

Socialist Party sought city offices in 1913

Late in the summer of 1913, Bloomingtonians were beginning to give some serious thought to electing a mayor and city council. Among those who had a particular zeal for political causes were the members of the Socialist Party.

In a front page story, the *Bloomington Telephone* informed its readers that Aug. 28 was the date set for the party's local convention to select candidates for the offices of mayor, treasurer, clerk and councilmen.

The meeting was called by the committee secretary, C.E. Branham. His statement about the convention concluded: "All members of the local (are) requested to be present and all socialists that wish to affiliate with us."

The newspaper did not indicate how widespread the Socialist Party membership was among the population of Bloomington or any details about the history of the local organization.

It may be recalled that Eugene V. Debs, born in Terre Haute in 1855, was founder of the Social Democratic Party. That organi-



Looking back

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zation held a convention in Indianapolis in 1900, when Debs was nominated as the delegates' candidate for president of the United States.

Of that particular election, Indiana University history Professors John Barnhart and Donald Carmony wrote: "The candidate (Debs) seemingly received less than three thousand votes in Indiana, and these came chiefly from the cities and in the coal and gas counties." Debs was also supported by the American Socialist Labor Party, a separate organization.

In a follow-up article on Sept. 2, the *Telephone* reported that the local party meeting had yielded a platform, which the

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