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# Report of William H. Henry, Executive Secretary to the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party, Nov. 24, 1928.

by William H. Henry

A letter to the NEC of the Socialist Party from an original document in the Bob Millar collection.

New York City  
November 24, 1928

To the Members of the  
National Executive Committee, Socialist Party

Comrades, Greeting:

In making a report to your Committee at this time I am including a resumé of the activities of the National Office and the finances of same for the first ten months of this year, ending October 31st, and also comparative tables of the membership for the first ten months of 1927 and 1928.

During that period the National Office organized state movements in Oklahoma, Minnesota, Iowa, Arkansas, Louisiana. We reorganized or strengthened the state organizations in West Virginia, Mississippi, Texas, and Kansas. We secured several new members at large in Florida and organized one active local there. We organized a new local in Louisville, Kentucky. We chartered a new state organization in Virginia through the efforts of Comrade G. August Gerber. We organized a new local in Omaha, Nebraska, and have under way work for the reorganization of the state. Wyoming was reorganized as a separate state organization by the comrades within the state and with the assistance of Comrade O.A. Kennedy, District Secretary of the Mountain States District, with which Wyoming was previously affiliated. New Hampshire divorced itself from the New England States District and was chartered as

an independent state organization.

In the work of organization we have cooperated with the weaker states, including those we organized, by sending in large quantities of free literature, mimeographing letters for general circulation by the state offices, and giving every bit of assistance possible that our limited finances would permit.

At the present time we have thirty states with State Secretaries: Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, New Jersey, New York, New Hampshire, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. The states constituting the Districts are: New England District: Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Vermont; North Western District: Oregon and Washington; Mountain States District: Arizona and Utah.

The following states are not organized: Alabama, Delaware, Georgia, Florida, North and South Dakota, North and South Carolina, and Nebraska.

The following states show no membership on the tables, but some of them have several members who are listed under the heading of national members at large: North Carolina, South Dakota, Alabama, Delaware, Mississippi, North Dakota, and South Carolina.

The average membership for the first ten months of 1927 was 7,270, and the average membership for the same period of 1928 was 7,925, a gain of 655.<sup>1</sup> The greater part of this gain in membership was in

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1. Henry's math is slightly off here. The correct total according to his figures below should be 7,245 for 1927 and 7,918 for 1928, a differential of 673. Interestingly, he does not include members of the SP's five Language Federations in the total count of party members; doing so should boost the count to 11,118 for 1927 and 11,332 for 1928 — a gain of 214.

Pennsylvania and Kansas.

In some of the states listed as having state secretaries there is very little activity; they do not function as organized states should. It will be necessary to get into these states as soon as possible with the view of creating new life and adding new members to the Party organization. We now have contact in them, and with the proper work carried on by the National Organization we can put them on their feet and make them active units of the Party. Wherever we have been able to get a comrade to act as State Secretary and even a small group to work in cooperation with him, we have recognized them as an organized state — with the hope that more members might be added and a properly functioning organization brought into being.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to the free literature and mimeographing given to the State Secretaries, we have been forced in some cases to provide postage in order to get the mail sent out, and frequently we have addressed the envelopes and sent out the mail ourselves. Whenever an inquiry comes from an interested person in any state we not only give the information requested, but we also connect the inquirer with the state secretary and then advise the state secretary of the inquiry, thus getting the two in touch with each other. This entails an expense to the National Office, but it is necessary and must be given proper attention. All these details add to the work of the National Office as well as to the expenses, but it is worthwhile and is a part of our efforts and linked with our schemes to increase the Party membership.

**Gain and Loss in Membership  
by States During 1927 and 1928.<sup>3</sup>**

	1927	1928	change
Arkansas	1	1	0
Arizona	6	7	1
California	227	277	50
Colorado	15	23	8
Connecticut	126	131	5
Florida	0	7	7
Georgia	12	6	-6
Idaho	0	32	32

