
The Pink Terror, Part 2:

The Pillage of the 18th-20th Assembly District Branch.

by John Reed

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Unsigned article attributed to editor John Reed.

Having tipped the policeman who safeguarded the looting of the 17th AD's headquarters and dusted off the moving van from which the crime was accomplished, the Right Wingers met once more in the crypt of the Rand School. No longer were they obstructed by Democracy — the Central Committee had been indefinitely adjourned. Nothing remained which could hamper the free use of brass knuckles upon the persons of the rank and file.

A committee was appointed for Preserving the Unity of Local New York. It was finally decided that the only way to preserve the party intact was to expel most of the members.

The comrade chairman of the Committee on Porch-Climbing reported that he considered it no longer necessary for his committee to operate, since the minutes of the Left Wing meetings were now openly published in the *New York Communist*. Committee on reading *The Communist* was then appointed.

Casting about for the next branch to destroy, the 18th-20th AD was selected. This branch lies next to the 17th AD, whose demise we recorded last week. It has always been a particularly harmonious branch, all meetings being conducted in the best of good feeling. However, the bacillus of the Left Wing had been infecting more and more of the comrades, until there was a clearly a Left Wing majority in the branch.

At the regular business meeting of the branch on April 11th it was decided to hold new elections for delegates to the Central Committee, to take place at the next business meeting, on Friday, April 25th.

The next meeting was perfectly orderly. Both sides had mobilized all their supporters, and the hall was crowded. The Right Wingers, headed by Jacob

Hillquit — who, although he lives in the Bronx, is the treasurer of the branch, which is in Harlem — declined nominations for the Central Committee.

The branch is entitled to 6 delegates. Eight candidates were nominated; and the 6 Left Wingers were elected. Dr. Aronson, the highest, polled 68 votes, and the two lowest, 47 votes apiece. Comrade Markel, a Centrist, who said in the debate that the Left Wing "should be given a chance to show what it can do," was nevertheless defeated.

The unanimous action of the Right Wingers showed that there was some sort of scheme on foot, so after the meeting the Propaganda Committee proceeded to copy the records of the branch, for fear that Alderman Calman and his moving van might swoop down and carry them off.

Alas! Their forebodings were only too well founded. The next morning somebody broke open the door, jimmied the Financial Secretary's desk, and took away the records, which were afterward returned to the branch by a small body. That evening when the Yipsels came to headquarters for their regular meeting, they discovered the door fastened with a triple-bar Siegel lock costing \$9.00 — the \$9.00 evidently being receipts from the sale of dues stamps; and window fasteners on every window. These had been placed there by the Executive Committee.

The Yipsels broke into the hall and began their meeting. Immediately a delegation of Right Wingers appeared, headed by Ex-Assemblyman Karlin, and composed of Shilb, Extract, Shpritzer, and a friend who was not a party member. Shilb offered to fight one of the Yipsels, while Karlin *threatened to have the Yipsels arrested for breaking and entering*. After the Yipsels'

meeting was over, the Right Wingers again locked the hall, this time using an ordinary lock. (The item of expenditure for padlocks must now be fairly large on the books of Local New York.)

On Sunday, April 27th, the Left Wing members of the branch held a meeting in headquarters and decided to allow the Executive Committee to remove the furniture or take any other illegal action they pleased, but not to submit to the reorganization or dissolution of the branch without a vote of the majority of the members. The names and addresses of those against the action of the Executive Committee were taken down.

In the middle of this, Extract, Shilb, and Shpritzer entered. Shpritzer said, "Take my name. I want to join the Left Wing." He was referred to 43 West 29th Street, where we eagerly await him.†

Shilb then remarked that at Monday evening's meeting of the Executive Committee, the business of "reorganizing" the 18th-20th AD would be taken up; and that on Tuesday evening, April 29th, a meeting to "reorganize" the branch would be held at Harlem Terrace Hall, on 104th Street between 2nd and 3rd Avenues.

Afterward, however, Shilb denied that he had said this, but announced that he was going to prefer charges against the Propaganda Committee for breaking open the Financial Secretary's desk.

By the time this paper is off the press, we expect to hear that the 18th-20th AD has been thoroughly "reorganized," and that the great majority of the rank and file has joined the Party Bread Line.

What further atrocities have the Semi-Comrades in store for us? By what machinations do they intend further to lacerate the poor, bleeding Left Wing? Time, and the next issue of *The Communist*, alone will tell.

†- 43 W 29th Street was the editorial address of the *New York Communist*.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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