

says, they will not increase farm wages nor diminish farm rents. And why should farm owners whose lands are increased only a little in value, be made to pay for good roads as much or more than those whose farm lands are increased in value a good deal?

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THE SOCIALIST NATIONAL CONGRESS.

The Socialists of the United States consist of two groups.

The smaller is known as the "Socialist Labor Party." It emphasizes "international solidarity of the working class," "economic determinism," "class consciousness," "materialistic interpretation of history," "straight-out Marxism," "revolutionary socialism," etc.

The larger group is the "Socialist Party." Its working theory and ultimate ideals are the same as those of the "Socialist Labor Party," but it is disposed to adjust its immediate policy to circumstances in order to attain its ideals. It is willing to act in a less revolutionary way for the present in order to be more revolutionary after a while. It is at present the leading Socialist group in the United States; and its attitude reflects more accurately the condition of Socialism in Europe than does the position of the much depleted Socialist Labor Party. Socialism in Europe is winning political victories and undergoing transformation.

The recent remarkable victory of the Socialists in Milwaukee (p. 412) was won by an organization working under a local name of its own, but affiliated with the Socialist Party of America. It sent delegates to the first national congress of the Socialist Party of the United States held last week at Chicago.

Delegates elected by the "locals" to that congress were present from nearly every State in the Union. Many leading Socialists of the country were in attendance. Such congresses are well known in Europe, but this is the first in America. The gathering of the same party which nominated Mr. Debs for the Presidency two years ago was not a congress like the present meeting, but a nominating convention. The present congress was called midway between Presidential years for the purpose of advising upon questions of party policy and attitude.

This first national congress of the Socialist Party was characterized by sharp factional controversies which, in a general way, tended to repeat the differences that separate the two Socialist

groups. Arrayed against each other were the so-called "impossibilists" on the one side, and "opportunists" on the other.

The preponderance of influence and weight of argument were clearly with the opportunists.

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Factionalism was in evidence from the start.

The committee on immigration could not agree. The majority report was against Asiatic immigration, while the minority report took the opposite ground. More than two days were consumed in hot argument over this point. On behalf of the minority report against exclusion of Asiatics, it was claimed that this position alone represented the true and original principles of socialism, which are for "solidarity of the working class" all over the world. If the majority report shutting out Asiatics were adopted, then the great historic position of Socialism would be abandoned. The majority report was declared by its opponents to be a bid for trade union votes.

On the other hand, those in favor of the majority report declared that the admission of immigrants from Asia tended to bring cheap foreign labor into competition with the American working class, thus weakening that class and cutting away support from the Socialist movement in the United States.

This entire matter was cleverly and logically side-stepped by the adoption of a substitute resolution or report. The substitute put the Socialist Party on record neither for nor against exclusion of voluntary or individual immigration, but against "mass importation" of alien workers by capitalists in order to break down the American working class. The substitute was adopted by the close vote of fifty-five in favor and fifty against. As the minority vote against the "mass importation" substitute was undoubtedly far greater than the strength behind the original minority report against exclusion, the vote on the substitute does not indicate the proportion between the straight-outers and the opportunists.

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The tendency thus indicated came in evidence with still greater distinctness when the report of the farmers' committee was brought in.

Significant passages in that report are as follows:

When it comes to outlining definite steps to be taken by the Socialist Party, we are confronted with a mass of detailed difficulties and forced to recognize that there is no royal road to the goal we are seeking. . . . We, in America, are not alone in this indefinite position. It is the position of every Euro-

pean Socialist party, many of which have worked for years upon this problem. . . . One thing that must be recognized by Socialists is that any program that neglects the largest single division of the producing class cannot rightly call itself a working class movement, and is certainly doomed to failure. It is, therefore, of the greatest importance that careful study be given to the question of cooperation with the farmers and that some plan of common action shall be developed.

Many of Marx's critics have said that in "Das Kapital" he did not carry out the economic analysis of society beyond the field of bourgeois production. This is now admitted by leading socialists of Europe and America. Marx identified his theory too exclusively with the factory worker in the large cities. He took for granted that the "capitalist method of production," which became standard in the nineteenth century, was to be forthwith transferred to agriculture. The large corporations in the city were to be matched by large corporations working in the country. The appearance of a few "bonanza" farms in America seemed to support this position, and was taken as a vindication of Marx. But it now seems clear to leading socialists that Marx did not analyze those economic phenomena which directly concern "the largest single division of the working class" in every civilized country.

The report of the farmers' committee at the congress was neither adopted nor thrown out. It was recommitted for the consideration of an enlarged farmers' committee, which is to report to the national convention two years hence. No other action upon this matter could have reflected more faithfully the trend of the present socialist movement as a whole.

The adoption of the report of the woman's committee on Socialist propaganda among women defined the relation of the party to the movement for woman suffrage. It pointed to the recent enormous growth in the number of women industrial workers, and emphasized the primary importance of converting women workers to socialism rather than to woman suffrage. Conversion to socialism brings with it conversion to the votes-for-women proposition; on the other hand, conversion to the suffrage movement does not imply conversion to socialism. The Socialist Party stands for universal adult suffrage without distinction of sex. It is against a limited franchise for women who own property and pay taxes; but favors the vote for all women, regardless of property qualifications. At the same time the Socialist Party, as a party, does not ally itself with any other movement. This leaves opportunity for in-

dividual socialists to co-operate with worthy movements on this subject, and avoids the danger of making the party itself the tail-end of anything else.

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The clearly evident general position of the congress was this: Our previous doctrinaire attitude toward the social problem is impossible for the time. We must work out a program based on a wider analysis of society. Meanwhile, let us hold our ultimate ideals in full view, but adjust ourselves to circumstances.

This attitude was illustrated more distinctly by the discussion over the problem of agriculture than by anything else at the congress. The debate brought the land question fully before the congress; though not fairly, for it was taken for granted that the land question as relating to the farmer can be separated from the land question as a universal economic problem. Hence, the "straight-out" faction scented a scheme to endorse private monopoly of one of the "means" of production. But this was not the intention of the farmers' committee. The report embodied suggestions for a "farmers' program," based upon the experience of Socialists in Oklahoma, which called for "exemption from taxation and execution of dwellings, tools, farm animals, implements and improvements to the amount of one thousand dollars," and "a graduated tax on the value of rented land and land held for speculation." These items, however, did not come into the discussion, which was closed by the re-commitment of the report.

The farmers were well represented at this congress. It will be interesting to note the future effect of their entrance into the councils of the Socialist Party.

LOUIS WALLIS

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

SOCIOLOGICAL MEETINGS IN ST. LOUIS.

St. Louis, Mo., May 24.

The week has closed upon a remarkable series of meetings and doings in St. Louis. The National Conference of Charities and Corrections alone drew about two thousand delegates and visitors, while affiliated societies and sub-societies seized the appropriate moment to meet and discuss their special problems.

The leading note of the Conference was struck in the opening address of the woman presiding over the whole, Miss Jane Addams. She traced the connection, ever becoming closer, between the sympathy of which charity was the earliest expression, and the passion for justice finding scope in the struggles