
Victory Over Ignorance: State Convention is a Great Event for the Socialist Movement [events of Oct. 18-19, 1901]

by E. Val Putnam

Unsigned article in *The Missouri Socialist* [St. Louis], vol. 1, no. 41 (Oct. 26, 1901), pg. 1.
Editor of *The Missouri Socialist* was E. Val Putnam, who presumably wrote this piece.

The Socialists of Missouri have held their State Convention. It was held in Sedalia. It was held October 19 [1901]. It was held in a hall; all this in spite of the efforts of the Citizens' Alliance of that city. That organization is now probably sorry it spoke so hastily for never was an organization so neatly turned down.

Although the Alliance had succeeded in pushing its boycott to the point of almost preventing our securing a hall, they did not succeed in creating the slightest prejudice against the party. From the moment the first delegate entered the city until the last one departed not a word was spoken against the Socialists within their hearing, not even a look of disfavor could be detected on the face of any citizen whom they met. Except for the good-humored roasts our speakers delivered on the Alliance, a stranger would not have known that the slightest objection had ever been raised against the convention. The victory of the Socialists was complete. They met and transacted their business, thanked the citizens of Sedalia for their hospitality, laughed at the Alliance, and adjourned without even recognizing it by a resolution. The behavior of the Socialists was so commendable, their entire course so manly, that they won the respect of everyone and put their defamers to shame.

The delegates, as they alighted from the trains, were met by hotel porters crying, "Sieher Hotel, Socialist headquarters." Most of the delegates put up at this hotel. The large storeroom opposite the courthouse which had been tendered by a lodge of the KP [Knights of Pythias], was filled with chairs and benches and used for the con-

vention and the mass meetings. The first meeting was held Friday Night [Oct. 18, 1901] and the hall was well filled. The audience was addressed by Comrades [Caleb] Lipscomb, [G.A.] Hoehn, and [Walter Thomas] Mills. The Citizens' Alliance was well roasted, to the delight of the audience. Comrade Mills said he was sure that, inasmuch as the Alliance was opposed to boycotts, it certainly would not boycott him the first time he came to town, and that therefore the members of that body were probably all present. He then proceeded to give an explanation of what Socialists want.

The convention assembled at 10:30 am Saturday [Oct. 19]. The delegates all wore red carnations on the lapels of their coats. Comrade [George H.] Turner, as Chairman of the State Committee, called the convention to order and read the call. Turner was then elected temporary chairman and William J. Hager, temporary secretary.

The following committees were elected:

Credentials:— M. Ballard Dunn, St. Louis; E.T. Behrens, Sedalia; W.L. Phifer, California.

Rules:— L.E. Hildebrand, St. Louis; S.S. Andrews, Bevier; John O. Fischer, Sedalia.

Constitution:— C. Lipscomb, Liberal; E. Val Putnam, St. Louis; George H. Turner, Kansas City.

Resolutions:— G.A. Hoehn, St. Louis; E.T. Behrens, Sedalia; W.L. Phifer, California.

The convention then adjourned to 2 pm.

Afternoon Session.

Owing to the work of the various committees the afternoon session was not called to order until 3 o'clock.

The Committee on Credentials reported 36 delegates representing 15 towns and 443 votes present.¹ The delegates and the votes represented were as follows:

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| M. Ballard Dunn, St. Louis | 43 |
| G.A. Hoehn, St. Louis | 1 |
| E. Val Putnam, St. Louis | 1 |
| William J. Hager, St. Louis | 16 |
| L.E. Hildebrand, St. Louis | 25 |

¹ Delegates seem to have been assigned multiple votes based on the actual or claimed paid membership of their local or branch.

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| S.S. Andrews, Bevier | 22 |
| George H. Turner, Kansas City | 28 |
| Sam Sterling, Pleasant Hill | 13 |
| C. Lipscomb, Liberal | 73 |
| W.L. Ward, Damascus | 21 |
| W.L. Phifer, California | 1 |
| L.H. Ferguson, Houstonia | 1 |
| George Bevan, Bevier | 1 |
| John Heberling, Warrensburg | 1 |
| D.L. Hoffman, Marshall | 30 |
| John Nicols, Lincoln | 10 |
| E.L. Green, Lincoln | 10 |
| J.W. Waer, Lincoln | 10 |
| William Welgand, Sedalia | 5 |
| W.T. McNulty, Sedalia | 5 |
| J.L. Cone, Sedalia | 5 |
| T.J. Everheart, Georgetown | 1 |
| David Lindsay, Sedalia | 5 |
| Fred Lueking, Sedalia | 5 |
| P.S. Jamison, Sedalia | 5 |
| John Fisher, Sedalia | 5 |
| J.H. Allison, Longwood | 1 |
| B. Behrens, Sedalia | 5 |
| Mrs. Frnk Wilbarger, Sedalia | 5 |
| E.T. Behrens, Sedalia | 5 |
| Robert Fuchs, Kansas City | 14 |
| L.C. Chaney, Kansas City | 14 |
| Fred Hawk, Kansas City | 14 |
| Emil Stultz, Kansas City | 14 |
| George Clopper, Kansas City | 14 |
| Emmett Futvoqe, Kansas City | 14 |

Report accepted and delegates seated.

