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# The Multnomah County, Oregon Socialist Party Convention of 1904: Two Reports from the Contemporary Press.

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## I. Name Their Ticket: Socialists Hold a Perplexed Convention

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### The Socialist Ticket

Sheriff — H. Yarwood  
County Clerk — G.W. Lichtenthaler  
Treasurer — Sam Rowan  
County Superintendent of Schools — N.W. Phelps  
Coroner — G. Michaelson  
Surveyor — Jake Schneider  
Justice of the Peace, West Side — A. Hickethier  
Justice of the Peace, East Side — A. Peterson  
Justice of the Peace, Mount Tabor — J.L. Henderson  
Justice of the Peace, Troutdale — L.H. Rickert  
Constable, West Side — G.L. Prior  
Constable, East Side — J.B. Kerr  
Constable, Mount Tabor — G.W. Farrier  
Constable, Troutdale — J.L. Crozier  
State Senator — William McDevitt  
State Senator — J.R. Tomleson  
State Senator — J.N. Railton  
State Senator — Dr. P.L. Mackenzie  
Representative — E.K. Jones  
Representative — Fred Rossicker  
Representative — J.C. Miller  
Representative — J.C. Ockdig  
Representative — J. Frank Porter  
Representative — B. Peterson  
Representative — Theodore Bergman  
Representative — F.C. Wendland  
Representative — J. Ehalalainan  
Representative — F.P. Kenniston  
Representative — C.G. Jacks  
Representative — C.W. Saunderson

Shades of the original politician and a half measure of Jacksonian simplicity, mixed with collarless Socialist enthusiasm, and you have the picture of the Multnomah County Convention of the Socialist Party, which was held last night in its hall on Davis Street. The work of the convention began yesterday morning, but the absence of the “men with the overalls” caused the actual work to be recessed until evening. At the morning session, 15 out of the 117 delegates chosen reported, and, as that number multiplied by two would be necessary to complete the ticket, those present, just to show that they knew about politics and conventions, elected J.C. Miller temporary chairman and J.R. Tomleson secretary. A committee on the platform and credentials was named by the chairman, and the convention then adjourned until 7:30.

Chairman Miller was a long way from being a Tom Reed or an Uncle Joe Cannon when it came to presiding over the...body of delegates and floundered many times in an effort to wade through the tanglements of knotty parliamentary motions. The mixture of German, Swedish, Slav, Scotch, and Irish dialects confused the venerable chairman, and he was often lost in a flood of original and substitute motions. If it had not been for delegates Stevens and Rogers, Chairman Miller would have been as helpless as the Portland Browns. As it was, he was caught asleep on bases several times, but slips were overlooked and lost sight of in the great waves of harmony which prevailed.

Once and only once did anything crop up which brought the delegates on thin ice. It was when the name of W.F. Godfrey was placed in nomination for County

Assessor. G. Michaelson, a delegate with a German accent that sounded as if it had been in cold storage all winter, demanded to know whether Comrade Godfrey was a Socialist in good standing. Michaelson had the goods on Comrade Godfrey, for hadn't Godfrey said in his, Michaelson's presence and that of another Socialist, that he, Godfrey, was back some six months in his dues. Godfrey did not deny the impeachment. His memory was not good. All he knew was that he had often paid money to the treasury. During the skirmish it was found that his son was in good standing — was a Socialist of six months' standing and his dues were paid up to date. This fact atoned for the elder Godfrey's oversight, and with the staunch aid of Stevens and Rogers, the wheelhorses of the convention, Godfrey was duly nominated. It was here that Michaelson awoke to the painful fact that while he had struggled manfully to have a resolution passed at a recent meeting placing the ban on all Socialists not in good standing, "Something must have wrong been," he said.

"We must have been disagreed with each other. I thought we'd made it our mind that no one unless he was in good standing should an office hold." While he was still pondering over this confusion, it was discovered that most of the delegates who had been previously nominated were in no better standing than Godfrey. While all this was going on, Michaelson sat with a pained expression on his face, and the cloud of perplexity did not lift until he had been nominated for coroner.

