

CARL SCHURZ:  
CIVIL SERVICE REFORM LEADER  
1869-1902

By  
SIDNEY D. PALAY, Ph.B.

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## INTRODUCTION

At one time, Civil Service Reform in the United States was regarded as a whimsical notion of some dreamy ideological theorists, and was not to be taken seriously. But these same dreamers with their lofty ideals were successful in making it an issue of primary importance in national politics during the latter half of the nineteenth century. One of these dreamers was Carl Schurz, who continually fought for the realization of the ideal of a reformed civil service, not as a man of a party but as a man from without the realm of organized politics. It is the purpose of this thesis to trace the activities of Carl Schurz in behalf of Civil Service Reform.

## Chapter I

### Early Life

#### Section I

Carl Schurz, as his name implies, was a German, a son of the Rhine, who rose to great heights as a pure and pointed American. His is the dual story of political disfavor and popular appeal. Though of foreign birth he became one of the very great American statesmen with his entire career dedicated to a powerful and worthy ideal--the reform of the civil service and the elimination of corrupt politics. His life is one to provide a powerful ideal and encouragement to everyone who would exalt human character or increase human happiness.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>New York Daily Tribune, May 15, 18, 1906 for estimates of Schurz.

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Carl Schurz was born on March 2, 1829, in the little town of Liblar, near Cologne. His father, Christian Schurz, was first a village schoolmaster and then embarked in business; his mother, Marianne Jüssen, was the daughter of a tenant farmer. From public school in Liblar, he entered the gymnasium of Cologne, and then the University of Bonn. Being a stranger at school, he first shied away from social relationships and devoted himself to his books and his music. This intense and concentrated study produced results of a decidedly liberal nature. He soon began to enjoy the intimacy

of his teachers and several students who were his elders. Of these, Professor Gottfried Kinkel exerted the greatest influence by imparting to his favorite student an admiration for liberal government, constitutionally formed and dedicated to a democratic Germany. His contacts with Kinkel and his associations with several older students transformed him from a scholarly recluse into a scholarly leader of men. His contact was with men who were either his equal or his superiors intellectually. He became a member of the Franconia, an organization, whose members wore under their coats the black, red, and gold ribbon, the symbol of revolution.<sup>2</sup> Being a

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<sup>2</sup>Claude M. Fuess, Carl Schurz, Reformer (New York, 1932), 12-19.

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student of Arndt, Dahlmann, and Kinkel it is not difficult to understand Schurz's liberal tendencies. During his early university career Schurz became acquainted with Theodore Petrasch and it is in the correspondence between them that much is learned of Schurz's inclination toward liberalism and reform. On May 29, 1848, Schurz wrote that he was in the midst of "a lively and reforming activity", trying to organize "a universal union of associated students which would then be the battlefield when, on a brighter day in our public affairs we shall overthrow our adversaries and if possible destroy them. The best spirit reigns in our party and we radicals stand unqualified at the head."<sup>3</sup> As a University Radical

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<sup>3</sup>Schurz to Petrasch, May 29, 1848. Carl Schurz Letters (MSS), Wisconsin Historical Society Library.

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Schurz forged ahead into the public life of his party. He became "provisional president of the student union."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., June 26, 1848.

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This popularity led to his selection as president of a student meeting to protest against the acts of an unpopular royal official. This might be termed the first visible step in his fight against corrupt officials who were appointed as a favor to some person or group. This was followed during the summer and early autumn by meetings with other groups of the same inclination. During the summer Schurz had augmented his work with liberal student groups by becoming an editor of Kinkels's newspaper, the Neue Bonner Zeitung. This gave Schurz an opportunity to put his ideas on paper and to expound the ideas of those whose policies he followed, and criticize their opponents. In late September the nineteen year old editor attended the studentenkongress at Eisenach with the somewhat happy belief that they were "hearer to the tremendous explosion of a universal popular revolution...." He expressed it graphically when he wrote: "The bow is stretched and only awaits the moment when a hand loose the fateful cord and speed the deadly arrow to the breast of the foe, let but an accident or premeditated incident announce the moment for the explosion."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., September 18, 1848.

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But no incident was forthcoming from the Congress of students, and all that Schurz achieved was to increase his ever

lengthening list of friends. To express his beliefs to a greater audience he prepared a seditious, radical pamphlet entitled:--"Address to the German Nation." Oddly enough this young agitator felt disappointed that the government did not notice his fanatical outbursts. Schurz might have been aware of the impending doom of the rising revolutionary movement for when he visited the supposed constitutional convention at Frankfort-am-Main he viewed it as a waste of time and the destroyer of the work of the Revolution.

When the Prussian king, Frederick William IV, refused the Frankfort Constitution, several armed insurrections broke out in the south German states of Rheinpfalz (the Rhenish Palatinate) and Baden. To the entreaties of the terrified southern sovereigns, from their tottering thrones, Frederick William IV supplied troops for their aid. Here Schurz became an actor in the midst of the action, fighting for his principles. But all to no avail for the final outcome of his indiscretion was exile from his native land. The only satisfaction of his exploits as a military man was that at the age of twenty he became a hero and found that his fame had spread throughout the provinces of the Rhine. As an exile in Switzerland and later in Paris he planned for the rescue of his friend and adviser Kinkel who had been apprehended by the Prussians. This rescue made him a greater popular hero whose praises were sung everywhere along the Rhine. On November 23, 1850 Kinkel and Schurz, teacher and pupil, fugitives and exiles, set sail for England and for future destiny.

Two years later Carl Schurz and his bride of but a few months came to settle in the United States. What prompted the young radical German exile is hard to understand. But from a letter to another of his friends, Adolph Meyer, dated April 19, 1852, it would be understood that he wished to take his parents out of Germany where they suffered many hardships because of his anti-monarchical activities. It might also be inferred from the same letter that it was his hope to act as a full citizen and to carry on his work that had ended so disastrously.<sup>6</sup> Egotistically he expected to take America by

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<sup>6</sup> Carl Schurz Letters (MSS), Wisconsin Historical Society.

storm and to lecture the length and breadth of the land on subjects that lie in the field of his scholarly studies.

