

onor: Mina Lamy, 1983
E05 #53

THE MILITANT

Published Semi-Monthly by W. J. BELL, Socialist, 110 W. Erwin, Tyler, Tex

Price: 1 year 10c

Application will be made for entry as Second Class Matter.

Volume I.

TYLER, TEXAS, JAN. 15, 1910.

No. 13



IS THE N. E. C. NECESSARY?

(by T. A. Hickey)

Author of Political Dr. Cook, Etc.

Written for The Militant

The longer I look into the matter the more I come to the conclusion that the Provoker is moving on wrong lines and that nothing is to be gained by a change in the personnel of the National office or the N. E. C.

Change a Czar and another steps in his shoes. As the French had it. Le Roi est mort--vive le Roi.

"The king is dead--long live the king."

The whole thing must be wiped out root and branch--between national campaigns. The N. E. C. as our party conducts it is un-American reactionary, foreign and a curse to the movement--and that is its rotten record for thirty years.

This stupid row that is going on in the N. E. C. at present differs but slightly from hundreds of other rows that have impeded the progress of Socialism in America.

In 1889 the N. E. C. factions fought until one crowd forcibly kicked the other down stairs. In 1899 the factions fought on the 8th and again on the 10th of July until they were separated under the drawn guns of the New York police. As in 1889 two different N. E. C.'s struggled and shot their venom and poison into every part of the nation.

Now in 1909 and '10 we are witnessing the same unsavory scandals, kitchen cabinets, secret sessions or executive sessions behind closed doors, in fact all the disruptive machinery at work that has paralyzed the striking arm of the Socialists for lo these many years.

The tragedy of it all is that there is no necessity for the fool thing. The whole trouble lies in the fact that the membership is unaware of this fact that goes to the root of all the trouble to wit: That in the political structure of America the N. E. C. and all its national appurtenances is but the fifth wheel on a coach.

It is a political makeshift that was invented 100 years ago for the purpose of expediting business for six months in the national campaign that takes place each four years. Outside of that it is a silly joke and all parties for 100 years have realized this--all parties save ours.

Now will each red card man and woman that looks on this national executive committee as something sacrosanct, holy and can-do-no-wrong please digest the following facts:

First: Unlike the actions of state committees no finding of the N. E. C. is reviewable in any court in the land.

Second: The states have absolute control over their respective internal affairs as for instance, if Milwaukee or Wisconsin should adopt a program that the N. E. C. did not like, no man in America, outside that city or state, has anything to say about it; or to put it stronger--all the national committee, the N. E. C., plus all the delegates to a National convention can not enter a primary, distribute a hand bill or clean a spittoon in the Milwaukee headquarters unless the membership of that city says so. And if they should attempt it the said national convention delegates, N. E. C. and all the rest would find themselves in the body of the county jail before they knew what had happened to them. Did the S. L. P. membership know of this fact in the nineties they would not have been worshippers at the shrine of the N. E. C. and Socialist history would be differently written today, and who would not dare say that we would now have three million intelligent Socialist voters behind us.

Do not understand me to infer that all national machinery shall be wiped out between campaigns. My position on this point I made very clear to Victor Berger in his office as far back as 1904 when Wm. Mailly was national secretary. Asked as to my views on the national machine I said: "A good working force from a month before the national convention campaigns until election day then auditing of books and adjournment as do all other political parties. Unlike them I would maintain a \$15 or \$20-a-week stenographer to write

occasional letters to Europe and sundry postal cards between the states.”

Of course I know a howl will go up about unorganized territory; but it is to laugh when we consider that Mississippi is an “unorganized” state, although they elected an alderman last week. Delaware with its Wilmington next door to Philadelphia is another of the “unorganized” ones. Georgia with a state convention and state ticket this summer is another of the “unorganized” ones. But after all, let us be charitable towards our overworked N. E. C. when the worst comes to the worst, have we not got the Philippine Islands, Porto Rico and Hawaii clamoring for organization?

Fact Three: The war between the states from Manassas to Appomatox was fought without an N. E. C.

Think then of this fact that the membership of the Socialist party are bleeding themselves of \$30,000 a year to keep this fool fake alive.

As an example of how the thing works out take Texas for instance: We send \$100 a month to Chicago and in return we receive some national bulletins and Morgan's Provoker.

Fact Four: The N. E. C. has no record of accomplishment. It is as colorless as a dead mans hand. Everything of importance is accomplished in the states. Socialist victories and achievements are secured by the autonomous action of locals and individuals.

When the Moyer-Haywood battle was fought, the N. E. C. was as impotent as a cigar store Indian. It was the Appeal, Debs, the defense league that aroused the country and beat the would-be murderers back.

