
What the Convention Accomplished

[events of February 26-28, 1916]

by Sigmond N. Slonim

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One the 26th, 27th, and 28th days of February, last, at the City of Duluth, delegates from all parts of the state have met as the State Convention of the Socialist Party of Minnesota, and in the afternoon of February 28th, after adopting a platform, constitution, various resolutions, and nominating candidates for Governor and Lieutenant Governor, the convention adjourned and all the delegates went to their respective homes to attend to their usual callings of earning their daily bread. Some of them realized the importance of the convention and some of them I presume did not. I believe that this convention has accomplished something that will long be remembered and appreciated by the members of the Socialist Party of this state who are familiar with what is known as the "Finnish Controversy."

Two or three years ago we had in this state, especially in St. Louis County, a Finnish Socialist Party organization that every Socialist of this state had cause to be proud of. That organization had hundreds of members who were working harmoniously and unitedly in the tremendous struggle against capitalism. But what happened? The time came when a certain element entered that organization and either consciously or unconsciously has manufactured two terms, namely "Reds" and "Yellows," until it developed that these so-called Reds and Yellows, instead of fighting for the abolition of capitalism and the establishment of socialism, began to spend their time, money, and energy in fighting each other. Then a split was caused in the ranks of that splendid Finnish organization and hundreds of men and women who sincerely and honestly stood for Socialism were either expelled from the or-

ganization or have voluntarily left same. Six locals of those so-called Yellows who are out of the organization have applied to the Socialist State Executive Committee for charters, but were refused by that committee. The last convention, realizing the importance of having a strong organization and of uniting the two elements, and also realizing the importance of giving all Socialists a chance to be useful workers in the cause of Socialism, has adopted an amendment to the state constitution, authorizing the State Executive Committee to grant charters not only to the 6 Finnish locals who have already applied for same, but also to any other foreign locals that may desire to organize and work for Socialism and the principles of the Socialist Party of the United States, providing that such locals will not be antagonistic to the existing locals of the same language. By so doing the State Convention has gotten into our organization 470 members that have already applied for charters and hundreds of other members who will soon join those locals.

The other day I met one of the Finnish Socialists and he told me that in his opinion the granting of charters to the 6 Finnish locals has laid the foundation for uniting the two factions. He said that it is only a question of time when they will be united.

During the proceedings of the last convention one could not help but notice the necessity of having our state organizers to devote their time not only in creating sentiment against existing conditions, but to teach the workers, and especially the members of the party, the principles of Scientific Socialism. Within the last 3 or 4 years we have spent much of our time and energy in splitting hairs about radicalism, opportun-

ism, and fighting against each other, but we have utterly failed to teach the real fundamentals of Socialism. And what is the result? When the state platform was voted upon at the last convention various delegates, even those who pretend to be Radicals and who are boasting of being members of such a revolutionary and uncompromising organization as the IWW, have supported such immediate demands of our platform as the Single Tax plank and other cheap reform provisions that were adopted there.

I do not wish to leave the impression that I believe that we are going to get Socialism tomorrow and that in the meantime it is not necessary to have some constructive program of immediate demands to improve the conditions of the working class, but I do say that this could be done without taking planks from capitalist parties, especially such a plank as exempting the improvements on land from taxation. Assuming, for the sake of argument, that it would be a good policy to steal planks from capitalist reform organizations, is that Single Tax plank of any benefit either to the working class or to the small farmers? The small farmer has very little improvements on his land and therefore he is paying very little taxes on improvements. The only one that would be benefited by such a provision is the rich farmer who has all kinds of improvements on his land and naturally has to pay taxes on same and I believe that the Socialists ought not to bother their heads about trying to save taxes for the rich farmers. For years and years the Socialists have fought against the Single Taxers and their theories contending that the Single Tax theory is not beneficial to the working class and

that therefore the working class can not be interested in such schemes of taxation. Now we have assembled at the State Convention of the Socialist Party and have adopted a Single Tax plank in our own platform.

Years ago radicalism consisted of uncompromising tactics but not in stealing reform planks from the capitalist party platforms. These delegates cannot be blamed for supporting such reform planks because it seems that Scientific Socialism has become a novelty in the Socialist movement. I think that it is high time that our State Executive Committee should begin to take more pains in finding out whom they are sending out as state organizers and teaching the workers the real principles of Socialism or they are merely tickling the audiences with sarcastic remarks against individual capitalists or are spending their time in talking about everything under the sun except Socialism.

Although the convention made some mistakes (which must be expected), on the whole it displayed an excellent spirit. There were heated discussions during the proceedings of the convention **TIMES EIGHT** but none of the delegates ever entered in personalities and all of them showed a great interest in the proceedings. I hope that the time is not very far off when the two factions of our party will soon realize the importance of having harmony in the party and they will join hands not only by holding membership in the party, but by doing away with their animosities and hatreds against each other and will then put up a solid front in their struggle against capitalism until the time will come when the toilers of the world will be emancipated from wage slavery.

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