It was on September 17, 1852, when the young couple set foot in New York, unheralded and unwelcomed, but with a "buoyant hopefulness." The purpose for Schurz's entrance was shown the following spring to be a less idealistic Americanism than a continued struggle for a free Germany. In a letter to his teacher, Kinkel, April 12, 1853, Schurz formulated a plan for the formation of a German society for the aid of a possible German revolutionary movement and a continuance of the student principles of 1848.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Carl Schurz Letters (MSS), Wisconsin Historical Society.

At this time Schurz decided to visit Washington to gain first hand knowledge of the workings of the national government.



His first impression was rather negligible for he discovered that the country was rather poorly governed, but he drew the conclusion that democracy had not failed altogether.<sup>8</sup> The

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<sup>8</sup>Claude M. Fuess, op. cit., 44

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most favorable result of this visit was the inspiration that Schurz derived. He was initiated, by Francis Grund, a newspaper correspondent, into the vices of the "Spoils System," a movement that shocked his idealistic philosophy of government. The fact that office-holders were more interested in the "pickings" of their offices than in the salaries to be derived from them was rather revolting. Fortunately for the movement of Civil-Service Reform, which he in later years so fervently sponsored, his visit to Washington had taken place in the presidential inaugural year, 1853. For when else might he so adequately view the evils of the "Spoils System." Thus, viewing the Democratic party in action and coupled with the party's avowal of the institution of slavery as a democratic principle, Schurz became straight-laced anti-Democratic.

Schurz dropped his thoughts of politics to try to find a niche for himself in the financial world and a home for his wife. His visits carried him to Wisconsin where he decided to settle in Watertown. The decision to live in Watertown came with the proposition of participation in local politics.

In 1856 Schurz became a notary public and threw himself into local politics. He was elected alderman and supervisor and was briefly commissioner of public improvements, all as a

member of the young but ever-expanding Republican party.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 52

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The brief period of his activity brought him widespread influence, to such an extent that Schurz in a letter to Henry Meyer stated:--"That I shall probably not be for long a stranger to official life."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Carl Schurz Letters (MSS), November 20, 1856, Wisconsin Historical Society

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This prophecy was realized almost immediately when the Republican State Committee drafted Schurz as a speaker for their anti-slavery cause.

## Section II

Schurz's introduction into Wisconsin politics was through an invitation to speak before a meeting at Jefferson, Wisconsin. There he spoke in German on the slavery question and on the duty of the German citizens to their adopted country.<sup>11</sup> As a

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<sup>11</sup> Carl Schurz, Reminiscences, 2:67-69.

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result of this speech, Schurz spoke throughout the state in behalf of the Republican party during the campaign of 1856. Unfortunately for future chroniclers, his speeches were in German and were infrequently reported in scattered German papers. In these speeches he admonished his hearers

"not to be mere blind followers of any leadership, whatever its name might be, but to think for themselves, honestly

seeking to discover what was right and best for the common welfare, not indeed to reject advice, but to weigh it and then courageously to do that which, according to their conscientiously formed convictions, would be most apt to serve the cause of justice and the true interests of the country." <sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 71

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While such political philosophy served the purpose of the growing Republican party, it rankled the party leaders fifteen years later. However, it was Schurz's first attempt at an appeal for an honest, non-partisan government. He was impressed and became rather encouraged when he saw the far-reaching influence that political freedom exercised upon the development of the masses.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Carl Schurz to Heinrich Meyer, November 20, 1856.  
Carl Schurz Letters (MSS), Wisconsin Historical Society

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In August, 1857, Schurz, who had been an editor of the Watertown Anzeiger, began his own newspaper the Watertown Deutsch Volks-zeitung. His salutary editorial pledged the paper to respect for the inherent right of self-government, and a minimum restriction upon it; uncompromising opposition to slavery; freedom of social life from encroachment by government, by temperance laws and the like; an attitude of disapprobation toward financial cupidity and corruption as destructive of government. It would support the Republican party as long as it upheld these principles.<sup>14</sup> Thus once

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<sup>14</sup> Wisconsin State Journal, August 31, 1857.

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again Schurz reaffirmed his non-partisan political belief in good government. This, too, was looked upon by the state Republican party as a means of breaking into the strength of the successful Democratic party. Schurz published and edited this paper for more than a year continually advancing these same principles.

Schurz attended the Republican state convention in Madison, September 2-4, 1857, as a delegate from Watertown. On the first day he became a member of the Committee on Resolutions. On the second day the young immigrant became a probable candidate for the nomination as Lieutenant-Governor. As a result Schurz was given his first real recognition by the English papers in the state. The Milwaukee Sentinel spoke of him as one whose belief in Republican principles was well established.<sup>15</sup> Schurz was selected as the party candidate on

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<sup>15</sup> The Milwaukee Sentinel, September 4, 1857.

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the first ballot, polling 145 out of 182 votes. This vote was the largest polled by any candidate on the ticket. He looked upon his selection with great pleasure and with expectation of being elected.<sup>16</sup> The party's candidate for

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<sup>16</sup> Carl Schurz to Henry Meyer, September 20, 1857.  
Carl Schurz Letters (MSS), Wisconsin Historical Society.

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Governor was Alexander W. Randall of Waukesha.

The campaign for Lieutenant-Governor was at times more important to the newspapers of the opposition than that for Governor. They began the first of a long series of political attacks on Schurz:--doubting his right to be a candidate for any elective office; questioning his citizenship; belittling his services in the German revolution; and feigning a great difficulty in spelling his name--Schooooortz, Shirts, Chemise, etc.<sup>17</sup> Schurz hardly deigned to notice such attacks and

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<sup>17</sup>The Milwaukee Sentinel, Throughout the campaign.

continued to give his impersonal speeches on policy of government. Oddly enough he sought to carry on his campaign on national affairs rather than on state or local politics.

However, when the vote was cast on November 3, there was much doubt as to what the final outcome would be. Early results showed Schurz leading his party ticket. But when the final vote was announced on December 15, 1857, Randall was elected by 118 votes in the Governor's race, while Schurz lost to his Democratic opponent by 48 votes. This Schurz attributed to fraud and the purchase of votes.<sup>18</sup> His rancor

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<sup>18</sup>Carl Schurz to Henry Meyer, January 15, 1858.  
Carl Schurz Letters (MSS), Wisconsin Historical Society

gave way to rationalization when in a letter to Gottfried Kinkel, February 15, 1858 he attributed his defeat to a popularity that was phenomenal but not enduring.

