

Eric Jarosinski

“Der unrealistische Genosse”: Heinrich Bartel and Milwaukee Socialism

Most accounts of Milwaukee's socialist municipal administrations and their ties to the city's German immigrant population duly emphasize the reformist pragmatism of the movement. Known as “the sewer socialists,” the Milwaukee Social Democratic Party rose to power in the first half of the twentieth century pushing a platform of clean government, efficient city services, and common-sense civic reform.¹ By bringing German and Austrian socialist principles such as broader access to public education and health care into the American political mainstream, the party made steady, incremental advances and was able to hold city hall for some three decades. Still, no matter how successful the strategy might have been at the ballot box, not every Milwaukee socialist corresponded to the image of the pragmatic reformer. Some took a fierce, and perhaps also fatal pride in refusing to relinquish a less acculturated socialist vision informed more by the movement's European radical intellectual origins than by its translation into the more pedestrian vernacular of Midwestern American politics.

Heinrich Bartel was one such outsider. An Austrian immigrant, he arrived in Milwaukee in 1911 as a published poet and composer, experienced journalist and seasoned radical. Though frequently overlooked in histories of the period, he served as editor of the German-language party newspaper *Vorwärts* and has been dubbed one of the party's greatest thinkers.² Yet this was a distinction that brought him considerably more lament than influence. Bartel was deeply committed to the subversive political potential he found in German high culture, especially lyric poetry and classical music, and just as profoundly frustrated by what he perceived as a lack of a firm intellectual, cultural, and ideological basis for Milwaukee socialism. When *Vorwärts* failed in 1932, he even felt bitterly betrayed by a movement he feared had lost its way, having long since traded traditional German *Bildung* for an American-style obsession with ballots.

It is difficult to assess what influence Bartel might have had on the direction the Milwaukee socialists took, but by all indications it could only have been negligible. If he had much of an effect at all, it was in private conversations with party leaders such as Victor Berger, his fellow Austrian friend and the movement's most dominant figure. Still, the life of this “unrealistischer Genosse,” as Bartel called himself, tells us a great deal about Milwaukee socialism and its evolution from its European origins, especially relating to the party's most serious struggles during World War I, its internal division

and debate, and eventual exhaustion in the thirties and forties. A life-long reader of Goethe, Bartel offers an account of the party's fate as a Faustian bargain in which short-term electoral success came at the cost of long-term political failure. Despite his own disappointment and the obvious souring of socialism's prospects in the city and nationwide, he went on to spend the last decades of his life true to the socialist cause, and perhaps even more so, to the classical German culture he so revered. If as a result of anti-German sentiment during World War I the movement had Americanized itself so much as to lose its soul, Bartel would live out his days clinging to his own.

Bartel was born in Reichenberg, Bohemia, on 9 October 1874. His mother was a maid and his father, a shoemaker, died when he was just three years old. Poverty forced Bartel to give up school after the sixth grade in exchange for a low-paying job in a textile factory. The premature end of his formal schooling, however, did not mean the conclusion of his education. While working seventy-two hours per week in the factory, "Herr Professor," as his co-workers called the studious young man, filled his remaining time with books, with his interest in literature and history fueling study of the German classics, the philosophy of Nietzsche, and Darwin's scientific theories. No stranger to long days and low pay, Bartel was quick to join the growing socialist movement in hopes of improving working conditions. At age sixteen he became a member of the Socialist party, joined the newly formed textile workers union, and in 1891 founded his own radical, and likewise illegal, youth organization. Bartel was quickly recognized as a persuasive socialist orator thanks to his booming voice and good sense of humor. In addition to speaking frequently at political gatherings, Bartel also wrote numerous articles and poems for workers' publications. In these early writings, the author is extremely idealistic, seeing an almost limitless potential for a well-delivered speech, an inspiring song or the written word to effect change. They demonstrate Bartel's life-long adherence to two key distinguishing aspects of Austrian socialism at the time: a strong belief in political change through culture and education and an equally pronounced anticlericalism.³