So with Rudowitz, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Haverhill etc.

And so it has ever been: impotent, trouble-breeding and we pay \$30,000 a year for this mutual admiration society.

Take the biggest move in organization in recent years—the encampments. The whole N. E. C. could not tell an encampment from a Schuetzenfest. It started in one Texas county, spread into Oklahoma, then Kansas and California and then the N. E. C. has one of its members report on encampments. He never saw one, by the way, and knows no more about them than a Fiji Islander. Talk about your comic opera. The N. E. C. is sure a joke.

Comes another wise member who introduces a negro resolution in which

we are informed that there are 10,000,000 negro workers in the country. Now there are nearly 10,000,000 negroes, men, women children and babies in arms. Incidentally there are 88,000 negro farm owners in Georgia and a proportionate number in the other states. This problem of the negro is going to be solved in the South, but it will be done by Southern Socialists who are on the ground and have to deal with the conditions at first hand. As well have a Texas cotton farmers' union resolute for the New York Jewish Bund as have the N. E. C. from the north carry a propaganda torch in the powder magazine known in the South as the “nigger question.”

For all these reasons and one hundred that I could advance, I believe that the N. E. C. should adjourn and go home until the guns boom in the national campaign of 1912 and leave the party in peace and quietness to develop its propaganda within the state lines. If they do not do so now an awakened and thoroughly disgusted membership will, in the not far distant future, compel them to do so.

The practical working out of the Texas program in practical operation today will be the beacon light that will show to the S. P. membership the way to orderly development on autonomous lines where our energies will be devoted to fighting the common enemy instead of our comrades in the class struggle fray.

NOTE. The “Texas Program” is as follows:

1. States and Counties shall have absolute autonomy or local self-government in their respective internal affairs.
2. Reapportionment of dues, retaining the bulk of same in the states, apportioning same among the counties for local work.
3. The National and National Executive committee to adjourn between campaigns.
4. National and State candidates for political offices to be elected to nomination by rank and file, using the most advanced methods of balloting.
5. All salaried party officers to resign after two consecutive terms.
6. No member receiving financial support from any Socialist periodical or publication shall be eligible for election to national party committees or other party offices.

Are the “Leaders” afraid the party will be turned right side up?

“We have people among us who believe themselves superior beings as soon as they are voted into office.”—Bebel.

Assertion! Assertion!! Assertion!!!

Again the concentrationists are at work. Our limited progress toward democracy is charged as the cause for the National Executive Committee being "open to criticism." Capitalists are trying to fasten the "Commission Form of Government" on city, state and nation. Their excuse is "efficiency." The bureaucratic state committee of New Jersey is trying to fasten it to the Socialist Party. Same excuse—"efficiency"—We already have too much of it in the mere existence of the N. C. and N. E. C. They propose to take the election of the N. E. C. out of the hands of the rank and file and give it to the N. C. That wise (?) bunch of guys once had to be throttled for clogging the mails with nonsensical motions.

The "comments" favoring this move contain the old, oft used, outworn arguments (?) and ASSERTIONS always used to persuade an innocent electorate to hand over its powers to a chosen few.

The word "cumbersome" is applied to the election by rank and file. If they gain their point it will also be found "cumbersome" to so elect the National Secretary and a move will be made to have the N. C. or what is worse, the N. E. C. elect him. Things will then be back where we started from years ago.

"EFFICIENT executive ability" they say cannot be secured by rank and file vote. Say, "you New Jersey fellows are "democrats with a morbid distrust of the majority." What assurance can you give us more than your bare ASSERTION that a few isolated individuals in remote states will be better able to select "efficient executive ability?"

The "reasons which impel" the New Jersey Committee to put forth their motion are a series of bare ASSERTIONS which are supposed to be so just because they said so. For instance they say "as the N. E. C. has no power to outline policies the principles of the referendum are not applicable to their selection." Why the distinction they do not state. It is just "because." How would this sound? "As a sheriff has no power to outline policies the principles of the referendum are not applicable to his selection?"

They say "There is nothing in the experience of the state organizations to show that the business interests of the party are better served by the present method of choosing the N. E. C. than by that which has been found to work well in the different states." That is a joke. Review the history of centralized committees in Arkansas, Nebraska, Minnesota, Kansas, Montana, California, Washington, Texas, Oklahoma and

lastly in Missouri as well as the wreckage of the past National and National Executive Committees "which have been found (?) to work well (hell) in the different states."