	1927	1928	change
Illinois	563	491	-72
Indiana	79	86	7
Iowa	10	38	28
Kansas	20	129	109
Kentucky	0	11	11
Louisiana	0	12	12
Maine	52	70	18
Maryland	28	28	0
Massachusetts	1203	1097	-106
Michigan	91	142	51
Minnesota	3	67	64
Missouri	23	41	18
Montana	26	35	9
Nebraska	12	18	6
Nevada	8	5	-3
New Hampshire	106	104	-2
New Jersey	405	323	-82
New Mexico	2	1	-1
New York	1466	1450	-16
Ohio	551	406	-145
Oklahoma	0	27	27
Oregon	22	27	5
Pennsylvania	720	1215	495
Rhode Island	32	33	1
Tennessee	0	8	8
Texas	14	42	28
Utah	21	19	-2
Vermont	38	43	5
Virginia	0	17	17
Washington	20	31	11
West Virginia	5	22	17
Wisconsin	1276	1306	30
Wyoming	30	42	12
AT LARGE	32	48	16
* SUM *	7245	7918	673

**Foreign Federations**

Finnish	2030	1842	-188
Italian	339	270	-69
Jewish	590	593	3
Yugoslav	827	676	-151
Lithuanian	87	33	-54
* FEDS SUM *	3873	3414	-459
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>11,118</b>	<b>11,332</b>	<b>214</b>

2. The policy of the National Executive Secretary arbitrarily selecting a State Secretary and using that appointee as a sort of unpaid organizer for moribund state organizations flies in the face of the tradition and constitution of the Socialist Party of America, based as it was upon the principle of federation of semi-autonomous state organizations.

3. Sum totals appended editorially for this edition.

**Organization.**

We must organize the Socialists into the Socialist Party, and the best and only way to do this is to send organizers out. Experience shows that immediately after a campaign only a few meetings can be arranged in most parts of the country and that the best results can only be attained by organizers hunting up the Socialists and meeting them in their homes. Such work should not be attempted in a hurry up way. The organizer should stay in a given place long enough to get the organization in good working order before leaving the field. Work of this kind calls for experienced workers, comrades who know how and are not afraid to work. It is doubtful if we have very many such field workers in the Party at this time who would be willing to do that kind of work, but we can pick out those who wish to try and train them. An experienced organizer can give the new one the essentials in this work that will get results, and we should get as many of the young comrades to tackle it as possible.

Besides organizing, the field workers should carry Socialist literature with them — books, pamphlets, platforms, leaflets, etc., as well as sub cards. They should also carry monthly pledge cards and get as many as possible to sign up to help finance the work. Experience shows that organization work of this kind does not bring in much cash outside the dues and sales on literature, and that does not begin to cover the expenses of the work. The workers sent out should not only be able to organize, but also to deliver a speech whenever opportunity presents itself.

In this connection I have started a drive to sign up comrades who will make a monthly donation to the organization fund, and I think the one big work for this Committee to perform at this time is to help get that list of contributors as large as possible. A statement should be issued by the Committee, telling of the purposes of the fund and appealing to comrades to get in and help. I do not think we should make the appeal too strongly to the locals and branches as such, for they will have their worries in keeping their organizations together, but the appeal should be more to individuals who can afford to make such contributions. I am firmly of the opinion that our money and efforts spent in this way will get by far the best results, and to that end I have, as previously stated, already started a

drive to sign up monthly contributors. Those who have already signed and the amounts pledged are as follows:

Frank H. White, Los Angeles, CA	\$1.00
Henry H. Sweetland, Brush, CO	.50
Dr. S.A. Garth, Colorado Springs, CO	1.00
M.E. Edson, Tampa, FL	1.00
Fred Ehling, Chicago	2.00
Martin Lofgren, Berwyn, IL	1.00
William H. Henry, Chicago	10.00
Mary Richter, Chicago	2.00
J.M. & M.H. Barnes, Chicago	5.00
Prof. Paul H. Douglas, Chicago	1.00
W.H. Spaulding, Lawrenceville, IL	1.00
Elsworth Mitten, Anderson, IN	1.00
Fred F. Harter, Middletown, IN	2.00
Paul Holtzapple, Fort Wayne, IN	1.00
C.W. Broomall, Kensington, MD	2.50
Albert Sprague Coolidge, Cambr., MA	25.00
Mrs. Rose Levin, Northampton, MA	1.00
Carlo Maccarini, W. Springfield, MA	1.00
Eugene Muehleemann, Chesterfield, MO	5.00
Milo C. Jones, Newark, NJ	2.00
Charles H. Carron, Ridgefield Park, NJ	2.00
Morris Hillquit, New York City	25.00
Samuel Orr, New York City	2.00
J.J. Duhamel, Medford, OR	1.00
Charles Mazer, Philadelphia	2.00
Joseph E. Cohen, Philadelphia	2.00
David G. George, Richmond, VA	1.00
M. Larena, Chattaroy, WV	2.00
John M. Work, Milwaukee	5.00

The Middle West and the West should be given prompt consideration for the prospects of building up a good Party membership is not to be overlooked.

