

MS-94: Local Dayton Socialist Party Records

Collection Number: MS-94

Title: Local Dayton Socialist Party Records

Dates: 1901-1956 (bulk 1901-1924)

Creator: Local Dayton Socialist Party

Summary/Abstract:

The bulk of records in this collection were generated by the Socialist Party organization in Dayton from 1901-1924 and include membership meeting minutes, the minutes of various committees, financial records, and a listing of new members for the years 1906-1908 and 1912-1917. Also included is a small collection of Socialist Party literature, some state and national Party materials, and a miscellaneous collection of notices, handbills, correspondence, and photographs.

Quantity/Physical Description: 2.5 linear feet

Language(s): English

Repository:

Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, Wright State University, Dayton, OH 45435-0001, (937) 775-2092, library-archives@wright.edu

Restrictions on Access: There are no restrictions on accessing material in this collection.

Restrictions on Use:

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Preferred Citation:

[Description of item, Date, Box #, Folder #], MS-94, Local Dayton Socialist Party Records, Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio

Acquisition:

The collection was accessioned into the Special Collections and Archives, Wright State University Libraries, in February 1980. They were purchased from Mrs. Lucille Stapleton of Dayton, whose father-in-law had been a member of the Party in the 1930's. An addition was received from Mrs. Stapleton in March 1981.

Other Finding Aid:

The finding aid is available on the Special Collections & Archives, Wright State University Libraries web site at <https://www.libraries.wright.edu/special/collectionguides/files/ms94.pdf>. It is also available in the OhioLINK Finding Aid Repository at <http://ead.ohiolink.edu/xtf-ead/>.

Related Material:

[MS-144: Oscar Edelman Papers.](#)

Revisions:

The finding aid was revised according to DACS standards by Lisa Rickey, March 2020.

Processed by:

The original collection processing and finding aid were completed by Dorothy Smith, Spring 1980.

Arrangement:

The collection is arranged in 5 series:

- Series I: Administrative Records, 1901-1937
- Series II: Financial Records, 1907-1929
- Series III: State and National Socialist Party Materials, 1912-1936
- Series IV: Socialist Party Literature, 1905-1956
- Series V: Miscellaneous Materials, 1906-1936

Biographical/Historical Note:

Between the years 1901 and 1912, the Socialist Party of America enjoyed continuous growth and exerted a wide impact upon the political life of the nation. Starting with 10,000 members in 1901, the party had grown to 118,000 by 1912, had elected some 12,000 public officials throughout the United States, and was publishing over 300 periodicals of all kinds. In the labor movement, and in many of the reform movements of the period, Socialists held positions of prominence and had won substantial followings. Many Socialists looked forward to the continuing expansion of their party, fully expecting it to become a dominant force in American politics. During the next decade, however, the Party not only ceased to grow, but by the mid-1920's, had almost ceased to exist.

The evolution of the Socialist Party in Dayton followed a similar pattern of growth and demise. The roots of the Party can be traced to the formation of a Social Democratic Party in 1899. The charter members of this organization were six Dayton workingmen, members of a substantial working-class community of German descent from which the Party would draw a large share of its early supporters. Voicing their disillusionment with the present two-party system, these men felt that their newly emerging class had interests which were not being represented in traditional Dayton politics.

By 1902, the new political party had changed its name to the Local Dayton Socialist Party and begun to run candidates for local offices. During its tenure in Dayton, the Socialist Party was well-organized, held regular meetings, ran candidates in local elections, and, from 1912 until 1924, published a Party newspaper, the Miami Valley Socialist.

The years 1911-12 marked the peak of the Socialists' power and influence in Dayton politics. Actual membership in the Party was nearly 600 at this time, and in the municipal election of 1911, Socialist candidates were elected to two City Council seats and three Assessor positions. Eugene V. Debs, the Socialist candidate for president, received over 6,000 votes in Dayton in the 1912 Presidential election, but the municipal victories of 1911 were to be the first and last the Socialists would enjoy here. In 1913, the change-over to a non-partisan, manager-type city government, in which commissioners were to be elected on a city-wide basis, deprived the Dayton Socialists of much of their political power which had been based on the old system of electing a Councilman from each ward. Other factors contributing to the Socialists' decline, locally as well as nationally, were right-left ideological conflicts and the incorporation of some of Socialism's basic issues into the platforms of the progressive wings of the major political parties.

Throughout the decade, the official stance of the Party in Dayton remained moderate, and the local Socialists took only a mild anti-war stand in 1917. Consequently, they escaped much of the repression suffered by radicals during the war years and in the following "Red Scare" that swept Ohio and the country.

