

Telegram Accepting the 1908 Nomination
for President of the United States
(May 15, 1908)

Girard [Kansas], May 15 [1908]

Fred Heath
Secretary, Socialist Party,¹
Chicago, Ill.

My Dear Comrades:—

Deeply touched by the incomparable honor you have for the third time conferred upon me. I accept the nomination for the presidency, returning to each of you, to the convention as a whole, and the party at large my sincere thanks.² The hearty unanimity with which the nomination is made and the magnificent spirit in which it is tendered fill me and thrill me with inexpressible emotions and arouse within me all the latent energy and enthusiasm to serve the Socialist Party and the great cause it represents, with all the mental, moral, and physical strength of my being.

Personally I had earnestly hoped the convention would choose otherwise,³ but as individual desire is subordinate to the party will, I can only wish myself greater strength and fitness to bear the revolutionary banner of the working class you have placed in my hands. Permit me to congratulate you upon the nomination of Comrade Hanford and to express my personal gratification in having a comrade so loyal to share in upholding the proletarian standard.

At a later date I shall make a formal answer to your notification. The campaign is now fairly opened and the command to advance must be issued to all the hosts of socialism and emancipation.

The working class of the United States must be aroused this year and made to feel the quickening pulse, the throbbing hope, and the stern resolve of the social revolution.

The greatest opportunity in the history of the socialist movement spreads out before us like a field of glory.

The principles of the Socialist Party are resplendent with the truths which crown them; its very name is prophetic, and its spirit is literal

fulfillment. In this auspicious hour, supreme with opportunity, duty to the cause transcends all else, and touching elbows and hearts keeping time to the quicksteps of the revolution, we march beneath the banner of “No Compromise” to certain victory.

My love and greeting to you all, my comrades. My heart is full and overflowing. With every drop of my blood and every fiber of my being, I render obedience to your command and offer myself, body and soul, to the Socialist Party, the working class, and the revolution.

Eugene V. Debs

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¹ Frederick Heath, editor of Victor L. Berger’s *Social Democratic Herald*, was the secretary of the nominating convention of the Socialist Party, held in Chicago from May 10-15, 1908.

² Debs was elected one of the four delegates of the Socialist Party of Indiana and was scheduled to join Morris Hillquit, May Wood Simons, and Joshua Wanhope as a speaker at a mass meeting preceding the opening of the quadrennial convention in Chicago on May 10. Continuing what was by now a highly predictable pattern of behavior, Debs once again skipped the convention, however, recycling the excuse of “family illness” as the reason for his inability to attend. An alternate delegate was seated in his stead. Debs remained in Girard, Kansas during the week, hundreds of miles from his home in Terre Haute.

³ For many months Debs had been boosting the candidacy of William D. Haywood as the Socialist Party’s nominee for 1908, including attendance of a January meeting with him along with top officials of the Socialist and Socialist Labor parties in the New York City office of Morris Hillquit to explore the idea of a joint SP-SLP ticket in the fall campaign.