

Santa Maria

Dec 31 1856

My Dear Comrade

I write you from here because I happen to be here on business. This will doubtless be a long letter, but I hope you will take time to read it through. I have been gratified to know that the S L P headquarters commend the policy of my paper, the New Charter (San Jose) and I am sorry that circumstances over which I had no control compelled me to suspend publication for awhile. It will be republished in San Francisco in February. The State & Com. have made it the official organ of the S L P for this state and the editorial policy will be

under the supervision of the National  
Ex Committee

The State Ex Com furnish  
me type and materials free, also  
rent free for three months, and  
my wife and I do the work and  
get the income. The Party is not  
strong here yet, hence their  
paper must be run by some one  
long habituated to facing poverty for a  
cause, and who will not chaperone  
it. My wife and I can fill  
that bill all right.

The paper is to  
be run three months as a monthly,  
and then as a weekly, we will run  
it as a weekly sooner if the  
patronage warrants. The price has  
been 50 cents per year, and  
by advice of Com will continue  
at that price until it is  
safely on its feet as a weekly.

The price is too low, but I started it to compete with the coming nation and Appeal to Reason, both of which have a large circulation out here.

The New Charter has been in existence three years, has a paid up circulation of about 4000 subs, mostly middle of the road Populists, many of whom have declared for socialism since the New Charter came over. To begin with a paper that has age and reputation is better than to begin at the ground.

Now I am frankly going to ask for some encouragement from national headquarters, which I believe you will grant, as the New Charter can in no sense become a rival to the People.

First - Will you send me the names and addresses of all sec-  
tions secretaries in the country,  
and a selected list of good workers.

Second: - Will the People Carry  
a ten line reading notice adver-  
tisement, with a clubbing proposition  
with People at the end, and what  
will the charge be?

Third: - Will you give me such  
pointers as the Party's experience  
has demonstrated to be valuable  
in running a paper; and that will  
help us to build up an I L P  
paper on this coast, and aid  
us in getting at the people  
and booming the cause?

Fourth: - Will the I L P headquarters  
advance me one hundred dollars <sup>worth</sup>  
of uncredited socialist literature, at whole-  
sale price and freight it to me

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and allow me to make settlement at the end of each month, for what is sold for the month? By advertising such literature in my paper I believe it conservative to say that we can sell \$1000 worth in a year, which would greatly lighten the burden of existence, as well as help the cause. I have not the money to buy in a stock of literature, and if I had to write a letter, and get a postal every time I got an order for books, it would take off all the profits, make a lot of extra work besides irritating our customers with the delay. I sincerely hope the above propositions will be favorably considered

The new Charter will be straight  
socialist. The Labor Exchange matters

will be cut out. I desire to be clear on tactics and economics, and to avoid everything that is re-actionary, and shall welcome advice from headquarters. I desire to act in conjunction, and in harmony with national headquarters in doing all I am capable of for the cause of the people.

What is the clipping rate of the People? Our idea is to make the new charter 50 cents per year; clipping rates 40 cents, and to send 52 numbers of the paper to those who pay for a year while the paper is yet a monthly (first three months of issue)

The comrades out here are poor; we haven't much to start with, and if you can get prices in

Motion that will prompt our Com-  
rades throughout the country to send  
us in a few dollar worth of sub-  
scribers during January it will  
help us in our startoff.

Briefly, I will give  
you my connection with reform  
work. Since 1874 I have been  
connected with the Greenback and  
Populist movement. Have been a dele-  
gate to five National conferences and  
conventions, Kansas City, March '90,

Cincinnati May 21<sup>st</sup>, 1891,

St Louis February 22, 1892, Omaha

July 4 1892, St Louis July 22, 96,

Made 70 speeches in the first suc-  
cessful Populist campaign in Missouri,

in 1890, managed the first Populist  
campaign in Kentucky, in behalf of  
National Com 1891, afterward State

Chairman of Ohio, delegate-at-large-

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and Chairman of Ohio Convention to  
Columbus, and member of National  
Conv 1892. For two years I did the  
principal editorial work on the Ameri-  
can Noncomformist of Indianapolis, Ind,  
which was and still is the most  
widely circulated Populist paper in the  
country. Started with that paper in  
Kansas in '88 and moved with it  
to Indianapolis in '89. Have made  
speeches at many of the biggest  
Populist rallies in the States of Kansas,  
Texas, Missouri, Iowa, Ill, Ind, Ohio,  
Kentucky and Calif. Came to latter  
state in Jan 1893. Am a non-  
in-law of State Chairman War-  
dell, (Populist) of this state, but  
we never agree, politically on  
anything.

I have always been more radical  
than my party, hence have always  
had the party machine against me.



Three years ago, while editing the National Spectator at Fresno Calif I discarded the free silver delusion and have fought it ever since. I had associated with me at that time Mr. Job Harriman, of I P candidate for Congress in 6th Calif this year

For several years I have been a Socialist at heart, but regret that through lack of knowledge I was not always clear as to what Socialism was, and have wasted time advocating re-act-ionary things. Time and study, and good counsel has cleared the atmosphere. A year and a half ago, I joined the Labor Exchange and became an organizer. I thought in the beginning that was Socialism but have since discovered it

is not, Mr Carl Gleeson was running a Labor Exchange Paper in San Francisco. A year ago he joined his Paper to mine, and had a page therein devoted to Labor Exchange. After the St Louis Populist Convention this year, when I came out for Socialism I found that the Labor Exchange leaders were bitterly opposed to it. Mr Gleeson has now totally withdrawn from the Paper, and left me free to run it straight Socialist.

At St. Louis Convention (Populist) this year I was made a member of the Middle of the Road National Committee, and was made their leader on the floor of the convention. The party machine met us with, "You are Socialists and have no business here", Concluding

that was true I came out  
 for Socialism  
 In October I visited Job Harrison  
 at Los Angeles and was jailed  
 with Comrades Higgins and Mc  
 Ginty for addressing an open  
 air Socialist meeting. I then  
 joined ~~joined~~ Los Angeles section  
 S & P.

I believe the time is ripe for a  
 big Socialist harvest, and I want  
 to get my sickle into the grain  
 I anxiously await  
 your answer.

My address for a while will be  
 as below.

Fraternally

M. W. Wilkins  
 San Jose  
 Calif