
Socialists in Washington Only Opposition: “Progressive” and Communist Organizations Disappear in Northwestern State

by Emil Herman

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Seattle.— The Socialist Party in the state of Washington, as elsewhere, will be the only vital political labor force on the ballot this year. The reason for this is apparent; it is the only party with a clear and definite program for labor’s emancipation while at the same time offering immediate demands which meet the present needs of the workers.

Because they buried the goal of the labor movement in a mass of contradictions which confused even their leaders, the Nonpartisan League [and] the Farmer-Labor Party have entirely disappeared as political forces in this state. This, notwithstanding that the Farmer-Labor Party at one time had the endorsement of and the financial backing of the State Federation of Labor and of many Central Labor Councils.

The Workers (Communist) Party will no doubt have candidates for Presidential Electors in the field but it never gained any political standing in this state and is rapidly losing what little influence it once had with the workers. Their “nuclei” were first expelled from the Central Labor Councils and are now being expelled from local unions. The first of the Communist leaders to meet this fate is Aaron Fislerman, District Secretary for the Workers (Communist) Party. Though they raise the cry of intolerance, it has little effect as they are

merely referred to their own unalterable commitment to a policy of dictatorship. Organized as well as unorganized workers are beginning to distinguish between the program of dictatorship and intellectual slavery of the Communists, and the program of democracy and industrial freedom of the Socialist Party.

These facts, combined with the most acute unemployment situation which has ever hit the Northwest, opens a promising field for Socialist Party activities this year. Our only obstacle to a most successful campaign is lack of finances. If this can be overcome we will perfect our organization and conduct a campaign such as will rally the workers and farmers to our cause on election day on a scale not before reached since the end of the world war.

The Western Progressive Farmers, organized in 1921 by the deposed president of the Washington State Grange, William Bouck, has merged its identity in the Progressive Farmers and has now all but disappeared as an organization in this state. This organization at one time had a weekly newspaper with a wide circulation, the editor of which was Elihu Bowles of Prosser, Washington. Two months ago this paper suspended publication and once again demonstrated the futility of "trying to do something for the farmers and the workers." The Socialists' view of presenting a program through which the workers can do something for themselves is fast becoming recognized as the only scientific and practical method.

The *Union Record*, known for 10 years as Seattle's labor daily, has suspended publication and is in the hands of receivers. In its last days it was the only labor daily in the English language West of the Mississippi River. It had a checkered and stormy career. Its editor, E.B. Ault, had, up till 1910, been a member of the Socialist Party. For 7 years the *Union Record* was owned by the labor unions of Seattle and vicinity. When the unions found themselves no longer able to finance the paper it went into private hands and for a time was completely dominated by Communist support. However, as the idea of an immediate "World Revolution" flickered, this emotional support gradually was withdrawn and a new and more constructive policy was adopted, but it seems that it could not survive the stigma when it was under Communist influence and thus it has passed into history, another monument to the fact that only an honest, consistent, clear-cut, and

definite program will permanently attract the average member of the working class. Such a program is that of the Socialist Party. That is why it has survived all the “fly by night” movements which offered “something to the workers now,” as well as the internal wounds inflicted by the communist wreckers and the external wounds made by their capitalist allies.

Edited by Tim Davenport

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