
Minutes of the State Executive Committee of the Socialist Party of New York, Special Meeting of May 21, 1919.

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Comrade Merrill of Schenectady was elected chairman, all members of the State Executive Committee being present.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as read.

The Secretary reported that this was a special meeting, called primarily for the purpose of canvassing the vote on pending national referendums and to act on some ballots from some locals and branches, which on their very face show gross irregularities; also to act on a communication from Local New York with reference to charges against Local Queens, as well as to take up the activities of other locals in the state, which are entirely ignoring the state platform and resolutions of the last state convention, as well as the national and state constitutions.

In the matter of canvassing of the vote for pending national referendums "B" and "C," the Secretary submitted the individual ballots from a number of language locals and branches affiliated directly with the state organization, such as the Ukrainian locals of Auburn, Hicksville, and North Tonawanda, the Russian local of Cortland, etc., not only casting a vote entirely out of proportion to the dues stamps purchased by such locals during the last three months, but also showing that the individual ballots on their very face were either signed by one or a group of persons, or marked by the same person. The same mark appears on about fifty ballots in ink from one language local, while the signatures were mostly in pencil. The report received from a number of locals which have language branches, especially those belonging to the Russian, Lithuanian, and Ukrainian Federations, show that the same practice prevailed in the vote of such branches.

An instance has been shown of the secretary of one local — Richmond — stating that he had delivered a supply of ballots to the secretary of the Russian branch at his home, and knows that no meeting of the Russian branch was held that night, yet the following morning he received from the secretary of such branch the result of the vote tabulated.

In view of the above it was decided that the Secretary should correspond with the different locals having language branches, demanding a tabulation of the vote on the national referendums by branches, English as well as foreign languages; and also arrange to have all locals turn into the State Office the individual ballots from all their branches.

Also, that, in filing the tabulation of the vote with the National Office, a statement should accompany same, explaining that the tabulation so filed was but tentative and that a final tabulation would be filed later, as soon as all the facts in connection with the irregularity of the vote on both referendums have been gathered together.

A letter was received from Local New York preferring charges against Local Queens for interfering with the affairs of Local New York and for violation of the state constitution, Section 15 (a) of Article 1, as follows:

May 21, 1919.

State Executive Committee,
Socialist Party, New York

Comrades:

The Executive Committee of Local New York hereby enters a protest against the actions of Local Queens for interfering in the internal affairs of Local New York, and would ask your body to order an investigation.

We charge Local Queens with:

- (1) Furnishing ballots on national referendums to suspended and reorganized branches of Local New York.
- (2) Canvassing the votes on such referendums from suspended branches of Local New York.
- (3) Furnishing supplies, selling dues stamps to suspended branches of Local New York, and issuing membership cards to members of such suspended branches, not in any way affiliated with Local Queens.
- (4) Making membership in the Left Wing organization a requisite or qualification for holding office in Local Queens and notifying all of its officers, not members of the Left Wing, that unless they become members of the Left Wing organization, they will be recalled from office.
- (5) The endorsement by the local of the Left Wing manifesto and its affiliation as a local with the Left Wing organization. The acceptance of the Left Wing manifesto and holding same as the guiding platform for its members and a total disregard of the national or state platforms.

Julius Gerber,
Executive Secretary,
For the Executive Committee of Local New York.

On motion, adopted by a vote of eight to one, Comrades Sheehan, Mrs. Mailly, and Eugene Wood were appointed a committee to investigate the charges against Local Queens and if same are found substantiated by the sub-committee, the charters of Local Queens stand revoked and the necessary arrangements made for a speedy reorganization of the local.

A letter was received from Local Queens submitting the result of the vote from a number of suspended and expelled branches of Local New York, and they ask that the same be included in the vote of the state of New York covering such referendums.

On motion, adopted by a vote of eight to one, it was decided to refuse to accept the votes forwarded by Local Queens, as neither Local Queens nor the State Executive Committee has any evidence that the votes so reported have been cast by members of the party in good standing; and also that Local Queens be notified that the State Executive Committee will not countenance any interference on the part of the state. That the jurisdiction of Local Queens, while a part of the state organization, is limited exclusively to the geographical divisions of such local.

The privilege of the floor was extended to some members of Local Kings County to explain the situation of the party in Kings County, charging that the local has been willfully guilty of the violation of the national and state constitutions by adopting and adhering to the Left Wing manifesto and making Local

Kings an integral part of the Left Wing organization, ignoring the national and state constitutions, platforms, and resolutions adopted at national and state conventions and party referendums.

In this connection similar charges were preferred against Locals Bronx, Rochester, and Buffalo, and after a lengthy discussion the following motion was adopted by a vote of eight to one:

“It having come to the notice of the State Executive Committee that certain locals, particularly Locals Kings, Queens, Bronx, Buffalo, and Rochester, have adopted resolutions endorsing the Left Wing manifesto and having joined the Left Wing organization, adhering to the manifesto and rules of the Left Wing organization, in violation of the state and national constitutions, be it

“Resolved, that Comrades Sheehan, Mrs. Mailly, and Eugene Wood be appointed to act as a committee to investigate the charges, and if the same are found substantiated, the charters of the locals above named be revoked and steps taken for the immediate reorganization of the locals in question.”

The privilege of the floor was then extended to a committee from Local New York, which preferred charges against the City Committee for the usurpation of power in disregarding all party rules, by the City Committee delegates of locals in Greater New York. It was pointed out that the City Committee, without any consultation with the locals of New York, and in violation of its own by-laws and rules (Sec. 4), at a recent meeting adopted a resolution to call a city convention of all the locals of Greater New York for the purpose of acting on matters over which the city convention and the City Committee had no powers, such as to take steps for the formation of the five locals of Greater New York into one local, the City Committee being fully aware of the fact that the state constitution distinctly provides (Sec. 19 (a), Art. 1) that there shall be one local in each of the five counties of Greater New York. After considering the matter the following statement was adopted and ordered to be given publicity in the party press and sent to all the locals and branches in Greater New York:

“The State Executive Committee at its meeting on Wednesday, May 21, decided that in calling a city convention of the Socialist Party branches of Greater New York, the City Committee exceeded its author-

ity. The State Committee learned that the decision to hold such a convention was reached without any consultation with the locals of Greater New York, and with the knowledge that no such authority as calling a city convention has been delegated to the City Committee by its own by-laws. The action of the majority of the delegates to the City Committee in voting for such convention was in pursuance to orders given to them by the so-called City Committee of the Left Wing organization.

“The State Executive Committee holds that the calling of such a convention by the City Committee is illegal and a usurpation of power, and calls upon all locals and branches in Greater New York to refrain from electing delegates to such a convention, which from all appearances is intended to cause additional trouble and lead to endless controversies. Any convention which may be held by the City Committee under the circumstances will have no binding effect, and should not be recognized by the members of the Socialist Party.

Fred L. Arland
Recording Secretary

P.S. — The Kings County Executive Committee, at its meeting on Saturday, May 31, among other matters, took the following action: First, that on the sending of monthly calls for the election of officers for branches, a provision should be included that only such members of the local are eligible who have white membership cards from the Left Wing section.

2. That all candidates for public office to be nominated for the fall primaries must be members of the Left Wing organization in order to secure nomination.

3. That they will ignore the decision of the National Executive Committee with reference to the suspension of the language federations and continue to recognize such members as members of Local Kings, irrespective of the action of the NEC or the SEC, or any other duly constituted authority of the party to act in such matters, thereby defying every party committee and ignoring the rules and regulations of the party.

Walter M. Cook,
State Secretary

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