

# NEC Suspends California State Charter

## Clarity Group In Punitive Expedition

(Continued from page 1)

California comrades to present the overwhelming evidence against the viciously false and absurd charges presented to the NEC by the tiny "Clarity" clique in the state. The responsible officers of the state organization were given no notice whatever that such drastic action or action of any kind was contemplated. The official party press kept mum, the national party membership was barred out, while its responsible officers prepared the most far-reaching and important expulsion since 1919.

In marked contrast to this decisive and ruthless attack upon the revolutionary Socialist wing of the party was the vacillation and reluctance of identically constituted National Executive Committees in dealing with the frankly reformist and disloyal New York Old Guard. For more than two years local after local, state after state, demanded action to discipline the Waldman clique. The Old Guard systematically broke every principle and rule of the party and yet its reward from the NEC was discipline of the "ultra-lefts". Investigations, hearings, negotiations without number dragged through long months. In all these the Waldman-Cahan betrayers played the role of Dickensian schoolmasters with rod in hand. The NEC took its licking, and the charter of the state of New York remained in Waldman's vest pocket. Only after years of waste effort and cowardly cringing, only after the NEC was faced with a national membership so aroused that they could not be denied, only in the face of the accomplished fact of two parties in New York—only then did the NEC, reluctantly and almost tearfully, suspend the charter of the state of New York.

No such tender regard and polite ceremony is shown to the State organization of California. No proof of disloyalty or violation of party decision by the state organization has been shown, or can be shown. The California Socialists, only two short years ago virtually wiped out by "Epic" desertions, have fought back to healthier, more militant, more influential mass work than was ever true in the last twenty years of the state party. The number of trained, active, enthusiastic comrades has steadily increased. Faced with the strongest Stalinist concentration outside New York City they have fought them to a standstill and recruited the best elements from their ranks. On the day when Ward Rodgers, accompanied by bodyguard, presented his National Office order demanding the charter and property of the State organization on grounds of "demoralization of the state membership" and "stultification of party activity", young Socialists were returning to San Francisco from the largest and most successful state summer school in more than twenty years.

### California's Real Crime

The crime of California Socialists is not too little but too much revolutionary socialist activity. It was not loss of membership that worried the Rodgers' clique, it was steady gains in youthful, aggressive revolutionary socialists. All along the line the cause of socialism was gaining, but the plight of Rodgers and Co. was growing more and more tragic. By corraling every Old

Guard hangover, anti-"Trotskyite", pacifist, liberal and stay-at-home member, and by a secret and unparalelledly vicious personal campaign they had secured a slim convention majority last February. Every meeting, discussion, class, trade union struggle or demonstration saw "Clarity" support dwindle. Their stay-at-home members were too far to the right for the Chicago convention decisions. Registration took its toll of those whose socialism was not sturdy enough for the exertion of filling out a card. The State Committee majority was a cross-section of Clarity support, it could agree only on Trotskyist-baiting and opposition to any and all active work and political development—which the membership persisted in.

A thriving party and a do-nothing, politically illiterate State Committee majority clashed more and more sharply. Locals representing a full three quarters of the members—San Francisco, Oakland, Fresno, Los Angeles Branch Central, Dominguez Hills, Santa Monica and San Diego—called for a special state convention. The SEC met and Clarity managed to hold a majority against a committee vote for state convention by forcing its members to sign the opposing resolution in advance. The question was lost by a tie vote but a second motion was offered calling for a state referendum to allow the membership to decide the question democratically. Clarity floundered and broke in the face of this unforeseen emergency. The motion carried 7-5. Frank Trager, who was present as Clarity reinforcement from the National Office, and who heard at the SEC meeting every item of the Clarity evidence against the Left wing favored a referendum. Now Rodgers repeats this "evidence" and the entire NEC, apparently including Trager (though the accused have received no minutes or statement of the vote), votes for suspension of the state charter for the stated purpose of nullifying the referendum and preventing a convention. Considerations of "fair-play", truth and elementary democracy are very quickly sloughed off in the face of California's real crime—that of insisting on maintaining, acting on, and fighting for a revolutionary Socialist position.