The temporary organization was then made permanent.

Committee on Rules reported and report accepted. Committee on Resolutions reported an address to organized labor, which was unanimously adopted.

A resolution regarding farmer and small merchant was also presented, but after a few speeches were made it was withdrawn.

Resolutions Committee instructed to draft resolutions on the kidnapping of labor leaders at Tampa, Fla.² Motion to increase committee to 5 carried. Lipscomb of Liberal and Dunn of St. Louis elected.

Secretary of State Committee read financial report covering the period beginning February 22, 1901:

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|-----------------|---------|
| Receipts | \$86.55 |
| Expenditures | 85.84 |
| Balance on hand | .71 |
| Assets | 49.25 |
| Liabilities | 12.50 |

Report accepted and new organization instructed to assume indebtedness and assets.

Committee on Constitution reported draft which was taken up by sections. The constitution provided that the local branches be hereafter termed "clubs" and a motion was made to substitute the words "local branch" wherever "club" occurred. Several speeches were made for and against and the motion was lost.

The article on party organ awakened a discussion on the offer of Local St. Louis to turn over *Missouri Socialist* to the state organization. Finally the question was put to a vote and the offer of St. Louis Socialists was unanimously accepted. After a few minor amendments the constitution was adopted as a whole.

Motion carried to proceed to election of State Secretary-Treasurer. Garnet Futvoye, of Kansas City; E. Val Putnam, of St. Louis; L.E. Hildebrand, and M. Ballard Dunn were nominated. Dunn and Hildebrand declined. Putnam was elected, Futvoye receiving 124 votes and Putnam 176.

St. Louis unanimously chosen headquarters of State Committee. William J. Hager, Louis Kober, S.A. McInturff, A.J. Lawrence, and J.E. Fitzpatrick were elected as the local quorum from St. Louis.

George H. Turner and E.T. Behrens nominated for National Committeeman. Turner elected, receiving 268 votes and Behrens, 68.

Motion carried to continue present editor [E. Val Putnam] and business manager [M. Ballard Dunn] of *Missouri Socialist*.

² Reference is to a recent incident in which 13 striking cigar-makers in Tampa were kidnapped by anti-strike businessmen and abandoned on a desert island off the coast of Central America.

Resolutions Committee empowered to pass upon Tampa, Fla. resolution without reporting.

The following resolution was adopted:

“Resolved, That we, the Socialist Party in State convention assembled, express our thanks to Local Lodge No. 27 of the Knights of Pythias, the local press, and citizens of Sedalia for their hospitality and courteous treatment.”

The State Committee instructed to pay expenses of convention arrangements.

Motion carried thanking the comrades of Sedalia for the able manner in which they had conducted arrangements in the face of opposition.

The following telegram was received and read:

“Denver, Colo, Dec. 19.— To Chairman Socialist Convention, Sedalia, Mo. Colorado locals send greeting. Great results. Victory coming sure. —R.A. Southworth, State Organizer.”

Adjourned sine die.

The Mass Meeting.

It was 7 pm when the convention finished its work, and as the delegates left the hall the people were filing in to attend the big mass meeting at which Eugene V. Debs was billed to speak. At 7:15 pm a brass band took its position in the street before the hall and let the people know there was a Socialist meeting in town.

The train bearing Comrade Debs was very late and Comrade Walter Thomas Mills held the crowd of 1,000 people that packed the hall to the doors. At 9 o'clock Debs arrived and was greeted by a demonstration. The audience stood up and hurrahed and the band played “The Marseillaise.” For an hour and a half the speaker kept the attention of his big audience, and when he closed men, women, and children poured forward to shake him by the hand.

Thus triumphantly closed the Missouri State Convention of Socialists. The attempt at suppression by the Citizens' Alliance had its reaction even earlier than expected and the Socialist Party of Missouri has doubled its strength. The organization is now complete and the

Socialists of every county can take up the work with zeal, knowing that success will soon crown their efforts.

Edited by Tim Davenport

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