcia and others. The signers declared they did not intend to indorse the Second International and signed the paper under misapprehension. However that may be, Gale, Luna and others demanded an unequivocal endorsement of the Third International, and after some hedging by Roy and others, a brief clause endorsing the Third International was inserted in the party platform drawn up by Roy and Frank Seaman. At the same time, a lengthy resolution denouncing the Second International, proposed by Gale, was tabled, the con-

vention apparently not wishing to say anything harsh of the Berne conference.

Santibanez was shortly after ousted as International Secretary of the party as punishment for opposing Morones, and Jose Allen elected in his place. Lopez, although strongly against Morones, was swung into line by the threat of withdrawal of Roy's financial support, and was accordingly reelected National Secretary. An Executive Committee consisting of Morones men was chosen, and control of the National Committee was also easily gained. Neither Morones nor his companion-delegate, Samuel Yudice, tried to be officers of the party. Instead they had friends named, or members of the party who were easily influenced. The National Committee contains Roy, Mrs. Roy, Seaman and several others who worked in absolute harmony with Morones. It may be mentioned that Yudice was chairman of two sessions of the convention and Roy nominated him. A platform was adopted that would have been acceptable in many respects if the reactionary character of the controlling forces of the convention were not known.

The Left Wing after fighting until the last day of the convention, withdrew and called a provisional convention to organize the Communist Party of Mexico, on September 7, 1919. Provision was made for holding a permanent national convention in November, but on account of lack of time for preparation, it has now been put off until April. Santibanez was originally named International Secretary, but later resigned on account of personal duties, although he remains a member of the Executive Committee and of the party. The list of officers with that exception, and with a few additions, remains the same as then announced.

International Secretary, Geo. Barreda; Secretary for Mexico, Enrique H. Arce; Treasurer, C. F. Tabler; Executive Committee, Geo. Barreda, Enrique H. Arce, C. F. Tabler, Linn A. E. Gale, Fulgencio C. Luna, Adolfo Santibanez, Dmitri Nikitin, A. P. Araujo and J. C. Parker; National Committee, Geo. Barreda, Enrique H. Arce, C. F. Tabler, Linn A. E. Gale, Fulgencio C. Luna, Magdalena E. Gale and Josefina Barreda, of the State of Mexico; A. P. Araujo of the State of Coahuila, J. C. Parker of Tamaulipas, Dmitri Ni-

kitin of Nuevo Leon, and Federico Sommer of Tlaxcala.

The following delegates have been chosen to the Third International at Moscow: Delegates, Linn A. E. Gale, Geo. Barreda, A. P. Araujo; alternates, Enrique H. Arce, Dmitri Nikitin and Angel Bernal. It is probable that only one of the delegates will actually try to go to Moscow both on account of expense and of the difficulties resulting from the blockade.

Flourishing locals are now having regular meetings in Mexico City, Monterrey, Tampico and various parts of the republic, and the work of organization is going on rapidly. The Mexico City Local is the largest and is doing a splendid work, taking up the study of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotzky and other great Communist thinkers. Much attention is also given to Industrial Unionism, the party maintaining that industrial action is the main weapon for the working class to use.

The Mexican I. W. W. has been provisionally organized through the efforts of the Communist Party, with the following Provisional Executive Committee: Enrique H. Arce, Jose Villalobes and John Jutt. There are two I. W. W. unions in Tampico and several unions in Mexico City have been induced to change their constitution and affiliate with the I. W. W. Of the committeemen, Arce is a printer, Villalobes an electrician working for the street car company, and Jutt a truckman.

