
Report of the NEC to the 2nd National Convention of the Socialist Labor Party of America: Allegheny City, PA — Dec. 26, 1879

by Philip Van Patten

Published in *Proceedings of the National Convention of the Socialistic Labor Party Held at Turner Hall, Allegheny City, PA, Commencing Dec. 26th, 1879*. Detroit: National Executive Committee of the Socialistic Labor Party, 1880; pp. 5-17.

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Philip Van Patten then read the official report of the National Executive Committee, reciting the various acts of that body, and also a general history of the party. It was received with applause and referred to committee on report of National Executive Committee. The following is a summary:

It is to be regretted that our party has lost valuable opportunities offered during the past two years, but which could not be properly grasped, as our own organization had not yet the experience nor confidence necessary to control the vast numbers of discontented workmen who were ready to be organized. The situation has now materially changed. The temporary revival of business prosperity is rapidly drawing the plundered toilers back into their old paths, and closing their ears to the appeals of reason. They are selling their birthright for a mess of pottage, by rejecting the prospect of future emancipation, in their greed for the trifling gains of the present.

It is especially to be regretted that we had not secured the election of at least a dozen representatives in the legislatures of every Northern state, since a party which has elected a number of representatives is considered tolerably permanent, while one which has not is regarded by the public as transient and uncertain. We believe, therefore, that our party has been over-cautious in spending all its time and efforts in perfecting the means, while the results have been treated as secondary in importance. We must expect the labor movement to meet with dangers, for only by actual experience can our members obtain a knowledge of political management. We cannot know what men to trust until they have safely passed through the temptations and corruptions of several campaigns. In endeavoring to avoid the extreme of

pushing forward candidates regardless of consequences, we have fallen into the other extreme, that of electing nobody. We have vainly attempted to convert all those upon whose votes we depend into philosophers and political economists, able to direct and guide such public officers as might be elected, and we regret that our efforts made to this end have only reduced the quantity, without materially improving the quality of those voters. We can be careful without being timid, and bold without being rash; consequently this convention should remove some of the obstacles to progress, and still retain all checks necessary for safety.

We must grapple with present false conditions, and so alter, modify, and readjust them, that we can always hold public attention and keep the minds of workingmen excited over each progressive measure leading toward the desired result. In the arguments above offered, we believe that the cause of our present political weakness is made clear, and with this introduction we will now review the history of the party during our administration.

When our committee first organized itself in Cincinnati in March 1878, the conditions which caused the congress to choose that city as the location for its managing officers had greatly changed. Although at the fall elections of 1877 Hamilton County had cast 9,000 votes for the ticket of the Workingmen's Party of the United States, yet within the two months following that election, a dangerous reaction set in.

The old quarrels between the extreme theoretical Socialists and the stronger elements which favored ameliorative measures and financial reform were revived with intense bitterness, so that when the Congress of Newark [Dec. 26-31, 1877] changed the name of the party, many made that action an excuse to leave our organization. Just before that fall election above mentioned, a daily newspaper, the *Ohio Volks Zeitung*, first appeared, with no capital of consequence to back it. The circumstances attending the establishment of this paper brought up fresh strife, and inaugurated the internal warfare among our German members which has almost completely destroyed the Cincinnati Section.

When, therefore, our committee entered upon the duties of office, the situation was already discouraging, especially when at the April [1878] elections, one month later, the small number of only 1,700 votes were cast for our local ticket. The failure of the daily paper in September following completed the downfall of the movement in Cincinnati. Our committee could do nothing to avert the blow, but were obliged to witness with sorrow the consequences of imprudent speculation. We state these facts in order to explain how the Section once most powerful in the party, and which appointed our National Executive Committee, has been destroyed and our committee itself greatly weakened.

The Party Press.

