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# Communist Party Pays Farmer-Labor Convention Expenses.

by Emil Herman

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On November 24-25, 1923, I attended a conference of the Farmer-Labor Party in the Labor Temple at Everett, Washington, and here is what I observed.

The convention was called to order by John C. Kennedy at 10:00 am, November 24th. After electing a Rules Committee and a Credentials committee, adjournment was taken until 1:30 pm.

The Credentials Committee reported 96 delegates present who were entitled to seats — the number was later increased to 116.

John C. Kennedy, secretary of the Washington Farmer-Labor Party, former member of the Socialist Party and now flirting with the Workers (Communist) Party; James A. Duncan, former secretary of the Seattle Central Labor Council and an active supporter of the late war; William Bouck, organizer of the Western Progressive Grange; and Vincent Brown, an avowed Communist, were the floor leaders of the conference.

Kennedy and Bouck were two of the three delegates who attended the Farmer-Labor Party national convention held in Chicago last July.† Recently both of them attended a caucus in St. Paul, Minn., called by the Federated Farmer-Labor Party through Magnus Johnson for the purpose of forestalling the Farmer-Labor Party in the calling of a National Convention.

Reporting as a delegate to the Farmer-Labor Party convention at Chicago, Kennedy moved the adoption of a resolution, the substance of which was that the Farmer-Labor Party continue to be designated as at present in this state and that it affiliate nationally with the Federated Farmer-Labor Party. After three readings, considerable opposition, and much discussion, the resolution was amended by striking out the word “affiliate” and inserting the word “cooperate” and

then adopted. This puts the Farmer-Labor Party of this state on record to cooperate with the Federated Farmer-Labor Party instead of affiliating with it — in the circumstances of the case it is a distinction without a difference.

Through the report of Bouck and Kennedy on what came to be known as “the St. Paul caucus” it was developed that Bouck received word from Mr. Manley, an official in both the Workers Party and the Federated Farmer-Labor Party, that they would be invited to attend a caucus in St. Paul some six weeks before it was actually called by Magnus Johnson; that the regular Farmer-Labor Party now has state organizations in only two states — New York and Illinois; that the Workers (Communist) Party made a loan of \$500 to the Farmer-Labor Party to enable them to issue the call for the national convention held in Chicago, where they bolted their own convention and where the Federated Farmer-Labor Party was born under the guidance and domination of the Workers Party; that the expenses of Bouck, Kennedy, and some other delegates to the St. Paul caucus were paid by the Federated Farmer-Labor Party; that Kennedy and Bouck, with others, had signed an agreement authorizing the Farmer-Labor Party of Minnesota to select three men (names not given) to issue a call for a National Convention to be held in the Twin Cities on May 30, 1924, for the purpose of nominating candidates for President and Vice President; that J.G. Brown and John Fitzpatrick, national officials of the Farmer-Labor Party, stated that had they known that the Federated Farmer-Labor Party was to be represented in the caucus they would not have been there and that they would not give definite assurance of support of the May 30th

†- The convention which founded the Federated Farmer-Labor Party was held in Chicago from July 3 to 5, 1923.

convention, nor refrain from calling a National Convention of the Farmer-Labor Party, if conditions warrant.

The state secretary, John C. Kennedy, stated that the dues of members in the Farmer-Labor party had been first \$4.00, then \$2.00, and then \$1.00 per annum, but that he had not received any dues for so long he did not know what they now are — which translated into plain English means that in this states, and, judging from the diversity of interests represented and opinions expressed, that is the fact.

There were delegates present who claimed to be Socialists and saw here the best field for the propagation of Socialist principles and ideals. There were others who said it was a party through which they could elect good men to office who are not Socialists; others who contended that it gave an opportunity to work for progressive principles without endorsing Socialism, and others who saw an opportunity to advocate Communist doctrines through “cooperation” with the Federated Farmer-Labor Party.

Truly an incongruous mass with aims leading in so many different directions that will end in division or dissolution — another object lesson in waste of time, energy, and money for the benefit of a few politicians, as, for example, through the Populist Party and the Progressive Party.

*Edited by Tim Davenport.*

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