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# Large New Home of Finnish Socialists Will Be Formally Opened Next Thursday

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The new home of the Finnish branch of Local New York, Socialist Party, is situated at the Southwest corner of [East] 127th Street and Fifth Avenue, which was formerly occupied by the Columbia Club.<sup>1</sup>

The building occupies a plot of 75 by 125 feet, and the branch paid \$110,000 for the building. Seventeen thousand dollars were spent in alterations to make the building suitable for the purposes of the branch.

It is a four-story limestone structure, and will be occupied as follows: The basement has four bowling alleys, a billiard room, restaurant, and kitchen. The first floor has a book store, the office of the *Raivaaja*, the Finnish Socialist daily in the East; reading rooms, library, and a gymnasium for the athletic section of the branch.<sup>2</sup> The second floor contains the smoking room, hat boxes, dressing room, ladies' parlor, recreation room, and a buffet. The third floor is occupied by the large hall and balcony, accommodating 1,500 persons, and sitting room.<sup>3</sup>

The house is owned by the Finnish Workers' Educational Association. Membership in the association is confined to members of the Socialist Party.

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<sup>1</sup> The building still stands at 2056 Fifth Avenue, Manhattan, New York and is readily seen via the "street view" of Google Earth. A fifth story and penthouse level have been added in a subsequent remodel.

<sup>2</sup> *Raivaaja* remained loyal to the Socialist Party throughout the factional struggles of the 1910s and 1920s.

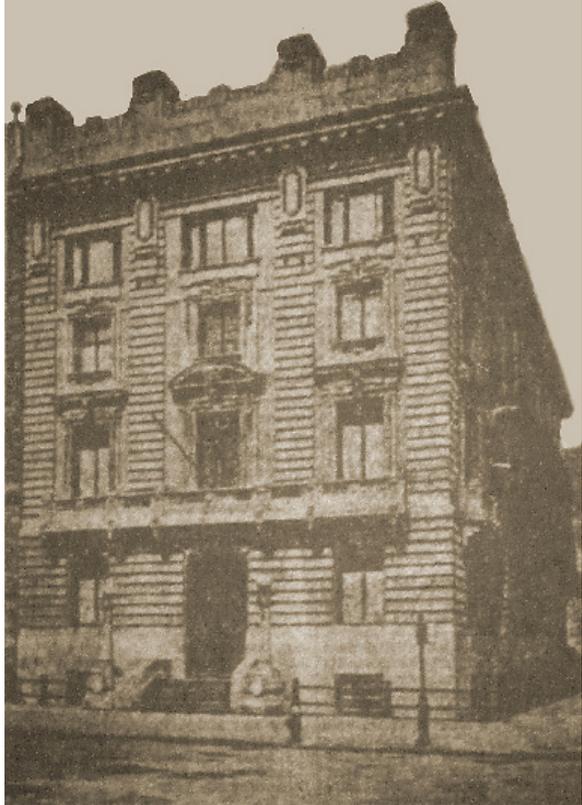
<sup>3</sup> The New York Finnish Socialist Hall hosted the 1920, 1923, and 1928 National Conventions of the Socialist Party of America.

## **A Workmen's Club.**

This is truly a workmen's club. All the members of the Finnish branch are working men and women, and every cent collected for the building fund came from these hard workers.

The Finnish branch was organized in February 1905 at 8 St. Mark's Place, with 13 members. the number 13 was most certainly

not a bad omen, as the success of the branch evidences. In 1907, due to the trend to move north, a second branch was organized uptown, in Harlem, and for several years there were two branches in Manhattan. In 1911 so many of the members of the branch had moved uptown that the members thought it best to amalgamate the two branches, and the branch then secured headquarters at the Southeast corner of 125th



Street and madison Avenue, renting one floor of the building and paying \$1,800 a year rent. But soon the branch outgrew these quarters and a movement was started to secure a home to be owned by the branch.

## **Activities of Branch.**

The branch has a singing, a dramatic, an athletic, and a sewing section. All these sections are part and parcel of the branch and con-

fined to members of the branch only, and all these sections cooperate to keep up the activity and sociability of the branch.

The branch meets every second and fourth Sunday afternoon in the month, and on every first and third Sunday afternoon the branch conducts a series of discussions. On Sunday evenings the branch has an entertainment and dance. A Sunday School is conducted every Sunday morning from 11 to 2 o'clock. A course of lectures is conducted every Thursday evening, while every Saturday evening the dramatic section gives a performance. On the other evenings the hall and rooms are occupied by the various sections for rehearsals. The sewing section meets every Tuesday evening and Thursday afternoon. The members of this section sew and stitch, making things which are sold at the annual fair, and the money for the building was raised principally from these fairs.

About four years ago, when the branch decided to buy a house, a percentage of the proceeds from the entertainments was set aside for the building fund, and from this and the annual fair held \$10,000 was realized. Seventeen thousand dollars more was raised from donations and membership certificates, and this formed the nucleus of the fund to buy the house.

The branch will celebrate the opening of the house next Thursday [October 4, 1917]. All the sections of the branch will cooperate to make this an enjoyable affair. A fine musical program has been arranged. Morris Hillquit will speak, and the branch invites all Socialists to join in the celebration. The Finnish branch has never called upon the other party members for assistance. It always has cooperated with the party and helped the movement along in every way possible.

*Edited with footnotes by Tim Davenport*

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