### What the Left Wing Is Hindering

Such criminals endanger the La Guardia sell-out, hinder negotiations with Lovestone and the franker Stalinists, "discredit" our young friends busily job-hunting in the happy hunting ground of the CIO, "demoralize" our pacifist, liberal and social-reformist hangovers from the good old days when anybody could be—and all kinds were—"Socialists". Such "sectarians" keep us out of the big, happy all class family of the People's Front. It is impossible to work with them—suspend the charter!

The revolutionary socialists of California do not intend to be so easily disposed of. We are the Party in California. We intend to proceed with our work and with our convention. We will not turn over the Party equipment to these disrupters—it would only get dusty from disuse. We will challenge and fight the unconstitutional suspension and every illegal act that follows from it. We have already moved for a national referendum. We call upon all revolutionary Socialists to come to the defense of their California comrades and to join the fight against the wreckers who are trying to drive Socialism out of the Socialist Party.

## CLARITY IN CALIFORNIA AND CLARITY IN WISCONSIN

The Clarity group in control of the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party has voted unanimously to lift the charter of the California organization, which is controlled by the left wing, and to reorganize the State.

Bold, prompt, vigorous—against the left wing.

### Clarity Capitulates to Wisconsin

But how does the same NEC act with regard to the right wing organization in Wisconsin? The shameful policy of Hoan, Porter, Biemiller, Raskin and Co. has not only led to a disgraceful alliance with the La Follette machine, but to the decline of the party membership from some 2,000 to about 400—according to the Clarityites themselves. In addition, the Wisconsin right wing simply refuse to accept the Trade Union Resolution adopted by the national convention in Chicago. In a word, whatever is even remotely revolutionary in the SP is ignored by Wisconsin's party bureaucracy. The Clarityite National Action Committee of the Party thereupon proceeds humbly to Milwaukee to meet with the Wisconsin State Executive Board and the Milwaukee County Executive Board of the party to "straighten things out". And how are things "straightened out" in Wisconsin? By "bold, prompt, vigorous" action? No, Clarity's blows are directed at the left wing. Before the right wing, it capitulates!

Here are the revealing excerpts from the official minutes of the meeting of the National Action Committee with the Milwaukee right wing officials on June 4, 1937. They tell their own story:

"HOAN: For many years Wisconsin has been tempted to form coalitions with progressive movements, but has refused out of loyalty to the national movement. It grieved over the New York split; kept out communistic elements; took a stand against violence. On the basis of these stands it has kept its membership and it has now become larger and more successful than ever before. Now with our large and thriving membership this new policy of flirting with communists—Trotskyists or Stalinists, does not set well. We believe the program as set out at the convention to be the wrong one for building a movement. We feel that if we subscribe to these doctrines we will go the way of all other states. We feel that the policy of sticking our noses—as a political party—into the business of trade unions is wrong. We believe we have problems different than those of trade unions—and ordering trade unions around is not successful. A political movement doesn't allow trade unions to dictate their policies—so trade unions shouldn't allow a political movement to dictate its policies. And you won't attempt to do this if you want a Socialist Party in Wisconsin (We know federation set-up, etc.) Wisconsin can build better within the (Farmer-Labor Progressive) federation now than ever before. We have objections to war resolution; particularly to section which states that when there is a war we will start a revolution....."

"BIEMILLER: (1) We are seriously concerned with the decline in membership of the Socialist party outside Wisconsin. ports) and we believe (2) the

(Wisconsin now has one-third the membership of the party according to the latest membership results of the convention and its decisions to be disastrous. Not a true convention. If held now, representation would be entirely different. Pennsylvania now has only 200 members, while at convention they had more delegates than we. (3) Also, we had thought there was an agreement on labor secretary—we thought he (Trager) had agreed to resign if given a place on the NEC. Now we find him back. We have theoretical and organizational differences....

### Attack Trade Union Line

"CHAIRMAN PLACE: Labor resolution full of contradictions. AFL and CIO both could take exceptions to things said in it. Need simplified general statement. Next step lies with NEC. Unless something is done Wisconsin has said for a long time there was no Socialist Party and why go on. They'd be happy to have us go to devil so there would be no party in Wisconsin. That's why I suggest a referendum—and if so-called "leadership" is right—O.K. Let's find it out now...."

