
Otto Branstetter Named Secretary of Socialist Party: Edmund Melms Sees Huge Increase Coming in Party Membership

Unsigned report in the *Milwaukee Leader*, v. 8, no. 252 (Oct. 1, 1919), pg. 4.

Otto E. Branstetter has been made National Secretary of the Socialist Party, according to the report of National Executive Committeeman Edmund T. Melms, who has returned to Milwaukee from the meeting of the national body in Chicago. Adolph Germer, who recently resigned as National Secretary, was selected as field organizer.

“A tremendous amount of work along the lines of organization and general propaganda was accomplished by the meeting,” Melms said Wednesday [Oct. 1, 1919]. “Field organizers will be sent to the Pacific coast, and especially to reorganize California, Utah, and Colorado. Other states will be looked after. Ohio, Michigan, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Minnesota will get special attention, and the committee is seeking organizers for these districts.

Sees Huge Membership.

“Encouraging reports were received from Ohio, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Indiana, and California, and from indications it will be only a short time when the Socialist Party of the United States will witness a new growth and a tremen-

dous increase in membership, as the result of overcoming the recent troubles forced upon it.”



Speaking of the Left Wing movement, Melms said: “The so-called Communist Labor Party is dead. One of the strongest states that it claimed was Ohio, and that state is hopelessly lost to it. Some of the strongest industrial cities have repudiated it. In Cleveland, in the city and country convention just held, the Left Wingers [CLP] were able only to muster the votes of 3 delegates seated in the convention.”

To Agitate Amnesty.

It was further decided to set aside one month for general amnesty agitation all over the United States. In this appeal, trade organizations and other radical bodies will be included. Various methods, from mass meetings to resolutions, telegrams, and petitions will be employed. This work will be started immediately through the National Office.

Leaflets will be printed for distributions in various states. These will treat of current events,

general unrest of the masses, the Socialist position of economic questions, and the aims of Socialism.

The name of the national organ will be changed from *The Eye Opener* to *The Socialist Call*, and a campaign book will be issued for the 1920 Presidential campaign. Important manifestos, resolutions, proclamations, etc. will be printed in book form for propaganda.

To Meet in New York.

A sub-committee to draft a declaration of principles, in accordance with instructions of the recent national convention, was appointed. It consists of James Oneal, New York; Victor L. Berger, Wisconsin; Gustav A. Hoehn, Missouri; Joseph E. Cohen of Massachusetts; and Morris Hillquit of New York. The draft is to be ready not later than Feb. 29, 1920.

An Emergency Committee composed of Otto Branstetter, Oliver C. Wilson, and Edmund T. Melms was named.

The National Executive Committee will hold its meetings in different cities, the next being slated to take place in New York City Nov. 29 to Dec. 1 [1919].

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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