Montana, according to the reports of votes cast, should be given a helping hand. A desire to organized in that state is evident. At one time Montana cast a very large percent of the total vote, had a number of Socialists in the Legislature, and their work was of the best.

Wyoming has a good start towards a Party organization and as it is now being recognized as one of the organized states it should be given due consideration.

We have two comrades who wish to go to Ari-

zona and attempt to build a state movement there. The big stumbling block that has been in our way for the past several years, that is, the fallacy that Governor Hunt was a Socialist or near Socialist, has been pushed in the down-and-outs, and we should take advantage of the situation as soon as possible.

Utah is in the hands of a very able comrade and we may expect some good work done there if the proper help can be given.

Oregon, one of the states connected with the North Western States District, should be given consideration, looking to the formation of a regular state organization.

Washington is the other state of the North Western District. Comrade Emil Herman was the District Secretary. Mrs. Herman desires to be appointed to carry on the work. A letter from her will be brought to your attention later.

Oklahoma is now practically without a State Secretary as Comrade Buie has been forced to neglect the work and go to the cotton fields to find employment.

Nebraska needs attention, but with a nominal amount of help a state organization can be formed and the work of organization advanced.

Texas has a small but hard working force. They also need some help if they are to build a bigger and better state organization.

Illinois comrades seem to be awakening to the need of organization. The comrades in Chicago and down state are talking and planning for party building.

Indiana organized several new locals during the campaign and are now busy planning a winter's work of strengthening the state organization.

Missouri has made a start towards a bigger party membership and is showing some real activity, but this state needs special attention.

Minnesota may or may not have a good field in which to expend considerable effort. There is talk on the part of some of the Farmer-Labor Party members of fathering the organization of a national party.

Iowa has made a good start towards building up a good party membership under the guiding hand of Comrade McCrillis, the State Secretary. We should not neglect it.

Colorado comrades are asking for help to strengthen their party membership.

### **Comrades Desiring Party Work.**

Comrade John W. Brown is anxious to get out and organize. Party history shows Comrade Brown to be an excellent speaker and one who understands the party program, but I cannot vouch for his fitness for organizational work, since he has had little experience in that kind of work.

Comrade Jacob M. Kruse of Montana, recent nominee for Governor, has asked for assistance to enable him to get into the field and organize the party of the state.

Comrades Mr. and Mrs. Coombes of Los Angeles, California, are desirous of moving into Arizona, and they offer their services in an attempt to build up a party movement in that state. They have had considerable experience in both propaganda and organization work. They will move into Arizona and begin their work if the National Office can finance them.

J. Carabine, of Springfield, Massachusetts, makes application for party work. He desires to locate in some state that needs to be developed and offers to accept a position as a state secretary of the party anywhere the party demands. He, like others, would have to be paid for his services.

Comrade Ruby Herman asks to be appointed secretary of the North West States District at a wage of \$30.00 per week and the usual profit from dues stamp sales. A letter from Comrade Herman on other matters is her for consideration and it will have a bearing on this situation.

Comrade Ross Magill, State Secretary of Kansas, desires to be placed as an organizer in his state; otherwise he will not be able to attend to the work that should be done.

### **Literature.**

During the first ten months of the year the National Office sold a total of \$1,393.90 worth of literature, of which %587.24 was on cash sales and the balance of \$806.66 on charge accounts.

The literature sold consisted of 665 clothbound books; 2,050 pamphlets; 6,675 two-page leaflets; 83,150 of our standard 9 x 12 four-page leaflets; and 14,675 of the large 12 x 18 leaflets; 14,325 copies of the national platform; and 2,225 copies of other cam-

campaign leaflets. The amount received by the National Office for campaign leaflets, platforms, and buttons was \$53.71. Practically all the platforms and campaign leaflets were sent out without charge to assist locals and states that could not purchase them. In addition we sent out several hundred packages of sample leaflets to students and others who wrote in for Socialist literature. In a number of the packages we included several selected pamphlets to assist students in preparing papers and speeches.