This defeat in state politics was closely followed by a similar setback in Watertown, where Schurz was defeated for the office of supervisor. As future events proved themselves, the defeat sustained in state politics was rather fortunate, for his proper field of political endeavor was in the issues of the nation as a whole. The reputation that Schurz had derived from his campaign was overwhelming for even the Democratic press acknowledged his power as a politician. He enhanced this opinion of himself as he journeyed throughout the state lecturing on the general topic of "Americanism." This reputation spread beyond the boundaries of the state and brought him invitations to speak in several senatorial campaigns throughout the country. Schurz refused all but one of these invitations and the one campaign that he did participate in was in Illinois where "Abe" Lincoln sought the seat of Senator Stephen A. Douglas. As a result of his part in this contest the name of Carl Schurz became known throughout the country. But while campaigning so heavily in behalf of the anti-slavery candidate and principle Schurz did not lose sight of his own principle of clean, honest, and efficient government.

In August, 1858, Schurz, as a member of a conference of German Republican editors, placed his name to a document, assailing the corrupt practices of the incumbent Republicans; demanding that the party improve its morals; and clarify its principles of "Good Government."<sup>19</sup> Basically the majority of

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<sup>19</sup> The Milwaukee Sentinel, August 30, 1858.

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the editors who affixed their signatures to this document were seeking a better portion of spoils than had been offered to the German voters of the state. Schurz's actions during the following months showed that his part in the manifesto was that of principle rather than a probable division of the spoils. He advanced his policy one step further at the state convention in Madison, October, 5, 1858. Here he was again a member of the Committee on Resolutions and had advanced to the chairmanship of the same. The party platform showed his influence by its condemnation of political corruption. An address to the voters, which was written by a committee headed by Schurz, augmented and amplified this denunciation of political corruption.<sup>20</sup> With this beginning Schurz took an active part

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<sup>20</sup> The Milwaukee Sentinel, October 14, 1858.

in the campaign of John F. Potter for Congressman from the strong Democratic district of Milwaukee. It is a fitting compliment to this Americanized German that a Republican should be elected from the heart of the Democratic Party's stronghold. On October 30, 1858 Schurz, speaking in behalf of his friend Potter, made an impressive political speech against the nomination, election, or appointment of corrupt politicians to any political office.<sup>21</sup> While this matter was looked upon as

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<sup>21</sup> The Milwaukee Sentinel, November 1, 1858.

being politically sound it was an actual statement of Schurz's belief in efficient and honest government. He reaffirmed

this and other principles of "Good Government" in a speech at Milwaukee, November 18. He expressed the hope that since his countrymen had successfully emancipated themselves from party despotism, they would "never again consent to be made the pawns of corrupt combinations and political tricks," or be parties to political trades and corrupt bargains, with whatever party they may be affiliated.<sup>22</sup> He also admonished the party

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<sup>22</sup>

The Milwaukee Sentinel, November 20, 1858.

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in general to steer clear of the pitfalls of political corruption or else it would choke itself to death. However, his words on the reformation of political life were rather idealistic, and hardly to be taken seriously at the time. He adhered to these idealistic principles throughout his political career.

This was followed by a brief period of political inactivity in which Schurz tried to establish himself as an attorney in Milwaukee. He effected a partnership with Halbert E. Paine which perished within a year. Schurz was soon deeply involved in the Fugitive Slave Law issue in the Wisconsin courts. His opinions as he campaigned in behalf of Byron Paine for Justice of the State Supreme Court backfired later in the year when those who disliked his stand fought his candidacy for the gubernatorial nomination. Schurz's national reputation was enhanced by the position he had taken. He was invited to speak in Boston on slavery and on the place of the immigrant in American life. He spoke at Faneuil Hall on April 18. In it was a



paragraph which showed Schurz's opinion of ideals.

"You may tell me that my views are visionary, that the destiny of the country is less exalted, that the American people are less great than I think they are or ought to be. I answer, Ideals are like stars; you will not succeed in touching them with your hands. But like the seafaring man on the desert of waters, you choose them as your guides, and following them you will reach your destiny."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>The New York Daily Tribune, May 15, 1906. Printed amongst a series of excerpts of famous Schurz speeches.

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Thus did Schurz answer his opponents and justify his own position. Democratic papers, as the Boston Courier, the Madison Demokrat, the Chicago Times, the Milwaukee News, belittled his efforts with mockery and questioned the principles and ideals he had enunciated. To Republicans he was held up as the representative of the Germans in the Northwest. After a similar speech at Worcester, Schurz returned to Wisconsin to participate once again in state politics and to make some money to support his family.

Upon his return Schurz began to wonder as to whether or not he should seek the position of governor of the state. He sought and received confirmation of this idea from several of his intimate friends. His campaign to obtain the gubernatorial post was to wait somewhat complacently until the party realizing his presence would draft his services. Here he was, a young man of twenty-nine, seeking quietly but firmly the highest office open to an immigrant of six years residence. But Schurz

had made many powerful enemies with his speeches, and these plus his well-meaning friends achieved the renomination of Randall, who had made a splendid record as Governor. These well-meaning friends wanted to bridle the ambition of Schurz until such a time that he could assume his place in national politics. The party managers then offered him once again the second place on the party ticket and Schurz refused this rather dubious honor. He explained his refusal at a demonstration given in his behalf, September 6, 1859, in Milwaukee. He felt that he would have to sacrifice too much for the position, and he wanted to show that the "class of politicians, who will take anything in order to have something," did not number him as a member.<sup>24</sup> He expressed a feeling of being hurt and

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<sup>24</sup>The Milwaukee Sentinel, September 8, 1859.

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humiliated at the expressions of distrust of his principles and actions. He looked "upon the offices of our government not as wages to be paid for services rendered, but as opportunities given for services to be rendered."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

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It is not at all strange that a political party should reprimand or virtually dislike its best orator when he continually expressed his disapproval of machine politics. Schurz envisioned a party organization based on honest principles, efficiency, and a belief in the common cause of liberty, and not a machine of corruption, graft, and dishonesty.

