
Minutes of the Meeting of the New York State Executive Committee, Socialist Party of America, Sunday, July 13, 1919.

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Meeting of the SEC held at the state office, 467 Broadway, Albany, NY, called by State Secretary [Walter] Cook.

Present: Friedman, Malkiel, Gerber, Berlin, Sheahan, and Arland of the Executive Committee; Kobbee and Mayell of the Advisory Committee; State Secretary Cook.

Minutes of the SEC meeting of June 26 read and approved with corrections. Minutes of meeting of Advisory Committee of July 5 read.

Report of State Secretary.

The State Secretary [Cook] reported the vote of the State Committee on the proposed special state convention as follows: Wilcox, Smith, Bettetts, Wiley, McKay, Breckenridge, Hogan, Kelly, Bingloff, Karlin voted "yes" without comment. Rich and Axelsohn voted "yes" but wrote that they questioned the advisability of holding the convention under the present conditions. Twelve voted "yes." Trachtenberg, Gerber, Lenihan, Rowe, Sauter, Sander, Mailly, Berlin, Orr, Hillquit, Griedman, and Waldman voted "no."

The vote being a tie, no action was taken.

The State Secretary [Cook] then made a report, and action was taken on the various locals in the state, as follows:

Locals Kings and Queens.

Owing to the fact that all property, funds, records, furniture, and so forth are held in the possession of the former local, the Secretary reported that he

had temporarily loaned to the newly formed Kings County office fixtures of the old state office.

Approved.

Old Local Appeals.

On June 20 [1919] former Local Kings County submitted its appeal from the action of the State Executive and State Committees. It was moved by [Julius] Gerber that a committee of 3 prepare a statement, which, when approved by the State Executive Committee, will go out with the appeal of Local Kings (the old local) to membership in the state.

Carried.

Local Queens County had submitted a similar appeal on June 23, and it was decided to include the appeal of former Local Queens in the above action. [David] Berenberg, [James] Oneal, and Gerber were appointed.

Local Utica.

The State Secretary reported that on June 26 he visited Local Utica for the purpose of making an investigation as to whether the local was violating the state and national constitutions of the Socialist Party by affiliating itself with the "Left Wing" organization, and, further, whether Local Utica had adopted the platform of the "Left Wing" organization as its official expression. Minutes show that Local Utica had approved of and endorse the manifesto of the "Left Wing" organization and demanded that the next convention of the Socialist Party adopt the principles outlined

therein. Evidence did not show that Local Utica had violated the constitution in this instance. However, when asked if Local Utica had severed its relations with the suspended Language Federation branches as instructed by the SEC, in obedience to the action of the NEC, the local declared in meeting, at which the federation members participated, that it had not, and did not intend to do so.

With reference to the affiliation of Local Utica with the "Left Wing" organization, he was informed that Local Utica had accepted the report and approved of the action of two of its members in participating in the formation of the "Provisional Left Wing Caucus of New York." Further, Local Utica had elected a delegate, and this delegate had attended the national "Left Wing" conference on June 21 [1919]. This had been done at a general Party meeting on June 16 with the suspended federation branches' membership participating.

Charter Revoked.

The action of Local Utica, as evidenced by the minutes, resolutions, and so forth, clearly shows that Local Utica has affiliated itself with the "Left Wing" organization, refuses to abide by the instructions of the state and national organizations as expressed in the suspension of the language federations, and has thus violated the state and national constitutions, and upon motion, it was decided that the charter of Local Utica stands revoked as of June 21, and the State Secretary is instructed to proceed with the reorganization of this local at once.

State Secretary [Cook] further reported that upon notifying Local Utica of its suspension by the State Executive Committee, because of its actions, as reported above, a large part of the membership left the meeting and expressed a strong desire to be reorganized at once, and steps were taken immediately to effect this work. The prospects were reported as being good for a speedy reorganization of the overwhelming majority of the English-speaking membership, together with practically unanimous support of the Jewish Federation branch.

Local Syracuse.

State Secretary [Cook] reported that he had been informed by comrades in Syracuse that at a meeting of the Central Committee on June 23 [1919], the chairman (Comrade Brockway) had ruled on three different occasions that the delegates from the suspended language federations had the same rights as the other delegates and entitled to make motions and vote, over the protest of a large part of the delegation. This was done in clear violation of the action of the state and national organizations, and the local had been warned at the general party meeting of Local Syracuse on Saturday, June 14 that to permit such action would subject the local to expulsion by the State Executive Committee. At that meeting on June 14, the membership decided to abide by the decision of the state and national organizations and did not permit the suspended membership to vote in its proceedings. The Central Committee, in sustaining the decision of the chairman at its meeting on June 23, acted in violation of the decision of the general party meeting on June 14.

