
Enemies Within the Party

by Abraham Tuvim

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(National Office Press Service.)— The most vital of the many and varied problems which the Socialist Party must solve at the pending national convention is that of the activities of the “Third Internationalists” within the ranks of the party.

All other questions are secondary to this. Affiliation with Vienna or steering clear of all international affiliation; the foreign language groups; dues, programs, and other essential matters should be kept in the background until we solve the problem of the enemies within our ranks.

Frankly, there are enemies within our ranks. Men who hate the Socialist Party with a vindictiveness which makes a Security Leaguer a friend by comparison. Men who never speak of our party without an accompanying sneer. Men who garble the truth, misrepresent, and slander. Men who are doing more to keep the party from functioning than then enemy outside of our ranks — the defender of capitalism.

Yet the problem presented by the Engdahls, Trachtenbergs, and Glassbergs will not be solved by the proposal of the several ward branches of Chicago. The only effect the “expulsion resolution” will have will be to completely destroy an already shattered movement.

“All members who support and endorse the Communist International, or advocate affiliation therewith” are subject to expulsion by the branches and locals, under the terms of the proposed resolution. The string attached: “Until such time as the Communist International has officially withdrawn its appeal to the membership of the American Socialists to leave the party and join the United Communist Party,” is meaningless.

Assuming that such were possible — actually occurred — would that lessen the evil of the destructive policies of our “revolutionists”? Most certainly not, and yet the language of the Chicago resolution and the spirit back of it are just as threatening as the “revolutionists” themselves. For if we establish the precedent of reading out of the party those who disagree with us, our membership will decrease to the point where no one will be expelled because there will not be any to do the expelling.

Mere belief in the “Third,” or even advocacy of affiliation should not be considered sufficient cause for expulsion. By the same token the belief in dual unionism, or the opposition to immediate demands, has never been and is not considered sufficient cause for expulsion.

Our movement must ever remain a vehicle for expression. It is that privilege which attracts countless thousands to its ranks. Our branch meetings and lecture discussions should always remain an opportunity for the exchange of views and may the most popular always win.

This is not a plea for the Communists or the Third International. The writer has little respect for the former and much less for the latter. Their dictatorship of and over the proletariat has left in its wake the ruins of what at one time was a powerful Socialist structure.

My pleas is but to draw a line between honest and sincere disagreement on policy and active opposition to our movement. Let us find the division between honest criticism and vicious antagonism. Let us welcome the disagreement of those who are sincere in an organization sense and who conduct their activities within our ranks.

It is they who have gone outside the ranks of our party; have sought affiliation with the enemies of our movement, and are at present editing and distributing newspapers and periodicals, attacking our party in the most vicious manner, who do not belong within our ranks — these should be expelled forthwith.

The Engdahls and Trachtenbergs and Glassbergs, who seek to maintain membership in the Socialist Party, and who at the same time commit a thousand acts unbecoming Socialists,

should be divorced from our ranks. We might as well give our platform and headquarters to the American Legion — both would have the same effect on our organization.

The Engdahls and Trachtenbergs and Glassbergs are utterly lacking Socialist self-respect (not the bourgeois morality quality), otherwise they would themselves have withdrawn from a movement which is “utterly lacking in every revolutionary sense.”

The national convention should adopt a resolution forbidding affiliation with anti-Socialist Party organizations and periodicals, including all Communist groups and publications or independent anti-party groups. The threat to the Socialist Party is the acceptance of dictation from enemies of the Socialist Party. Honest disagreement and discussion cannot hurt us.

Edited by Tim Davenport

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