
A Report to the NEC.

by Adolph Germer

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To the National Executive Committee

The average membership for the first four months of this year is 104,656. This under ordinary circumstances would be highly encouraging as compared with our membership of the past, but when we analyze the figures, it presents itself as a danger to the future of our organization as a political party.

A situation has arisen within the foreign-speaking federations which seems to me so very serious that I deem it my duty to recommend it to the most earnest attention of your committee.

The tabulation of membership from the month of April, 1919, shows 57,248 members in the foreign-speaking federations, out of total party membership of 108,504, i.e., 53%.

The fact that a clear majority of the membership of the Socialist Party of the United States is in the foreign federations is in itself an abnormal and unhealthy condition, but it does not tell the whole story or indicate the whole danger. The bulk of the startling increase of non-English speaking party members is of recent date, is limited to a well-defined group of nationalities, and bears all the earmarks of a concerted and well-organized movement to capture the party and subject it to the domination of the group of Slavic and kindred nationalities within the party.

I am well aware of the grave nature of the charge, and do not make it light-mindedly. It is

the expression of my deep conviction after a careful examination of indisputable facts.

Here are the figures showing the "growth" of membership in the federations referred to:

	<i>Dec. 1918</i>	<i>April 1919</i>
Russian	2,878	7,824
Ukrainian	2,400	3,836
South Slavic	1,200	3,115
Lithuanian	4,760	6,049
Lettish [Latvian]	1,353	1,606
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Total	12,591	22,430

An increase of 70.2%.

Scarcely admitted to membership in the party, these comrades proceeded to "capture" it by methods which in point of boldness and unscrupulousness would put to shame the most notorious old-party political machines. Constituting the backbone and main "voting strength" of the so-called "Left Wing" movement, they not only adopted a platform and concrete form of organization wholly at variance with those of the Party, but proceeded to "stuff the ballots" in the several pending national referendums in a manner to make the latter a hollow farce.

The numerous ballots which happened to come to this office and the reports of several local and State Secretaries prove conclusively that the membership of those federations do not vote, but are voted by the "leaders" — voted *en bloc*, with mathematical uniformity — and all one way. In

some instances the vote on the ballots indicates that they were marked in advance, and the members is asked to sign the predigested ballot, while in others the "leader" signs the names of the members.

The Translator-Secretaries of some of these federation, instead of serving as "mediums of communication between the federation and the National organization of the Socialist Party," as called for by the constitution, and instead of furthering the propaganda of Socialism in their respective languages, devote a great part of their time and the facilities extended to them by the National Office to wire-pulling, election machinations, and intrigue.

This is the situation in plain terms, comrades. The Socialist Party has always and consistently shown itself above nativistic or nationalistic prejudices. It always has welcomed, and I trust always will welcome the cooperation of foreign-born comrades in the work and management of the party. It does not seek to dominate them, but it must be

clear to all thinking Socialists that the foreign federations must come into the Party with the bona fide desire and intention to cooperate with the Socialists of America in their efforts to win this country for Socialism.

The Socialist Party of America dominated wholly by non-English speaking members, organized as such, would be as ludicrous a spectacle as it would be an inefficient instrument.

The question that confronts us is, shall the Socialist Party remain the organization of the Socialist movement in the United States, including the various nationalities which make up the population of the country, or shall it be reduced to the tail of certain foreign federations, engaged in a special form of propaganda made to suit the peculiar conditions of the countries of their origin. Shall the Socialist Party control the foreign-speaking federations as part of its organization, or shall the federations dominate and control the party? This question must be frankly faced and wisely solved.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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