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To Members of the Social Democracy of America  
(June 16, 1898)

**The Social Democratic Party of America.**  
Address Communications and Remittances to  
Theodore Debs, 519 E Sixty-Sixth Street,  
Chicago, Ill.

Chicago, June 16, 1898.

To Members of the Social Democracy of America.

Comrades:—

There has been a division of the delegates who met in annual convention in this city in the name of the Social Democracy, beginning June 7th and ending June 11th, and the result has been the formation of a new party, known as the **Social Democratic Party of America**.

To report the truth respecting the withdrawal of the undersigned delegates from the convention, and the causes which led thereto, and to the formation of a new party, is the purpose of this address, and we bespeak for it the calm and serious consideration its importance demands.

Soon after the convention was called to order it became apparent that the delegates were divided into two factions, and as the deliberations proceeded the breach which separated them grew wider and all hope of bringing them into harmonious alliance vanished.

The prime factor in the disruption of the Social Democracy was the appearance in the convention of a number of delegates representing Chicago branches which were reported to have been organized within two or three days of the time the convention met, and these delegates were sufficient in number to control the convention. As a matter of fact they were chosen for that purpose and for that purpose alone, and it can be proved that the branches they were alleged to represent had not, and have not now, any existence.

That there was an undercurrent to defeat independent political action, especially in some sections in which certain delegates were personally interested, was too plainly evident to admit of doubt. The intense activity of

certain other persons who are known to be violently opposed to political action emphasized the conviction that "colonization" was made the pretext for defeating the independent political program of the organization.

Another factor in the separation was the colonization department. Upon this feature there were, and are no doubt, honest differences, but that the work done, or rather not done, by the commission during the past year is a sore disappointment as well as a flat failure is a fact so painfully evident as to silence all controversy. The constitution authorized the commission to select some state for colonization, with a view to securing control, political and otherwise, but this mandatory duty had been totally disregarded, and instead of this all kinds of schemes were proposed and abandoned, and absolutely nothing accomplished. There was undoubtedly a radical departure from the original design to decide upon a state and colonize it to secure political control; and on the lines followed by the commission, which the convention was determined to continue, failure and ruin are, we are convinced, inevitable, as time will demonstrate.

From time to time the commission reported in the columns of *The Social Democrat* that they were on the eve of launching great enterprises, raising the hopes of members to the highest pitch, and as nothing materialized from these glowing promises, the disappointment and dissatisfaction of delegates was intense, and when the reports of the commission showed that almost \$2500 had been received and spent, and that there was nothing tangible to show for it, the feeling found expression in bitter opposition.

A third cause of the trouble grew out of the fact that a certain number joined the Social Democracy, avowing their faith in the colonization department, who are not social democrats, are opposed to political action, and are, in fact, opposed to the fundamental principles of the organization.

Under these circumstances, and realizing that the various elements alluded to were utterly and hopelessly irreconcilable, the undersigned withdrew from the convention at the adjournment of the session of Friday night, 2:30 am, and proceeded at once to the Revere House, where it was unanimously decided to organize a new Socialist Party, composed exclusively of socialists who subscribe to the principles and program of international socialism.

Comrade Frederic Heath of Wisconsin presided and Comrade F.G.R. Gordon of New Hampshire acted as secretary. The following proceedings were had:

The platform reported by the majority of the committee in the Uhlich Hall convention was approved.

The name "Social Democratic Party of America" was adopted.

A temporary national committee composed of delegates from the various cities and states was chosen.

An address to the membership of the Social Democracy, setting forth the causes which led to the separation, was ordered issued and signed by the delegates representing the seceding branches. The meeting adjourned at 4 o'clock am to meet again to perfect the organization at Hull House at 10 o'clock am.

Thus, at the dawn of a new day, the new organization was born.

The delegates met at Hull House pursuant to adjournment, Jesse Cox of Illinois in the chair and William Mailly of Tennessee acting as secretary. The following Executive Committee was chosen: Jesse Cox, Seymour Stedman, Eugene V. Debs, Victor L. Berger, and Frederic Heath. The Executive Committee was authorized to carefully revise the platform, prepare a suitable constitution, and submit the same to the membership for approval by a referendum vote.

The resolutions respecting organized labor, and also the resolutions in memory of Edward Bellamy and Paul Grottkau adopted by the Uhlich Hall convention were readopted.

