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# The National Committee Meeting.

by James Oneal

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The recent meeting of the National Committee of the Socialist Party in Chicago is of vital interest to the party membership. The fact that the charter of the Michigan organization was revoked and seven foreign language federations were suspended has caused widespread curiosity as to the reasons for these actions. *The Call*, as an organ of the party, interested in the development of the Socialist Party, realized that the schism has become so wide that the matters in controversy must be discussed, and discussed intelligently, if rational judgments are to be formed.

It may be said that the conditions revealed at Chicago were without precedent in the history of the socialist movement in this country. While the party has had blows rained upon it by public officials, its newspapers suppressed, its spokesmen jailed, and its meetings frequently broken up by the powers that be, while facing all this a self-styled "Left Wing" has organized and attacked from within. As a result of these foul blows from two directions, work of organization has largely been destroyed, our political prisoners are being sacrificed, the movement is being driven underground in a number of places, and demoralization in general has resulted.

Filled with an emotional ecstasy over the Russian revolution, the pretended "Left Wing" has worked nationally through seven foreign language federations, and in particular those federations that represent the various nationalities of Russia. Through the publications of these federations the party and its representatives have been the victims of a shameless campaign of slander. Trusted party members of many years standing and service in the movement have been denounced as "Kolchaks, Denikins, Scheidemanns," etc. Statements were even made that if the party was trium-

phant it would make an "alliance with the bourgeoisie" and shoot down real socialists with machine guns. The party and the members thus denounced have been helpless as they were unable to read the publications in which these gross libels have appeared. The whole tenor of this campaign has been that the foreign federations should take the leadership in the socialist movement in this country, the American members being incapable or too ignorant for this purpose.

To establish a dictatorship within the party a coalition between the self-styled Left Wing and these federations was formed. Documentary evidence was presented to the committee showing a nationwide, systematic attempt to "capture" the party by the shock troops of this coalition. Foreign translators sent mimeographed slips from the National Office to their branches with blanks to fill in requesting more ballots from State Secretaries. Requests were received from some State Secretaries for extra ballots before the secretaries themselves had received their supplies of ballots from the National Secretary. Evidence shows that one man marked scores of ballots for members and had the latter attach their signatures. In some cases the same member even signed many ballots. Some 15,000 ballots disappeared from the National Office. Who took or who received them is not known.

When the Translator-Secretaries learned that the charters of some branches in New York had been revoked for violating the state and national constitutions, these secretaries presented a signed document to the National Committee. They denied that the New York organization had any right to discipline these branches and affirmed that they would not "brook any interference" with them! At the same time they demanded of the National Committee that it should interfere with

Local New York!

The National Committee, at a previous session, had decided to call a national amnesty convention with the view of securing cooperation with all organizations in favor of amnesty for political prisoners. This may have been wise or foolish. Nevertheless, it was the decision of the committee. An office was established to carry this out. The local postmaster held up nearly 3,000 letters mailed in the interest of this convention. Following this, six Translator-Secretaries submitted a signed document "demanding" that the arrangements be called off and affirming that they would not support the convention. Between the opposition of the postmaster and government officials and the Left Wing brigade, our political prisoners have good chances of rotting in jail.

The national constitution specifically provides that the duty of Translator-Secretaries is to serve as a medium between the party and the federations. In practice, they have come to view it as their duty to control the party. They have sole jurisdiction over their own members. The party has no voice in their deliberations and decisions. In addition to control of their federations they seek a dictatorship within the party. In their frantic efforts to accomplish this control they have repeatedly violated the constitution. This will be shown when the charges made against them are printed in the party press.

The Michigan organization violated the party constitution by making it mandatory for a local to expel any member that "advocated legislative" reforms. In other words, a member in Michigan who supported the national organization in this matter would be outlawed; if he repudiated the national organization he

would be in good standing. The State Secretary afterward did not deny that this clause had been adopted by a large majority in the state.

In the matter of the referendum enough evidence was submitted to indicate practices that would disgrace even politicians of the capitalist parties. The National Committee elected an investigating committee to which all the documents will be referred, and this committee will report to the special national convention, which meets on August 30.

What is facing the Socialist Party is an anarcho-syndicalist revival that should play into the hands of capitalist reaction and give our enemies an opportunity to outlaw any socialist movement. Where the "Left Wing" has developed it has driven out many members through sheer disgust. An example of how this faction secures control was given in a letter from a Michigan local. Consisting of 120 members, they were constantly discouraged from attending meetings. At a meeting of 18 members the "Left Wing" manifesto was adopted by a vote of 14 to 4. Of the 14, the majority were members only a few months. One had recently supported a capitalist candidate for office. Several had been members only a few weeks and were the loudest for the establishment of a "dictatorship of the proletariat." Most of them were beardless youths, intoxicated by the phraseology with which the "Left Wing" gluts itself. What happened in this local is what has happened in many other phases of this struggle from time to time. In the meantime, socialists are more in need of calm judgment now than at any other time, and the mere passing of epithets will not contribute to any intelligent solution of their difficulties.

*Edited by Tim Davenport.*

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