Among the officers of the Communist Party, Barreda is an employe of the National Railways of Mexico, has been active in the Railroad Men's Alliance for years, and some years ago engineered a strike of telegraph men that was very successful; Arce has been a syndicalist agitator for 9 years and is a capable writer; Tabler is an American political exile and a garage worker; Gale is too well known as a brilliant editor to need introduction; Nikitin is a Russian who fled to the United States to escape the tyranny of the Czar, and then fled to Mexico to escape military service; and a very capable organizer; Araujo is a former Mexican revolutionist who spent 3 years in Leavenworth prison for agitating for the overthrow of the Diaz Government, who helped edit "Regeneracion," a revolutionary paper in San Antonio and St. Louis, and who was exiled from Mexico for 11 years in the United States, Canada, England and Cuba; etc., etc. The party is composed of class conscious workers, many of whom have sacrificed tremendously for the sake of the revolutionary cause. It is the honest expression of the Communism of the awakened Mexican work-

ers, and it is actually doing real work for the movement.

That the Socialist Party of Mexico should, on Dec. 1, 1919, boldly appropriate the name of the Communist Party which was organized on Sept. 7, 1919—three months previous—shows the unscrupulous character of the interests controlling the reactionary Gompers-Morones outfit.

But a still bolder and more despicable act is that of sending Frank Seaman as delegate of the party to Moscow, in an effort to obtain recognition as the real Communist Party of Mexico. It is worthy of note that the Socialist Party changed its name only a couple of days before Seaman left for Cuba. There is little fear that this attempt at deception will be successful, but it is a revolution of the methods of machine politics and big business applied in the ranks of the workers. Seaman, like several thousand other Americans, came to Mexico to avoid military service. Unlike Gale, to use a striking contrast, he took an assumed name, began making money and laid low. He taught school in Guadalajara for a time, then came to Mexico City and became editor of the English section of "El Heraldo de Mexico", owned by ex-Governor Alvarado of Yucatan, whose experiment in "state Socialism" was widely advertised, but was mainly a piece of political adventuring. Alvarado was a poor man before. Now he is a millionaire and is able to start a big daily here. Enough said! The policy of the English page of Seaman—whose real name is Charles Francis Phillips of New York—was that of a liberal bourgeois sheet like the Dial or the New Republic. It opposed intervention in Mexico on "business grounds" and appealed to American monied men with the argument that it would be more "profitable" to maintain peace. Recently Phillip had an editorial in "El Heraldo" which ridiculed the report in American papers of Bolshevik propaganda in Mexico, and said that "there are no Bolsheviks in Mexico." It was a palpable effort to "kid" American financial interests into thinking what is perfectly false, since practically every labor union in the country, no matter how poorly organized, supports Bolshevism at least on paper, and many are actually propagandizing for it. **Even the reactionary Socialist Party of whose National Committee Phillips is a member, is on record as endorsing Bolshevism!** Phillips was willing to impugn the motives of his own party in order to pat American capitalism on the back and stave off the danger of intervention. We Communists have been fighting intervention harder than anybody else, and, we believe, more effect-

ively, but we make no compromise with our principles in doing so.

Irvin Granich, formerly a reporter on the New York Call, and also a draft fugitive, is another of those who turned traitor here and sold out to the flesh-pots of Gompers. He has been employed as an assistant editor on "El Herald" with Phillips until recently, and has been exceedingly industrious in vilifying those who are really working for the Cause. He has recently returned to the United States and being in danger of prosecution, as is any draft evader who returns, is doubtless using another name. As his home is New York, he will probably stay in the West where officials will not know him. It is expected he will carry on a campaign of misrepresentation of the Mexican Communists wherever possible and that he will also claim to represent the "real Communist Party." American Communists should look out for him.

