

Socialist Party Now the Social Democrats, U.S.A.

The members of the old Socialist party of Eugene V. Debs and Norman Thomas voted yesterday to drop the word "party" and to become instead the "Social Democrats, U. S. A."

The action was taken by a vote of 72 delegates to 34 in the second day of a national convention at the McAlpin Hotel.

A majority led by James S. Glaser and Irwin Suall contended that the change would be realistic and helpful, while a minority led by Michael Harrington and Samuel H. Friedman objected, citing loss of philosophy and tradition.

The party last ran a Presidential candidate in 1956, when only 2,121 votes were counted for its nominee, Darlington Hoopes, in six states. By contrast, it now says it has 18,000 members, resulting from a merger last March of the Socialist Party, U.S.A., and a former split-off, the Democratic Socialist Federation.

Mr. Glaser, former chairman of the federation, and Mr. Suall, former party national secretary, had submitted a majority report declaring that the continued use of the word "party" had been misleading and "an obstacle to our recruitment of many persons who are actively involved in the Democratic party."

Confusion With Communism

The organization's actual aim, they argued, is "achieving democratic socialism through the transformation of existing major parties." They added that they also "believe that the term 'socialist' has become hopelessly identified in the public mind with the Communist world, which constantly uses the term."

Mr. Harrington, the former national chairman of the party and the author of a recent historical analysis, "Socialism," and the celebrated work on poverty, "The Other America," said after the vote that he was



The New York Times
James S. Glaser, first vice chairman of the newly renamed Social Democrats, U.S.A., with Charles S. Zimmerman, center, co-chairman, and Mrs. Joan Suall, the national secretary, at national convention at the McAlpin Hotel yesterday.

"very saddened."

"I think it could mean," he added, "not simply the abandonment of a name but of a tradition, and in an attempt to become more acceptable to the American people and the American trade unions, it would result in our giving up our socialist content. I think the Socialist party should forthrightly stand for socialism."

Mr. Harrington said he and his "coalition caucus" would keep fighting for "socialist causes." Among members he listed were Julius Bernstein, a party vice chairman who is retiring as chairman of the Boston Housing Authority; Hugh Cleland, professor of history at the State University at Stony Brook, and Carl Shier, a repre-

sentative of the United Automobile Workers.

In favor of the name change were the party's two co-chairmen, Bayard Rustin and Charles S. Zimmerman, and Mr. Glaser, its first national vice chairman. All three were elected late yesterday by acclamation to the same positions in the new organization.

Also reported endorsing the change were Mrs. Joan Suall, the party's national secretary, and Josh Muravchik, chairman of the Young People's Socialist League, the party's youth section.

The Socialist party of America dates from 1901, when it was organized by various groups including the Social Democratic party, which had

nominated Mr. Debs for President even earlier. It differs from the Socialist Labor party, a still older group following the precepts of Daniel De Leon, and the Socialist Workers party, a Communist group following the precepts of Leon Trotsky. Both are still waging national campaigns.

At Friday night's opening session, Mr. Zimmerman contended that the Socialist party had been "the driving force behind the programs of the New Deal" and that "our job today is to continue to play this vanguard role" for social change. Mr. Rustin called for opposing the "reactionary policies of the Nixon Administration" and the "irresponsibility and elitism of New Politics liberals."