
Convention Notes

by A.S. Edwards ¹
(January 26, 1901)

- There were many faces from different states that were new to a socialist convention.
- Take up the organization fund in your branch without delay and give it your best lift.
- [G.C.] Clemens of Kansas is an eloquent speaker and a great fun maker. He made a friend of everybody.
- The lunch parties at all the restaurants near Aldine Hall will be long remembered by many delegates.
- Many of the ladies attended every session of the convention, starting at 9 just the same as a legal voter's.
- The new constitution provides for the creation of a National Committee of one representative from each state.
- Comrade Victor Berger kept the delegates in good humor; he also smoked too much — and there were others.
- Tuesday evening [Jan. 15, 1901] the Illinois state convention was held and a considerable amount of organization work effected.
- The resolutions and call for a joint convention in September will be forwarded to all other socialist parties in a few days.
- A large number of visitors were in attendance at each session, mostly Chicago socialists attached to other organizations.
- The result reached by the convention was the triumph of a plan for harmony through consolidation of all parties. This is the sort of union for which every honest socialist can work with enthusiasm.
- The four propositions on organization presented to the convention, although varying in many features, were acted upon in a way to give satisfaction to all parties concerned. Good points were found in each.
- Comrades [Martin H.] Wefel of Fort Wayne, [Sylvester] Keliher of Indianapolis, [George H.] Strobell of New Jersey, and others were prevented by business from seeing the convention to a finish, which Comrade [Edward Ellis] Carr of Danville, Ill., said was a great treat.
- The convention decided to issue a quarterly bulletin containing a report of the National Secretary-Treasurer of the financial condition of

the organization and other matters related to party affairs, to be sent to branch secretaries.

- Comrades [Seymour] Stedman, Philip Brown, [A.S.] Edwards, and [W.J.] McSweeney of Chicago, [Louis E.] Miller of New York, [William] Benessi of Michigan, [M.] Gillis of Pennsylvania, Clemens of Kansas, [Frederic O.] MacCartney of Massachusetts, and nearly all the other delegates not mentioned kept the lights burning at the Tremont House from 12 to 3 o'clock every "night." Nearly all the committee work was done at night, followed by friendly conversation and a "smoke up."

- Comrade [Alfred] Hicks of Colorado, assistant secretary, the last day rather surprised himself and the delegates, after being elected to the new executive board, by saying, "I forgot; I am on my way to England." He stopped off here on his way East.

- The organization committee recommended that a fund of \$2,500 be raised not later than March 1 [1901] for the purpose of putting organizers in the field, contributions to this fund to be in the custody of Comrades Elizabeth H. Thomas and Corinne S. Brown.

- The report in nearly all the Chicago papers that a fistfight between delegates occurred on the floor was untrue. There was an altercation of little consequence between two visitors over the union [unity] question, but at no time did anything approaching a fight take place among the delegates to the convention.

- Comrades [Margaret] Haile, Miller, and MacCartney, the Eastern section of the new executive board, and Berger and Stedman of the Central section, caused considerable merriment and opposition in their vain efforts to withdraw as candidates. The convention would not allow their voices to be heard.

- While the newspapers of Chicago had a row in the convention every day, the truth is that there was nothing resembling a row any day. Every one among the delegates was too busy with the work of the convention to engage in rows. There was harmony and united purpose from beginning to end.

- The report and recommendations of the finance committee were ordered sent in a special circular to all branches. this will be printed as soon as practicable and mailed to branch secretaries, together with blanks to facilitate the recording and reporting of the vote of members of the call for convention, reports, constitution, and platform, submitted in this number of *The Herald*.

- The press committee, owing to pressure of business on the last day, had no opportunity to report. It decided to recommend that a department be established in *The Herald* for brief communications from members, affording all an opportunity for free expression of their views on party matters. This is believed to be the desire of the delegates, and such a department — “The Herald Forum” — will be opened. It is hoped comrades will make it bristle with interest.

- When a committee report was brought to the convention Wednesday afternoon [Jan. 16, 1901] showing the necessity of having two or three organizers in the field constantly, and the need of money to carry on the work, Chairman Corinne Brown called upon comrade A.S. Edwards to “collect the money.” Before the men of the convention could get to their feet nearly every woman in the room — Comrades Elizabeth Thomas, Johnson, [Corette] Brown, Finsterbach of Chicago, Comrades Weeks and [Elizabeth] Aldrich of Minnesota, and Comrade Margaret Haile of Massachusetts — had contributed from \$5 to \$60 each. Following these in quick succession came contributions from all the states represented, ranging from \$1 to \$100 for each individual, the average amounts being \$5 and \$10. As the good work progressed Comrades MacCartney of Massachusetts, Koop of Chicago, and others made short speeches, followed by the usual V or X [\$5 or \$10 pledge]. While it was understood that all money should be paid before March 1, several comrades who wished to contribute larger amounts than were called for offered to pay \$5 each month during the present year. Of course, they were received with applause, as was also a comrade’s remark that, “As money talks, I would rather give five dollars than make a speech.”

- It was a regular hold-up game, but some of the delegates, as their enthusiasm increased, offered to raise and even double their first contributions and to pledge an equal amount from the local branch to which they belonged. Comrades, look out for the returning delegates; they carry with them all the enthusiasm for socialism and organization that was manifest at our national convention. Many of them are pledged to collect from you five and ten dollars each, to be forwarded to Comrades Elizabeth Thomas and Corinne Brown at national headquarters, who are in charge of the Organization Fund. Visitors at the convention also contributed so you are expected to continue the work by getting friends of socialism in every locality to aid in the work of organizing and thus unifying the socialists of America. Remember that, as Comrade Thomas said, where our money is our hearts are also.

- After \$750 had thus been contributed Comrade Clemens of Kansas got into trouble by saying there was not \$10 in the house, and offering another dollar if Chairman Brown could prove the contrary. Comrade Elizabeth Aldrich immediately started the hat with \$1 and was assisted by Comrade Corette Brown in collecting about \$14.

- If this convention (made up as it was of men and women who had railroad and hotel bills to pay, besides losing a week's salary) was such "ready money," the comrades who stayed at home, but still had a voice in the convention, ought to raise the balance of \$2,500, as expected by the delegates.

Published in *Social Democratic Herald*, vol. 3, no. 32, whole no. 134 (Jan. 26, 1901), pg. 3.

¹ Unsigned article published in *Social Democratic Herald*, almost certainly written by editor A.S. Edwards.