When the last Party Congress adjourned [Dec. 31, 1877] there were in the United States the following newspapers devoted to our movement:

- *The Arbeiter Stimme*, (property of the Party). Weekly. New York.
- *Vorwaerts*, (published by stock company). Daily. Newark, NJ.
- *Ohio Volks Zeitung*, (published by stock company). Daily. Cincinnati, Ohio.
- *Philadelphia Tageblatt*, (published by stock company). Daily. Philadelphia, Pa.
- *Die Neue Zeit*, (published by stock company). Daily. Louisville, Ky.
- *Arbeiter Zeitung*, (published by stock company). Tri-weekly. Chicago, Ill.
- *Vorbote*, (published by stock company). Weekly. Chicago, Ill.
- *Volks Stimme des Westens*, (published by stock company). Daily. St. Louis, Mo.
- *Delnicke Listy*, (Bohemian [Czech]), (published by stock company). Weekly. . Cleveland, O.
- *Vorwaerts*, (published by stock company). Weekly. Milwaukee, Wis.
- *The Socialist*, (English), (published by stock company). Weekly. Detroit, Mich.
- *The Times*, (English), (published by C.A. Light). Weekly. Indianapolis, Ind.

Shortly after the Congress, the *Vorwaerts* of Newark suspended publication, followed by the *Neue Zeit* of Louisville, the *Vorwaerts* of Milwaukee, and *The Socialist* of Detroit. The *Delnicke Listy* was removed to New York City. Early in 1878 the German membership of New York established a handsome daily entitled the *New Yorker Volks Zeitung*. The competition made by this paper very soon took so many subscribers from the *Arbeiter Stimme* — the weekly paper belonging to our party — that its suspension had to be ordered. Before ceasing publication we called upon the publishers of the *Volks Zeitung* to redeem their promise made at the Congress, to avoid destroying our weekly paper; and we asked them to print our paper at a low price, from the standing matter used in the daily. After considerable correspondence this was refused, and the *Arbeiter Stimme* had to be suspended, leaving the party over \$400 in debt to the Social Democratic Printing Association.

In April 1878, our committee decided, with the approval of the Board of Supervision, to issue a weekly paper in the English language entitled *The National Socialist*, with Josh McIntosh as editor. It came out early in May and its appearance was the signal for the suspension of *The Socialist*, the English weekly in Detroit, which was already nearly bankrupt. *The National*

Socialist soon gained nearly 3,000 subscribers, and although it ran heavily into debt, yet the weekly deficit was reduced to about \$20 per week.

In July 1878 we decided to call for the payment of an extra tax of 5 cents per member, for the relief of *The National Socialist*. The response was rather weak, yet considerable help was obtained.

In August 1878 the Chicago Section resolved to publish a local weekly of their own, with money (\$3,000) which they had gained by holding a picnic and festival. As the competition of this paper would be certain to break down our *National Socialist*, which was then already \$800 in debt, and the other debts of the Party (over \$500 more) were very heavy, our committee decided to persuade the Chicago membership to buy the membership list of our paper and issue the new one as the official Party organ. After two trips to Chicago, our Corresponding Secretary [Van Patten] was successful in selling the list for \$400 cash, and making a contract binding the Chicago Section to publish the paper, strictly as an official organ of the Party, with editors whose appointment should be subject to our approval. Under the Chicago management the paper lived nearly a year, until August 1879, but its expenses were so heavy, and its deficit so large (an average of \$50 per week!) that its entire capital of \$2,600 was wasted, and the paper died. The Chicago *Arbeiter Zeitung* was made daily early in 1879, and a new company formed for its publication. The *Indianapolis Times*, under the management of C.A. Light, changed its names and its politics in the spring of this year, and assumed the title of *The Democrat*. As previously mentioned, the *Ohio Volks Zeitung* suspended in September 187, after seven months of severe struggling with financial difficulties, and the attempt to continue its weekly publication also failed.

All these disasters to our Party papers led us to suggest to the publishers of our principle daily papers that they enter into practical cooperation with one another, namely, that each of the two large papers, one in the East, the other in the West, should print one side of each of the smaller papers in neighboring cities from the standing matter used in their own. By this plan numbers of weeklies and small dailies in towns near the central office could be cheaply published. Our suggestion was, however, not acted upon except for the *Philadelphia Tageblatt*, which gets its Sunday edition printed at the office of the *New York Volks Zeitung*.

