
Let Party Membership Function Now

by L.E. Katterfeld

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In a statement to the locals the members of the old National Executive Committee, who are holding up the membership referendum in which they know themselves to be defeated for reelection, make a tearful plea to the outraged membership to "wait until the convention." They ask locals not to make or second motions to reverse the NEC but leave it all to the convention.

In the meantime the same NEC finds even the mails too slow for its party wrecking activities, and is voting right now BY TELEGRAPH to expel the Socialist Party of Massachusetts. Why not wait until the convention?

The New York State Committee is throwing out of the party its revolutionary membership by the thousands. Why not wait till the convention?

The Connecticut State Executive Committee has voted to expel every local and member that endorses the Left Wing program. Why not wait till the convention?

We can expect every little committee that is still controlled by the reactionary officialdom to follow suit. The convention is called primarily for the specific purpose of affording the party membership the opportunity to pass judgment upon the Left Wing program, to determine the party's position on the question of affiliating with the Third International, organized by the Bolsheviks at Moscow, which today is the ONLY International of Revolutionary Socialism. But these little committees of petty officials that want our party to straddle and compromise are not

willing to await the action of the convention. They are now trying to forestall the convention and to expel from the party all those elements that come out openly for revolutionary Socialism. We know that their frantic efforts will avail them nothing. The membership of our Socialist Party today is sound and revolutionary to the core. No matter how many thousands the party officialdom “discipline” with its paper expulsions, of those that remain the Left Wing will still be the majority. The inexorable logic of world events has undermined the opportunist elements within our party and made the revolutionary wing unconquerable.

We have serene confidence in our victory at the coming party convention — when that convention is held. But we have **no confidence whatever** in the honesty and good will of the present party officialdom.

As soon as they realize in truth that in spite of all their machinations the convention will decide against them, we can expect them to “postpone” the convention. In fact, they discussed this possibility openly at the recent NEC meeting in Chicago [May 24-30, 1919].

So do not let the specious pleading of these defeated and disappointed party officials lull you into inactivity, comrades. Lose no time. Second the referendum NOW. Support Local Cleveland’s efforts to force the party officialdom to obey the will of the membership.

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The NEC also asks us to “wait for more information.”

But they themselves refused to “wait for information” when they expelled the Socialist Party of Michigan, 6,000 members strong, without any trial or even informing the Michigan comrades that they were under charges.

They refused to “wait for information” when they voted down my motion to give the translators [Translator-Secretaries] time to communicate with the Federation Executive Committees, and suspended 30,000 GOOD standing party members

without trial, just by a simple resolution made by seven men in an attic in Chicago.

We need no information to know that no little Executive Committee has the power to throw 40,000 members out of our party without trial and get away with it.

We need no information to know that it is the duty of our party officials to count our membership referendums and announce the results, that no committee consisting almost entirely of defeated candidates has the right to suppress them.

If there is anything wrong with the referendum the remedy is not to suppress and keep secret, but to TURN ON THE LIGHT, publish the results, and then if necessary let them be challenged and investigated by DISINTERESTED comrades.

WE WANT the party convention to decide the questions at issue. But the old NEC has forestalled the convention, and in order for these questions to come properly before the convention these unconstitutional and pernicious acts of the NEC must NOW be reversed.

Therefore, comrades of the Socialist Party, we urge you to second Cleveland's motion to annul the NEC expulsion of Michigan, and let THE CONVENTION decide if those 6,000 members should be expelled from the party.

Second Cleveland's motion to annul the NEC suspension of the seven language federations, and let the CONVENTION decide whether those 30,000 comrades are guilty of violating our party principles and should be thrown out.

Second Cleveland's motion to have the results of our referendum elections announced. Then if there are any contests or challenges, let the CONVENTION decide them.

Second Cleveland's motion to halt the NEC's action turning all the party property over to a little corporation that cannot be controlled by the party membership. If the new headquarters are to be in the hands of a little group of individuals that cannot be recalled within three years by the party, let the CONVENTION consider that.

And remember, as a precaution against the Executive Secretary's merely throwing your "second" in the waste basket, be sure

to send a duplicate thereof to the State Office of the Socialist Party of Ohio, 3207 Clark Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio, so that we may know when sufficient seconds have been sent in to demand a referendum of the party.

Comrades, in every one of the actions the NEC have insulted the party membership. They have usurped powers that are not theirs. They have trampled roughshod over all constitutional limitations. they have violated the will of the membership. They may now camouflage their motives with honeyed words and fine phrases, but their every act gives them the lie, and the very circumstances under which they acted mercilessly condemn them.

They have sown the wind. Now let them reap the whirlwind. Let every comrade make it his personal business to prove that such incredible trickery on the part of the party's officialdom will be resented and rebuked in the Socialist Party. LET THE PARTY MEMBERSHIP FUNCTION NOW.

Edited by Tim Davenport

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