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# Election of Party Officials:

## Letter to the Editor of *The American Socialist* in Support of Santeri Nuorteva for SPA NEC, January 22, 1916.

by J.F. Maki

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The Socialist Party in its development has reached a state where its membership must exercise the utmost caution in the election of party officials. The large area from which the officials are to be chosen makes it extremely difficult for the membership to vote correctly. Only a few of the candidates are personally acquainted with any considerable number of members of the party. Naturally the comrades are inclined to cast their votes for the candidates whom they know personally or by reputation. But there might be other candidates just as capable to serve the party, only they are not so widely known.

I have in mind one such comrade, Santeri Nuorteva, National Committeeman from Massachusetts. I think he is not so well known as he deserves. The members of the Finnish Federation know him, of course, and would entrust him with any party office at their disposal. He is also quite well known to the comrades in Massachusetts and Oregon, where he has resided, having served those state organizations as a member of the State Committee and as delegate to state conventions.

The whole career of Comrade Nuorteva has been typically proletarian. At the age of 15 he had to leave his studies in school and go to work for his living. Desiring to see the world and to get familiar with the economic conditions in the different countries, when 17 years old he went to Germany where he worked for 2 years as an office helper. From there he left for a tour around the world, working his way as fireman on a

ship. When he returned to Finland he managed to get into the University of Helsingfors and completed his academic education. Upon leaving the university he was elected professor of modern languages to one of the colleges in Finland, which position he held until he became actively engaged in the work of the Socialist Party.

Comrade Nuorteva has been very active in the socialist movement. Although still a young man, being 35 years of age, he has the experience of a veteran. Soon after his joining the party in Finland in 1903 he was engaged as a lecturer and organizer; elected to the Finnish parliament 3 times; served as editor of party papers, in which capacity he attracted the attention of the Russian bureaucrats, who indicted him at least 20 times for articles he wrote to the party press. On one of the charges — practically all of which were for “insulting His Majesty” — he was convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for 7 months, which time he served. Later he was again convicted on a similar charge and sentenced to 2 years’ imprisonment. This sentence still stands against him, he having in the meantime left for America. In this country he has devoted his time to the cause in the same way. He has made several lecture tours over the country, translated several works on socialism, and at the present time is editor of one of our dailies.

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