Several months ago a small daily evening paper called the *Arbeiter Zeitung* appeared in Milwaukee under the editorship of M. Biron.

The Scandinavian members of Chicago commenced, soon after the last Congress, publication of a weekly paper in their own language, with the title *Den Nye Tid*. Great sacrifices were necessary on the part of the publishers to sustain it, but it still manages to exist, and deserves encouragement. We cannot close our review of the Socialistic Labor Press without mentioning the *Irish World* and *Industrial Liberator*. This splendid weekly, while nominally a Greenback paper and the principle organ of that Party, is never-

theless so impregnated with radical Socialism that it is doing far more for our cause than any English paper in America. We could wish it to be all our own, were it not for the fact that it now reaches tens of thousands who would ignore it were it devoted exclusively to Socialistic theories. We hope our members will aid it with correspondences, and lay our views before its readers.

In October last our National Executive Committee commenced publication of an official monthly bulletin, and the warmth with which its advent was hailed convinces us that such a paper ought to have been issued years ago. It is cheap and small and yet full of all party news of interest. We hope it will be continued, as it supplies a long-felt want.

Agitation.

Our committee have always made it their policy to so manage the financial affairs that the heavy deb by which we were burdened could be steadily reduced. During our administration we have paid off all debts except that of the *Arbeiter Stimme*, which still amounts to \$115. Owing to these financial difficulties we were obliged to be very sparing in the matter of sending out traveling speakers. Nevertheless, we have done fully as much in this line as the former National Executive Committee, although laboring under far greater difficulties. We have learned that Sections near to one another can be induced to join in paying expenses of a speaker on their route, and thus avoid drawing to any considerable extent upon the party treasury. An agitator with any enterprise can collect enough at each place he visits to carry him to the next place. In many cases he may deliver lectures costing 10 or 15 cents for tickets, as has been successfully done by several agitators.

In the fall of 1878, our committee issued to all Sections quantities of blank subscription lists for the establishment of an agitation fund. The Northern, Eastern, and Western states were apportioned into five agitational districts, and the Sections in those districts were appealed to to combine their strength and money and organize the states in such districts. Our appeal was read, approved, and — in most cases — forgotten! We must give credit to the states of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, for having formed temporary state organizations and appointed State Executive Committees. Those of New York and Pennsylvania made numerous efforts to strengthen their connections, and did succeed partially. Our party papers gave very little attention to the matter and deserve censure for ignoring so important a movement.

Our Political Record.

At the ballot box — the instrument which is popularly supposed to correctly express the will of the people — our party has generally held

ground very firmly, some localities showing increased strength, while others, once prominent in the movement, have weakened in a most discouraging manner. But however slowly we may seem to gain in voting strength, it cannot be denied that we have compelled the public to adopt a much more respectful attitude toward us, and tens of thousands who still regard the success of the old parties to which they severally belong, as necessary to public safety under present circumstances, have nevertheless become convinced of the justice of our ultimate aims. They no longer believe in the divine right of property, but they are too indolent or indifferent to devote their time and talents to the work of organizing, or of spreading our principles. We have compelled such journals and periodicals as *The Nation*, the *North American Review*, *The Independent*, *The International Review*, *The XIXth Century*, *The Boston Investigator*, and many other prominent publications, to discuss our movement in an earnest manner. That their conclusions generally are unfavorable is to be expected, yet we find that after the literary champions of capitalism have to their own satisfaction demolished our arguments, they find it necessary every few months to renew the contest.

