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# **Socialist Party**

## **National Committee Meeting:**

### **Report by Comrade W.L. Garver,**

### **National Committeeman from Missouri**

#### **[events of May 9-14, 1915]**

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St. Louis, Mo., May 17, 1915.

To the Socialist Party of Missouri:

I herewith submit a report of the National Committee meeting, held at Chicago, May 9-14, 1915.

The meeting was at the Sherman Hotel, with 56 of the 65 members present.

#### **Texas and Michigan.**

One of the first questions to be decided was the contests from Texas and Michigan. The special committee elected to examine into the merits of the contests reported in favor of the seating of [W.J.] Bell [of Tyler, TX], on the ground that Edwards had not been elected by a referendum vote, as the National Constitution provides, and whether Bell's last election was regular or not, he be held over until his successor was elected. After the seating of Bell a motion was passed that such action was not to be construed as an endorsement of the so-called Texas form of organization.

In the Michigan contest the special committee recommended the recognition of [Joseph] Warnock, the old secretary, and the seating of [Frank] Aaltonen as National Committeeman, but under a clause in the Michigan State Constitution, which made the State Secretary the

National Committeeman. The minority report was accepted, seating Warnock.

### **No Special Organization Paper.**

The matter of publishing a small official paper, devoted exclusively to organization business, reports, and controversies, so as to keep such matter out of *The American Socialist*, for fear it might injure the latter's value as a propaganda paper, especially among new members, was voted down, and the recommendation of the Committee on Organization and Propaganda, of which your committeeman was a member, was accepted. This report provides for a special organization department in *The American Socialist* and a general call for contributions from the rank and file and also the omission of all motions made by National Committeemen when they do not receive the required number of seconds.

### **The Information Department.**

A motion was made to confine the scope and activities of the Department of Information to labor questions, but was voted down. One member objected to wasting time trying to find out how many cattle there were in the United States, but the majority thought there might even be a relation between such facts and the high cost of living.

### **Measures Voted Down.**

After a consideration of both the minority and majority reports of the Woman's Department and the National Woman's Committee, both were abolished.

The action of *The American Socialist* advertising a Chicago mail order house on the commission plan received little favor and was voted down.

### **The Liquor Problem.**

The vote on the standing committee on the liquor traffic was brought up and continued for several days of the session. The report

of the committee was strongly against the liquor traffic and recommended the submission of the attitude of the party upon the various measures of regulating the traffic to a party referendum. The minority report of the committee, however, said the majority were biased, and recommended a new committee with a fairer division of views among the members. The report was finally adopted, with an amendment providing for a new committee, to be appointed by the National Executive Committee.

### **1916 Convention in Chicago.**

The national convention for 1916 was voted to be held in Chicago, beginning on the first Sunday after the first Monday in June [June 11, 1916], and the meeting of the National Committee for 1916 dispensed with, the consensus of opinion being that 300 delegates could do any and all business without the additional expense of the committee meeting

### **Foreign Language Federations.**

One of the other important subjects up for discussion was the foreign federations. The fact was brought out that the membership in the foreign federations has been growing much faster than the English-speaking membership, until the federations constitute nearly a third of the total party membership. The effort to divide the movement along the lines of foreign and American was deprecated and the spirit of internationalism was largely in the majority. The prevailing thought was that if the native-born Americans feared foreign dominance the thing to do was to increase the native-born membership and get a broader vision than that which finds expression in a purely nationalistic sentiment.

### **To Avoid Future Friction.**

To avoid future friction between locals and state organizations additional and specific amendments were placed in the Constitution, clearly defining the jurisdiction of each and a method to settle the differences should they arise. At the same time, a general policy of social intercourse and more frequent meetings together was urged. Foreign branches were urged to have fraternal delegates in the

English-speaking organizations and also English fraternal delegates among the foreign-speaking branches.

### **To Support None But Socialist Candidates.**

Another important question was whether the party should permit its members to vote for candidates on other tickets when the Socialists had been eliminated at a primary or when there was no Socialist ticket to be voted for. By a vote of 43 to 9 the committee declared against supporting any other candidates when there were no Socialists to vote for.

### **Young People's Socialist League.**

Upon recommendation of the Organization Committee, a section was added to the Constitution, placing the Young People's Socialist League under the control of the party organization, reports from several localities showing that there was a tendency for the branches of this organization to drift away from Socialism and become absorbed entirely in things for amusement.

The report of the Special Committee on Ways and Means, of which your committeeman was a member, is submitted herewith, having been adopted practically without change.

*W.L. Garver,*  
National Committeeman.

*Edited by Tim Davenport*

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