The Secretary [Cook] further reported that he had been informed that Local Syracuse had elected 5 fraternal delegates to the "Left Wing" state convention held in Syracuse on July 4, and by that act had defied the state and national constitutions by recognizing and compromising with a political organization other than the Socialist Party. It was further reported that Local Syracuse is electing to official positions some who are not now members of the Socialist Party.

Upon receiving above information the State Secretary wrote the organizer asking for the information covering the points charged against the local. Organizer Steen of Local Syracuse appeared before the State Executive Committee on behalf of Local Syracuse and submitted the copy of the minutes as requested of the Central Committee meeting of June 23. No meeting of the Central Committee had been held since that time, thus the minutes had not been read and approved of by the Central Committee, although there is no doubt or question that they are substantially true and correct and will be approved by the Central Committee when it meets next. These minutes bear out the contention that Chairman Brockway ruled that the

delegates from the suspended branches could vote and make motions.

With regard to the election of 5 fraternal delegates to the "Provisional Left Wing Caucus" in Syracuse on July 4, the following, Dr. Thomas Crimmins, C.V. Brockway, R. Simoni, A. Silverstein, and D. Special, were elected and participated.

Members in Bad Standing.

Regarding the charge that Local Syracuse elected officials who are not now members in good standing, it was shown that at least one, Turtelot, literature agent, has not paid dues since March 1, 1918. However, Brockway has been on strike for the past two or possibly three months and is therefore entitled to exempt dues. C. Sherman (elected to replace Mrs. Fred Sander, who was recalled by Branch 2 because of her actions and desires to keep the local in line with the state and national constitutions of the party) has not paid dues since March 1918. D. Perimuter, Branch 3, is paid up to December 1918 and made no payment of dues since February [1919]. It is thus clearly shown that this charge is in part true, the following officers of the local not now being in good standing: Turtelot, literature agent; Brockway, Central Committee delegate, Branch 2; Sherman, Central Committee delegate, Branch 3.

Local to Rescind Action.

Motion adopted that in view of the information furnished by the State Secretary [Cook], Herman Kobbe be appointed a committee of 1 to represent the State Committee at a special party membership meeting at which the suspended federations are not to vote or be invited, when Local Syracuse will be given another opportunity to rescind its former action in affiliating with the "Left Wing" and in recognizing the suspended federations. That if this is not done the charter of the local thereby stands revoked and the State Secretary is authorized to proceed with the immediate reorganization of the local.

Local Buffalo.

State Secretary [Cook] reported that in accor-

dance with the instructions of the SEC he proceeded to Buffalo July 9 for the purpose of reorganizing that local, that he immediately notified Organizer Heisler that the charter of Local Buffalo had been revoked. He was instructed to hold all moneys, records, etc. of the Socialist Party in his possession until such time as Local Buffalo was reorganized by the State Committee. Heisler was further instructed to work with those individuals who were the officials of former Local Buffalo, viz. Robert A. Hoffman, Treasurer; Bessie Yokom, Secretary; and Emma Gertzner, on the same basis as when employees of former Local Buffalo, and otherwise to conduct the business of the Socialist Party in Buffalo and Erie County as heretofore, and to give an account of his actions, receipts, and disbursements to the proper officials at such time as when a Socialist local had been reorganized in Buffalo and Erie County.

In line with these instructions, Comrade Heisler gave notice that the office was now under the supervision of the State Committee. It was brought out that a few individuals wished to bring court proceedings against the local officers and so the State Secretary instructed Heisler and Hoffman to withdraw the money on deposit in the Market Street Bank to the credit of the Socialist Party, Local Buffalo, and redeposit jointly, to the account of the New York State Committee, Socialist Party.

Motion by Hillquit: That the action of the State Secretary in withdrawing the funds of Local Buffalo from the bank and redepositing them to the credit of the State Committee be approved.

Carried.

Reorganization of Local.

The State Secretary [Cook] further reported that he had on Thursday, July 10, started the reorganization of Local Buffalo by reorganizing Branch 7 with 13 of the 19 members present, with the prospects that not less than 50 of the 60 members would be received back into the branch. On Friday, July 11, he reorganized the Jewish Federation branch with 24 of the 30 members present. The attendance at meetings on the part of these two branches has been very low because of the actions of the half dozen Left Wing members, which accounts for their not having been present when the branches were reorganized. The organizer of the

local was able to reorganize, the same night, the German Federation branch, and steps have been taken to reorganize the other branches as soon as possible. Local Buffalo will retain 75 percent of its membership and lose only the suspended foreign branches, together with those who have come into the party for this controversy. This part of the report was accepted as read.

New Form of Charter.

The charter reads as follows:

Your application for membership in the Socialist Party has been granted, and your organization has been entered on the roll of the party as Local _____ of _____ County, State of New York.