Two years ago we were treated as incendiaries and inciters of riots for the purpose of plunder. Today we meet with silent respect for our devotion, although it is the respect shown to "well-meaning fanatics and harmless dreamers." But these fanatics have arguments which startle the scoffers, these dreamers offer remedies for social wrongs — remedies based upon the soundest principles of socio-political economy, and the poorest workingman is furnished with weapons which pierce through all the armor of sophistry. The progress of socialism cannot be measured by the number of votes cast for our humble ticket, but by the extent to which the public have become enlightened as to our principles. Therefore we find no cause for discouragement in the weak vote polled by our Party. The following is a short and hasty review of our political history. Most of the Sections have abstained from participating in the campaigns since their organizations are claimed to be too weak to achieve success. In the New England states, only the Section of Boston has taken much interest in the elections, and there only in a limited degree. In the manufacturing towns, the workmen are kept under such strict supervision by their employers that they rarely dare to hold public meetings.

In New York City and Brooklyn the Party polls from three to five thousand votes, the former figure being the reliable voting strength. At the recent election the socialists of New York state nominated a full state ticket, and quite a number of towns were organized for its support. Albany, Troy, Utica, Syracuse, Buffalo, and a number of towns around New York and on Long Island lent their aid. Comrade Caleb Pink was candidate for Governor and Comrade Osborne Ward for Lieutenant-Governor. The state organization was naturally very incomplete, owing to our lack of speakers and resources,

so that not over 10,000 votes were polled. This result is however better than ever before, and is at least progress in the right direction.

The Sections of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Maryland remained inactive. In Ohio, where in 1877 over 12,000 votes were cast for the state ticket, the organization was destroyed as before stated, before our Executive Committee was formed, since in April 1878 only Cincinnati had a county ticket in the field. Seventeen hundred votes were recorded, a downfall which frightened away all but those who were or had been Section members. In the fall election, the Cincinnati members made the first nominations for Congress that have occurred since organization of our party. Peter H. Clark, a colored man, and Solomon Ruthenberg, were the candidates, their combined vote not exceeding 600. The *Ohio Volks Zeitung* had been suspended, and the party was completely demoralized. The spring of 1879 witnessed the same state of affairs, the vote being less than 500. During the summer the partial revival of business induced workingmen to ask more wages and reorganize their trade unions, and as our members rendered them active assistance in this good work, we gained their confidence so that at the October election a handsome increase of our vote rewarded our efforts. The sections in Kentucky refrained from taking any part in the campaigns, as did also those of Indiana. Detroit, Michigan now has a lively movement, notwithstanding the difficulties under which the Section has labored. As in Cincinnati, so in Detroit, our members believe in nominating a ticket and voting for it even if only a dozen votes are cast. At the last election they lacked very few votes of electing Comrade Simpson as alderman.

It is to Chicago, however, that the attention of our Party has been turned ever since the large vote of 1877. Then nearly 7,000 votes set the movement on its feet, and until the last election there has been a steady increase. In the spring of 1878 Comrade Fred Stauber was elected alderman from the 14th ward, and did good service in the city council by exposing frauds and corrupt jobs dating back a number of years. In the fall of that year there were elected three State Representatives, namely C. Ehrhardt, C. Meier, and Leo Mellbeck, and one State Senator, Sylvester Artley. During their first term they introduced bills to enforce the payment of wages in cash, prohibiting children's labor and the employment of convict labor by private individuals, a bill to license locomotive engineers, to enforce the 8-hour law already on the statute books, to create a bureau of labor statistics, to secure proper ventilation in the mines, to make employers responsible for injuries to employees while at work, and a number of other important measures. Most of these were killed either by direct vote or by amendments which destroyed their efficiency. The bureau of labor statistics was however established and good results hoped for. In the following spring [1879] four socialists were elected as aldermen, namely Altpeter, Lorenz, Meier, and Stauber.

Although the opportunities of these representatives are somewhat limited, yet they have always been found on the side of honesty and justice on all questions requiring their votes. At the election in which these socialists were successful, our ticket was headed by a candidate for mayor who is deservedly one of the most popular and best loved men in Chicago, namely Dr. Ernst Schmidt, the leading German physician and an old associate of Karl Marx. He received 12,000 votes, running ahead of his ticket and lending great influence to the movement, although he was defeated.

