
Cahan Dictator of *The Call* as Karsner, Editor, Resigns; More Light on Anti-Soviet Plot.

by J. Louis Engdahl

Unsigned article, attributed to editor J. Louis Engdahl, published in
The Worker [New York], v. 6, whole no. 272 (April 28, 1923), pp. 1-2.

The last issue of *The Worker* carried the story of the recent secret meeting of the yellow Socialist officialdom of New York, on March 29 [1923], which decided upon an openly counterrevolutionary policy against Soviet Russia and the Communists.

The resolution adopted at this meeting called for reprints from capitalist papers of all news unfavorable to Soviet Russia, but rewritten so as to conceal its source.

The resolution furthermore declared for a systematic attack against the Communists, seizing every opportunity to carry it on. As a result of this policy, at the very moment when William Z. Foster was being prosecuted by the capitalists, the *New York Call* published a declaration of war against the Communists.

Further facts of this meeting and subsequent meetings of the Socialist officialdom which confirmed its policy of denunciation of the Communists has been brought to light by the resignation of David Karsner, Editor of *The Call*.

Karsner has resigned as a direct result of the furor aroused by the publication by that paper of the libels against Soviet Russia written by the British secret service spy, Francis McCullaugh. The resignation of the editor has brought to light the full facts concerning that Socialist daily's adoption of a new policy, by which it cooperated with the arch-reactionary *New York Herald* in spreading the British police agent's propaganda. From the best sources in the *New York Call* office we have obtained the following facts: The *New York Call* was in dire financial straights. On Thursday, March 29, occurred a meeting of the Board of Man-

agement to consider ways and means.

At this meeting a resolution was introduced by Algernon Lee, which, in the light of the introductory remarks, would bind *The Call's* editor [Karsner] to change the policy of that paper and to adhere as closely as possible to the policies of the *Jewish Daily Forward* as a model.

In the debate the sense of the Board was expressed to the effect that the *New York Call* could not keep alive without the financial assistance which was expected to be obtained from Abraham Cahan, as editor of the *Jewish Daily Forward*. It was pointed out that by following Cahan's lead and gaining his approval, not only could immediate financial assistance be obtained, but the policies themselves would lead to success and independence.

Among the policies laid down by the resolution was one to the effect that *The Call* must on every possible occasion undertake a militant and aggressive fight against the revolutionary elements in the trade unions and against the Communists on all fields.

A committee of 3, of which James Oneal was one, was appointed to see that Karsner put into effect the Board's new policy. Almost immediately Oneal handed to Karsner for publication an editorial composed of scurrilous denunciation of the Communists on trial in Michigan. Karsner pointed out to Oneal that William Z. Foster was on trial at that moment and that the jury had not yet brought in its verdict. He requested Oneal to let the editorial wait for publication until after the return of the verdict. Oneal refused and the editorial was published on March 31.

Karsner had trouble with the Board on one occasion because of publishing a very small paragraph mentioning the activities of the Friends of Soviet Russia. He had great difficulty in getting the Board to allow him to put the news of the Foster trial on the first page, the Board wanting to reduce its prominence as much as possible by putting it on an inside page.

On the morning of April 6, the City Editor of the call laid on Karsner's desk a copy of the *New York Herald* carrying McCullaugh's first article, purporting to be a recital of the events of the Butchkavitch trial, saying, "To publish this would be just about in accordance with the new policy."

Karsner scanned the article and said, "Yes, it would, exactly."

He then ordered its publication.

On the day of publication several letters of violent protest from Socialist readers of *The Call* were delivered at the office. These increased with every mail delivery until *The Call* office was literally deluged with indignant letters from all over New York City and the neighboring states. One Jewish Socialist expressed his contempt ironically by sending *The Call* through the mails a huge crucifix. With the first letters that came in, *The Call* Board was alarmed.

A regular meeting of the Board was scheduled for that afternoon, Saturday, April 6. At the meeting Karsner was censured by unanimous vote of the Board for having published the article. His defense was this: That he had been against the policy from the beginning, but that he had undertaken to carry it out on orders, and the publication of the McCullaugh article was in direct and complete accord with the policy that had been laid down by the Board for him to follow.

In the quarrel which ensued, Karsner gave his resignation as editor, to become effective a few days

later. *The Call* Board compiled an apologetic paragraph disavowing the policy of publishing such articles, and ordered Karsner to publish this disavowal in a box on the first page of both the Sunday [April 7] and Monday [April 8] edition of *The Call*. This was because some of the daily readers do not see the Sunday paper.

But the last word had not been said. The man who holds the financial life of *The Call* in his hand, Abraham Cahan, had not been heard from. On Sunday [April 7], Karsner received a telephone call from the *Jewish Daily Forward* office and was informed that a messenger from Abraham Cahan was coming down to see him. This man soon arrived and told Karsner that Cahan wanted to know why in the hell *The Call* repudiated the publication of the McCullaugh article. Karsner told his story to Cahan's messenger and then quickly telephoned a member of *The Call* Board who could be reached, telling them that Abraham Cahan protested against any repudiation of the McCullaugh articles. Each member of the Board whom he could reach quickly agreed that under the circumstances they did not want the Board's disavowal to appear in the Monday edition of *The Call*.

The *New York Herald* has published an admission of the membership of McCullaugh in the British Secret police in the following words: "His general knowledge of all parts of Europe drew him into the British Secret Service and he acted as an intelligence officer first in Serbia and then in Siberia."

The reactionary "Abe" Cahan and the yellow Socialist *Forward* dictates the policy of *The Call*. It is a policy of war against Soviet Russia and the Communists. In this war the Socialists gladly ally themselves with the capitalist agents. It is the duty of all workers to boycott these prostituted sheets.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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