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# Report of the German Language Federation to the National Committee of the Socialist Party of America, May 1913.

by A. Dreifuss

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To the National Committee:

Dear Comrades:—

The German Language Federation of the Socialist Party was formed at the first national convention of the German-speaking Socialists of the United States, which took place in New Castle, Pa., December 27 and 28, 1912. The Federation was a necessity. Almost too long the German comrades had hesitated to bring their Language Federations into existence. That hesitation was due to the fact that the German Socialists felt themselves so much a part of the party that they, indeed, neglected to some extent propaganda work among their country-people, in order to help to build up the American Socialist movement. For this reason the German branches of the party had no means of communication. They were independent of each other, and therefore, although quite numerous, were not strong enough to fulfill the mission of organizing their immigrated country-people as members of the Socialist Party.

But the American movement having grown powerful, the Germans all over the United States demanded a Federation. They saw a great opportunity to work among the multitude of Germans in this country, who have not yet joined the Socialist Party. They saw how many new immigrants from German-speaking nationalities become lost for the Socialist movement, partly in the struggle for existence, partly on account of their ignorance of American conditions, and partly on account of the inability of the German Socialists in this country to take hold of the newcomers.

So strong was the demand for the formation of the Federation that 32 delegates from all over the country assembled at the convention in New Castle, representing 90 branches, with 4,515 members.

The Federation began its work March 1, 1913, when Comrade A. Dreifuss took up his duties as German Translator-Secretary in the national office in Chicago.

The National Committee of the German Language Federation is composed of one member from each of the following counties, elected by referendum vote of the members of the German party branches of the respective counties: Union County, NJ; Essex County, NJ; Hudson County, NJ; Bronx County, NY; Manhattan County, NY; Kings County, NY; and Queens County, NY.

The Translator-Secretary is elected by the convention every second year.

A supervising committee, also elected by conventions, acts as a grievance committee, and in a general way supervises the actions of the National Committee and the Translator-Secretary.

Members of the National Committee and the supervising committee have to be members of the Socialist Party of the United States for at least three years.

In its two months of existence the Federation has already sold 7,219 dues stamps — 3,042 in March and 4,177 in April.

The Federation has already sent an organizer

through the Eastern states and preparations are also made by the Translator-Secretary to organize new German party locals in Illinois and Indiana. Field work in other states will follow.

The prospects seem to be bright, and through the activity of the German Language Federation we hope to increase the membership of the party considerably.

For several reasons the convention in New Castle found it proper to give each state the possibility to have their own state agitation committee, which committees at the same time act as mediums between the Translator-Secretary and the German branches of their states, buying for and selling to them the dues stamps. By doing so they have the opportunity to be in steady contact with their branches, learn of their needs, and can help them by word and deed.

Such state agitation committees have so far proved to be very successful. They are established now in the states of New York, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Ohio, Massachusetts, and Illinois, and will probably be soon installed in other states. They pay for their stamps in advance to the Translator-Secretary, and report to him before the end of each month their actual stamp sales to their branches.

As to the attitude of the various central committees of the party, I can report that it is generally a friendly one, but in some counties the comrades seem to forget that our Federation exists in conformity with Article 14 of the National Constitution of the Socialist Party, and act rather hostile toward the Federation. Especially hostile, for instance, acted Local San Francisco against our organization, and at the same time

against all foreign language organizations, practically forbidding all comrades that are citizens from belonging to foreign-speaking branches. Upon demand of a conference of all the Translator-Secretaries in the national office, the National Committee will have to decide about the constitutionality of said rule of the San Francisco local.

We have in our branches a great number of comrades who have been citizens for a long time, and just these comrades are of great value for our branches on account of their years of experience in this country.

As up to this time a very great part of all party contributions came from German party branches, unions, and other German-speaking organizations, the fear of losing these contributions seems to be the motive of said hostile actions. But that fear is absolutely unwarranted. The German comrades know what they owe to the movement, and the growth of the German Language Federation of the Socialist Party will certainly not only increase the party membership, but also the funds of the party, as the willingness of the German Socialists to sacrifice for the cause is known the world over.

This is all I have to submit in my report this time, and I hope the German Language Federation of the Socialist Party will be able to report great progress to the next party convention.

Respectfully submitted,

A. Dreifuss,  
Translator-Secretary

*Edited by Tim Davenport.*

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