In the middle of summer [1879] a special election for judges was held, in which while our Party took no official action, yet the members by tacit consent united in supporting Judges Barnum and McAllister, owing to their steadfast protection of the working people against the oppressions of the monied class. Our party was not disappointed in these men, for when the question of the constitutionality of the State Militia Law was brought into the courts, these judges affirmed the right of the people to maintain their own military organizations independent of the government. For having been instrumental in gaining this decision, the *Lehr und Wehr Verein*, the military workingmen's organization, fulfilled a valuable mission, thus convincing us that after all there is nothing on earth which is not *sometimes* useful. At the fall election for county offices, our ticket suffered a discouraging loss, only 5,000 votes having been cast for it. To be sure, there was no hope of carrying the county, and therefore many thousands felt that votes for the socialist ticket would accomplish no good beyond showing our strength, so that these may return to their allegiance next time, yet the influence of this setback will require great efforts on our part to restore our former power.

The *Arbeiter Zeitung*, our daily paper, has proven a valuable means of agitation.

Throughout the rest of the state there has been no political action, although a number of Sections are organized. Chicago socialists ought long ago to have organized the state, and we trust this important matter will be no longer delayed. Missouri depends upon St. Louis to represent socialism politically. This city has cast as high as 7,000 votes for us, yet unfortunately these occasions happen when they can do no good except to give opportunities for strong protests against existing evils. None of our candidates for any important offices except those of members of school board, have been elected. On two occasions the Greenbackers and our Section have endorsed each other's candidates, but this has, we believe, never been done in such a way as to compromise our principles. The *Volks-Stimme des Westens*, our daily German paper, continues to do good work, and only needs a little livening up in its local and general departments to make it a formidable competitor with the capitalistic dailies.

Wisconsin, Iowa, Kansas, and Louisiana all have Sections of our Party, but the only political action in these states was taken by the sections of Leavenworth and New Orleans, the former in a county election and the

latter in opposition to the new constitution. Both Sections lost their cause but gained in experience, and will do better next time.

In California our Sections are doing their best to educate the rank and file of the WPC [Workingmen's Party of California] in our principles, but have not nominated an independent ticket, deeming it unwise and imprudent at present to divide the forces of the labor movement.

In Colorado a lively movement was inaugurated at Denver by Comrade Pinther and several old members from Chicago. In July [1879] they held a great demonstration in favor of the 8-hour law, and afterward prepared for political action, since which time they have not reported. As may be gathered from the foregoing report, the Southern states remain unorganized with only an occasional subscriber here and there. The experience we have gained has forced us to the conclusion that Article 2 of general regulations of the constitution is a great injury to our movement, for it not only discourages newly organized sections by preventing them from voting for their principles until 12 months have elapsed, but it also cripples all other Sections by preventing them from expressing their judgment as to who are fit to be candidates.¹ The rule has been broken so many times that it no longer is considered binding, and we cannot suspend a section for its violation. The cases of Chicago, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Leavenworth, and we believe New York offer we believe sufficient proof of the inefficiency of this law.

During the past summer our Committee called for a general vote upon a number of amendments intended to perfect our political machinery, and among other reforms we asked the limitation of the probation period of candidates to 6 months. This was, however, voted down by a small majority, while most of the other amendments were adopted. The most important amendments which became law were those permitting the recognition of only one Section in each city or town (with as many Branches as may be found necessary), and those providing means to conduct the movement in each large city through a Central Committee, which is to all intents and purposes the Section itself, but can transact business much more rapidly and intelligently than the old style mass meetings could. The clause which deprived executive officers of the Section of voting power in the Central Committee, but left them the right to debate and advise upon all questions, has caused some discussion. Our reason for the amendment was that we considered such officers servants of the Section, and as such they should not be allowed to vote upon questions affecting their own administration. We

¹ **General Regulations:** 2. No person shall be eligible as a candidate of this Party for any public office who has not been at least one year a member of the party in good standing, and has identified himself with the movement by active participation. This rule may be suspended in cases of necessity, by the Board of Supervision and National Executive Committee, on application of any Section.

hope the amendments will not be materially changed by the Congress, except to better carry out the ideas embodied in them.

