
Report of Italian Section to the Socialist Party National Convention [May 1912]

by Joseph Corti

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To the Socialist Party National Convention, 1912:

The activity of the Italians in the Socialist Party began in the latter part of the year 1908, after a tour through the country made by Comrade G. Bertelli, under the auspices of the National Office.

With the closing of the presidential campaign of that year the Socialist Party counted about 40 Italian branches. Very few were the Italian branches affiliated with the party before the year 1908.

In the following year, 1909, a movement was started by the New York branches to organize all the Italian branches of the party into a national organization in order to carry on the Socialist propaganda among the Italian immigrants. A convention was called in West Hoboken, NJ, for that purpose, but it had failed in its very beginning and nothing concrete could be accomplished.

A year after the West Hoboken, NJ, convention, December 1910, with the consent of the National Office, the Italian Section was formally organized with about twenty branches, less than half of the total Italian branches affiliated with the party in that time, for the other branches did not fully realize the necessity of such an organization.

From December 1910 till October 1911, twenty-two branches joined the Section, but in the same period of time fourteen branches disbanded.

When I took the office as Translator-Secretary September 1911, the Section consisted of twenty-eight branches with less than 660 members, although the Translator-Secretary was in communication with more

than twenty other Italian branches directly connected with the party.

In the last seven months (September 1911 to April 15, 1912) seventeen new branches were organized and eight branches joined, while eight have disbanded, leaving a total of forty-four branches alive and in good standing, scattered in the following states:

| | |
|---------------------|----|
| Illinois | 14 |
| New York | 14 |
| New Jersey | 4 |
| Pennsylvania | 3 |
| Massachusetts | 3 |
| Wisconsin | 3 |
| Vermont | 2 |
| Florida | 1 |
| Colorado | 1 |

These have a total membership of 1,200.

Italian branches of the party not affiliated with our Section, but in communication with the Translator-Secretary, can be found in the following states: Pennsylvania, 6; Montana, 1; Illinois, 6; Michigan, 2; New Jersey, 3; Indiana, 1.

Italian members of the party can also be found in all the mining districts, especially in the states of Illinois, Michigan, and Pennsylvania, where the party branches are mixed of different nationalities and also in many industrial centers.

The Socialist sentiment is very strong among the

Italian workers in this country, and it will be only a matter of time to have a strong Italian organization, which will no doubt be able to accomplish its mission in organizing and educating the Italian workers in this country without the assistance of the party.

Party Press.

Our press consists of three weekly papers: *La Parola Del Socialisti*, official organ, published in Chicago, Illinois, with an average circulation of three thousand copies. *La Fiaccola*, published in Buffalo, NY, with 1,500 copies circulation weekly. *La Flamma*, published in Camden, NJ, with two thousand copies circulation.

The latter two weeklies will be combined in the near future, following a resolution passed at the interstate convention held in Schenectady, NY, April 7 and 8, 1912.

The New York branches and vicinity are working to establish a weekly paper of their own.

Oral Propaganda and Organizers.

From October 1911 to April 1912, about 120 lectures have been delivered by A. Cravello, as a special organizer, in a three months' tour, and by G. Corti,

A. Caroti, S. Bonfiglio, and G. Bertelli. The states covered were Illinois, Wisconsin, New York, Kansas, and New Jersey.

For the coming national campaign we have secured as a speaker one of the best orators and propagandists on the Italian platform, Miss A. Balabanoff, who will be in this country for the middle of May for a four months' tour.

At the same time Comrade V. Vacirca, publicist and orator, has left the city of Trieste the 13th of this month [April 1912], bound for New York, who, after a short stay in that city, will come to Chicago to edit our official organ until he becomes acquainted with the American movement; then, he will be engaged as an organizer.

The future is full of promise and the prospects are very bright to our young movement. With a permanent organizer in the field, we are sure that in a year's time we will double the members of our branches and will build up a strong party press, without which we would not be able to accomplish much.

Fraternally submitted,

Joseph Corti,
Translator-Secretary

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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