
Report of Bohemian Section to the Socialist Party National Convention [May 1912]

by Josef Novak

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To the Socialist Party National Convention, 1912:

The Bohemian Socialist movement in the United States has been in existence more than fifteen years, but the Bohemian Section was affiliated with the Socialist Party of America as a foreign-speaking organization in December 1911, and the present Translator-Secretary took his office on December 13, 1911. At that time the Bohemian Section had 37 branches with a membership of about 800, in ten states.

From December 1911 to March 31, 1912, seven new branches were organized, and the Bohemian Section had 44 branches in eleven states, with 1,164 members. The Bohemian branches are in the following cities: Chicago, Ill., 13; Baltimore, Md. 1; New Bedford, Mass., 1; St. Louis, Mo., 1; Omaha, Neb., 2; South Omaha, Neb., 2; Elizabeth, N.J., 1; Union Hill, N.J., 1; Buffalo, N.Y., 1; New York, N.Y., 1; Winfield, N.Y., 1; Cleveland, Ohio, 5; Bellaire, 1; Bridgeport, 1; Neffs, 1; Allegheny, Pa., 1; Irwin, 1; Loyalhanna, 1; Mt. Pleasant, 1; North Braddock, 1; Philadelphia, 1; Wilmerding, 1; Taylor Crossing, Va., 1; Manitowoc, Wis., 1; Milwaukee, 1; Racine, 1.

The Bohemian Section resolved by referendum vote that every Bohemian branch has to belong to state and county. No Bohemian branch can buy the party dues stamps unless it pays the dues to the state and county. It is the opinion of the membership of the Bohemian Section that to take in branches and members to the Section which are not affiliated with state and county would be a step backward.

After the very successful tour of Comrade Dr. Francis Soukup from Prague, Bohemia, who was here last year and accomplished very good results, the Bo-

hemian Section decided by referendum vote to get in closer relationship with the Social Democratic Party in Bohemia and get a good organizer every year. Another important step was taken by the establishing of an information bureau for the purpose of warning the Bohemian workingmen regarding steamship companies' agents, who are encouraging the emigration and, under false pretenses, are painting the beautiful life in America to get business. Immigrants after coming here are disappointed and are used by patriotic American capitalists to lower the standard of living for the working class. For such Bohemian comrades who are members of the party in the old country and have decided to come to the United States the Bohemian Section established an information bureau to assist them in every possible way and to keep them in the party.

The Bohemian Section owns and controls five papers — one daily and four weeklies. The oldest of them, the weekly *Spravedlnost* (Justice), has been published since 1900. Eight years ago the Bohemian Section bought property — three lots and two buildings — at 1821-1826 Loomis Street, in Chicago, where the printing plant was established.

In 1906 the daily *Spravedlnost* was started. In addition to newspaper printing, the plant has a modern and well-equipped job printing department. Last year a new press was bought for \$6,500, payable in installments in four years. The daily is not self-supporting at present, and the deficit is paid by collections, profit from different party affairs, such as bazaars, balls, picnics, etc.

In 1908 the Bohemian branches began to publish in Cleveland, Ohio, a weekly paper, *Americke*

Delnicke Listy (American Workingmen's News), to which they added in 1912 another weekly, *Pravo* (The Right). Both papers are printed in Cleveland in their own printing shop. This printing shop also has a job printing department.

In 1911 the Bohemian branch in New York, in cooperation with the Bohemian trade unions, started a weekly paper, *Obrana* (The Defense). In addition to papers, the Bohemian Section is publishing other literature — books, pamphlets, etc. During the year of 1911 the amount received for literature was more than \$1,000.

All the papers are owned direct by the Section, and the Board of Directors of same is elected by referendum vote, only members in good standing having votes.

The Bohemian Section has seven woman branches — two in Chicago, two in Cleveland, one in Omaha, one in South Omaha, and one in Baltimore. In organizing women the Section has had to face some difficulties in regard to the dues question, as the women are complaining of high dues. The Bohemian Section

is awaiting some reform in this question from the convention.

One of the features of the Bohemian Socialist movement is the organizing of gymnastic associations, where both boys and girls are active members. This organization of young people is a recruiting station for Bohemian branches. It takes care of children from six years up for physical development, and when they reach the age of 18 years they become party members. In this way the Bohemian Socialist movement lays a strong foundation for spreading Socialism among the youth. At present the gymnastic associations are in the following cities: Chicago, 6; Cleveland, 3; Dillonvale, O., 1; and North Braddock, Pa., 1. This organization was formed three years ago, and at present has about 1,000 members, both men and women.

Fraternally submitted,

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