
Socialists Convene:

National Party Meet and Affiliate with Vienna — Party's Stand Reviewed — Debs Sends Greetings

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The 10th Convention of the Socialist Party of the United States was held in Cleveland on April 29th, 30th, and May 1st [1922]. the agenda was not as long as usual but the discussion on some of the points was prolonged and sometimes tedious. It was, however, at all times interesting. The Socialist Party left the rut of isolation and joined the Vienna International by the passage of the following resolution:

“The Socialist Party of the United States apply for immediate affiliation with the International Working Union of Socialist Parties.”

Resolution 2, reading “the National Convention elect delegates to attend the next international conference called or participated in by the International Working Union of Socialist Parties (Vienna International) and to report with recommendations as to affiliation with the Working Union or with such international organization as may result from the next conference held,” was warmly supported by James Oneal and B.C. Vladeck of New York as well as by Giralemo Valenti and William N. Reivo, from the Italian and Finnish Federations, respectively.

The principal arguments for the Vienna Working Union were made by Morris Hillquit and National Secretary Otto Branstetter.

Motion 1, for continued abstention from the entire international movement, received one vote, that of [William A.] Toole of Maryland.

Hillquit Happy and Optimistic.

The convention was opened by Branstetter and, for the ninth time in the ten conventions of the Socialist Party, Morris Hillquit was

elected temporary chairman. Hillquit expressed optimism for the future of the party. Citing two recent conferences as an evidence of the rebirth of Socialism as a world force — the Berlin reunion conference of the executives of the three Socialist Internationals and the recent Chicago political unity conference of the railroad unions and other labor and Socialist organizations.¹

“For the past few years every convention showed a shrinkage in our membership; today we represent only a fraction of the membership we represented in 1912, the last general convention that represented all fractions and tendencies in the movement. But there is nothing to be discouraged about. the past few years have been years of destruction of everything and our party could not escape the general fate. We were just beginning to feel the solid ground under our feet at the beginning of the world war, and the blow at all social progress hit us particularly hard. The labor and Socialist movements all over the world are just beginning to awaken, and we are bound to be drawn into this revival.

Berlin Conference Most Important.

“The endeavor to reunite the whole Socialist movement was almost a miraculous endeavor. The result of the Berlin conference was not all harmony, but there is at least the nucleus of an international in the creation of a commission of nine representing all Socialist bodies. The concrete achievement was not great, but as a symptom it is of tremendous import. The conference means a new era in our movement, it means the beginning of the burying of old acrimonies.

“This little conference of 31 persons in a little room of the Reichstag building in Berlin holds more promise for the future historian than the whole Genoa Conference. We have stood aloof. We have taken no part in the quarrels, but now the quarrels become co-operation, we can no longer keep from taking a stand of affiliation.”

Taking up the recent Chicago conference, Hillquit said that for years labor stood silent while blows were rained upon it. At last, however, labor is taking a stand against those who are making the campaign for the open shop and for wage reductions, he said.

“It is symptomatic that the most conservative of the labor organizations, the railroad brotherhoods, should be turning to political ac-

¹ That is, the first Conference for Progressive Political Action, Feb. 21-22, 1922.

tion, finding the old methods of lobbying ineffective. They turned to the Socialists for cooperation, among others. That conference may prove the turning point in the career of the party.

“We never had a cause of our own, the cause was the cause of the workers, and we will work with them giving them of our vision, not from Olympian heights, but by daily contact and cooperation. Our party represents a great voting strength. The workers are turning to us, as they did in Wisconsin. They make up the Socialist Party, and our party will join with the workers, and stand with them, as always in the past.”

Hillquit Elected Chairman.

After the close of Hillquit's address he was elected permanent chairman; [George] Roewer, vice-chairman; [Otto] Branstetter, secretary; and Bertha Hale White, assistant secretary.

The convention was electrified by a telegraphic message from Debs from Terre Haute. Messages of greeting were also read from the *Jewish Forward*, and a number of party branches and locals and other organizations. Committees were elected as follows:

Resolutions — Hillquit, Vladeck, [James] Oneal, [Gus] Hoehn, and Toole; Finance — Birch Wilson, W.M. Brandt, Alex Kahn, Ross Magill, and Charles Sehl.

Fraternal delegate Morris Novik, representing the Young People's Socialist Federation, reported the most encouraging work of any party organization.

“Another year and you will find a real Yipsel movemnet,” he said.