A.S. Edwards of Tennessee was chosen National Organizer.

Jacob Winnen, representing the Social Democratic Federation, appeared before the body, expressing his approval of the new organization and declaring that he had no doubt the members would ratify the action and ally themselves with the Social Democratic Party at an early day.

(Note: E.V. Debs was prevented by illness from attending the Revere House and Hull House meetings, but was in accord with their object and his name therefore appears with the rest.)

The Executive Committee deem it advisable to continue headquarters at Chicago for the present. The place for holding the next annual convention will be determined hereafter.

The publication of an official paper will be begun at the earliest possible moment.

The constitution fixes the dues at 25 cents per quarter, payable quarterly in advance, and the first quarter's dues is payable on July 1st, and each branch is requested to send this amount for each member as soon as possible, together with a list of the names and addresses of members.

Herewith is forwarded to each branch a copy of the platform and constitution and in accordance with the action of the meeting held by the withdrawing delegates, each branch is requested to have the same voted on by the members and advise us of the approval or rejection of same as early as possible. It is hoped that the constitution will be promptly approved, even though some defects may be apparent, in order that the organization can be perfected. Such defects as may appear can be remedied later by a referendum vote.

As we are entirely without funds and require office equipment, printing, supplies, etc., we earnestly appeal to each branch and each member to send at once such an amount, however small, as can be spared to meet immediate demands.

The officers of the Executive Board for the present are as follows:

Chairman, Jesse Cox, 95 Fifth Avenue, Chicago.

Secretary, Seymour Stedman.

The temporary National Secretary and Treasurer is *Theodore Debs* and his address is *519 East Sixty-Sixth Street*, and all correspondence and remittances will be addressed to him until otherwise ordered.

Immediately on receipt of this address branches are requested to notify us if they approve of our action and are with us in the new organization. Branches deciding to ally themselves with the Social Democratic Party will have charters issued to them and cards of membership issued to their members as soon as these can be provided.

The motto of the Social Democratic Party is pure socialism and no compromise. The party stands for united political action and proposes to enter the national field this fall by nominating candidates for Congress in every district in which the organization has a foothold. Candidates for municipal and state offices will also be nominated wherever possible and a thorough campaign made for a united socialist vote throughout the country.

Comrades, we feel that the Social Democratic Party is the party of the American socialist movement. It stands for international socialism and appeals for support on its merits as a class-conscious, revolutionary social organization. The convention which resulted in separation has not

weakened, but strengthened the movement. There are now no longer warring factions, conflicting elements, but absolute unity and harmony, which are bound to bring success. Every loyal supporter of socialist principles should promptly come to the front and join the Social Democratic Party of America. Never was the outlook more promising. East, West, North, and South, comrades are with us and ringing messages of approval cheer us on the course we have taken. There is cause for neither doubt nor dependency. The cause of socialism has again given evidence that it cannot be sidetracked, that it is a living force in human affairs, and that in due course of time it will abolish the slavery of capitalism and give us the cooperative commonwealth.

With socialist greetings and awaiting your reply, we subscribe ourselves

Yours fraternally,

**James F. Carey**, Massachusetts

**Margaret Haile**, "

**Anna Ferry Smith**, California

**Eugene V. Debs**, Indiana

**Theodore Debs**, "

**Hugo Miller**, "

**Sylvester Keliher**, Illinois

**Jesse Cox**, "

**Seymour Stedman**, "

**George Koop**, "

**M. Winchevsky**, New York

**Louis E. Miller**, "

**I.A. Hourwich**, "

**I. Phillips**, "

**Joseph Barondess**, "

**William Butcher**, "

**Samuel Levine**, New Jersey

**G.A. Hoehn**, Missouri

**C.F. Meier**, "

**Mary G. Jones**, "

**William Mailly**, Tennessee

**A.S. Edwards**, "

**Victor L. Berger,** Wisconsin  
**Federic Heath,** "  
**Charles G. Kuhn,** "  
**George Moerschel,** "  
**Jacob Hunger,** "  
**John Doerfler,** "  
**Oscar Loebel,** "  
**F.G.R. Gordon,** New Hampshire  
**Charles R. Martin,** Ohio  
**W.J. Carberry,** "  
**Walter H. Miller,** Pennsylvania.

Typeset and printed circular letter mailed to party members. Copy on the Papers of Eugene V. Debs microfilm edition, reel 6, frames 1064-1065.