Though his principles were frowned upon, they served as good campaign oratorical material. As a result he was invited to deliver speeches in the Minnesota gubernatorial campaign, but the campaign in Wisconsin soon beckoned him and he engaged in a series of debates with Harrison C. Hobart, the Democratic candidate for governor. He forced Hobart to repudiate the "machine politicians" and then flayed him for not doing so sooner.<sup>26</sup> So great was his influence in the campaign that for

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<sup>26</sup> Carl Schurz to his wife during the campaign.  
Carl Schurz Letters (MSS), Wisconsin Historical Society.

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the first time the Republicans succeeded in electing all their candidates.

This campaign was the last incident of real action by Schurz in Wisconsin politics. But before bidding farewell to state and local politics, he led the opposition to the appointment of A. D. Smith to the Supreme Court in February, 1860, to succeed Justice Whiton. Schurz wrote to his wife that his platform demanded "relentless war on corruption" and that he would nail the party to it.<sup>27</sup> He charged that Smith was not

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<sup>27</sup> Carl Schurz Letters (MSS), February 23, 1860, Wisconsin Historical Society.

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adverse to bribery. This matter gave Schurz another opportunity to express his views. He wrote to his wife:

".....I have thought out a speech in opposition to the corruptionists. If I shall deem it necessary to give, it will ring in their ears.....I shall not depart from the principles which guide me in my political life, even if I have to fight

the whole Republican party....I shall convince the Republicans that my declaration of war on corruption was meant seriously, and that, in this fight no quarter will be given."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Carl Schurz Letters (MSS), February 27, 1860, Wisconsin Historical Society.

Schurz realized his power over the German element within the party and he could well afford to take such a stand. For without this group the strength of the party was greatly reduced. He won his argument by having A. Scott Sloan nominated to the office. But Sloan's indiscretions and Schurz's support led to the defeat of the former and the banishment of the latter from the Republican party.

In April 1860, Schurz was appointed as a delegate-at-large to the national Republican convention in Chicago. Although he was chosen chairman of the delegation without opposition, he entered the convention and national politics alone.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Chester V. Easum, The Americanization of Carl Schurz (Chicago, 1929), 258.

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### Section III

Carl Schurz's entrance into national politics furthered his belief in the principle of a non-partisan government. As chairman of the Wisconsin delegation to the Republican national convention and as the recognized leader of the German-American voters, he was in a position to observe the bargaining in behalf of a candidate or a "favorite son." The Wisconsin delegation was pledged to the support of William H. Seward,

and Schurz moved among the various delegations advancing Seward's cause. His popularity was acknowledged when he was chosen, along with Preston King of New York, to escort the permanent president to the chair, and when he was appointed to the Committee on Resolutions. His influence on the latter was shown in the platform which declared in favor of the rights of immigrant citizens.<sup>30</sup> His favorite principle of

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<sup>30</sup>Ed. C. W. Johnson, Proceedings of the First Three National Conventions of 1856, 1860, 1864, (Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1893).

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non-partisan government was not included among the resolutions. It was deemed much too radical for the party leaders and too definite for them to evade in case of victory for the party.

Schurz supported Seward until the final vote, when Lincoln obtained the nomination. The editor of the Milwaukee News accused Schurz of political bargaining. It was stated that Schurz promised Wisconsin's vote on condition that Seward would be appointed Secretary of State. This accusation was immediately denied by the Republican papers.<sup>31</sup> It seems

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<sup>31</sup>The Milwaukee Sentinel, May 29, 1860.

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strange that Schurz, who had condemned such practices and had fought for Seward's nomination, should be accused of political chicanery. He ignored the accusations and insinuations.

During the campaign, Schurz visited those doubtful sections where the party leaders thought his oratorical ability could be used with the greatest effect. He discussed the

slavery issue, the chief topic of the time. While in Springfield on July 24, 1860, he had an interview with Lincoln. Office seekers and the "spoils system" were the two topics discussed. Schurz obtained Lincoln's prediction that undeserving office-seekers would find him "a tough customer to deal with," and that he would know "how to distinguish deserving men from drones."<sup>32</sup> The occasion for the

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<sup>32</sup> Letter to Mrs. Schurz. Speeches, Correspondence, and Political Papers of Carl Schurz, edited by Frederic Bancroft (New York, 1913), I:119. Hereafter this source will be referred to as Papers.

interview was the matter of a reward for Schurz's services in the campaign. It had been hinted on several occasions that he would be appointed to a diplomatic post. However, not much more was said about the matter.

Schurz's speeches were directed mainly against Douglas. He indicted the popular sovereignty candidate for many inconsistencies. Many of his speeches were printed and circulated as campaign literature. As a result, Schurz brought a large number of German votes into the Lincoln column. He also obtained votes of the former Know-Nothings and of the Democrats. "No one worked harder than Carl Schurz," wrote William Cullen Bryant in his New York Evening Post, "No one touched the people more deeply."<sup>33</sup> By virtue of his work in the campaign and by

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<sup>33</sup> Ida M. Tarbell, Life of Abraham Lincoln (New York, 1903), II:163.

the rules of the "spoils system," a choice of offices should have been his. Democratic papers seized upon his role in achieving his party victory, to infer that it had been his intention to establish himself as an office-broker at Washington. It was further stated that if Schurz would receive a foreign appointment, the Democrats would reject the nomination.<sup>34</sup> Schurz was besieged by office-seekers who hoped

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<sup>34</sup> The Milwaukee Sentinel, November 1, 1860.

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that he would intercede for them with Lincoln. Schurz, however, brushed them aside.

After the campaign was ended, Schurz decided upon a lecture tour throughout the East, in order to recoup his losses. He had hoped Lincoln would proffer him an appointment so that he might pay off his debts. He wrote:

"To ask for an office is, in my opinion, to pay too high a price for it. I shall not do that myself, nor do I wish others to do it for me. I will tell you why I am somewhat scrupulous on that point. If I ask for a place, I lose part of my independence; if I merely accept what is spontaneously offered, I am bound by no obligation; and I must confess my independence in political life is worth more to me than all the favors which a government can shower upon a man."<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Schurz to Potter, December 24, 1860. Papers, I:176.

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Hence Schurz was not adverse to obtaining a position, provided it were offered in the proper manner, that is, through Lincoln. He desired most an appointment to a diplomatic post either in Sardinia, or in one of the German states. He was completely

confident of Lincoln's friendship. In an interview with Lincoln, in February, 1861, he was promised offices for whatever friends he should recommend and an office for himself.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Schurz to his wife, February 10, 1861. Carl Schurz Letters (MSS), Wisconsin Historical Society, I:179.