The election of 1921 was the last in which the Socialists made any showing in Dayton, and membership at this time had dwindled to 200 members, with about 50 consistently active. In 1924, the Local Dayton Socialist Party backed Robert LaFollette's Progressive-Farmer-Labor candidacy for the Presidency and ran its last slate of candidates for city-wide office. In the same year, the Miami Valley Socialist stopped publication.

The Local Dayton Socialist Party experienced a small resurgence during the early depression years. Membership swelled to 400, but then fell to less than 100 members, with only about 14 people very active by 1936.

During the late 30's, many Socialists took an active part in helping the C.I.O. form the first industrial unions in Dayton. At this time, conflicts between Communists and Socialists became open and hostile as the large electrical unions at Delco, Frigidaire and other plants were being organized.

Scope and Content Note:

The material within the Local Dayton Socialist Party Collection is divided into Five series: Administrative Records, Financial Records, State & National Socialist Party Materials, Socialist Party Literature, and Miscellaneous materials.

Series I, Administrative Records, is composed of the Minutes of the Campaign Executive Committee, April - November 1901; Minutes of the City Campaign Committee, 1905-1906; Minutes of the General Membership Meetings, 1910-1912 and 1914-1919; Minutes of the County Central Committee, 1912-1916; Minutes of the Executive Committee, 1920-1924; General Membership Minutes, 1933-1937; and a records of new members, which includes the name, age, address, and occupation of those who joined the Local Dayton Socialist Party from 1906-1908 and 1912-1917. Span dates for this series are 1901-1937.

Series II, Financial Records, has the dues and cash books for the Local Dayton Socialist Party for the years 1907-1909, 1910-1911, and 1916-1929. The series also contains a record of Local Dayton's real estate sales for the years 1921-1924.

Series III, State & National Socialist Party Materials, includes a constitution for the Socialist Party of Ohio, 1932; a ballot for the election of the State Committee, 1912; a secretary's report to the State Convention, 1932-1933; portions of the minutes of the 1933-34 State Convention of the Socialist Party of Ohio; Handbook of the State Convention of 1935; a National Platform of the Socialist Party, USA for 1936; and a State Platform of the Socialist Party of Ohio, 1932. Span dates for this series are 1912-1936.

Series IV, Socialist Party Literature, covers such topics as strikes, industrial and trade unionism, anarchy, militarism, pacifism, socialist philosophy and communism. Also included in this series are several issues of Socialist Party newspapers and copies of the Debs Memorial Edition of the American Appeal. Span dates for this series are 1905-1956.

Series V, Miscellaneous Materials, contains Socialist Party notices, petitions, handbills, announcements, resolutions, miscellaneous correspondence and three photographs of a Socialist Party outdoor meeting. Span dates for this series range from 1906-1936.

Subject Terms

Persons/Families

Organizations/Corporate Names

Places

Subjects (General)

Local Dayton Socialist Party -- Archives
Socialist parties -- Ohio -- Dayton

Material Types

Occupations

Collection Inventory

Box	File	Item	Description	Date
Series I: Administrative Records				1901-1937
1	1		Minutes, Campaign Executive Committee, Local Dayton Social Democratic Party	1901 Apr-Nov
1	2		Minutes, City Committee, Local Dayton Socialist Party	1905 Dec - 1906 Sept
1	3		Minutes, Local Dayton Socialist Party	1910 May - 1911 Jul
1	4		Minutes, Local Dayton Socialist Party	1911 Sep - 1912 Mar
1	5		Minutes, Local Dayton Socialist Party	1914 Dec - 1917 Jan
2	1		Minutes, Local Dayton Socialist Party	1917 Jan - 1919 Oct
2	2		Minutes, County Central Committee	1912 Jun - 1916 Jun
2	3		Minutes, Executive Committee, Local Dayton Socialist Party	1920 Jan - 1924 Dec
2	4		Minutes, Local Dayton Socialist Party	1933 Feb - 1937 Jul
2	5		Record of New Members	1906 Jul - 1908 Sep
2	6		Record of New Members	1912 Jan - 1917 Mar
Series II: Financial Records				1907-1929
3	1		Cash Book, Local Dayton Socialist Party	1907 Apr - 1909 Mar
3	2		Dues Book, Local Dayton Socialist Party	1910 Jan - 1911 Sep
3	3		Dues Book, Local Dayton Socialist Party	1916 Jan - 1919 Oct
3	4		Dues and Cash Book, Local Dayton Socialist Party	1919 Oct - 1923 May
3	5	1	Cash Book, Local Dayton Socialist Party	1923 May - 1929 Jun
3	5	2	Loose Record of Local Dayton Lot Sales	1921-1924
Series III: State and National Socialist Party Materials				1912-1936
4	1		Ballot for election of State Committee	1912
4	2		Constitution, Socialist Party of Ohio	circa 1932
4	3		Secretary's report to the State Convention, Socialist Party of Ohio	1932-1933
4	4		Minutes, Convention of the Socialist Party of Ohio	1933-1934
4	5		Proceedings & Handbook of the State Convention of the Socialist Party of Ohio	1935
4	6		Proposed Declaration of Principles, Socialist Party, USA	circa 1935
4	7		National Platform, Socialist Party, USA	1936
4	8		State Platform, Socialist Party of Ohio	1932
Series IV: Socialist Party Literature				1905-1956
4	9	1	"What Means This Strike" by Daniel Deleon (1898 address, reprinted 1913)	1913

