

Erber Hits Plan to Steal YPSL Convention

Calls on Circles To Guarantee Honest Meet

New York City
August 15, 1937.

To all Circle Secretaries;

(To be read at next Circle meeting).

Dear Comrades:

This letter is an appeal to the membership to take immediate steps to secure the election of a fair and representative convention and thereby defeat the conspiracy of the centrist leaders to steal the convention from the majority and split the League.

The centrist leaders began their mad attempts to secure a majority at the convention some six months ago by systematically placing factional organizers in the field under the guise of League organizers. Three months ago, with bureaucratic disregard for the wishes of the membership, they deliberately changed the location of the convention from Akron to Philadelphia in order to increase the difficulties of the western left wing section in sending delegations while easing the task for their two eastern strongholds, New York City and Philadelphia. As the convention approaches and it becomes apparent to them that even these shoddy maneuvers leave them far from having a majority, they now embark upon a frenzied campaign of gerrymandering, dues stamp record juggling, illegal transfers, and other corrupt practices.

Brazen Fraud

I receive reports virtually daily from Cleveland, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Chicago, Ithaca, N. Y., and other places, telling of the brazen attempts on the part of the national office or the local centrist leaders to fraudulently defeat the left wing nominees. When all of these reports will have been collected with irrefutable evidence to verify them, they will constitute a veritable "black book" of the crimes of the centrist leaders against the revolutionary majority of the League as well as against those of the centrist minority who are opposed to the introduction of chicanery and fakery into the Y.P.S.L.

The practices engaged in by those in control of the League machinery have created a situation where it is no longer possible to adhere to the legal forms of the NEC when this crooked "legality" of the centrist leaders is designed to defeat the left wing by corrupt methods. The controlling bodies have abdicated

their right to legislate on questions of representation by the methods they have stooped to.

Their methods of representation has given New York City, with only twice the membership of California or Chicago, three times as many delegates, while Philadelphia, with less than half the membership of California or Chicago, has been given two-thirds the number of delegates. They have had members vote in Columbus and transferred them to vote again in Cleveland. They have nullified the election of a left wing delegate in Ithaca because a centrist member was absent. They have sold dues stamps on credit so that circles like Baltimore will meet with three members present to elect two delegates. They give Chicago 120 members when a census last May showed 193. They engaged in practices of the type exposed in the notorious Barshop letter.

Since these practices have destroyed all possibility of holding a convention that really represents the membership, it is necessary that the circles take matters into their own hands to enable the League to meet in a representative convention and prevent the centrist leadership of the youth from carrying through the orders of the Clarityite group in the Party to split the Y. P. S. L. rather than permit the left wing to gain control. There is only one fair method for the election of delegates remaining to the circles. This is to:

1. Have your circle examine its records and the books of the members to determine the number in good standing.
2. Elect delegates to the convention on the basis of the ratio decided upon by the national office despite the obvious injustice of their system (1 for 5, 2 for 8, 3 for 23, and an additional delegate for every fifteen members or major fraction thereof).
3. Supply your delegates with indubitable proof of the membership of your circle, either by means of the treasurers records or the membership cards.

Only this procedure can save the League from the disrepute into which the revolting methods of the centrist leaders are plunging it. Let the membership teach the cynical politicians in control of the apparatus that the capture of the majority of the dues stamps leaves one far from capturing the majority of a national convention of the Young People's Socialist League.

With Socialist greetings,

Ernest Erber

National Chairman, Young People's Socialist League.

An Appeal to Revolutionary Socialists

By Glen Trimble

For weeks before the Chicago convention there was a furious campaign for the expulsion of the former members of the Workers Party from the Socialist Party. Paul Porter called for expulsion in a pamphlet issued by the Wisconsin Socialist Party, paid for by a block sale to the Communist Party and circulated to every local with the help of National Office lists. The "Connecticut Committee of Correspondence" and an equally phoney letter which "borrowed" the signatures of Michigan trade unionists demanded that the Convention drive out revolutionary socialists from the Party, Jack Altman, ex-militant executive secretary of local New York, joined the expulsion chorus led and directed by the C. P. and the Daily Worker. The "united front" of counter revolutionary reformism was working smoothly.

But the stooges reckoned without the rank and file of the Socialist Party. Declarations of solidarity between pre-and post-entry revolutionary socialists, a powerful counter-attack on the People's Front, party liquidation program of the Right, above all, an overwhelming flood of left wing delegates gathering in Chicago scared the expulsion into its hasty retreat.

The "Red Herring"

Not a single delegate at Chicago dared to raise the expulsion issue. In the corridors, despite their written record, the right wingers indignantly denied that they had ever intended such a thing. The Appeal Group was charged both by the right and muddled and mis-led Clarity with creating a false issue, dragging a "red herring" into the convention.

Did the Appeal group exaggerate the danger of expulsion? The answer is now on the record. June 19th the National Executive Committee was hastily called together in New York. Here behind closed doors the N. E. C. launched the campaign which the genuine representatives of the Party membership stopped dead at Chicago.

Just three months have passed. The Party is not less but more thoroughly convinced that the revolutionary Marxist road is the only one for the Socialist Party. But the NEC, handpicked by Wisconsin, has reacted to this shift to the left by a retreat to the right. The Philadelphia resolution on Spain embraces the People's Front of class collaboration which the convention decisively

rejected, the Milwaukee meeting of the National Action Committee sold out the Chicago decision on trade unions by turning its administration over to the anti-discipline, anti-Socialist League Wisconsin SEC. Now at New York the process is culminated by a vicious and unprecedented attempt to gag the left wing majority of the convention and the party.