The cheapest argument (?) they indulge in is that "vicious attacks, fostered probably by the capitalist party have been made upon the committee." This method of retort is overworked. It shows lack of discernment of causes. Should we wish to descend to the same level The Militant might say that "probably" the "capitalist party" desiring that the Socialist Party should go to smash on the rocks of centralization, has engaged its agents to influence the New Jersey Committee and every reactionary local it can reach, to check the growth of party democracy at every step. But The Militant makes no such claim. It is nothing but downright ignorance and non-progressiveness that governs the New Jersey Committee.

Watch for the "investigation" and then judge if the attacks "could have been satisfactorily met if they had been responsible to the N. C." Any state secretary who has gone through one of these 'storms' that are inevitable under centralized management will tell you that he would rather be accountable to a responsible whole than an erratic few.

New Jersey is on the wrong tack. A few of the "comments" are logical but their logic calls for the abolition of the N. E. C. rather than its concentration. "As it is impossible for the members (or the National Committee—Ed) to judge of the practical qualifications of the many candidates" As "the means of checking any neglect of duty" are "too cumbersome to readily apply." And as "the important (national) business affairs" are an imaginary creation of a few swelled heads, the N. E. C. should be abolished except for campaign purposes, the N. C. abolished entirely and the states should follow suit, in the wake of Texas, and eliminate state committees.

* * *

Abolish the N. E. C.

* * *

Let the members run the party

* * *

The greatest "Provoker" is centralized power.

* * *

"Watch your leaders. Watch your editors." Bebel.

* * *

"An unjust, cumbersome and costly control of the many by the few."

* * *

"TRUST IN LEADERS is a pillow upon which a people's wisdom and manhood GO TO SLEEP."

Over three hundred from the national treasury to speakers in Nov.

Nearly six hundred in wages just to run the national office in Nov.

"Other delinquencies" is the term used to "COVER" the charges against Barnes, not otherwise specified in the press.

It seems that many of the acts of the N. E. C. are usurpations, without regard to rule, precedent, equity or democracy.

You National Committeemen can not get action on your motions without seconds, but the National Secretary can. See?

An executive body that gives more power to a non-member than it can give to its own members has not much power within itself.

The membership has the sole right to make its mistakes and profit by the experience rather than be bound by the mistake of the Seven Wise Ones

This issue of The Militant is delayed because mail was not properly forwarded to enable the editor to prepare copy while out on the road earning the money to cover its deficit.

Over three thousand went into the National Treasury in Nov., as its half of the dues. The other half is parcelled out among all the other states, giving each but little, scarcely making ends meet.

A member of the National Committee must have several endorsements before his motion can get recognition before the party but anyone of the Seven Wise Ones can get action on his say so alone.

Socialists seek to abolish the U. S. Senate, while the nation is clamoring for their direct election, but New Jersey wishes to continue the N. E. C. and take their election out of the hands of the membership. See?

The capitalist press is sure to seize upon any fact, or purported fact within the Socialist movement to its discredit. Therefore any uncovering of putrescence in the party is "furnishing effective ammunition to the enemies of our movement." But should we suppress the facts on that account?

Though not a member of the N. E. C., the National Secretary can propose action by that body and call a vote on it. In Texas the State Secre-

tary had to await motions of the members of the board before action could be had. Why should a National Secretary have such power?

The N. E. C. has more power over the National Committee than any member of the N. C. No member of the N. C. can get a matter before his own Committee until five members from three states accord him the privilege; but the N. E. C. can get action of the N. C. on their initiative alone.

Barnes assumes greater privileges before the National Committee than any member of the committee. Upon his own whim he can get action from the Committee, while a member of the Committee must get several seconds from several states before he can get action. He should have no initiative whatever.

LaMonte, in call. "Every institution and organization tends to become rigid, stereotyped and conservative whether it be a church, a labor union or a political party. The Socialist party is no exception." And why? Because it delegates its management to a few Wise Ones who sit on the lid and clog the works.

The remedy for the mistakes of democracy is more democracy but the mistakes of centralization are made the occasion of greater centralization. New Jersey says the N. E. C. has autocratic tendencies because it is directly responsible to the rank and file and would make it less autocratic (?) by having a select few (N. C.) elect them. They would not dare apply that principle to general politics, although the state of New Jersey is not found among those favoring direct election of U. S. Senators

A few months ago the national bulletins were loaded down and the mails clogged with nonsensical, hysterical, idiotic and otherwise entertaining motions and comment by members of the National Committee. The Convention of 1908 put a hobble on the National Committee. Since then there has been little doing in the National Committee. Had a similar or stronger limitation been put upon the the N. E. C. and National Secretary it would have been well, but they were left free not only to act on the slightest whim of their members, but to initiate action in the National Committee, thus transferring the powers of the N. C. bodily to the N. E. C. and National Secretary.

IF THE N. C. SHOULD BE HOB-
BLED THE N. E. C. SHOULD BE
HOG TIED.