Among Bartel's best-known works were the political songs he wrote and set to the tune of popular melodies. Printed and sold as cheaply as possible, these labor anthems circulated widely. Decades later, Bartel would live to hear many sung at socialist gatherings in Milwaukee. Writing as much to educate as to inspire, his words are unadorned, yet invective in application. The works attempt to combine the aesthetic with the didactic, characterized as much by rousing slogans as by highly allegorical references to history and mythology. His themes are those one might expect of the young socialist firebrand: the injustice of poverty, the necessity of international solidarity, and preparation for the coming revolution.⁴ Bartel's words were dangerous, catching not only the attention of his socialist comrades, but also that of Austria's monarchy. From 1894 on, Bartel estimated that his socialist campaigning had landed him behind bars at least twelve times. He served sentences that typically lasted for only a few days or weeks, but had once stretched into two months. Despite his frequent clashes with the law, Bartel continued to advance his career and standing in the party as he obtained posts at several party newspapers and participated as an outspoken delegate in national party conventions from 1897 until 1904. His speeches meeting with frequent applause,

Bartel made constant appeals for party unity and an internal coherence based on education and dedication to party principles. "We don't need a broader party," he would frequently pronounce. "We need better educated comrades."⁵

Upon the urging of Austria's socialist party leadership, Bartel left for the United States in 1904 to do what he called "missionary work" for the socialist movement, first finding work in Sheboygan, Wisconsin at the *Volksblatt* and then moving on to the *New England Staaten Volkszeitung* in Lawrence, Massachusetts. Both posts proved to be ill-fated, as Bartel was much better at offending his often conservative readership than boosting circulation figures. These early positions did increase his profile in the radical German-language press, however, and in 1906 he became a city news editor for the *Chicago Arbeiter-Zeitung*, an anarchist paper that during Bartel's tenure would become more closely affiliated with the Social-Democratic Party. It was while in Chicago that Bartel's political philosophy began to take on sharper focus, at the same time that it was running ever further afield from contemporary political and cultural realities. As Heinz Ickstadt has written in his extensive studies of German-American workers' culture in Chicago, Bartel and his well-read German colleagues at the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* considered themselves the legitimate heirs of the cultural traditions of the Enlightenment, and as such, the vanguard of a new society. They adhered to a form of radicalism mixed with cultural idealism that Ickstadt terms "aesthetic anarchism," in which "the 'ennobling effect of art,' as much as the political battle, ensured the coming of the 'new race.'"⁶ This species was to be that of the "whole human being," an Enlightenment ideal of the individual whose work and creativity are united in a society that melds a love of beauty with its desire for material well-being. Yet, if anything, Bartel's position portended more splintering than harmony within the increasingly assimilated German-American community. Ironically, what Bartel saw as the emancipatory potential of high culture and learning for the masses, became the province of an increasingly irrelevant elite. As Ickstadt writes: "To maintain the Utopian ideal of the 'whole human being' as the only true alternative to existing (i.e., American) conditions implied loyalty to a specific form of ethnic cultural idealism and the identification of true socialism with German socialism."⁷ Nowhere is this clearer than in a 1907 speech he gave at the twentieth anniversary ceremony of the execution of the Haymarket anarchists. "People's horizons here stop short at their stomach, a feed trough, a bankbook, a house being their highest ideals," Bartel declared, beginning an attack on the materialism of unions. [F]or most workers, the labor question is one which ultimately boils down to the question of knife and fork." He then went on to spell out his own vision:

The labor question is a cultural question, in the largest sense of the word. From the depths of their misery, countless people direct their yearning and their prayers to the most eternal of the goddesses, to Aphrodite and in her unclad beauty, to Athena, the embodiment of wisdom and strength. Here lies one the worthiest tasks of the working-class movement. Besides struggling for the material, we mustn't lose sight of the ideal for a single instant. It is

also our duty to capture art and science. We want to change the world and to appropriate everything which makes life magnificent.

Changing the world is of course no small order, and Bartel prefaced his rousing appeal with a more sober note. Again showing signs of his peculiar form of pragmatic idealism, he warned: "The present does not call for unbounded dreams, no, but rather practical agitational and organizational work."⁸

