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# **The State Convention: What the Socialists Did at Jefferson City — Delegates Pleased with Growth— The State Platform by Phil A. Hafner**

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The editor [Phil A. Hafner] returned from Jefferson City Thursday of last week [Sept. 10, 1908], where he had been sent to represent the Socialists of the 14th District at the state convention.

At the state capital I found the delegates of the five parties — the Republican, Democratic, Socialist, Prohibition, and Populist. They had gathered to organize and formulate platforms.

The Republicans and Democrats were, of course, largely in the majority. From all over the state the men who live from other men's labor were there. They were well dressed and had the appearance of being well fed and housed.

The Socialist Party is the third party in the state and nation and so in representation at Jefferson City. But we looked small and rather "shabby" when compared with the representatives of the old graft parties. In earnestness of purpose, however, we had them all skinned. Every delegate had in mind, not what he wanted, but what the people at home wanted.

This was clearly shown when the matter of electing a permanent organization came up. Under Socialism the membership elect all officers by referendum vote, and all matters are submitted to the membership by referendum vote to approve or disapprove. The primary law says the State Committee must elect a chairman, secretary, etc. This is in direct conflict with Socialist

principles, for it takes from the membership the election of its officers by referendum. We had to find a way around it, for to destroy the referendum in our party would make it possible to establish “machines” such as they have in the old parties.

At the first of each year the membership elects a chairman, secretary, and treasurer to serve for one year. The new law says the State Committee must elect these officers for two years. Under the law the latter would be the legally elected officers, and the officers elected by the membership would have no legal standing. A committee composed of C.A. Berry, W.L. Garver, E.D. Wilcox, and Phil A. Hafner was selected to draft rules to overcome the difficulty. These rules were adopted:

“Section 1. The State Committee shall accept the resignation of the then chairman, secretary, or treasurer of the State Committee at any such time as the action of the party shall be to elect anyone else for any of these officers.

“Sec. 2. In case of the recall of any members of the State Committee, or of the chairman, secretary, or treasurer of the committee, said members or officials are hereby required to hand in their resignations.

“Sec. 3. Proxies are not to be accepted by the State Committee.

“Sec. 4. The business of the State Committee may be conducted by meetings or by correspondence.

“Sec. 5. These rules may be amended at any time by a majority vote of the committee.”

Subject to these rules the former chairman and secretary were elected (or, rather, endorsed) and Otto Kaemmerer is the State Treasurer.

Now I want to say a word to the women — especially the WCTU [Women’s Christian Temperance Union] members who are so active in the Prohibition movement. The Woman’s Suffrage League, of St. Louis, presented to all five of the conventions in session at Jefferson City the following appeal:

“Resolved, that we pledge the delegates and candidates of this convention, to work for the immediate enactment of a law, giving women the same political rights as men; and that our can-

didates for the State Legislature, if elected, shall vote in favor of such law.”

“GENTLEMEN:— We beg leave to submit the foregoing resolution for consideration and adoption by your honorable convention.

“Innumerable instances could be pointed out as to woman’s ability to intelligently handle public questions and take an active part in public life.

“We mention but one instance in this respect, namely, that fully 90 percent (if not more) of all the public school teachers in the state of Missouri are women. Yet, politically this army of intelligent women is still kept on the same basis as criminals, idiots, or chattel slaves.

“It is generally conceded that industrially and socially woman has already become a great factor in modern civilization.

“It is distinctly set forth in the Declaration of Independence, that ‘governments derive their just power from the consent of the governed.’

“The consent of our sex, constituting fully 50 percent of this nation’s governed, has never been asked, but simply implied, or taken for granted. It logically follows that we, as a sex, are governed unjustly, that we are not living under a truly republican form of government, and, therefore, such government has no moral or ethical claims on our allegiance.”

This appeal was personally presented to the different conventions by Mrs. Sarah Gilmore, of Pomona, and Miss Lucy Gantert, of Sedalia. And what do you think? Every capitalist group turned it down — including the Prohibitionists! But here is what the Socialists did:

“Resolved, That the Socialist Party of Missouri, in convention assembled, will do all in its power to bring about the enactment of a law by the General Assembly of Missouri granting woman’s suffrage.”