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Lincoln wrote to Seward asking his advice on what was to be done for Carl Schurz.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Easum, op. cit., 327.

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Following Lincoln's inauguration, there was considerable speculation as to whether Schurz would be given a foreign post, and if so, which one would it be. The New York Times reported that Schurz had made a bargain with Anson Burlingame to obtain the latter's aid in gaining the mission to Sardinia.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> The New York Times, March 7, 1861.

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This report aroused much criticism and opposition to his appointment to any European country since Schurz had been involved in the German Revolution of 1848 which had aimed at the establishment of a constitutional democratic government. The idea that one imbued with such principles should be sent to a monarchical government could hardly be condoned. It was generally thought that a native American, rather than Schurz, should be sent to a European capital. The Times suggested that he be given some appointment by the state of Wisconsin or that the President offer him some position within the United States in recognition of his services.<sup>39</sup> Schurz desired especially



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<sup>39</sup>The New York Times, March 9, 1861.

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the Sardinian mission, but he "considered his success doubtful" and he asserted that the Brazilian mission, for which he was being considered, would not be acceptable.<sup>40</sup> Oddly enough,

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<sup>40</sup>The New York Times, March 14, 1861; The New York Herald, March 14, 1861.

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the man who offered most opposition to a diplomatic appointment was none other than William H. Seward, whose nomination Carl Schurz had sought in the Chicago convention.<sup>41</sup> Schurz attri-

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<sup>41</sup>Carl Schurz, Reminiscences, II:221; The New York Herald, March 14, 1861.

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buted Seward's opposition to a fear of his revolutionary principles. Seward was strongly opposed to the appointment of a foreign-born citizen to a diplomatic post.

Schurz's aspiration for an appointment to Sardinia was given a setback when George P. March, of Vermont, former minister to Constantinople, was named Minister to Sardinia. The appointment was within Schurz's conception of good government for March was qualified by experience and he had not rendered any services to the party during the campaign. At the same time, Cassius Clay, of Kentucky, was named Minister to Spain. This position he declined in order to accept the Moscow post. Thus was the way cleared for Schurz's appointment to Madrid. Despite criticism, he accepted the appointment. The Milwaukee

Wisconsin News pictured the appointment as a holdup by an "impudent mendicant" who entered the presidential mansion a homeless refugee and vagrant, and left it clothed with the high dignity of a first class Ambassador of State.<sup>42</sup> He was

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<sup>42</sup>The Wisconsin News, March 30, 1861.

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described as a professional revolutionist and a soldier of fortune who divided the spoils after the victory was won. But it was Schurz's desire to serve his adopted country and to be of the greatest service. This was proved forcibly within two weeks after his appointment, when he hurried to Washington to tender his resignation and offer his military services to Lincoln. His resignation was refused since Seward insisted that the state of affairs in Europe demanded the presence in Madrid of a minister of full rank.

Arriving at Madrid in July, 1861, Schurz devoted himself to advancing the Union cause abroad. He returned to the United States in January, 1862, and resigned in April. He sought to rouse the public for immediate emancipation and to that end delivered an address, previously read and approved by Lincoln, at Cooper Union in March, 1862. In June, 1862, he was appointed Major-General in the Union Army. This action on the part of the President caused the Democrats to renew their charges of filling responsible positions in the national army for political reasons only.

The indictments on the part of the opposition did have some foundation for how could Schurz prove sufficient training

for such a position. True, he had been involved in the uprising of 1849 in South Germany as a lieutenant, but only as an aide-de-camp, and he had studied military tactics and science early in his exile and while he was Minister to Spain. Certainly this did not warrant such a position in the United States army. It was Schurz's first and last great indiscretion with reference to office seeking. From now on Carl Schurz was to lead the fight for the establishment of an honest, non-partisan government for the United States.

## Chapter II

### In National Politics

#### Section I

In 1865 Schurz obtained his discharge from the army and returned to private life. Before Schurz could decide upon his next course of action, President Johnson asked him to visit the Southern states and to report upon conditions in that section. Schurz traveled from July to September, 1865, and wrote a lengthy report, in which he stated that the extension of the franchise to the freedmen should be a condition precedent to the readmission of the Confederate states. With this task accomplished, he accepted Horace Greeley's invitation to become Washington correspondent for the New York Tribune. In this position he observed the beginning of the struggle between the President and Congress over reconstruction. Resigning in 1866, he became editor-in-chief of the Detroit Post. The following year, he became joint editor, with Emil Preetorius, of the St. Louis Westliche Post, and part owner of this German-language daily. In April, 1867, Schurz moved to St. Louis, where he entered local politics almost immediately.

In a letter to his wife, September 21, 1867, he prophesied that the Republican party would suffer many losses because of the "wire pullers" within it, and he was convinced that unless the best men were put at the helm and the "wire

pullers" and speculators were removed from leadership, the future of the party would be insecure. He declined to be a candidate for Congress, believing he "might be able to accomplish more in a free, strong, private situation than in Congress."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Schurz to his wife, October 12, 1867. Carl Schurz Letters (MSS), Wisconsin Historical Society.

In the spring of 1868 Schurz was named a delegate-at-large from Missouri to the Republican National Convention. Here he was chosen temporary chairman and in his acceptance speech he called upon the party to

"faithfully strive to restore the honor of the Government, to crush corruption wherever we find it, inside the party, just as well as outside, and to place the public service of the country in the hands of honest, true and capable men."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ely Burnham and I. Bartlets, eds., Proceedings of the National Union Republican Convention, May 20, 28, 1868.