The courage which dozed out of the expulsionists at Chicago flourished in the secret sessions in New York. Aaron Levenstein, speaking for Jack Altman demanded that all "Trotskyites" be expelled. He didn't bother to give reasons; it was up to the NEC "to find the formula"—to frame a plausible excuse. Norman Thomas, having apparently abandoned all faith in "all-inclusiveness", party democracy and Socialism itself in his desperate effort to make the SP safe for pacifism and his own exclusive leadership, lined up solidly with Altman and Wisconsin. He differed only on a minor point of tactics—arguing for expulsion of selected "Trotskyite" leaders in the (vain) hope of splitting off and retaining a tamed rank and file.

Charity's Capitulation

The Clarity majority of the NEC lived up to the Clarity record. Just as they allowed Wisconsin to dictate the NEC, and Thomas's new threadbare threat to "refuse the leadership unless" to dictate their resolutions at Chicago, so at New York they surrendered to the combined right threat and unanimously endorsed the expulsion "formula" which Altman demanded.

This formula is so flagrantly in violation of every democratic tradition of the Socialist Party that even the Call dared not to print it. The NEC, itself bankrupt of leadership and having no answer to the revolutionary program of the membership, wants a moratorium on Socialism in the Socialist Party.

Left Wing has Majority

The consequence of the enforcement of this decree should be clear. Either we agree to be gagged or the NEC will try to expel the party in the name of the party. This is not an exaggeration. From the Mississippi to the Pacific, everything worth mention is from the jaundiced viewpoint of the new old guard "Trotskyite". Throughout the Middle West and east outside the city of New

York an estimate of 80 per cent of the active party membership is conservative. In New York more than half the book membership and far more of the active membership is opposed to expulsion and will unite us in the fight that the party wreckers have forced. Providing that the NEC maintains its closet arrogance in the open arena of the party, it can, by violating every clause of the constitution and every tradition of the party, enforce its illegal act and expel us.

After the smoke has cleared there will remain in the Socialist Party Wisconsin (already dickering with the Social Democratic Federation), Lewis of Massachusetts (surrounded by Stalinist stooges, pie-cards on the Lewis bank roll, and befuddled liberals), Altman (whose program is transparently the Daily Worker's), Thomas (provided his decision to wreck the party does not involve personal retirement to wait for the Farmer Labor Party) and, perhaps, Zam (whose reward for providing a left front to this outfit will be toleration, so long as he continues to do as he's told).

Many of us have given years of our lives to the job of winning the Socialist Party to a revolutionary position in words and action. Despite setbacks we have come a long way since 1931. I do not believe that we are going to let the petty autocrats of the NEC stop us now. What is demanded is a solid front of ALL revolutionary Socialists, regardless of previous party or group affiliation—SP or WP, Appeal or Clarity—and an offensive against the wreckers that will drive them so far into their holes that they won't be able to dig out until six months after the revolution.

Unite against Gag Law!

The NEC resolution is a call to arms. Every weapon in our arsenal must be used to crush the offensive against the left and to drive from the field all who persist in an anti-Socialist position. For this we must use every legal channel (the enclosed referendum proposal should be endorsed by every possible local), we must revive the Socialist Appeal (the promise of free expression through the Call and Monthly has proved worthless), we must break down the artificial split in the left wing forces devised and maintained by some Clarity "leaders" and force these same leaders to come off the fence and choose, once and for all, between Wisconsin and revolutionary Socialism.

Only Clarity votes can drive us out of the Socialist Party and we have no intention of "bailing out". The decision is up to the Clarity NEC. The NEC must be told in unmistakable terms that we will not be gagged, that we will fight to the last ditch against every attack on any revolutionary Socialist, against the wrecking of the Socialist Party, and for a leadership and party seriously and honestly dedicated to the overthrow of capitalism and the victory of Socialism.

San Francisco, July 8, 1937.

Washington Protests Mass Expulsions

WASHINGTON, D. C. — The Washington, D. C., branch of the Socialist Party adopted a motion at its last meeting to send a telegram to Norman Thomas protesting against the idea of mass expulsion of left wingers from the Party.

Harry Milton Freed in Spain; Returning Here

As we go to press, the gratifying news arrives that comrade Harry Milton (Wolf Kupinsky), who has been in the Stalinist-People's Front prison in Barcelona for almost two months for his revolutionary beliefs, has been set free. A telegram to his friends here from Secretary of State Cordell Hull announces that comrade Milton has been released and is now at the American Consulate in Barcelona awaiting the departure of the first ship that can bring him back to his home in New York.

Because he was known as a supporter of the left wing in the SP, his case was sabotaged from beginning to end. When the Daily Worker of June 30 charged comrade Milton and Hugo Oehler with being fascist spies and called for their execution, the So-

cialist Call did not carry a single line in defense of a member of its own party, who actually fought the fascists at the front. To the very last day of his imprisonment without a single formal charge against him, even after he, with others, was compelled to start a hunger strike which left him emaciated, reducing him from 180 pounds to 115, the Call did not print a line about him, although an article on the subject was sent in weeks ago.

Not only the Call, but Altman and Co. especially left Harry Milton in the lurch. Altman went so far as to call him a deserter because he chose to fight with ILP contingent rather than to commit suicide in the Stalinized International Brigade. This Altman did when some Party mem-

bers approached him on behalf of Milton. Equally dastardly was the act of the Altmanite, Clendenin, who, in the name of the Workers Defense League apologized to the Spanish Government for the "unauthorized" action of the Chicago branch of the Workers Defense League in offering its legal services in behalf of comrades Oehler and Milton on the ground that the WDL does not intervene in "intra-working class disputes." Were these the actions of a revolutionary party and press, or the work of miserable capitulators to the Stalinist butchers?

Arrangements are now being made by the New York comrades for an appropriate, hearty welcome to Harry Milton upon his arrival here, which is expected shortly.

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