
A Cook County Socialist Conference: Bureau of Investigation Report on the Special Meeting of Local Cook County, SPA: Machinists' Hall, Chicago — June 19, 1921.

by August H. Loula

Report of Special Agent A.H. Loula's for the week ending June 24, 1921.
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Report Made at: Chicago, Ill.
Date When Made: June 25, 1921.
Period for which made: June 24, 1921.
Report made by: August H. Loula.

Title and Character of Case:
Special convention of Delegates of
the Cook Co. Illinois Socialists.

Facts Developed:

AT CHICAGO, ILL.:

A convention of 124 delegates representing the Cook Co. Ill. Socialist Party met at Machinists Hall, 113 S Ashland Ave., Chicago on June 19, 1921, and discussed the question of international relations.

By a vote of 50 to 74, the convention rejected affiliation with the Third International on the basis of the 21 points.

The discussion as to whether or not the Socialist Party of the US renew its application for membership in the Communist International lasted for more than 3 hours with J. LOUIS ENGDAHL and HYMAN SCHNEID leading the forces in favor of affiliation with the International, and OTTO BRANSTETTER acting as chief spokesman for the opposition, supported by ADOLPH DREIFUSS and DR. GREED. The vote was by roll call.

Following the announcement of the vote, the bloc of 21 delegates representing the [pro-affiliation] Bohemian branches of the party left the hall. The vot-

ing then proceeded on the other 3 agenda motions on the question of international relations. The second motion declaring for affiliation without reservations, with the Bohemian delegates absent, was then defeated by a vote of 36 for and 44 against. This motion was as follows:

That the Socialist Party renew its application for membership in the Communist International with the reservation that we accept no binding formula for the attainment or organization of the Socialist society; and retain complete autonomy in matters of membership organization and tactics, and in regard to our program and declarations regarding questions which are primarily of domestic concern.

The third motion, which declares for affiliation with the so-called 2-1/2 Vienna International, received only 5 scattering votes in its favor and was declared overwhelmingly defeated.

The motion was as follows:

That the Socialist Party of the US affiliate with the International Working Union of Socialist Parties on the basis of the rules and resolutions adopted by the conference at Vienna.

The vote on the fourth proposition was then taken. The motion was declared carried by a vote of 59 to 24. It reads as follows:

The Socialist Party of the US considers that its paramount duty is to build a powerful, revolutionary, Socialist organization in this country. It is therefore resolved to devote all of its energy and resources to this task, believing it to be the most valuable service it can render to the cause of

International Socialism. Until this task is accomplished, or until a different decision is reached by a succeeding national convention, it is resolved to remain without international affiliations.

The convention voted to sustain the present provisions in the party constitution to foreign language federations.

BRANSTETTER's motion to expel 3rd Internationalists from the party came late in the proceedings. In the midst of the discussion a motion to adjourn was made and carried so that no action was taken.

The convention to open at Detroit at 10 am on June 25th [1921] at the Northeastern High School, corner Warren and Grandy Avenues, will be the 9th Convention of the Socialist Party, dating from the Unity Convention that created the party on July 2nd, 1901.†

In many ways it will be the most important of all, because it will decide whether the Socialist Party is going to be a political organization or not.

The National Executive [Committee] is to hold a preliminary meeting at the convention hall on Friday.

Most of the delegates will stop at the Plaza and Wolverine Hotels. The office of the committee in charge is in Room 625, Moffat Building.

Agent is of the opinion that the Detroit Convention will be a stormy one but that the party will not affiliate with the Third International.

CONCLUDED.

†- Due to the Socialist Party's protracted and convoluted process of organization and the pronouncement of its 1910 gathering as a "Congress" rather than a "Convention," the SPA did not generally number its conventions prior to 1932 — when the de facto 16th party gathering since 1901 was inexplicably proclaimed the "17th Convention" and numbering commenced. The June 1921 Detroit Convention was indeed the organization's 9th, the previous conclaves being: (1) "Unity," July-Aug. 1901; (2) "First", May 1904; (3) May 1908; (4) "Congress," May 1910; (5) May 1912; (6) "Emergency," April 1917; (7) "Emergency," Aug.-Sept. 1919; (8) May 1920.

Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport.

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