As unlikely as the combination of "practical agitation" with the ethos of Aphrodite and Athena may sound, for Bartel this was the true nature of radical politics and its best hope for unity. He spelled out his vision in a 1909 essay in the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* entitled "Radicalism."⁹ The piece might well be seen as his life-long political manifesto, as he had it reprinted several times, from the twenties until as late as the fifties. In it he dismisses those "radicals" and "revolutionaries" of the movement whose subversiveness consisted in name only. While their rhetoric is incendiary, they fail to stoke the fire with any real plans, he writes, leading to empty slogans that only serve to dampen any truly revolutionary spark. "Words alone are but ringing brass and pealing bells. It is only clear thought which brings them to life. And thought must give birth to deed, or at least an earnestness to act." Lacking this, such "radicals" are governed by emotion rather than reason and are doomed to disappointment, pessimism, and nostalgic stagnation. Bartel likewise scorns those "busy radicals," who under smiling faces and lip service to the cause mask a greedy opportunism. For him the "true radical" is idealistic and has solid convictions, yet proceeds undogmatically. "He takes people and things for what they are and tries to make of them what he can. He does not dismiss out of hand any morally acceptable means, but neither does he adhere solely to any one in particular." This is the truly free radical, and due to his revolutionary patience, also the most dangerous to the existing order. In conclusion Bartel calls for unity and healthy debate among comrades of all stripes, expressing an idealistic hope that truth and conviction will triumph: "Let everyone openly give voice to their doubts. For out of doubt grows clarity, and from clarity springs strength. This power grants the cause the certainty of victory."

At the time, however, any certainty among the ever-divided socialists was still quite distant, let alone their victorious establishment of the "cooperative commonwealth." Competing visions and tactical debates—especially among orthodox, economically minded Marxist "revolutionaries" and more politically oriented "reformers" in the spirit of Eduard Bernstein—wrecked the movement nationally. These divisions would continue to intensify, especially with the coming crisis of World War I and the changing ethnic make-up of American society, both developments that threatened Bartel's own brand of socialism based on German high culture. As Ickstadt wonders in his study of Bartel and his Chicago comrades: "Whether this cultural idealism eventually isolated these intellectuals from a new generation of Germans born in America and from a working class that grew in cultural heterogeneity is open to speculation."¹⁰ After moving to Milwaukee, a city where socialism had achieved its most important stronghold and party radicals and reformists were at an uneasy peace under Victor Berger, Bartel's experience tends to support Ickstadt's suspicions.

He came to Milwaukee to edit the Milwaukee Social-Democratic party's German-language newspaper *Vorwärts* in early October 1911, just days after Victor Berger left it for its new English-language daily, the *Milwaukee Leader*. At the peak of its power, the party had just scored major election victories and was working hard to expand its appeal and "Americanize" the movement. As the Milwaukee socialists saw it, *Vorwärts* and other socialist papers were largely responsible for the electoral success of the party, whose first great victory came in 1910, when it captured the mayor's office, gained a majority on the city council, and sent Victor Berger to Washington as the nation's first socialist in the House of Representatives.

Among the shrewd politicians that the Milwaukee socialists had become, Bartel stood out. He was an extremely cultivated figure, with his knowledge of literature, philosophy, and politics far outpacing his peers' in the city's socialist movement. He was respected for his eloquence in matters of socialist theory, music, theater and the arts. He looked the part of the European intellectual as well. As Former Milwaukee Socialist mayor Frank Zeidler describes him: "His glasses on a chain, his long hair and mustache and his rakish set of his hat distinguished him as a true intellectual in appearance."¹¹ His home had a bookcase in every room, holding some 3,000 volumes in all, which he proudly displayed to visitors.¹² Opera and classical music were his other passion, often played on his phonograph at window-rattling volume. Bartel served on the board of the Pabst Theater, wrote opera reviews, sang in German choirs, and was active in the city's Free-Thinker Society as well as the Milwaukee branch of the national Workmen's Sick and Benefit Fund. His heroes were Thomas Paine and the German authors Heinrich Heine and Johann Wolfgang Goethe. "The first thing I got is *Faust*, and I'm still reading *Faust*. One finds always in it something new," he once said in a newspaper interview later in life, calling Goethe a "patrician with a deep sense of social consciousness."¹³

The description fits Bartel as well, according to Irene Gutowsky, wife of his grandson Roland.¹⁴ The couple and their parents shared a three-story flat with Bartel, known at home as "Opa," at 3034 North 9th Street for almost 30 years. Gutowsky remembers him as congenial and having a good sense of humor, though she admits Bartel could also be a strict landlord and liked to play the boss. Bartel's grandson Bert Bartel, a retired police officer, agrees, but adds that Bartel was also a good listener. One of Bert's favorite memories of "Opa" is when Bartel insisted that the Boy Scouts were nothing more than training for the army, and the young scout disagreed and reached for his Handbook. "I explained it to him for about two hours and managed to change his outlook on that. That was great."¹⁵

Bartel was a small man, Gutowsky recalls, but in very good shape. He used to take long walks every day, even until he was very old. She reports that Bartel and his wife were not rich but also never had problems making ends meet, though it appears the couple's only income was from Bartel's modest newspaper salary and speaking fees.¹⁶ They had two children, Minerva and Berthold, and enjoyed moving in Milwaukee's intellectual and cultural circles, frequently entertaining party officials and performers from the Pabst Theater. Bartel spoke German at home with his wife and friends, but his English was quite good, though heavily accented at times. Bartel

never talked about the "old country," she recalls, and there was a clear understanding that the subject was *verboten*. "You couldn't talk about anything German. Everything was America," she says. "He was quite loyal, especially to Milwaukee."

