
Letter to Theodore Debs, National Secretary of the “Chicago” Social Democratic Party from William Butscher, National Secretary of the “Springfield” Social Democratic Party, April 18, 1901

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Theo. Debs, Esq.
National Secretary SDP,
Chicago, Ill.

Dear Sir and Comrade:—

I received a certified copy of the call for a unity convention of all organized Socialists of this country, adopted by the last national convention of your party, as well as your communication of March 28, 1901, advising me of the fact that the said call had been approved by a referendum vote of your membership, and agreeably to your request, I submitted both documents to the National Executive Committee of our party.

Our party has always stood for organic unity of all true Socialists of the United States, and welcomes the stand taken by your convention as an important step towards the accomplishment of that great object.

While your party was voting upon your call, our party, by practically unanimous vote, adopted a resolution, a copy of which I enclose and which, you will notice, calls for a general convention of the Socialists in terms similar to those in your call. It is with great pleasure that we exercise the authority conferred on us by the said resolution and accept your invitation for a joint unity convention.

We have appointed Comrades [Leon] Greenbaum and Putnam of St. Louis, Mahoney and Hamilton of Indianapolis, and [Max S.] Hayes of Cleveland, as a committee to cooperate with a similar committee of your party in all necessary preparations and arrangements for the convention, and we hope that they, together with any additional committees that may be appointed for that purpose by other Socialist organizations, will pave the way towards a successful and expeditious accomplishment of the task of the convention.

In conclusion we desire to urge upon you the advisability of modifying the terms of your call in some details in the common interest of the Socialist movement of this country.

We believe the date set by you for the convention, the second Tuesday in September [Sept. 10, 1901], is not well chosen. It is too remote, and it will very materially interfere with the fall campaign by compelling us to open the same with our forces still divided and by taking from it all our available funds and the time and energy of our most active organizers and speakers. We suggest that the convention be held in the early part of July.

We also believe that the actions and decisions of the convention should not be submitted to the general vote of each separate party or organization participating in the same, but should be final, so

that a united Socialist party might at the conclusion of the convention become an accomplished fact, and not a debatable proposition, and in order to avoid unnecessary prolongation of the unfortunate division of our ranks with the inevitable friction engendered by it.

In advising that course we follow the example of our comrades in all European countries on similar occasions, and do not in any way offend against the principles of democracy within our ranks, as the party members have ample opportunity to manifest and enforce their desires in electing and instructing their delegates.

We believe we voice the sentiment of the overwhelming majority of the comrades in the ranks of both our parties in advising these modifications, and hope your board will find it possible to accept the same, or to submit them to a referendum vote of your party, if necessary.

With sincere wishes for a speedy union of all true Socialist forces.

By order of the National Executive Committee, SDP.

William Butcher,
National Secretary.

Springfield, Mass, April 18 [1901].

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