
St. Louis, Missouri

Local Completely Reorganized

[events of Aug. 13-25, 1919]

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On June 16, 1919, Local St. Louis through its General Committee, adopted a statement of its position, which has since been applauded by leading comrades throughout the country. It was thought that would keep the wings from flying. It didn't, for wings are made to fly.

On Wednesday, August 13 [1919], the Executive Committee of the Socialist Party of St. Louis met and decided by a unanimous vote to immediately draft a program, call a general membership meeting, discuss the draft, and when passed upon by the general membership meeting recommend the same to the party's national convention in Chicago on August 30.

The call for this general membership [meeting] had to be issued by the General Committee. The Executive Committee, therefore, called the General Committee together for Monday evening, August 18, to issue the formal call for the general membership meeting.

As the General Committee session had nothing else to do but to attend to the formality of issuing the call, only 31 out of 61 delegates attended. It was recommended that the general membership meeting of Local St. Louis be held at New Club Hall, Sunday, August 24. This motion was defeated. On motion of the Left Wing, it was decided to call this membership meeting for Saturday, August 22, together with a Left Wing public meeting already arranged for the same time and place, at which one national secretary of the three national Left Wing groups was the principle speaker.¹ This motion, carried by a vote of 16 to 15, was in violation of our party constitution and contrary to all precedents in the Socialist Party.

¹ Probably Isaac Edward Ferguson, Secretary of the Left Wing National Council.

The matter was brought to the attention of the State Committee in Springfield, which was in session, Thursday, August 21, and after four hours' consideration of the entire matter, decided to revoke the charter of Local St. Louis, to immediately reorganize the Local, excluding from its membership all those who, under the pretense of Left Wingism were organizing a dual party organization.

The State Committee authorized William M. Brandt, Otto Pauls, and G.A. Hoehn to temporarily take possession of all the property of Local St. Louis, in the name of the Socialist Party of Missouri, until the Local was properly organized.

National Secretary Adolph Germer was authorized by the Missouri State Committee of the Socialist Party to forthwith proceed to St. Louis and attend to the reorganization. This Germer did. He came here last Sunday [Aug. 24, 1919] and at a meeting held Sunday afternoon at the New Club Hall, Local St. Louis was reorganized. A temporary Executive Committee consisting of Wagner, Brandt, Long, Wieger, Aldrich, Pauls, and Pfister, was selected to attend to the rest of the reorganization details. The temporary General Committee met last Monday evening [Aug. 25, 1919] at 940 Chouteau Avenue, with about 40 delegates present, most of them members of the old committee. All the branches will be properly informed of the entire proceedings.

Thus ended the "Tempest in a Tea Pot."

Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport

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