Apart from occasional trips to a summer home, she cannot remember what Bartel did for relaxation. "All he went for was reading and speaking, reading and speaking. That was his only fun." Along with his books (Gutowsky remembers them spilling over into the dining room) Bartel also brought his principles home with him, pushing his family to vote socialist and not willingly celebrating holidays or giving presents. According to her, he once told the grandchildren, "You know, there really isn't a Santa Claus." Bartel was not one to fit in, she says, and people knew it. "He wore spats, a long, flowing scarf, and his hair was down to his shoulders. He was the talk of the neighborhood. They called him eccentric, but he didn't care." Bartel would need his convictions most during World War I, a time when nonconformity on the part of a German-speaking socialist could draw the attention of more than just the neighborhood.

With the outbreak of World War I Bartel would face the challenge of defending the German cultural tradition he so revered, while attacking what he saw as the grounds for the war: capitalist greed, on the side of the Germans as well as the allies. Under Bartel's leadership, *Vorwärts* was a strong voice in opposition to the fighting. This war, it declared, was not a battle to make the world safe for democracy, as it was called. Instead, it was a war for markets, for raw materials, and for profit. It fought hard to bring the broad masses of newspaper readers into the party ranks by appealing to their German ethnicity, their perceived class interests, and their hopes and fears. Like all effective opinion-makers, Bartel and his staff knew that the repetition and tailoring of their message was crucial to winning support for the cause. Thus, almost all aspects of the war, from conscription to the latest military offensive, were portrayed in print as so many ugly manifestations of a self-destructive capitalist system spiraling into chaos at the expense of working people.

As the European fighting continued into 1915, so too did the paper's now familiar condemnations. "The World War for Profit" is how *Vorwärts* described the bloody conflict in January 1915, as a tangle of European military alliances caused the war to spread throughout Italy and the Balkans. "In reality this is a capitalist war, brought about by fear of competition on the world market," it railed. "This is a war for customers! A war for raw materials! A war for greater profits! That's what this war is. Innumerable victims on all sides, destroyed lives, murdered progress, tens of thousands of fatalities – all this for greater profits!"¹⁷ The paper demanded neutrality, but not the brand of non-alignment they saw furthered by President Wilson. It maintained that his pro-ally sympathies had rendered "Neutrality" a meaningless, deceptive concept.

Bartel's condemnations of the war generated great interest among Milwaukee's German-Americans. One of the largest audiences ever to assemble in the lecture hall of Milwaukee's Free-Thinkers' Society came together in late February 1915 to hear him speak about "The World War, Anti-German Sentiment, and Nationalism." Bartel told his audience that economic imperatives were driving the war in Europe and had far outweighed nationalism in bringing about the fighting. "The world is not ruled by

thoughts and feelings, but by influence and power," he told the crowd. "These two factors are what have an impact. Looking deeper, this has been the case even in situations which one likes to describe as purely motivated." ¹⁸ Bartel's speech that evening was not a rare appearance. As he had done before the war, the editor and orator traveled almost every weekend throughout the country to agitate for socialism and decry the fighting. In articulating his own position regarding the war, Bartel appears to have been saddled with a problem facing many American socialists during the war: explaining why so many of their European comrades had broken from the socialist ranks of international brotherhood to support their own nations' efforts in the war. As he saw it, Germany's actions in the war were far from blameless. Yet, he said, they were the will of its ruler and influential classes, not of its people.