The convention nominated General Ulysses S. Grant for the presidency and Schuyler Colfax, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, for the vice-presidency. The platform was only something to ride in on and then to be forgotten after the campaign. Schurz had offered a resolution of amnesty for the former Confederate leaders which, while it did not go as far as he had desired, was accepted by the convention. It was his purpose to see that the disfranchised Southern leaders were brought into the Republican party. Events of later

years showed that if such a policy had been adopted by the government, it would have accomplished the purpose. Schurz took an active part in the campaign. He did not discuss the subject of an honest, efficient government but limited himself to the main issue advanced by the Democratic candidates-- the redemption of United States bonds with greenbacks. This fact and the popularity of Grant and Colfax brought victory to the Republican party. The part that Schurz had played in the campaign started rumours that he was to be appointed to an office in Grant's cabinet. But Schurz dismissed this idea as just an improbability stating that the General would be inclined to go his own way in the selection of his "Official Family." However, the probability that Grant might recognize his worth and services had entered Schurz's mind; he desired the secretaryship-of-state.<sup>3</sup> He admitted that he would be

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<sup>3</sup> Letter to his wife, November 2, 1868. Carl Schurz Letters (MSS), Wisconsin Historical Society.

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more interested in a senatorship believing that he could accomplish more in Congress.

The campaign to select Schurz as Senator was formally launched in the St. Louis Democrat, December 8, 1868. The opportunity for this movement was the ambition of Senator Charles D. Drake to become the state Republican "boss." In order to accomplish this Drake sought to replace his colleague, Senator John B. Henderson, who had been one of the Republicans to vote for Johnson's acquittal. Many Republicans who

realized that Henderson could not be reelected did not prefer Drake as the "Boss" of the state party. It was the policy of this self-appointed "Boss" to select as the Junior Senator from Missouri a man who would be in accord with his own principles which would give him complete control over federal offices in the state and in turn the power of dictating the policies of the state Republican organization. As his colleague he preferred General Ben Loan. This nomination came directly from Drake himself, and would have become an actuality if the friends of Henderson had not intervened. These men, of whom Schurz was one, were members of a club which met fortnightly to dine and discuss the current political situation. At one of these dinners, shortly after the election of 1868, the subject of Loan's candidacy was discussed as was also the possibility of supporting a rival for the position. Out of this meeting came the suggestion that Carl Schurz should be the candidate.<sup>4</sup> The announcement

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<sup>4</sup>Schurz op. cit., III:292-295.

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in the St. Louis Democrat was supported throughout the state by many influential newspapers. This caused Drake to hurry from Washington to Missouri to throw the weight of his personal influence with the Legislature into the fight against Schurz. The Drake-Loan campaign assumed the form of a vitriolic attack upon Schurz, his previous career, his moral character, his nationality, his views and opinions.<sup>5</sup> Schurz

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 296.

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answered this attack as he had all previous ones by challenging either Drake or Loan to a public debate. This was accepted by both men and was to be held on the day prior to the meeting of the Republican caucus. Henderson was also invited to speak in his own behalf.

Henderson opened the debate with a brief and moderate address in defense of his own record and challenged the criticism of Drake. Schurz followed with a quiet, calm address saving his best ammunition for the closing speech which he was to deliver the following night. Loan delivered a turgid and solemn attack on his opponent and conducted a laborious defense of his own record. Drake's speech was mainly a long and burdensome continuation of the campaign against Schurz. Drake, not content to belittle the man who was threatening his plans, digressed into a denunciation of the Germans of Missouri accusing them of being "led by corrupt and designing rings; as marplots and mischief-makers who could never be counted upon, and whose presence hurt the party more than it helped it."<sup>6</sup> After deriding those who supported Schurz, he spoke

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 298.

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briefly on General Loan and offered a bit of praise for himself. The effect of the speeches of Drake and Loan was negative for they caused bitter feeling. Schurz replied with a brief, spirited address in which he turned to irony and ridicule in a ruthless review of Drake's political career.



The result of this speech was a collapse of the Loan candidacy and Schurz's nomination by the caucus on the first ballot. This election was more than the mere humiliation of a party leader for it placed in the United States Senate two men of opposed political philosophies; one, sought to create a political machine opposed by the other who was positive and tenacious in preventing such a development. This gave rise to much speculation as to how they would cooperate, since Drake had charged during the campaign that Schurz would try to control federal appointments. Schurz dispelled these fears by stating that their watchword would be: "Let us have peace."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 300.

This cooperation was evident in March, 1869, when Drake and Schurz agreed upon a list of names for federal appointments to be submitted to Grant. But Grant disregarding the suggestions of the Senators, determined his own appointments on the basis of personal regard or caprice.<sup>8</sup> While Schurz was not

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<sup>8</sup>Thomas S. Barclay, The Liberal Republican Movement in Missouri 1865-1871, (State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbus, Mo., 1926, Doctoral Dissertation), 179-180.

adverse to doling out offices, he considered the entire matter a "real drudgery."<sup>9</sup> The army of office-seekers convinced him

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<sup>9</sup>Letter to his wife, March 10, 1869. Carl Schurz Letters (MSS), Wisconsin Historical Society.

more than ever of the necessity of Civil Service Reform.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Letter P<sup>r</sup>ætorious, March 12, 1869. Carl Schurz  
Letters (MSS), Wisconsin Historical Society.

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Shortly after assuming office, Senator Schurz offered a few remarks on the bill to repeal the Tenure-of-Office act. He opposed the method by which the bill was introduced, for it was not brought before the Senate on its merits. The purpose of the original act had been to assert the senatorial prerogative over appointive positions. It provided that all officers, except members of the cabinet, appointed with the advice and consent of the Senate, should be entitled to hold their offices until a successor had been appointed; secondly, for causes which should seem to him to be sufficient, the President could during a recess of the Senate suspend an officer and appoint a temporary successor, notifying the Senate within twenty days after the reconvening of Congress; if the Senate concurred in the suspension the office was vacant, and a nomination could be made; if not, the incumbent was to resume his functions; thirdly, the president was not to have power to fill vacancies caused by suspension if the Senate, at its next session, should not confirm a successor to the vacated office; and this position was to remain in abeyance and its functions were to be performed by any officer who could lawfully execute therein in case of accidental vacancy; fourthly, the act was not to be construed to extend the term of any officer which was already limited by law.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>U. S. Statutes at Large, XIV, 430-432.

