
The German-Speaking Branches in New York:

Most of the German-Speaking Comrades True to the Socialist Party are Reorganizing — Others Divide Up Between Communist and Communist Labor Parties.

by G.A. Hoehn

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Complying with an invitation of our New York party organization, the undersigned spent one week in that city, from September 20 to September 26 [1919], addressing a number of meetings under the auspices of the German-speaking branches of the Socialist Party. Our New York German-speaking comrades are confronted by a peculiar situation. When some time ago Comrade Herman Schlueter, the editor-in-chief of the *New York Volkszeitung*, died, Ludwig Lore, who had been employed in the editorial department for some time, became Schlueter's successor. Prior to his acceptance of a position under Herman Schlueter's management, Lore was an IWW organizer, but seemingly forgot all about his IWW activity and accepted the job of assistant editor of the *Volkszeitung*, with the silent understanding that the papers was by no means an IWW organ, but a Socialist working class paper that has for four decades been fighting for the unity of action and integrity of the labor movement both on the industrial and political fields.

When John Reed, Fraina, and others decided to put the Socialist Party on wings, Lore joined the "Left Wing," which was his privilege. But he always pretended he would defend the unity of the Socialist Party and his only object was to get the party into a radical revolutionary position.

As the Left Wing situation developed into a Communist Party movement, which again split up into several factions, Lore's troubles multiplied, and at times he did not seem to know where he stood. Then came the Chicago convention of August 30 [1919]. Lore

belonged to a New York branch of the Socialist Party which had been suspended, but he came to Chicago with a credential from the German Language Federation of the Socialist Party. The convention waved the formal point that he was not a member of the party and seated him on the German Language Federation credential. He never took his seat, but immediately made common cause with Wagenknecht's "Communist Labor Party" convention, taking his seat in that gathering.

As editor of the Socialist daily *New York Volkszeitung*, [Lore] published extensive reports of the work of the CLP convention, advertised it as the real revolutionary convention, failed to inform his readers of the important work of the Socialist Party convention, and even went to the extreme of giving publicity to some of the falsehoods circulated against the Socialist Party convention by the people whose very activity depended upon such falsehoods and misrepresentations.

The result of this method of misinforming the readers of the *New York Volkszeitung* naturally led to a peculiar situation among the German-speaking party branches of Greater New York and vicinity, because the members of those branches were practically exclusively dependent on the *Volkszeitung* as the only source of information. Immediately upon returning to New York, Lore and his friends lost not one moment's time to induce the branches to take action against the Socialist Party convention and in favor of the Communist Party conventions. The readers of the *Volkszeitung* were made to believe that the German-speaking Socialists

throughout the city and country were a unit for the "CLP." Quite a number of branches were induced to vote and, very naturally, the vote would favor Lore and his new party.

The first meeting at which the undersigned spoke was held on Sunday afternoon, September 21 [1919], at the Labor Temple on 84th Street. Several hundred members of the German-speaking branches attended and during the discussion following the address comrades declared that if the information concerning the Chicago convention of the Socialist Party given by the speaker had been known two weeks sooner, the New York comrades, in their branches, would have taken different action. This meeting, which lasted from 3 o'clock in the afternoon till 9 o'clock in the evening, was most interesting and instructive. The Left Wingers had some of their ablest speakers present and they were given all the chance they wanted to state their side and did. Comrade Adolph Germer, National Secretary of the party, appeared while the meeting was in progress, and was asked to address the audience, which he did. Comrade Mary McDonald also spoke. No vote was taken, but the overwhelming majority of those present were undoubtedly with the Socialist Party.

Other meetings addressed by the undersigned were held in the Bronx and Harlem districts. The last meeting was held Friday night [Sept. 26, 1919], under the auspices of the Harlem German-speaking branches. After addresses by the undersigned and by Comrade Wolf of the *Volkszeitung* editorial staff, the discussion was opened, and when the matter was put to a vote of the 28 branch members present, 15 votes for the Socialist Party and 13 for the Communist Labor Party were recorded, whereupon the latter left the hall. There is no doubt that the German-speaking comrades of Greater New York will find their way back into the Socialist Party. It is also expected that the comrades now in charge of the *New York Volkszeitung* will soon discover their blunders and fall into line with the

Socialist Party, to which the paper has been pledged all these many years. The fact that within the last few months 50 or more Left Wingers have been initiated as members of the *Volkszeitung* Publishing Co., and the fact that Comrade Lore and his friends may temporarily control the situation in the management of the paper, does by no means prove that their policy is right. Because Meyer London did not do what a radical Socialist in Congress might or should have done, and because some Socialist Aldermen in the New York City Council voted in favor of a triumphal arch for returning soldiers, are no reasons for delivering the *New York Volkszeitung* to a sideshow movement, where it is bound to meet with disaster sooner or later.

The comrades of some branches went over to the "CLP," others joined the "CP." But the disillusionment will come sooner or later.

All the New York German-language branches will continue their organization under the auspices of the Socialist Party; true some have been weakened by the "CLP" and the "CP" work, but only temporarily. Soon the branches will be stronger and more active than before.

The New York Socialist Party is composed of splendid material — the very material out of which a real revolutionary Socialist movement must be made. The New York movement is sound, and mistakes and errors, where they exist, can easily be remedied. Among our German-speaking comrades of Greater new York we met men and women of whom the Socialist Party may well feel proud. And they will stand by the Socialist Party and proudly uphold the glorious banner of International Socialism and of the revolutionary World Proletariat.

G.A. Hoehn,
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