
The National Executive Committee Acts.

by David P. Berenberg

Unsigned editorial comment in *The Socialist* [New York], v. 1, no. 5 (June 4, 1919), pg. 4.
Author is presumed to be the editor of the publication, David P. Berenberg.

We note with pleasure that the National Executive Committee has taken hold in the crisis and is proceeding firmly to expel the troublemakers. The first act of the National Executive Committee on Saturday, May 24th [1919], was to revoke the charter of the State of Michigan. This action was based on the unconstitutional actions of the State Convention of Michigan, when the following amendment was made to the Michigan State Constitution:

“Any member of the local or branch of the local advocating legislative reforms or supporting organizations formed for the purpose of advocating such reforms, shall be expelled from the Socialist Party. The State Committee is authorized to revoke the charter of any local that does not conform to this amendment.”

This provision is in direct violation of Section 5, Article 2, of the National Constitution.†

A further aggravating circumstance in the State Convention was the adoption of the following resolution: “Whereas, a function of the Socialist movement is to explain all social phenomena, including that of religion; Therefore, be it resolved, that the following

be inserted as Section 14, Article 15, of the State Constitution: “It shall be the duty of all agitators and organizers upon all occasions to avail themselves of the opportunity of explaining religion on the basis of the materialistic conception of history as a social phenomena.”

Secretary Germer pointed out to the committee that such a course would not only arouse additional prejudice against the party, but would consume the time and energy of our own members in endless controversies that would end in the disruption of many local organizations.

The situation created by Michigan is more acute than that of any other state except, perhaps, New York, and the action of the NEC is all the more welcome in that it precipitates the issue before the “Left Wing” menace has grown too great.

The vote on the revocation of Michigan’s charter was seven to three. We figure this as indicative of the relative strength of the “Left Wing” and the opposition to the “Left Wing” in the NEC.

†-Presumably Berenberg refers to the pledge to “be guided by the constitution and platform” of the Socialist Party, which was replete with minimum demands. The text of Article II (Membership), Section 5 of the then-current constitution of the SPA appears in full below:

All persons joining the Socialist Party shall sign the following pledge:

Application for Membership in the Socialist Party

“I, the undersigned, recognizing the class struggle between the capitalist class and the working class, and the necessity of the working class organizing itself into a political party for the purpose of obtaining collective ownership and democratic administration of the collectively used and socially necessary means of production and distribution, hereby apply for membership in the Socialist Party.

“I have no relations (as member or supporter) with any other political party.

“I am opposed to all political organizations that support and perpetuate the present capitalist profit system, and I am opposed to any form of trading or fusing with any such organizations to prolong that system.

“In all my political actions while a member of the Socialist Party I agree to be guided by the constitution and platform of that party.”

Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport.

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