Box	File	Item	Description	Date
4	9	2	"Marx on Mallock, or Facts vs. Fiction" by Daniel Deleon (delivered 1908, reprinted 1917)	1917
4	9	3	"The Burning Question of Trades Unionism" by Daniel Deleon (1904 lecture, reprinted 1934)	1934
4	10	1	"Ethics of Evolution" by John Scott	1914
4	10	2	Waylands Monthly	1905
4	11	1	"Shall a Labor Party Be Formed"	1923
4	11	2	"Letters to Judd" by Upton Sinclair (1925, reprinted 1932)	1932
4	12	1	"A Plan for America"	1932
4	12	2	"Socialist Handbook"	1937
4	13	1	Price List of Socialist Party of America Literature	1933
4	14	1	"Essentials of Socialism"	1933
4	15	1	"Where your dollar goes, 1934 United Socialist Drive"	1934
4	16	1	"Labor, Democracy & Fascism"	1934
4	16	2	"Fascism"	1934
4	16	3	"The Land of the Free Socialist America"	1934
4	16	4	"Social Attitudes Towards War ~ Peace"	1934
4	17	1	"The Commonwealth Plan"	1934
4	18	1	"Traffic in Death"	1934
4	19	1	"Mother Bloor"	1935
4	20	1	"Industrial Unionism"	1936
4	21	1	"Communism, Its Evils ~ Causes"	1937
4	22	1	"The Socialist Call" issue	1937 Oct
4	22	2	"The Socialist Call" issue	1938 May
4	22	3	"The Socialist Call" issue	1953 Oct
4	23	1	The American Guardian	1940 Sept
4	24		Miscellaneous Newspaper clippings	Circa 1930-1939
4	25		Copies of Debs Memorial Edition of the American Appeal	1936 Oct
4	26		"Labor Spies in the NMU"	circa 1940
4	27	1	"Socialism Answers Anti-Semitism"	1943
4	27	2	"The Labor Draft"	1944
5	1	1	"Anarchy, Communism, Socialism"	1932
5	1	2	"The Boytown Railroad"	Undated
5	1	3	"Parable of the Water Tank"	Undated
5	2		American Socialist Quarterly, several issues	1934 Autumn - 1936 Apr
5	3		American Socialist Quarterly, several issues	1936 Jun-Oct
5	4		"Government Competition with Private Enterprise, a Report"	1933

Box	File	Item	Description	Date
5	5		Series of Lectures on Social Justice	1935
5	6	1	"Death for Inciting Insurrection in Georgia"	1932 May
5	6	2	"Introduction to Scientific Socialism"	1932
5	7	1	"Hammer & Tongs"	1956
Series V: Miscellaneous Materials				1906-1936
5	8		Handbill re: Debs Organization Fund	Undated
5	9		Miscellaneous Handbills & Notices	1909-1933
5	10		Agreement, Local Dayton Socialist Party & Fern Dobbins	1918
5	11		Acknowledgement of sympathy card from Mrs. Eugene V. Debs	1926
5	12		Position paper, re: disruptionist tactics of Communist Party in the US Congress Against War	circa 1933
5	13		Precinct Directory, City of Dayton	1933
5	14		Notices re: Party sponsored activities	1918, 1935
5	15		Petition to US Congress, re: Cuba	1936
5	16		Rules taken from WPA Foreman's Handbook	1936
5	17		Photographs and Negatives	Circa 1920s?
5	18		Copies of Agreements, Correspondence & Legal Proceedings, re: Local Dayton's Lot Sales	1927-1932
5	19		Miscellaneous Correspondence, Local Dayton Socialist Party	1906-1936
5	20		Miscellaneous Announcements & Resolutions	1911-1932