Bartel's outspokenness did not go unnoticed, especially by nervous authorities eager to root out oppositional voices in the nation's German-American press. After passage of the Trading-with-the-Enemy Act in October 1917, *Vorwärts* was required to print an inscription on the top of the front page stating that a true translation of all articles dealing with the war had been filed with the Postmaster. Other Milwaukee German-language papers that either supported the war or stopped writing about it were freed from the provision, leading Bartel to see the law as an unfair measure that made a mockery of freedom of the press. "The consequences will be that the Milwaukee 'Vorwärts' and all Socialist newspapers will be oppressed," he charged, adding the lament, "This, now, is how far we have happily come in free America." ¹⁹ Bartel rightly foresaw what was to come. In September 1918, almost one year after the *Leader* had lost its second-class mailing rights, *Vorwärts* also felt the sting of the Espionage Act.²⁰ *Vorwärts*, he told his readers, would be delivered in Milwaukee by newspaper carriers and sent to its out-of-town subscribers by third-class mail at a considerably higher cost to the paper. Mindful of the dire financial consequences, *Vorwärts* took on the motto "Persevere" and pledged to keep the paper alive through whatever means it could muster. "One day things must change," it told readers. "It can't stay this way forever." ²¹ To get out of the red it raised subscription rates, sponsored bazaars and picnics, sold cigars and coal, borrowed money, and sold more shares in its ownership. "Comrades, friends!" Bartel implored, "If you don't want to become traitors to your own cause, you must remain loyal to the 'Vorwärts.'" ²² Despite increased costs and the threat of federal prosecution for its criticism of the war, *Vorwärts* did manage to survive, albeit with decreased circulation and increased debts.²³

After the war had ended, however, a new battle was to begin. This war, the fight for a German-American readership in an increasingly assimilated community with ever less commitment to the Socialist Party and less knowledge of the cultural heritage Bartel continued to cling to, was to prove much more difficult, and in 1932 the paper was forced out of business. Left without his newspaper, in 1933 Bartel began editing *Das Freie Wort / Voice of Freedom*, the bilingual monthly publication of the Milwaukee Freie Gemeinde, or Free-Thinkers' Society.²⁴ Even into his later years, Bartel was a determined and energetic speaker, especially on his favorite subjects: socialism, literature, and music. He had acquired such prominence among the society's "Old Timers" that some would complain to the society if they missed a lecture because of inadequate

notice. Despite his standing, however, Bartel would still frequently complain that readers did not pay their subscriptions on time. Numerous appeals during his years as editor attested to a frustration with waning financial support for what could only have been a labor of love.

Bartel went on editing *Das Freie Wort* until 1961, and died seven years later on 27 June 1968. As Paul A. Kaufmann, his successor at the publication, wrote upon Bartel's death: "The Freie Gemeinde of Milwaukee lost one of its oldest members, and the liberal movement of our country one of the few remaining members of the Old Guard."²⁵ He was 93 years old. Bartel, who had grown up as a rabble-rousing poet and intellectual, died an "old-time Milwaukee Socialist," as *The Milwaukee Journal* called him in its obituary.²⁶ Placed just one column over from a news item about then Governor Ronald Reagan's purchase of a California ranch and the Veterans of Foreign Wars' calls for increased support of the war in Vietnam, Bartel's death notice in the *Milwaukee Sentinel* signaled more than just his own passing. It also confirmed the end of Bartel's brand of radical politics inspired by Enlightenment idealism and expounded in citations of Goethe and Heine. For the American Left, the fight would continue, but by truly different means.

*University of Wisconsin
Madison, Wisconsin*

Notes

¹ See Elmer A. Beck, *The Sewer Socialists* (Fennimore, WI: Westburg Associates, 1982); Sally Miller, *Victor Berger and the Promise of Constructive Socialism, 1910-1920* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1973); Frederick I. Olson, "The Milwaukee Socialists, 1897-1941" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1952); and Michael E. Stevens, *Introduction to The Family Letters of Victor and Meta Berger, 1894-1929* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1995).

² The only studies of Bartel to date are a brief, unpublished conference paper "Heinrich Bartel and the Socialist Movement," 1980, by Joseph Hahn in the Bartel collection, Milwaukee County Historical Society and "The Workers' Best Weapon: The Milwaukee *Vorwärts* and World War I," an unpublished senior thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, by Eric Jarosinski. Bartel himself offers a detailed account of his life in a three-part series, "'Unrealistische' Genossen, Autobiographische Skizzen von Mitgliedern der Krankenkasse: Heinrich Bartel," in *Solidarität/Solidarity* 41,7 (1946): 127-28; 41,9 (1946): 165-66; and 41,10 (1946), 183-84. (Very rare source, located at the Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul.)

³ See Anson Rabinbach, *The Crisis of Austrian Socialism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983); and G. D. H. Cole, *A History of Socialist Thought: Vol. 3, Part 2: The Second International, 1889-1914* (London: Macmillan, 1956). The most extensive history of the movement in Bartel's native Bohemia is by Emil Strauß, *Die Entstehung der deutschböhmisches Arbeiterbewegung: Geschichte der deutschen Sozialdemokratie Böhmens bis 1888* (Prague: Verlag des Parteivorstandes der Deutschen Sozialdemokratischen Arbeiterpartei in der Tschechoslowakischen Republik, 1925).