Reivo, representing the Finnish Federation, said that the Finnish population is dwindling, many going home.

“We have been torn by factional strife,” he said, “but the bitterness is waning. Our paper, *Raivaaja* [The Pioneer], is growing in circulation and influence.”

Valenti said the Italian Socialists are loyal to the party.

Alex Kahn gave a humorous account of the change of the old Jewish Socialist Federation into the Alliance.

“The Communists took our old name, and with it they got our debt of \$15,000. We have the membership and the movement. A Socialist movement cannot live if it is separated from the labor movement., and we are with the labor movement, and the labor movement is with us.”

Reports of the Italian and Finnish Federations will be given next week.

The National Secretary's report dealt with finances and plans to meet the deficit.

There were a large number of visitors in the convention hall. The May Day demonstration was a brilliant success. Mrs. [Meta] Berger at the convention told of her trip half way around the world. Max Hayes did not attend despite expectation.

The convention was called to order at 10:45 Saturday morning, April 29th [1922]. The following delegates were present:

California: L.J. Wright.

Connecticut: Martin F. Plunkett.

District of Columbia: J. Webb Richman.

Indiana: Oliver C. Wilson; John M. Collins.

Iowa: W.G. Daniel.

Kansas: Ross Magill.

Massachusetts: George E. Roewer, Jr.; K. Seppa.

Maryland: William A. Toole.

Michigan: Benjamin Blumenberg.

Missouri: G.A. Hoehn.

New York: Morris Hillquit; B.C. Vladeck.

Ohio: John G. Willert.

Oklahoma: H.C. Geist.

Pennsylvania: Birch Wilson; Charles Sehl.

Wisconsin: Edmund T. Melms; Victor Beger.

Utah: A. Saperstein.

Fraternal Delegates:

YPSL: Morris Novik.

Finnish Federation: William N. Reivo.

Italian Federation: Girolamo Valenti.

Jewish Socialist Alliance: Alexander Kahn.

Yugoslav [Slovenian] Federation: Frank Petrich.

Lithuanian Federation: A. Zymont.

The following telegrams were read:

Terre Haute, Ind.
April 29, 1922.

Otto Branstetter,
Cleveland, Ohio.

Dear Comrade:

Please convey to the delegates of the Socialist Party in convention assembled my cordial greetings and say to them that the state of my health alone prevents my being in attendance. It would afford me pleasure indeed to meet once more the comrades who are gathered at Cleveland and to exchange greetings after our long separation, but I shall have to look forward to some future occasion for the gratification of that desire. Trusting that the deliberations of the convention may be uncompromisingly true to the fundamental principles and ideals of Socialism and fruitful of the best possible results to the international revolutionary movement of the working class, I am as ever

Yours fraternally,

Eugene V. Debs.

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Socialist Party Convention,
Labor Auditorium, Cleveland.

The *Jewish Daily Forward* sends its fraternal greetings to the party upon the occasion of its coming of age. The party has stood true to the cause of labor and freedom in the years of persecution and dissensions, and it has suffered for that devotion. With the awakening of the working class to the real meaning of the past years, the party will go forward irresistibly. May your proceedings be fruitful for the future of the American working class.

Jewish Daily Forward,
A.C. Cahan, Editor.
New York, NY.

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April 14, 1922.

John G Willert,
Cleveland, Ohio.

Dvinsker Branch No. 75, Workmen's Circle, congratulates the 21st anniversary convention of the Socialist Party of America, wishing it success in its work.

H. Feinson, Secretary,
Detroit, Mich.

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April 29, 1922.

The National Convention of the Socialist Party,
Cleveland, Ohio.

English speaking Branch No. 1 of Detroit, Michigan sends greetings
and wishes success of National Convention.

Axel Londal, Secretary.
Brooklyn, NY.

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Socialist Party Convention.

On the eve of international unity and workers' solidarity all over the
world, we greet and wish you success.

Dr. H. Katz,
P.H. Boxer,
Organizers 4th and 14th Assembly Districts,
Brooklyn, NY.

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Convention Greet Debs.

Eugene V. Debs,
Terre Haute, Ind.

The National Convention of the Socialist Party sends fraternal
greetings and regrets your ill health that prevents your attendance — the
ill health which is the result of your loyalty and devotion to the workers'
cause.

We are encouraged and confident for the future and sincerely hope
that you will soon be able to again take your place as a spokesman for
the party in the great work which lies before us.

Otto Branstetter,
Secretary.

Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport

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