
The Duty of the Hour (October 4, 1897)

Chicago, Oct. 4, 1897.

Each member of the Social Democracy should recognize his duty in this struggle and perform it. To be a sluggard in such a crisis is almost criminal.

The Social Democracy affords to each the opportunity to do his duty. Take hold with all your energy and will and prove your fitness to march beneath its conquering banner.

Never mind what carping critics say or do. Their opposition, to the extent that it has any influence at all, is helpful. The progress of our movement hurts them, and they are unable to conceal their chagrin. We have no time to bandy epithets with them. We are too busy building up and giving strength and proportion to our great organization.

Not one minute have we to waste in noticing our detractors. The spirit and temper of their attacks reveal the motive and make any answer or comment wholly unnecessary.

The Social Democracy is now a little over three months old. Its growth has been phenomenal. No movement has ever met with more instantaneous or widespread recognition.

The Social Democracy has been discussed in almost every paper and periodical in the land. More than this, it has attracted large attention in the old world. There is no mistaking the overmastering significance and importance of the movement. It is forging rapidly to the front, and no power on earth can stay its emancipating march.

It means the overthrow of capitalism, the abolition of wage-slavery, and the inauguration of the cooperative commonwealth.

It means a social revolution which shall destroy the last vestige of labor slavery and give to every workingman economic freedom.

Let the progress of the future eclipse that of the past. Let each member, with the zeal and fidelity of a true socialist, do his full share of the great work we have undertaken.

There are new branches to be organized, new members to secure, as well as new subscribers to *The Social Democrat*.

The Colonization Department must have the unwavering support of the entire membership.

Let it be remembered that a local branch can be instituted with five or more members, and there should be one in active operation at every available point. Secretary Keliher will furnish full information and supply all necessary blank forms on application.

The first national convention will meet at Chicago in June next. Every state and territory in the Union will be fully represented. In the intervening eight months each member must do his very best to increase the membership and spread the light.

Now, right now, is the time to begin.

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