
The Duluth Convention

[events of February 26-28, 1916]

by John Gabriel Soltis

Published in *New Times* [Minneapolis], v. 6, no. 20 (March 11, 1916), pg. 3.

It was a large and brilliant gathering of men and women that assembled for the state convention held at Duluth [Feb. 26-28, 1916].

All walks of life were represented. There were farmers, laborers, mechanics, businessmen, teachers, and professional men.

They came from all parts of the state.

The convention has accomplished much. Many of the pioneers of the state movement have declared that the convention just held surpassed former conventions in its achievements. It was a very harmonious affair. There was absolutely no bitterness displayed on any one question which came before the convention. Any tendency in that direction was unanimously quoted down [*sic*]. The delegation realized the great importance of these deliberations.

The convention healed a bleeding wound of the movement, when it united the Finnish movement. Had there been nothing else of consequence accomplished, this attainment alone, in my judgment, would crown the convention with glory.

It can be said to the credit of Leo Laukki, the brilliant Finnish thinker and leader of the "Reds," that he himself engineered and supported the much desired rapprochement between the two Finnish factions.

It was clear to all that the Finns of both sides desired unity. After all they came to realize that their differences of opinion concerning tactics did not justify a wide split, so they united. As a result the organization is now much stronger. This act of unity confirms the theory that socialists can always unite if they have the will to do so.

The amendment to the constitution, which provides for a county organization, will bolster up the morale of the local movement. Under this provision, every local in the county shall be compelled to be a part and parcel of the county organization, and, also, subject to its discipline. The anarchical condition of the local movement will be remedied under this amendment. No doubt the local comrades will hail this amendment with joy.

The platform adopted by the convention, in my judgment, reveals this fact: that we, ourselves, need considerable clarification on the fundamental principles of socialism. When I say this, I do not wish to pose as a superman or be hypocritical, but the fact that we have incorporated into the platform out and out Single Tax measures would argue, I believe, that many of us have not as yet grasped the economics of socialism. However, time and propaganda will overcome this defect.

The nomination of Comrade Bentall for Governor means that we shall have an able and thorough socialist before the workers. No other selection could equal him.

He has been actively identified with the socialist movement of the country for many years. He was State Secretary of the Illinois movement. He is an able speaker in two languages, and a clean student of the revolutionary movement. We can expect a mighty good campaign.

John Gabriel Soltis,

March 1, 1916. Minneapolis.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

Published by 1000 Flowers Publishing Corvallis, OR, 2009. • Non-commercial reproduction permitted.