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This was the text of the bill that had been debated by the Senate in March and April, 1869. Those who favored the repeal bill based their arguments on the constitutional powers of the president. Since Schurz held that the original act was constitutional, he limited argument to its practicality. The great problem of the day was to create a thorough reform of the public service calculated to ferret out corruption and inefficiency. Schurz laid the blame for this situation, not upon the power of arbitrary removal by the executive, but on the prevailing system of appointments based on political and personal favoritism. The chief defect of the Tenure-of-Office act, according to Schurz, was the fact that it controlled removals rather than appointments. Thus, Schurz, if he had been so inclined, might have supported the repeal bill in the Senate if it had been introduced on its own merits. Schurz would have voted for the bill had he been assured that it would be suspended only for one year allowing Grant to clean out the public service. This stand was a gesture to insure the continuance of the Civil-Service Reform issue before the congressmen and the people. Schurz stated that he was the last one to wish to hamper the President in "cleaning out the Augean stable;" in hunting down corruption; in breaking up the "rings;" and driving out the thieves from the public service. He argued that by suspending the act, Grant would be given as much freedom of action as could be granted by repeal.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Congressional Globe, 41 Congress, 1 session, 155-156.

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The most tangible effect of the speech was the appointment of Schurz to the Joint Committee on Retrenchment. This appointment pleased him since the committee dealt with the principal measures of reform. He resolved to "make Civil Service Reform, one of the weightiest questions" before the people, his specialty.<sup>14</sup> In this same letter Schurz belied

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<sup>14</sup>Letter to his wife, March 20, 1869. Carl Schurz Letters (MSS), Wisconsin Historical Society.

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the words that he spoke in the Senate on the previous day. For if the words of the letter are to be taken as the expression of his thoughts, the reasons that he stated against the repeal were incomplete. He indicated his displeasure of the Grant Administration because it showed "a disposition to give offices to all relations and to a great number of old personal friends" and did not consult with members of Congress as had been the practice. In this opinion Schurz might have been a bit disgruntled because his aforementioned nominations had not been recognized. In his appointments Grant felt himself entirely free to pay personal debts of friendship, regardless of party claims, to say nothing of the interests of the public service. So, without the fact that Grant had refused to accede to the nominations offered by Schurz, the latter did have some cause for complaint. He realized that Civil Service Reform measures had little if any chance of success unless there was sufficient pressure. He wanted to keep the issue alive in order to conduct a reform campaign during the following winter. His

Republican principles could not tolerate a situation in which legislative powers were trodden down by "personal government." He held further that it would be the best for Grant to learn "that the Legislative power is...independent and somewhat animated by an independent spirit."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Papers, op. cit., I:481

The Senate refused to give up entirely the power that it had and the act was amended by striking out several clauses, which allowed suspension at the discretion of the President, who was no longer required to state the causes.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Statutes at Large, XVI, 6-7.

It is proper here to define what is meant by Civil Service Reform. It was a movement to break up corrupt rings; to get faithful and honorable men for governmental positions; to stimulate effort and fidelity with the hope of promotions, and to operate the government on the principle of maximum efficiency.

Previous attempts to achieve such reform were mediocre, except for the efforts of Representative Venckes of Connecticut who had tried for some time to pass a bill providing for competitive examinations. These examinations were to be conducted by a three-man board. The bill was never passed despite its repeated introduction. Thus when Schurz entered the Senate the only provision to curtail any portion of the "spoils system" was the Tenure-of-Office act which was operative only when the Senate was not in session.

Upon his appointment to the Committee on Retrenchment Schurz was determined to become the leader of Civil Service Reform in the Senate.<sup>17</sup> He was convinced that the success of

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<sup>17</sup>Letter to his wife, April 12, 1869. Carl Schurz Letters (MSS), Wisconsin Historical Society.

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such a "movement would be a greater blessing for the country than the discovery of the richest world mines." He also planned to deliver two "long effective speeches for reform. Oddly enough Schurz assured James Taussig that certain faithful Missourians would be appointed to suitable positions." But he reaffirmed his promise to make Civil Service Reform an issue in the next campaign.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Papers, op.cit., I:482-483.

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The Nation stepped in to aid the reform movement by offering rebuttal to the objectors to Civil Service Reform. These objectors stated if such a system were to be brought into effect it would lead to bureaucracy. The reply to this was that in those countries where bureaucracy accompanied an existing controlled Civil Service it was supported by a large standing army.

Schurz stated that his purpose was to avoid the "quadrennial scandal of universal office hunting, to deal out the offices according to ability and deserts instead of political and personal favoritism and thus provide for a Republic of honest and economical administration and cleanse our political

life of the corrupting element of office seeking."<sup>19</sup> His

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<sup>19</sup>Letter to his wife, May 30, 1869. Carl Schurz Letters (MSS), Wisconsin Historical Society.

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method was to subject all applicants to a test before an examining commission and no one was to be removed from office except for inefficiency, neglect of duty, or violations of law. This, he firmly believed, would be sufficient to root out scandals and make the official business of the republic respectable once more.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

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The following December, Schurz introduced a bill to reform the Civil Service of the United States. In discussing the bill he enumerated the existing evils in the Civil Service. The first of these was the basis of appointments made upon the recommendations of politicians of high and low grade. It was a well known fact that in a majority of cases these offices were looked upon as berths merely into which men were put by their protectors for favors received, while the best interests of the service were given a mere secondary consideration. The second, was that the President and his cabinet had neither the time nor the opportunity to examine with sufficient care the recommendations received. This was due also to the great number of applicants who overwhelmed the executive officers with impetuous and uproarious urgency. The third evil was the rush that always occurred when the president and the heads of the departments had just entered

upon the discharge of duties, when they had not had sufficient time to study the exigencies of their positions. Thus, they are not at all fitted for the "task of taking to pieces the vast administrative machinery of the government and of putting it together again out of inexperienced new material." The fourth evil was the demoralization of those officers instead of stimulation of an honest zeal. This would impair the efficiency of the service because of its lack of stability. Finally demoralization would lead to the seeking of positions by persons of inferior moral and intellectual qualifications, which would lower the "character of the civil service in such degree as to deter in many cases men of high self respect and superior ability from devoting themselves to the service of the Republic."<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Congressional Globe, 41 Congress, 2 Session, 236.

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Schurz recognized the fact that a cursory examination such as he proposed would not be entirely conclusive as a gauge to the business ability of the candidate. To provide for the lack of such a test there was to be a probational period of one year for the candidate. Schurz felt that this was a sufficient length of time for the candidate's superiors to ascertain whether he possessed those qualifications which are necessary to an efficient office-holder. If the candidate proved incompetent during this period he was to be removed.