"MINKLEY: Our objections to labor policy are these: 1. An organization within an organization is the wrong policy (Socialist Leagues). 2. Our own policy is better—have key positions in labor movement now. Our superior knowledge pushes us ahead. 3. We believe that workers should organize into any union. The question is—should we push them into one rather than other.

"POLAKOWSKI: Only objection to trade union resolution was that of groups within unions.

"RASKIN: If you use discipline in forming leagues, it causes anti-group feeling. Our County Central Committee acts as a league in forming labor policy....

### Trager O.K.'s Raskin Demand

"TRAGER: Wisconsin in practice is following out the national trade union policy. On local matters there is no disposition on the part of the national office to make mechanical the system of leagues. On national questions concerning a national trade union policy in a specific union, we feel we are better able to help you to act.

"RASKIN: We are disciplined socialists and if the convention tells us to do so and so, we feel

we have to do is. We take everything very seriously in Wisconsin. We want the NAC to agree that as far as the resolution concerning trade unions goes, Wisconsin can follow its own course.

"TRAGER: The NEC will agree that the interpretation of this resolution and all resolutions shall be through the SEC of Wisconsin as it is through each SEC in each state.

"KRUEGER: Wisconsin is an exceptional organization. It has a stable organization with many people who had a great deal of experience. We can agree that for the purpose of carrying out trade union work in line with the convention resolution that the SEC, through its state secretary in Wisconsin, shall be considered responsible and no program of organization of socialist activity in the trade unions shall come into Wisconsin except through the state secretary.

"CHAIRMAN: We object to the publicity given the trade union resolution and policy. We don't want the press to know about such policy before we do. Besides, such questions should never be for public consumption but only for inner-party consumption.

### Wisconsin Gets Cart Blanche

"MOTION BY RASKIN: All questions relating to union and Workers Alliance activities of Wisconsin members of the SP will be handled by and be the responsibility of the State Committee of Wisconsin.—Carried.

"RASKIN: You leave the labor question to Wisconsin and it will be generally in line and not in conflict with the national resolution. We will apply it in the correct way. We agree that in some places guidance from the national organization is necessary but we believe the state office can handle the matter....

"PETER: Wisconsin's loyalty should be loyalty to itself. We have "kowitz" to the rest of the country and what have we gotten out of it? In no convention have we ever gotten a thing."

(On June 7, 1917, the Milwaukee Leader had the following to say about the "pact" between the NAC and the Wisconsin right wing: ("As a result of the pact, the Socialist party nationally will pursue a "hands-off" policy in so far as Wisconsin is concerned, and gave this state autonomy."))

## What is the N.E.C. Doing About LaGuardia

Months ago, spokesmen for the left wing charged that the Thomas-Altman group was heading straight for withdrawing the party candidate in favor of La Guardia.

We were accused of being alarmists and slanderers. Now nobody has any doubts on this score. The Thomas-Altman-right wing combination has come out in the open.

At present, the right wing liquidators still say that they will not withdraw their mayoralty candidate if La Guardia is at the same time the Republican party candidate.

We say in advance: La Guardia will not only run on the Republican ticket, but Thomas, Altman and Co. will withdrawn in his favor even if he does.

At present, the Clarity group leaders still say that "their" N. E. C. Will "step in" and pro-

hibit the sell-out to La Guardia.

We say in advance: the "Clarity" N.E.C. will not stand in the way of the right wing's betrayal of socialism; it will take no action to assure an independent SP candidate for Mayor of New York in the Fall elections.

Is it not a fact that the N.E.C. has already failed to act on this question? Is it not a fact that at its special meeting in New York it turned a deaf ear to the formal demand made by the Appeal Group that support of La Guardia be condemned in advance, before the present damage was done? Is it not a fact that out of 15 N.E.C. members, at least the following are already committed to support of Thomas: Thomas himself, Hapgood, Allen, Baron, Burt, Coolidge, Krueger, Polakowski, Raskin? Isn't this a fine "Clarity" N.E.C. for you, a fine "left wing" N.E.C.