The office of Sheriff was first taken up. Two candidates were in the field — H. Yarwood and J. Landigan. Delegate Folen wound up his speech nominating Landigan by saying that Comrade Landigan was a "hell of a good Socialist" and one who could beat either Storey or Stott. When the ballots were cast, it was found that 42 delegates had been recognized by the credentials committee. And they all voted. Yarwood was nominated, and it's on record that Landigan voted

for the beardless youth, whose face, while the count of ballots was going on, was as red as the necktie which he wore.

The nominations went smoothly along until it came to Coroner. There was some difficulty in finding a suitable candidate, or better, one who was willing to "sit upon the dead." Dr. McKinzie declined the nomination on the ground that he did not believe in carrying "grist to his own mill." This witty statement convulsed the convention.

The office of Surveyor was hard to fill, there being no one of that profession in the Socialist ranks. For a time it looked as if the office would have to be passed up, but Comrade A.S. Axelson saved the day when he announced, "it doesn't make any difference who is nominated, for he won't be elected, and if he is elected, he would not have to know anything in order to hold the office." The delegates concurred with Axelson, so they appealed to the convention for a man who had been with a surveying party once. Jake Schneider had once filled this exalted position, but he did not enlighten those present as to the position he had filled. It was significant that he had once "surveyed," and he was straightaway nominated.

It also took some skirmishing to fill the various other minor offices, but they were filled. When it came to selecting the candidates for four State Senators and 12 Representatives, there was little difficulty.

While Comrade McDevitt was selling tickets for a 10-cent theater, the delegates who were not buying tickets were wrestling with the problem of selecting a county Central Committee. Comrade McDevitt's theater-ticket selling is [designed?] to raise the campaign fund. The tickets, a thousand of them, were bought for 5 cents apiece. They are sold to the Socialists for 10 cents, hence 5 cents goes to the Socialist treasury. Comrade McDevitt hopes that each man who buys a ticket will sell it to a Republican and thereby contribute 5 cents towards the Socialist campaign.

## II. Socialists Name Party Ticket

As published in the *Oregon Journal* [Portland], April 3, 1904, pg. 19.

The county Socialist convention got busy promptly on time last night and nominated a full county ticket besides adopting a platform, appointing committees, adopting reports, and transacting other matters of business. During the course of the evening the delegates also found time for a lively wrangle in which there was a babel of languages as excited delegates attempted to gain the ear of the chairman to vent their grievances.

The trouble arose over the nomination of F.W. Godfrey for assessor. As soon as his name was placed in nomination, G. Michaelson, a delegate, objected on the ground that Godfrey was not in good standing because he and the treasurer hadn't met as often as the treasurer desired. Godfrey was far from being offended by the accusation of his indebtedness. He wanted to withdraw his name but his supporters refused and the trouble began.

Another cause for trouble was the effort that was made to separate the delegates from the non-delegates when the balloting began. Those who were not delegates resented the efforts as a reflection on their honesty and vehemently announced that they would take no part in the voting. Others insisted that it would avoid confusion.

In making the nominations for school superin-

tendent the name of C. Vanderhauf was submitted. He declined the nomination on the ground, it was stated, that he was not a citizen. N.P. Folen was nominated for various offices but persistently declined, announcing that he had been a victim too often to try again.

Nominations flew thick and fast and were accepted with gracious smiles until the office of county surveyor was reached. There the convention balked and hesitated for quite a while, for the reason, it was said, that no one present was eligible from the standpoint of experience.

"Look at me," said Jake Schneider, who rose and face the gathering as soon as his name was mentioned. "If you are looking for a man who is long on experience I am certainly there." He was nominated by acclamation.

The platform which was adopted incorporates the principles which have been avowed by Socialists, including municipal ownership, antagonism to capital in its oppressive form, and sympathy for labor of all kinds.

"We don't expect to win, but we will certainly give the other parties the best run for their money that they have had for years," announced one of the delegates in addressing his comrades.

*Edited by Tim Davenport.*

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