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# Death Chills Seize Meeting Of Socialists.

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CLEVELAND, OHIO. — After four days of gloomy sessions the Socialist Party convention came to a close. The end came in an atmosphere in which there was that coldness which presages the coming of death.

A delegate, in a final effort to create some appearance of life, moved that Morris Hillquit make a closing speech on the most significant achievement of the convention.

Hillquit complied, but it was a doleful effort. The weight of the four days of gloom was too great even for him, and though he uttered words of hope, the tone of the utterance was hopeless.

## **Contact by Greetings.**

The most significant achievement of the convention, according to Hillquit, was the fact that it had conveyed messages of greetings and received such messages from conventions of labor unions.

He urged that the National Convention of the party let no convention of a labor union pass without sending the greetings of the Socialist Party.

Thus, he said, contact and cooperation would be established with the organized labor movement.

## **Position of Workers Party.**

This gem as to the most significant achievement of the convention is typical of the policies of the Socialist Party.

The Socialists will send greetings and hope to receive them; the Communists, as shown by the program of the Workers Party, put themselves in the forefront of the struggles in which the organized workers engage.

They propose to win the support of the organized and unorganized masses by the services they render in the immediate struggles of the workers.

The Socialists consider the exchange of greetings a significant achievement; the Communists to lead and win a strike, to unite weak craft unions in greater industrial unions, to take the lead and through actual work in the unions to mobilize and unify the workers' organizations.

## **Senile Decay of Party.**

Among the resolutions adopted by the Socialist Party National Convention is one providing for the celebration of the "coming of age" of the organization on its twenty-first anniversary in July of this year.

Observance of the work of the convention gives one the impression of premature old age and that the "coming of age" anniversary comes coincident with the senile decay of the party.

This convention certainly marks the lowest ebb of Socialism in this country as represented by the Socialist Party.

Seated in front of a large hall before a speakers' stand draped with the American flag were less than 25 delegates.

## **All Enthusiasm Gone.**

A glance at these delegates tells the story of the Socialist Party. A majority of them are portly, gray-haired men with a look of petty-bourgeois prosperity about them. They talk in the language of past Socialist conventions, but there is no enthusiasm, no fervor, in what they say.

The proceedings dragged along without a spark

of life, without an inspiring note. These men and women — mostly elderly men and women — are the last remnant of the faithful who cherish something which had reality in their younger days and who are unable to let go now that premature old age has come and death is near.

### **Recalls 1912 Convention.**

As I watched this convention at work my mind went back to the Socialist Party Convention of 1912. Three hundred delegates sat in that convention, representing a membership of more than 100,000.

There was life, there was virility. In that convention some of the elderly men who sit in this convention repeating the old phrases struck the first of the blows which has brought senile decay coincident with the “coming of age.”

They drove out of the party the industrialist left with their anti-sabotage, anti-force, and narrow definition of political action constitutional clauses.

My mind went back to the St. Louis Convention of 1917. A good many of these same elderly men sat in that convention, but for once their machine was unable to control.

To St. Louis there came a host of young worker-delegates determined to place the Socialist Party on record in opposition to the war. All the intrigue of the old leaders could not stop them; opposition, open and secret, was swept aside. A ringing declaration and program of action in opposition to the war was adopted.

But the old reactionary leaders kept the party machinery in their control and proceeded to sabotage the work of the convention by refusing to make an aggressive fight in accordance with the St. Louis Program.

These same elderly men were in control of the party machinery in 1919 when the Communist Left Wing won its victory.

### **Still Keep Party Control.**

They ruthlessly expelled the revolutionary element from the party, holding control of their convention by aid of the police.

They succeeded in throwing the Communists out of the party and holding the party machinery, but

with the Communists went the life and strength of the party.

Here in Cleveland they sit around the thing they won, mumbling the old phrases. Since 1919 the organization has lived upon the prestige won in the days when there was a live, enthusiastic fighting element in the party, but even the strength thus gained is waning.

These portly, elderly men know that the thing is dying, but they cannot let go.

They talk about this and that makeshift to infuse new life, but while they utter brave words they utter them in a hopeless spirit.

They know that in the year of “coming of age,” death lurks around the corner.

### **Efforts at Resurrection.**

For two years after the Left Wing was thrown out of the party, and with it three-fourths of the membership, the reactionary Right Wingers who found themselves in complete control tried to build up their membership through holding out to the revolutionary workers the bait of some kind of connection with the Third International.

They kept up the pretense of negotiations with the Third International until the Executive Committee of that body told their members that there was only one way in which they could affiliate and that was through joining the Communist Party.

After receiving that slap in their face the Right Wing leaders no longer concealed their real attitude toward the Communist International.

They joined the ruling class lackeys in denouncing the international fighting organization of the revolutionary workers.

Having failed to infuse new life in their dying organization through bringing it into contact with the Communist International, this convention has done the next best thing by voting to affiliate with the International Working Union of Socialist Parties, better known as the Two-and-a-half International.

### **It Comes to Anchor?**

Practically all of the first day's session was given up to the discussion of the question of international affiliation. Three propositions were before the body.

The first provided for continuance of the policy adopted at the last convention of not affiliating with any international organizations; the second proposed sending delegates to the next conference of the Two-and-a-half International, who were to make recommendations, and the third for immediate affiliation with the Two-and-a-half International.

The first proposition received one vote, the second nine votes, and the third eleven votes. Thus, after three years of searching for an international haven the Socialist ship comes to anchor — that is, if joining the International of the parties of the vacillating center which is not quite sure whither it is going can be called coming to anchor.

### **No Platform Adopted.**

Although the agenda of the Socialist convention included a proposed Congressional Platform, no action was taken upon the matter, and the proposed program was referred to the National Executive Committee for adoption.

The last day and a half of the convention pro-

ceedings was taken up by discussion of how much the dues of the organization should be and similar routine matters and the adoption of a series of resolutions.

These resolutions, consisting of the usual pious wishes, cover amnesty for political prisoners, the trial of the miners at Charlestown, West Virginia, evacuation of Haiti, Pan-American Relations, a pledge of support to the striking miners, greetings to the *Jewish Forward*, and the Negro question.

Another resolution demands the resumption of complete trade and diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia.

This is asked for, not as a working-class demand for the recognition of a working-class government, but because “order, sanity and peace cannot be brought into the world, disorganized and distracted by devastating war, without the cooperation of one hundred and fifty millions of human beings constituting Soviet Russia.”

The National Executive Committee elected consists of Victor Berger, Morris Hillquit, William H. Henry, James H. Maurer, Edmund T. Melms, George E. Roewer Jr., and B. Charney Vladeck.

*Edited by Tim Davenport.*

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