⁴ Bartel's poems are collected in Konrad Beißwanger, *Stimmen der Freiheit* (Nuremberg: Konrad Beißwanger Verlag, 1914), as well as the self-published volume *Gereimtes: Couplets und Lieder* (Teplitz, 1898) and an anthology of workers' poems Bartel edited, *Nordböhmisches Klänge: Eine Sammlung von Arbeiterdichtungen* (Chemnitz: Albin Langer, 1898). These rare publications are housed in the papers of the Seliger Gemeinde, administered by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung's Archiv der Sozialdemokratie in Bonn, Germany.

⁵ *Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Parteitagess der deutschen Sozialdemokratischen Arbeiterpartei in Oesterreich* (Vienna: L. A. Bretschneider, 1902), 100.

⁶ Heinz Ickstadt, "German Workers' Literature in Chicago – Old Forms in New Contexts" in *German Workers' Culture in the United States*, ed. Hartmut Keil (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988), 209-18.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 209-10.

⁸ Quoted in Hartmut Keil and John B. Jentz, *German Workers in Chicago* (Urbana: Illinois University Press, 1988), 274-75.

⁹ *Chicago Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 23 May 1909; *Buchdrucker-Zeitung*, 1928; *Solidarität*, August 1951.

¹⁰ Heinz Ickstadt, "A Tale of Two Cities: Culture and its Social Function in Chicago During the Progressive Period" in *German Workers' Culture in the United States*, ed. Hartmut Keil (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988), 301.

¹¹ Frank Zeidler to Joseph Hahn, 17 February 1980. Bartel collection, Milwaukee County Historical Society.

¹² Bartel duly recorded his massive holdings in a thick ledger book on file in the Heinrich Bartel Collection at the Milwaukee County Historical Society, which also houses the bulk of his library. Also in the collection is an equally weighty scrapbook in which Bartel collected reviews of German and American theatrical productions clipped from German-language newspapers.

¹³ *Milwaukee Journal*, 22 September 1949.

¹⁴ Irene Gutowsky, interview with author, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 15 October 1999.

¹⁵ Bert Bartel, interview with author, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 2 November 1999.

¹⁶ Records available at the Milwaukee County Office of Register in Probate, file 433-686 R3156 F0536. Bartel died with a little over \$27,000 in investments and savings accounts, most at local savings and loan associations.

¹⁷ *Vorwärts*, 16 January 1915. This and all following translations by the author.

¹⁸ *Vorwärts*, 6 March 1915.

¹⁹ *Vorwärts*, 6 October 1917.

²⁰ Here it should be noted that historians have widely erred in writing that *Vorwärts* retained its mailing rights even though the *Leader's* were withdrawn. This was the case, but holds true for only one year. In September 1918, almost one year after the *Leader* lost its mailing rights, the *Vorwärts* was likewise barred from using the second-class mails until 1921.

²¹ *Vorwärts*, 7 September 1918.

²² *Vorwärts*, 14 September 1918.

²³ Fragmentary financial data is available in the minutes of the *Vorwärts* Publishing Company 1906-1909 and of the Milwaukee Social-Democratic Publishing Company, 1905-1935, both at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. The most complete collection of annual reports is in the Victor Berger Papers, roll 31, also at the SHSW. For circulation figures, see Karl J.R. Arndt and May E. Olson, *German-American Newspapers and Periodicals, 1732-1955* (Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 1961), 697; See also *Ayer and Son's Newspaper Annual and Directory*, which provides circulation figures up to 1918. Both sources, and the many that quote from them, list an estimated circulation of 38,000 for the year 1915, an implausible figure given its circulation of about 4,300 in the immediate years prior and thereafter, as well as Bartel's own commentary on sinking circulation in the paper itself. It is most likely a mistaken rendering of 3,800.

²⁴ For a detailed analysis of the Milwaukee Free-Thinkers see Bettina Goldberg, "Radical German-American Freethinkers and the Socialist Labor Movement: The *Freie Gemeinde* in Milwaukee, Wisconsin," in *German Workers' Culture in the United States* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988).

²⁵ *Das Freie Wort*, August 1968.

²⁶ *The Milwaukee Journal*, 28 June 1968.

