
The Finnish Amendment

by Sophie Carlson

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Note:— Although the referendum with which this article deals has been passed we are printing this letter for the information it gives our readers regarding the internal conditions of the Finnish organization.

In the April 8th [1916] issue of the *New Times* appeared an article written by A.L. Sugarman.

Comrade Sugarman is writing about something he don't know or understand. First let us briefly review why these locals apply for a charter. Let us take Chisholm for instance and have the actual situation.

It was in the year 1905. The Finnish workers organized into the national Finnish Federation, affiliated with the Socialist Party. A charter was granted to the Finnish Socialist local, and all went well and worked in harmony until the year 1914. Four members were expelled for 2 years for refusing to obey the constitution of the Finnish Federation and also the national constitution of the Socialist Party. They were expelled under Article II. Sec. 6 of the national constitution of the Socialist Party:

Sec. 6. Any member of the party who opposes political action or advocates crime, sabotage, or other methods of violence as a weapon of the working class to aid in its emancipation shall be expelled from membership in the party. Political action shall be construed to mean participation in elections for public office and practical legislative and administrative work along the lines of the Socialist Party platform.

As soon as they were expelled the State Executive Board informed us to withdraw the charges and ordered the local to *<line missing>*. The local refused to do so and their charter was revoked. And the State Board granted the expelled members and their followers a charter. The members of the old local formed a

new local and applied for a charter but the State Executive Board refused on the ground that there was already a Finnish local. This is the true situation and use your own judgment, comrades, which of these two factions are Socialists.

English speaking comrades do not understand why we do not join the local already in existence.

The Radical group in Chisholm called a mass meeting to see if there was a possibility of joining these two factions. We have had meetings and hot debates, and at present are trying to compromise but it seems impossible. The Socialist local, not having a charter, wanted to be affiliated with the Finnish Federation because they cannot read or write the English language. And the Radical group will not belong to the above named Federation, and this faction has its own newspaper, *Sosialisti*, that advertises who to elect, what resolutions to vote for, etc. It publishes for weeks a slate for members of Executive Board, with the result that everyone recommended by its group was elected, and also how to vote on amendments to the state constitution. In the April 7th [1916] issue of *Sosialisti* is an article about electing congressmen for the 8th District, Minn. Translated it is as follows: "Best representative for *our* party elect Jules Anderson of Two Harbors. The other to are Sigmund Slonim, an attorney of Duluth, yellows' bearer of arms, and Dr. Watkins of Carlton."

Comrades! What do you think of an article like this in the Socialist organ? Does it make such a great difference in the Socialist movement if he is red or yellow if he is capable for it?

This *Sosialisti*, instead of fighting against capitalism, fights against the Socialist Party.

But supposing these two groups join the same

local. Let us see what the result will be here in Chisholm. Of course the present charter local has a minority, and the other local majority. There are the same members in the charter local that were expelled by the old local under Article II, Sec. 6. Suppose the majority expel these same members for the same charge, namely that they deny the value of political action. State Executive Board requests to reinstate these members or revoke the charter. The majority faction, true to the Socialist Party and its principles, will not reinstate the members. Would comrades call this unity or disruption? It's just like trying to fit a square pet into a round hole.

And Comrade Sugarman ends his epistle:

"And for the State Board to grant me with a few followers a separate charter would be a ridiculous spectacle, and as dangerous as it would be ridiculous."

Yes, comrades, the State Board has done it already, by revoking the charters from Eveleth, Toimi, and Chisholm Finnish locals, which they had for over 10 years, and grant a charter to a few dissatisfied members. Your article would have been a good boost two years ago, but now it's too late.

Comrade Sugarman thinks that a charter is granted for the purpose of destroying the Socialist movement. But I believe he knows better than that, and your duty as a Socialist is to help take these 500 members into the Socialist Party.

Yours for Socialism,

Sophie Carlson,

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