
The Labor Party Convention.

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CHICAGO, ILL., Nov. 28 — The Labor Party of the United States opened its 1st National Convention in Streetcar Men's Hall, Ashland Ave. and Van Buren St., Chicago, Ill, at 10 am, Saturday, Nov. 22.

There were about 1,000 delegates present, every state being represented.

May Hayes of Cleveland acted as Temporary Chairman, opening the convention.

John Fitzpatrick, President of the Chicago Federation of Labor, Chairman of the Steel Strike Committee, and the man who has taken foremost initiative in starting the Labor Party in Chicago, made a short address of welcome. Fitzpatrick disclaimed too much credit in organizing the party and said it was due to labor's need for political influence.

Max Hayes, ex-Socialist Labor Party member, ex-Socialist Party member, a staunch craft unionist member of the International Typographical Union, and also editor of the craft union organ, *The Cleveland Citizen*, was elected Permanent Chairman of the convention. As such, he delivered a keynote speech proposing as policies for the new party all the 57 varieties of reform which he used to admire in the Socialist Party. They touched upon government ownership of public utilities, of the railroads, down to the release of political prisoners.

In the morning the time was consumed examining delegates' credentials and electing a Committee on Committees. This committee later appointed Committees on Constitution, Resolutions, Platform, and Finance.

John H. Walker, a delegate from a miners' union in Illinois, was elected Vice Chairman of the convention. Walker has a long record in Illinois as an enemy of the industrial union and Socialist movement, where he has for years fought the Socialists in the United

Mine Workers. Delivering speeches to the Labor Party Convention, Walker proved a very good declaimer. Said he: "Once we get the workers together there is no question of what we can do, but the difficult part is to get them together. The opportunity is now here for a movement to fight for the workers' rights and we shall put fear into those who try to crush labor." Frank J. Esper, Secretary of the Illinois Labor Party, was elected Secretary of the convention.

The delegates are mostly business agents and officials of the AF of L unions throughout the country. Many ex-Socialists are also present. Among the delegates are about 60 women.

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William English Walling is present, representing the Social Democratic League. He read a 10 minute prepared speech on Sunday [Nov. 23, 1919] on how to get democracy all around. Walling displayed a pink silk handkerchief while in earnest conversation with his fellow Social Patriot, Frank Bohn, lately of the Non-Partisan League, the SP, and, years ago, of the SLP.

Walter Millard of Cincinnati delivered a speech as the delegate from the Proportional Representation League which, he said, was backed by the Society of Friends. To listen to Millard one would almost get the belief that the panacea for all social ills is proportional representation. Chairman Hayes expressed the hope that the platform would have a plank on proportional representation.

The next speaker was the fraternal delegate from the British Labor Party. The Britisher stated it was their purpose to get hold of that power of the state which they (the capitalists) now use against the workers.

The British fraternal delegate certainly was blunt

and to the point.

All of Sunday was devoted to listening to speeches from fraternal delegates.

There was present quite a number of notables among Socialists and non-Socialists.

William E. Rodriguez, J. Kennedy — ex-SP and SP, respectively — were there, and so was Victor L. Berger. During Sunday afternoon session Berger was busy holding receptions in various parts of the rear of the convention hall. At one time he was nearly in the middle of the hall shaking hands with Labor Party delegates. His presence occasioned some sideway glances of mild curiosity, but that was about all.

J. Mahlon Barnes, former National Secretary of the SP, upon perceiving Berger, rushed down towards the rear of the hall to shake hands with his political colleague. It was a moving reunion and they had much to talk about.

In fact, the Labor Party-ites, the ex-SP-ites, and the SP-ites all had much to confer about. The utmost cordiality animated and pervaded the hobnobbing.

Beecher Moore, representing the Farmers' Non-Partisan League as a fraternal delegate, warned the convention to beware of the tactics of the Socialist Party, and, particularly, the Socialist Labor Party, which had called everybody a cockroach, yellow streak, fake, etc., and developed a bad spirit. Beecher Moore's appearance would have been improved by a haircut. Before he became organizer for the Non-Partisan League he was a member of the SP in Minneapolis, Minn. But he did not vouchsafe that information himself. In the palmy days of his membership in the Minneapolis SP he used to teach that higher wages meant higher prices. Evidently this gospel was not as profitable as getting a farmer to pay \$46 for 2 years' dues in ad-

vance to the Farmers' Non-Partisan League.

Moore mentioned the "Appeal" campaign for Debs and O'Hare as "the kind of noise which does not get us anywhere." This phrase occurred again and again in many speeches. Practicalism in the Labor Party will get results minus the bad SP noise. While Moore talks, the celebrities gather in groups and talk also. John Fitzpatrick, Joseph Schlossberg, and Sidney Hillman are busy conferring. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers has donated \$250,000 to finance the steel strike, more money it is said than the whole AF of L itself has contributed. The Amalgamated Executive Board has also helped the Labor Party in Chicago financially.

John Fitzpatrick is the outstanding figure in the Labor Party and in the steel strike moves. He is accepting aid and backing from independent unions. It is said around the convention that the Labor Party element is openly defiant of and flouting Gompers and his set in the American Federation of Labor.

That this view is well founded was confirmed in the following manner: On Monday [Nov. 24] afternoon, Secretary Bennett of Connecticut reported a resolution protesting in the name of the Labor Party of the US against the Jewish pogroms in Russian and Poland. The resolution provided that it should be telegraphed to a Jewish convention in session in New York City. "If it is an inducement to you to carry this resolution I can inform you," said Bennett, "that Gompers will be at that New York meeting."

These remarks concerning Gompers were greeted with derisive laughter by the convention and the resolution carried with a shout. Anything that hit at Gompers went well at the Labor Party Convention.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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