The question of our participation in the Presidential election of 1880 has been greatly debated, and the longer we reflect upon the matter the more we are convinced that we must under no consideration abstain from placing a ticket in the field. Great opportunities are now offered by the confusion in the ranks of the old parties. They have no longer any important issues, while we have the greatest issue ever presented to the people of America. The proposition to combine with the Workingmen's Party of California, the Liberal Party, and the Greenback Party, by uniting to support able representative men for the offices of President and Vice-President, would meet with our endorsement did we not know who that man would be and what the platform would be. If one can be found who will represent all labor elements on the main principle, leaving particular questions not immediately essential for future settlement, we shall indeed rejoice. The proposed Liberal Party, whose preliminary convention was held in Cincinnati in September last [1879] under the auspices of the Liberal League, and which adopted a socialist platform, gives no indication of an intention to nominate a Presidential ticket, its newspaper organs being remarkably silent on the subject. Still they may carry out their promises and show some political independence, therefore we recommend that the future National Executive Committee be authorized to send representatives to their convention in May 1880, also to that of the Workingmen's Party at Chicago, or elsewhere, when held, for purposes of conference with a view to possible unity in the campaign. A general vote of our Sections should be necessary to ratify any proposed coalition or endorsement of candidates. If none can be agreed upon we ought still to nominate one of our own men. We have fully as strong an organization now as the Greenback Party had in 1876, when they cast 100,000 votes, and as we believe that most other labor and reform parties will be used and possibly destroyed by the politicians of the old parties, we may be the only genuine labor party in the field. Let each state organization furnish its own tickets and distribute them well. The expense of tickets is trifling — not over fifty cents per thousand. Future details can easily be arranged. By all means let us vote for our principles next year!

Bureau of Labor Statistics.

These valuable institutions are now established in many states, but do not all work satisfactorily. That of Massachusetts is too timid or else too crippled in resources to attract public attention. That of New Jersey is no better. In that of Ohio the laboring people have an able and devoted representative in the person of Mr. Harry Walls, former secretary of the International Iron Moulders' Union. His reports are so truthful that he may soon lose his position. The bureau in Illinois has not yet published its first report.

That of Missouri is also in its infancy, under the management of Comrades Hilkené and P.J. McGuire. It is expected that when the census of the United States shall be taken in 1880, the statistics of the industries of America will also receive attention.

The trades unions and ameliorative reform movements are slowly gaining strength — very slowly. Although the 8-hour agitation has been kept up incessantly for years, and occasional demonstrations are held in its favor, yet the organization necessary to enforce observance of an 8-hour system makes little progress. The National and International trade union organizations have made little effort toward the desired federation of labor. At the annual conventions resolutions favorable to such combination were adopted by the Iron Moulders, the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers, the Cigar Makers, and the International Typographical Union, but with their adoption the matter seems to have been consigned to oblivion until another convention should be held. The recent revival of industry awakened new life and interest in the unions, quite a number of important strikes having resulted favorably to the workingmen.

By assisting and advising them, our membership has made many friends. Consistent and patient work among them seems to us absolutely necessary if we would gain political strength of any consequence, even without considering that it is our manifest duty to assist every effort of workingmen to ameliorate their condition.

Pamphlets and Tracts.

Our Committee have done their best to furnish suitable pamphlets and cause their circulation. Those entitled *Lassalle's Open Letter* and *Does Socialism Tend to Abolish Private Property?* were published at the expense of the party; several others by members on their own responsibility. We have standing advertisements of them in all the party papers, yet regret to state that very few Sections have bought them for distribution. A little attention to this valuable means of instruction would largely increase and improve our English-speaking membership. In Detroit several enterprising members have formed a tract association, printing many thousand sheets at low prices. Sections should purchase large quantities of them for free distribution. Now is the time for action. Delay is almost criminal.