Provided, that your organization shall issue no platforms or utterances, not institute any rules or regulations in conflict with the national or state platforms and constitutions of the Socialist Party.

The State Committee reserves the right to revoke this charter in case of any violation of the above provisions.

Chairman of Session.

State Secretary.

Dated _____

Motion by Malkiel: That a copy of the local charter issued by the SEC be forwarded to the Socialist press with the request that they publish it in order that the membership may understand that the State Committee was justified in revoking local charters.

[Carried.]

Rochester.

The State Secretary reported that, in line with the instructions of the State Executive Committee on June 21 [1919], he attended a meeting of Local Rochester on Friday, June 27. In the order of the regular business a report was called for and made by two delegates, who had been regularly elected by Local Rochester to the national "Left Wing" convention in New York City, and, over protest, the report of these delegates was accepted. The report was made from notes by one member and from member by the other, C. O'Brien. They reported that they took part in the early

proceedings of the convention, but, after a motion by the Michigan delegation calling for a national convention in Chicago for September 1 [1919] to organize a new and rival organization had been defeated, they decided to refrain from further participation in the proceedings and promised the delegates from Michigan their moral aid and personal presence and support in forming a new party. Local Rochester officially, in regular meeting assembled, thereupon accepted and approved of this report as given.

Local Wants New Party.

Upon the request of the Secretary [Cook] for the minutes of the local showing action taken with regard to the "Left Wing," a motion was made and passed to reaffirm their previous actions in refusing the minutes, that he be not given the minutes until the suspension of the local on the part of the State Executive Committee be raised and Local Rochester reinstated to its full rights as a local, when the minutes would then be sent. The statement was made that Local Rochester had not "affiliated" with the "Left Wing" organization, nor had it "adopted" the "Left Wing" program as the official expression of Local Rochester.

Local Denies.

This claim was made notwithstanding the fact that Local Rochester admitted then and there that a fraternal delegate (who took part in the proceedings) had been sent to Albany, and 2 regular delegates had been sent to New York City to the "Left Wing" convention, and these delegates had participated in a move to form a new party in opposition to the Socialist Party, and the local accepted and approved this action.

A letter from Organizer O'Brien to the State Secretary, dated June 21 [1919], in reply to his second inquiry for the minutes, read as follows:

Yours of the 17th was read at our regular meeting last night, and the motion of a week ago, "That we do not send the minutes" was reaffirmed. We have not withdrawn from the language branches. Comrade Stark was the fraternal delegate from this local to the "Left Wing" caucus in Albany.

The above information shows that Local Rochester has on three or more occasions defied the instruc-

tions of the state and national organizations and has refused the information concerning the official acts of this local by not giving the minutes as required by the constitution. Article 1, Section 6, reading as follows: "Local or county and general committees of said locals may adopt bylaws to govern their own proceedings, but such bylaws shall not be in conflict with the state or national constitutions. A copy of same shall be forwarded to the State Committee." Further, Local Rochester recognizes and gives membership privileges to the suspended language federation branches in its territory.

Local Rochester has officially gone on record as favoring the formation of a new party in opposition to the Socialist Party by accepting the report of Organizer C.M. O'Brien in regular meeting assembled. A fraternal delegate took part in the forming of the "Provisional Left Wing Caucus of New York," and two regular delegates were elected and took part in the national convention of the "Left Wing," all in violation of the national constitution, Article 11, Section 1, and Article 11, Section 5, last sentence therein, and of the state constitution, Article 1, Section 1.

To Revoke Charter.

Motion by Sheahan: That since it is conclusively shown from the above information and the reports, letter, etc. submitted and attached herewith by the State Secretary, Local Rochester has violated the state and national constitutions and platforms, as charged at the meeting of the SEC on May 21 [1919], the charter of Local Rochester is revoked as of that date and the State Secretary is hereby instructed to reorganize the local as soon as possible.

Carried.

St. Louis Statement.

The State Secretary submitted a statement, "The Socialist Party of the United States: Its Work, Past and Present," of the general committee, Socialist Party of St. Louis, representing 16 city branches and 3 country locals, adopted after due consideration at two consecutive special meetings, held June 16 and 23 [1919].

Motion by Malkiel: That the Secretary be instructed to purchase 5,000 copies of the statements of

Local St. Louis on the party situation for immediate distribution among the party membership.

Carried.

An appeal for funds from P. Troilo, Executive Secretary of the Italian Interstate Federation of the Socialist Party of New York and New Jersey for financial assistance was read.

Motion by Sheahan: That the Secretary [Cook] be instructed to write the national Italian Translator-Secretary for information regarding the status of this organization before the request for funds is granted.

Carried.

Motion by Malkiel: That Florence Wattles be engaged for two weeks for a tour of the capital district.

Carried.

The resignation of Clinton H. Pierce of Albany was accepted and the State Secretary [Cook] instructed to call for nominations from the locals in Albany county for a representative to the State Committee from said county.

