
NEC Suspends Defiant Groups of Foreign Born: Seven Language Federations Cut Off from Party Affiliation for Violation.

Unsigned report in the *New York Call*, May 29, 1919, pg. 5.

CHICAGO, May 28. — The National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party today suspended the Russian, Lithuanian, Lettish, Ukrainian, Hungarian, Polish, and South Slavic Federations and referred its action, together with documentary evidence and stenographic proceedings of the hearing, to a special national convention. The federations have some 30,000 members.

Action came after nearly two days were given to the matter. There was a tense feeling in the crowded room of the new party building as the dramatic moment arrived for taking the vote.

Those present were Work, Holt, Hogan, Goebel, Krafft, Oneal, Shiplacoff, Katterfeld, and Wagenknecht. The first 7 voted to suspend and the last 2 were opposed.

A mass of documentary material had accumulated in the National Office showing an organized, systematic attempt to carry pending referendums in the interest of the Left Wing. Translator-Secretaries, whose sole duty, according to the constitution, is to serve as the medium of communications with the party, it is charged, used their offices to influence the vote of the federation members. Mimeographed blanks had been sent by them to their branches requesting more ballots of State Secretaries. Blanks had been sent out before the ballots had been shipped to State Secretaries. Translations of language papers showed persistent attacks upon the party and party officials in general. These carried the impression that the party was dominated by counterrevolutionists. Some statements even went so far as to state that the party would ally itself

with the bourgeoisie and turn machine guns upon real socialists. It was charged that the party has been helpless and defenseless in this campaign of misrepresentation owing to inability of English-speaking members to read the various language publications and reply.

Charges against offending federations included 11 counts, including frequent violations of the national constitution. Stilson of the Lithuanian Federation served as spokesman for all federations and was frequently before the committee. Stilson denied any breach of the constitution, though admitting that some federations had endorsed the Left Wing. He denied that there was an organization within the organization which duplicated branches, locals, and committees. He held he had a right to work with a dual organization to support it. He admitted expelling members of his federation for trying to split it, but he denied the power of the Socialist Party to act likewise in a similar situation.

The decision in part reads:

That for violations of the party constitution the National Executive Committee, fully conscious of its grave responsibility, herewith suspends the federations, together with such privileges as affiliation with the party gives them; that this decision, with the documentary evidence upon which it is based, be transmitted to special national convention, and that Secretaries of the federations affected be accorded full opportunity to present their case to the convention; that those members of federations who are not in agreement with defiant policies of their federations be welcomed as members of party by locals and branches of the several states.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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