During the ten months we printed and purchased literature and local supplies costing \$1,104.36, most of which was for reprints of our standard leaflets.

The party needs some new propaganda pamphlets and books, written for beginners. My experience in the National Office and on the road proves to my satisfaction that the majority of people asking for information are desirous of knowing the ABC of Socialism; they want to know what our program is, and whether the inquirer be a worker in the shop or a student in the university, he needs the ABC type of literature to start with.

During the campaign the evidence of new interest in our cause came mostly from the educational institutions, and that field should be handled by men who are fitted for the task. These many young men who are looking to the Socialist Party as a guiding force to a better opportunity for them can be of great help in the building of our party. These we must reach as well as the organized and unorganized workers and get them into the Party.

### **Finances.**

The total income for the ten months from all sources was \$23,559.05. By adding the balance in bank as of January 1st, our total resources were \$23,639.90, or an average of \$2,363.99 per month. The total expenses for the same period was \$23,351.64, or an average of \$2,335.16 per month.

The principle items under receipts were: Dues (National), \$6,907.80; Dues (State and County), \$2,183.95; Literature and Local Supplies, \$587.24; Convention Fund, \$2,503.00; Organization and Sustaining Fund, \$8,465.82. This last item included \$1,600.00 received from the National Campaign Committee and of which more than \$500.00 was paid over

to the Italian Labor Publishing Co., and more than \$500.00 on International Dues. Since the first of November we have received an additional \$1,000.00 from Comrade Gerber, which was immediately paid over to the Italian Labor Publishing Co. — \$150.00 on account of an *American Appeal* note and the balance on account of the balance due for publishing *The American Appeal*.

Other items of expense included an additional payment of \$500.00 to the Italian Labor Publishing Co., for sundry printing; payments on loans and notes payable amounting to \$1,054.41; and \$318.62 to the John F. Higgins Printing Co., on account of the Debs book.

Still other expenses of the National Office included those of the National Convention, the total cost of which was \$4,289.94. We received on the Convention Fund a total of \$2,400.00 from Comrades Claessens and Gerber and \$103.00 from sundry comrades. This left a balance of \$1,786.94 to be met from the regular income of the National Office.

The total costs of the National Executive Committee meetings during the first ten months was \$2,200.95, the major part of which was raised by the comrades in the cities where the various meetings were held.

During the ten months we paid to organizers and for the printing of organizers' posters, etc., a total of \$473.91, and we paid out \$917.13 to various state organizations in cash appropriations and in covering the expenses of myself in attending several state conventions and organization meetings. The amount of free literature sent out was \$384.83 — this is in addition to the small packages referred to under the head of Literature.

The assets of the National Office remain practically the same as shown in the October Financial Report, which then amounted to \$6,454.62 and included the balance in bank, accounts receivable, furniture, fixtures, literature, etc.

### **Liabilities.**

Since the October report was made we have added on a small amount to the accounts payable for stationery and supplies, and we have reduced them by a few payments. Our liabilities at this date are:

**Accounts payable:**

Italian Labor Publishing Co.	
Balance on <i>American Appeal</i>	\$ 2,076.35
Literature and Supplies	239.85
John F. Higgins Printing Co.	
Debs Books	1,650.00
Hanchett Paper Co.	
Shipping Supplies	20.45
Holder's Stationery Stores	
Office Supplies	21.43
Walter Thomas Mills	
Literature	15.00
Rand Book Store *	
Literature	14.34
Daniel W. Hoan	
Expenses, NEC Baltimore Meeting	99.43
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 4,136.85</b>
State and County Dues **	\$ 707.38
Balance Due on Loans to	
William H. Henry	450.00
Balance Due on Notes Payable	
(Bank Loan)	500.00
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 5,794.23</b>

\* *The account with the Rand Book Store is offset by a contra account.*

\*\* *Of the amount due to the various state organizations on State and County Dues, \$468.62 is past due, some of it as far back as July. The state offices rely upon these dues to carry on their work, and they should be paid.*

The John F. Higgins Printing Company, to whom we owe a balance of \$1,650.00 on the printing of the Debs Book, informs us through their manager that unless they receive payment by November 26th, court action will be taken to collect.

Fraternally submitted,

Wm. H. Henry  
Executive Secretary

O.E.A.  
12755  
WHH/MHB

*Edited and Footnotes by Tim Davenport.*

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