The conduct of those snakes has been contrasted with that of Comrade Gale—especially Phillips who took another name to protect himself from the antipathy of American commercial interests here. Gale, on the contrary, used his own name, and immediately on arrival, more than a year ago, revived his magazine as a Communist journal. Constantly he has been the target of the malice and persecution of capitalists here. Twice the American government has unsuccessfully tried to extradite him, Carranza turning a deaf ear each time. Several times Mexican papers have his deportation. Once he was imprisoned but was subsequently ordered released. From the day he resumed publishing his magazine, he has faced and fought, under his own name and without budging, the sinister forces that now seek intervention in Mexico. If intervention ever comes, he and his wife will be the first ones sought by the American soldiers, while little attention, if any, would be paid to other "slackers." While Phillips, Granich and certain others were earning good money and hiding their identity, Gale was spending his money on a magazine that could not possibly pay a profit, and taking his chances of finding himself "broke" if intervention came. Just the other day, a railroad man working in the same office with me, told me that the American embassy had been hunting up the names and addresses of members of the Communist Party (not the Socialist Party, mind you!!), that no passports would ever be given any Mexican members who wished to return to the United States, and that if intervention came, a strict search would be made for any "slackers" who belong to the party!!

Another of the snakes referred to, is Carl Beals of Berkeley, Calif., who is a teacher in the Amer-

ican School in this city, having faked up some kind of a passport to prove he is "not a slacker". Beals has been busy lately writing to friends in California in an effort to discredit the Mexican Communists. It may be mentioned that he came here "broke" and was roomed and boarded by Mr. and Mrs. Gale for a couple weeks, freely and gladly. He lost interest in the Gales when, in January 1919, their money ran low and they had to move to cheaper quarters.

Then they suddenly jumped into the Socialist Party, busying themselves with obstructionist tactics calculated to prevent the others from doing anything. And when the Morones fight came on, they aligned solidly with the Morones machine. Perhaps they found it possible. Perhaps they only did so to spite the other "slackers" of whom they were jealous. But in either case, they were guilty of the most contemptible, treacherous conduct that can be described—conduct that one would expect to find among fugitives in a strange land.

In the winter of 1918-19 these same fellows, with one Levine of Brooklyn, were ringleaders in a meeting of the "Slacker's Club" of Mexico, when it was proposed to appeal to President Carranza to stop Gale's Bolsheviki propaganda. It was explained that this propaganda had aroused the wrath of the American government, that the "New York World" and other American papers had published articles about it, and that the border was being guarded more closely to catch returning "slackers". The "World" had published an article saying Gale was smuggling magazines into the United States to evade the censorship, and it would be harder for any "slacker" to get back. It was also suggested that a letter be sent Ambassador Fletcher stating that the signers were "not Bolsheviks but simply slackers" and had taken no part in Bolshevik propaganda in Mexico!! This, it was believed, would bring immunity from legal prosecution to the signers, if they were caught and identified in the United States, while Gale, Tabler, Parker, et al., who had been agitators, would have to take their medicine. To the credit of the club, there were some red-blooded, decent Radicals in the meeting and they denounced the proposal in hot language. Later, however, Comrade Gale was visited by a Russian-American who was then working as a printer for "El Pueblo", a Mexico City daily, and asked him if he would suspend his magazine two months until certain "slackers" could slip back across the Rio Grande. Of course, Gale refused, saying that he and his wife took their chance in wading the river and coming here, and others, going, must take the same risks.

None of these fellows took any part in Radical

propaganda here until a few months ago, when they suddenly become very active, apparently jealous of Gale, Parker, Nikitin and other "slack-ers" who had been working in the open for a year or so and whose work was beginning to bear fruit.

These facts are told, not with any desire to criticize for the mere sake of criticizing,, but in order that foreign comrades may know the truth about these fellows who will doubtless in later years try to gain credit for the result of the hard work that they did not do, and even actually obstructed. Such scoundrels should be known and exposed.

They cannot hurt the movement permanently but they should not be allowed to deceive comrades even temporarily.

On the other hand, there are some splendid "slack-ers" in our midst—selfsacrificing, sincere, idealistic fellows who gladly gave all and chanced all for the Cause. It is such as these that give us courage in our struggle and that make us feel little concerned when snakes come in our midst. Some day I will perhaps write of them, for it will be a pleasanter task than this has been.