Military Organization.

During the months of May and June 1878, the public press first began to express alarm at the reports of the organization of military companies among workingmen in Chicago and Cincinnati. As these carried the red flag and acknowledged their socialistic tendencies, the public were informed that the socialists were determined to accomplish by force what they could

not obtain by the ballot. The announcement having also been made that a general strike would occur in June, beginning at Chicago, and that the *Lehr und Wehr Verein* had ordered many thousands of rounds of ammunition, cause the entire newspaper world to publish warnings and alarming threats. The statements of the *Lehr und Wehr Verein* avowing peaceable intentions and declaring that the organization was only for self-defense in case workmen's meetings should be unjustly dispersed or our republican institutions overthrown, were received with derision. Americans asked, "what contingency could arise requiring the resistance of military organizations to the civil authorities?" Socialists asked, "what could be gained by resisting with arms and drilled forces the officers of the law in any one locality, even if such officers were acting in a manner unauthorized by law?" And above all, supposing a case might arise in which resistance of the working people to the civil officers would be justifiable, and that in the event of such an emergency some organization and discipline would be necessary for successful resistance, why should these armed bodies parade the streets in time of peace, in connection with and under the auspices of the Socialist Labor Party, a political association which is revolutionary in its aims but professes to desire only a peaceful revolution? What consistency is there in our professions when viewed from the standpoint of the generally uninformed and timid public? If the mildest philanthropist in the world, even Peter Cooper, were to walk the streets armed to the teeth, with a belt full of revolvers and a breech-loading rifle on his shoulder, people would look upon him with fear and trembling, and should they learn that he was a socialist who denies the privileges of property, they would feel like calling out the militia at once.

The public alarm at the period above mentioned required that our intentions should be declared and our position officially defined. Therefore we published a card denying the false reports that our Sections were arming, and informing the public that our party, *as a party*, would not be responsible for any violations of law by its members. The German weekly *Vorbote* ridiculed our action in a most unwarranted manner. Shortly afterward we learned that the *Lehr und Wehr Verein* would march under arms with the procession of our Sections of Chicago, upon the very day when the general strike was expected to commence, and that in anticipation of trouble the city authorities had issued special orders to the police department that the militia forces would be assembled at their respective armories. We resolved to advise the Chicago Section to avoid any military display and instead to ridicule the authorities by appearing in a manner as innocent as that of a religious procession. Owing to the lateness of the hour we had not time to communicate fully our wishes, but published through the Associated Press a declaration to all Sections to the effect that military organization is unwarranted by our constitution, and that no official recognition should be granted to armed bodies of workmen, also advising members of our Party to withdraw from any military organizations of the kind described.

This declaration was received by the Chicago section with the most bitter contempt. The advice was disregarded and the armed organization welcomed to the procession. The editor of the *Arbeiter Zeitung* and *Vorbote* [Paul Grottkau], not satisfied with this, attempted to create a permanent breach in our party by printing thousands of extra papers filled with abuse of our Committee, ignoring all explanations showing the good intentions which had actuated us, so as to maintain the honor of the Party we repudiated the *Vorbote* as our organ until such time as its tone should be corrected. After a time we resolved for the sake of the party, which was being greatly injured by the strife, and in view of the fact that the *Vorbote* had evidently recovered its reason, to again publish our official records in its columns. Since then comparative harmony has existed, although occasional blows are still aimed at us. We now call upon the Congress for a final vindication of our course, and hope that future misunderstandings concerning the attitude of the party to military organizations of workingmen will be avoided by a suitable resolution.

With this emphatic demand we close, hoping that the Party may rise above the petty difficulties which now embarrass it and become what we have striven to make it — a grand legion of devoted, earnest, and sincere champions of Human Rights and Universal Brotherhood.

Respectfully submitted,

The National Executive Committee.

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Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport

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