It was Eugene Debs, Socialist candidate for President, who recently said: “If I voted a capitalist ticket I would be ashamed to look my wife in the face.”

## **The State Platform.**

History demonstrates that political parties are not founded on mere theories, but on real conditions and material class interest. The history of this country shows conclusively that every industrial and commercial change was followed by a corresponding change on the political field. In other words, new economic conditions produced new material class interests and class privileges. To sanction, assure, protect, and perpetuate these new class privileges, those profiting by the changed economic conditions required the control of the law-making machinery.

Political reorganization on new lines was necessary, a realignment of new political forces was the natural result, and new political parties were called into existence.

Today the American people are in the midst of the most radical and far-reaching political realignment in the history of our country.

During the last 50 years the greatest industrial revolution in the history of mankind has taken place. Capitalism has made possible the possession of the earth and the products of labor by the few. The means of production are monopolized by the capitalist class. The mechanic of former days, who was the owner of his tools, is no more. Capitalist production has transformed him into a wage worker. Steam power and electricity applied to the machinery of production and transportation and the modern factory, the steam and electric railways, the telegraph and telephone systems have displaced the old system of production, transportation, and communication.

Capitalist production results in dividing society into two classes, the capitalist class and the working class. These two forces of society, whose interests are diametrically opposed to each other, are naturally forced into a continuous class struggle, which can only end with the abolition of the wage and profit system. Under this system the wage workers own nothing but their labor-power, which they must sell to the capitalist in the open market in order to live, while the lion's share of labor's

product flows into the pockets of the capitalists who buy and sell labor power for the sake of profit.

The Socialist Party declares for the abolition of the wage and profit system, and for the introduction of the cooperative system of production and distribution, which will guarantee to the working people the full fruits of their labor. The Socialist Party stands unqualified for the interests of the working class and the improvement of the conditions of that class.

We reiterate our allegiance to the Socialist Party of the United States and endorse its national platform. We appeal to the working class and all those in sympathy with its historic mission and the principles of Socialism, to join the Socialist Party in its noble efforts for labor's freedom and a higher civilization.

For the ensuing campaign we advocate the following measures for enactment: Legislation authorizing the municipalities and countries to own and operate such public utilities as street cars, gas and electric light and power plants, etc.

Municipal home rule whereby the citizens of every municipality will be empowered to attend to the management of their own public affairs without interference on the part of any state official.

Abolition of the contract system on public works.

Extension of labor and factory legislation, especially in regard to abolishing child labor and sweatshops; public works to be done under union conditions at union wages; prohibition of child labor in the newspaper distribution business; abolition of prison contract labor.

The establishment of a legal 8-hour workday.

Civil service or the merit system for all public employees.

An invalidity and old age insurance law.

Employers' liability law for the protection of all wage workers.

Compulsory education and free textbooks for the public school children throughout the state.

Abolition of capital punishment.

Election of the labor commissioner, election commissioners and police commissioners by direct vote of the people.

A law prohibiting the use of the police and militia by the state for the Citizens' Industrial Alliance and other employers of labor, for the purpose of breaking up strikes by malicious persecution and unwarranted brutality.

The suppression of free speech, or any unwarranted interference of the rights of citizens by the police powers, shall debar those guilty from holding any public office.

Stringent legislation against the blacklist system so infamously used against organized labor.

The writ of injunction shall not be applied in cases of strikes or boycotts, or used as a means of preventing the working people from improving their condition by organized effort.

Women to have the same political rights of men.

Direct legislation, imperative mandate and proportional representation.

The state shall conduct all insurance, such as life, fire, and accident and issue policies to all citizens.

Presidential electors were chosen — Carl Knecht, of Poplar Bluff, being selected for this district. David Allan, of St. Louis, who had filed an application as the party candidate for United States Senator, was endorsed by the convention.

A resolution petitioning President Roosevelt in behalf of the Russian revolutionist, Pouren, was adopted and the meeting adjourned.

*Edited by Tim Davenport*

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