
Circular Letter “To All Members of the Socialist Party” from Executive Secretary Adolph Germer, August 8, 1919.

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August 8, 1919.

To All Members of the Socialist Party.

Comrades:—

A circular has been addressed to “All Locals and Branches of the Socialist Party,” signed by A. Wagenknecht as “National Executive Secretary,” and the following as members of the “National Executive Committee”:

Edward Lindgren
C.E. Ruthenberg
Fred Harwood
L.E. Katterfeld
Louis C. Fraina
Marguerite Prevey
William Bross Lloyd
Kate Sadler Greenhalgh
H.M. Wicks

When the majority members of the National Executive Committee lodged the charge against Wagenknecht, Katterfeld, and their associates that they were in a frame-up to wreck the party by trying to force action in an irregular way before the Special National Convention to be held on August 30 [1919], they (Wagenknecht and Katterfeld) vigorously protested. Now the truthfulness of the charge is proven by their own acts. They have revealed themselves as political schemers. They cunningly clothe their work in phrases

they hoped would appeal to you.

Wagenknecht has a professional training in stirring up party controversies. His reputation dates back to his scholarship under the famous Dr. [Hermon] Titus of Seattle, and there is nothing new or surprising in the part played by him now.

Comrades, it is not my purpose to go into any extended argument in this communication. The Special National Convention will be held on August 30, and every detail of the controversy will be fully and carefully gone into, and every official act of the National Executive Committee will be subject to the closest review.

Wagenknecht and his associates have done their best to sabotage the convention finances, hoping thereby to force a postponement. This was done to enable them to send up another shriek, and say: “We told you so.”

Election Frauds.

They tell you that I will not tabulate the vote. But they fail to tell you that the most outrageous fraud was committed in the elections by the Russian, Ukrainian, and several of the other suspended Language Federations.

Neither Wagenknecht, Katterfeld, nor any of their immediate associates in the conspiracy have ever attempted to deny the machine voting of those federations.

Another important element in the action of this self-empowered nine is that they canvassed the vote and declared themselves elected.

Why do they refuse to wait for the delegates to the convention, which is only three weeks off, to hear and examine all the evidence and pass judgment?

They are too conscious of their guilt for that. They have boasted that they will “control” the convention, and this is the method by which they hope to do it.

Sabotaging of Funds.

They appeal to you for convention funds. Wagenknecht and Katterfeld attended the May meeting of the National Executive Committee. At that meeting it was decided to issue special convention assessment stamps, to sell at 50 cents each, and the money was to be sent to the National Office, 220 South Ashland Boulevard, Chicago, Ill. Both Katterfeld and Wagenknecht voted for the motion. In fact, Katterfeld was on the subcommittee which recommended that method of raising funds.

After leaving the meeting they began their sabotage. It was for no other purpose than to force a postponement of the convention.

They have gone further. The self-empowered nine have decided to ask the State Secretaries to withhold all dues from the National Office. Yet they have the brazen effrontery to charge the majority members of the National Executive Committee with party wrecking. We sent each an adequate supply of stamps. Wagenknecht asked for 2,000 more than their quota, and we sent them. Now he withholds the money on them and advocates other State Secretaries to do likewise. What would you call a person who gets goods from you to be sold, and then keeps the money? Would you consider such a person honest?

To Split the Party.

In order that you get evidence from one of their own crowd, I quote the following, word for word, from an article by Alexander Stoklitsky, the Russian Translator-Secretary, published in *The Communist* (Chicago) of July 19, 1919:

“Why capture the old party? Is the name of the Socialist Party so dear to the working class? No. The name of the Socialist Party is no longer dear to the proletariat. Years of reformatory and treacherous activity have covered it with mud and slime. Shall we capture the old party for the sake of its party machine and the form of organization? Its party machinery and form of organization is not fit for the cause of the revolutionary proletariat.

“Shall we capture it for its great mass of opportunistic literature? But that literature is only fit to be destroyed. For what, then, shall we capture the old party? For ‘revolutionary socialism?’ But this slogan was good only until the rupture of the party, and for the purpose of rupturing the party.

Because the split in the party is an actual fact it becomes our sacred duty to construct a Communist Party.”

Their Sinister Designs.

Here you are told that they adopted an appealing phrase only for the purpose of rupturing the party. What further proof do you want?

The convention will clear the decks. The membership will then learn who it is that is wrecking the party. Don't let professional troublemakers and political schemers capture you with appealing phrases that they hypocritically use. Stoklitsky pulls the mask down and lets us see them just as they are.

Never was there such an opportunity to carry on our revolutionary propaganda. The country is seething with unrest. Dissatisfaction with the

present economic order is prevalent everywhere.

Our opportunity in this crisis is thrown to the winds by political intriguers, who put their personal ambitions above the party's interest.

Any one, or any group, that will split us into "wings" or factions, when hundreds of our comrades are in prison, hundreds more on the way, commits little short of treason to the Socialist Party and to the case of working class internationalism, and merit our scorn and contempt. They serve no one but the capitalists.

Faithfully yours,

Adolph Germer
Executive Secretary

P.S.— You will observe that only nine names appear on the circular sent out from the Ohio State Office. Three of the members credited with election by the self-empowered nine repudiated them. These three are Dan Hogan, Mary Racul Millis, and P.S. Nagle. These three came from the only district in which no election frauds are reported. They refuse to function until the whole election is cleared up. Only those elected by admitted fraud claim election. Does this mean anything to you?

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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