Cook reported the receipt of 7,000 special national convention assessment stamps to be sold at 50 cents each. These were ordered distributed to the membership immediately. He further reported that the National Office had been given a full account of the proceedings of the SEC during the past month.

To Draw Up Statement.

The State Secretary [Cook] was instructed to draw up a statement regarding the actions of the State Executive Committee in revoking the charter of several locals in New York, same to be submitted to Kobbe, Mayell, and Arland before giving out to the locals.

[Barney] Berlin submitted report from the committee elected to visit the *Volkszeitung* concerning the editorial by [Ludwig] Lore, urging the branches in Kings and Queens Counties not to recognize the authority of the Executive Committee in expelling the locals, but to remain loyal to the former locals and refuse to be reorganized. Cook had failed to write the Board of Directors and Lore made defense of his action claiming

First. That the *Volkszeitung* will, and is, supporting the Socialist Party in everything but those actions of the SEC which were not in accordance with the state constitution.

Second. That the editorial in question was translated incorrectly.

Third. That official communications from the State Committee are not sent to the *Volkszeitung* and that he was forced to secure the minutes of the SEC from *The Call*. Lore promised to send a written statement covering this matter.

Yonkers.

The State Secretary submitted charges against Local Yonkers reading as follows:

I hereby wish to prefer charges against Local Yonkers for violating the state constitution, Article 1, Section 15, paragraph (d), reading as follows: "The charter of any local may be revoked for the following reasons: For failing to prosecute, and if found guilty, to punish a member for violating the provisions of the state and national constitution," by not prosecuting and punishing one of its members, viz., Comrade Irvin E. Klein, for having participated in a meeting of the "Left Wing" of New York in Albany, June 8 [1919], in direct violation of the national constitution, Article 11, Section 1, and the state constitution, Article 1, Section 1.

The State Secretary further reported that he had sent notice to Local Yonkers of this fact.

Motion by Gerber: That the charges be changed to read as being against Local Yonkers for having elected Comrade Irvin Klein as its official representative and delegate to conventions, caucuses, and conferences of the "Left Wing" organization.

Carried.

Cook to Visit Locals.

The Secretary [Cook] reported that he had been asked to attend a joint meeting of Locals Walton, Downsville, and Shavertown, Delaware County, in Walton, about August 1, and in Binghamton July 27, in order to report the actions of the SEC and to discuss party policies and tactics before the general party meeting. He was instructed to attend such meetings.

The State Secretary reported that he had to date received a total amount of \$449.75 on appeal for funds for the state organization. In this connection a com-

munication from A. Tuvim was read, inviting the SEC to participate in raising funds for the Socialist Party in conjunction with the committee recently organized to raise funds in Local New York and to elect 2 delegates to attend and unite with said committee at its meeting on Tuesday, July 15. On motion invitations accepted and Friedman and Berlin elected as the delegates of the SEC.

To Elect Delegates.

Secretary Cook reported that in accordance with the state constitution and the apportionment as made by the SEC on June 21, he had sent out calls for the nomination of delegates to the special National Convention to be held at Chicago, Ill. beginning August 30. Locals New York (District 1), Kings (District 2), and Bronx (District 3) are now in the process of nominating and electing their delegates.

Owing to the fact that the charters of the following locals stand revoked and reorganization has not yet been completed, calls were not sent to Queens (District 4), Utica (District 9), Rochester (District 10), and to the Locals in Erie and Niagara Counties (District 11).

District 5. Local Astoria nominates 2 candidates. The Secretary was instructed to hold up action in this district until Local Astoria is given the opportunity to decide which of the two delegates it wishes to place on the ticket.

District 6. Nomination received from Local Middletown, naming John C. Hogan, and from Local Binghamton, nominating A.E. Breckenridge. Secretary instructed to proceed with the election of a delegate from this district.

District 7. Local Poughkeepsie nominates Alfred C. Perkins. Locals in Troy and Albany nominated James C. Sheahan. Secretary instructed to proceed with the election of a delegate from this district.

District 8. Local Schenectady nominates Charles W. Noonan. There are a number of fairly large locals in this territory and the Secretary was instructed to write them asking if they did not wish to participate in the nomination of a delegate. Action held up for a reasonable time in order to give these locals a fair opportunity to participate in nominating a candidate.

District 9. Motion by Sheahan: That in view of

the fact that Locals Syracuse and Utica are now in the process of reorganization, the nomination of a delegate to the national convention be held up.

Carried.

District 12. Local Olean nominated C. Axelsohn, Local Elmira nominated William J.C. Wismar, Local Jamestown asks that the nominations be held open until July 30 in order that its branches may have the opportunity to make nominations and the local select the nominee...

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Edited by Tim Davenport.

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