The bill included the provisions of the Jenckes bill, but it went into greater detail. The Civil Service Board was



to be allowed to ascertain whether or not certain positions would require a written examination. Candidates for such positions were to show evidences of "character, antecedents, social standing, and general ability." These would have to be placed under a searching examination on the part of the Board. In order not to encroach upon the prerogative of the President to make appointments, the Board was to draw up a list of eligible candidates from which he was to make his selections. Not only was the President to observe the list but the Senators would also be given the list to ascertain the validity of the appointments they are to confirm.

To abolish the policy of "to the Victors belong the Spoils," Schurz included the following provision.

"All officers, with the exception of the class covered by Mr. Jencke's bill, who are already in the Civil Service when the operations of the Civil Service Board commence, and who, therefore, had been appointed without the careful scrutiny prescribed by the Bill, shall hold office for the term of five years from the date of their commissions; but all presidential appointments made afterward in pursuance of the provisions of the bill shall be for the term of eight years. No removals shall take place except for cause duly investigated and tried by the Board, with the provision, however, that any officer now in the service may at any time be ordered before the Civil Service Board and if found to be unfit, be dismissed. It is further provided that whenever any vacancy occurs in any office before the expiration of the term, the person selected to fill that vacancy shall be appointed, not for the balance of the unexpired term, but for a new and full term of eight years."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

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The class of officers mentioned in the Jenckes bill were those appointed by the heads of the departments, according to law. They work under the direction of those appointed by the President, with the advice of the Senate. It was in this latter class that the evils of the "Spoils System" existed. Schurz's aim was to prevent the "Spoils System" from becoming effective in March, 1873. In giving this reason Schurz manifested a feeling of confidence that a new administration might replace the Grant regime. If such a thing did happen, then there would be a lapse of one year to enable them to acquire sufficient knowledge of the demands of the service, and also obtain experience to guide them for future appointments. The eight year provision would give the country the benefit of the services of officers for a considerable time after their efficiency had matured by experience. Another purpose was to forestall wholesale removals by a new administration, thereby restoring to the people confidence in the Civil Service and removing the idea that it was a part of the working machinery of a political party. Another section of the bill provided for removal only of sufficient cause, and only upon "impartial trial." The entire purpose of the bill was to "strengthen the best impulses in the heart of every public officer by assuring him that he can find security of tenure in honest zeal and dutiful conduct, while the official recognition of duties well performed, as provided for in the bill, will stimulate his ambition to base future claims upon past good conduct and to leave an honorable record behind him."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 237

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The bill was referred to the Judiciary Committee whence it was reported on February 22, 1870 without amendment.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 1477.

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That was the last time it appeared on the Senate floor with any chance for debate. Following this, every time it appeared on the calendar its consideration was objected to until finally Schurz himself objected to its further consideration.

The feeling left by Schurz was that unless the practice that had been in vogue since Andrew Jackson time was reformed, the country would be ruined. Liberal papers supported this view. Eventually it had its effect but not to the satisfaction of Carl Schurz.

Previous to the introduction of the Schurz bill, Senator Lyman Trumbull, of Illinois, had introduced a bill to preserve the independence of the different departments of the government. Any member of Congress who shall solicit appointments for constituents to executive departments, except in writing in response to a written request from the President or any of the department heads, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction be fined up to \$1,000 for each offense. Nor shall the executive or department heads appoint to office anyone so solicited or recommended except on written request.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 17.

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Trumbull stated that his bill was aimed at a single abuse from which many abuses emanated. Schurz took exception to this as he did not see how a real reform could have been effected by the bill. He stated that if this bill were passed the appointments would be made on the recommendations of certain persons. He wanted to know who those persons would be upon whose recommendations the appointments were to be made, because it could not be supposed that the President or the members of the Cabinet would have the opportunity to cover the entire list of candidates themselves. Schurz aimed to provide for this in his own bill. Trumbull replied that his bill would remove the legislative members from the matter of appointments, but that there would be other channels of information. Schurz was aware that it was "highly improper for members of Congress to meddle with the functions of the executive, and to put themselves under obligations to the executive departments by the favors they asked and that are granted to them." He wanted a broader basis for the reform of the service than the Trumbull measure afforded.<sup>26</sup> Schurz refused to allow the

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 1077.

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bill to be considered.

At this time as a member of the Joint Select Committee on Retrenchment, Schurz was given an opportunity to obtain information about the workings of the service. In examination of John F. Miller, the collector of customs at San Francisco, Schurz asked:--

"What do the examinations consist of?"

"Miller:--They talk with a man, get his handwriting, and see whether he is intelligent or not. In the first place, they know of course that I have passed on this man beforehand. The examiners suppose I want him appointed. I do not presume the examination amounts to anything if there was a board of examiners outside not connected with the office, it might be different; but of course every subordinate in the custom-house, or nearly everyone would naturally wish to do what he thought the collector wanted done. That is human nature. In order to make the examination effective, it should be conducted by experts outside the custom-house; but an examination by citizens who know nothing about the revenue system would not amount to much, because a man might be very good at some things and not be good here."<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Senate Committee Report No. 47, 41 Congress, 2 Session, 226-227.

In January, 1871, the Trumbull bill was admitted to the floor of the Senate with amendments from the Judiciary Committee. On January 27 Schurz proposed a substitute to the Trumbull bill,

"Hereafter all appointments of Civil officers in the several departments of the Civil Service of the United States, except those hereinafter designated as exceptions, shall be made from those persons who shall have been found qualified for the performance of the duties of the offices to which such appointments are to be made, in open examinations or by other modes of investigation concerning their fitness, instituted, regulated, and conducted as herein prescribed."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Congressional Globe, 41 Congress, 2 Session, 778.  
(See Appendix A for Bill en toto.)

The reason for the amendment was that the original bill deprived the president of the best available and most dependable source of information, and thus a new source of reliable information had to be provided. The bill did not seek to cover the whole ground but attempted to remove the element of demoralization which prevailed in the distribution of offices. This was an answer to those who insisted that there were evils that could not be corrected by a reform of the service.

To bring the force of the evils of the system before his colleagues, Schurz pictured a post-innauguration scene. He showed how a motley throng, with anxious eyes, nervous movements, curious expressions of countenance besieged the President, department heads, and Congressmen with hurried tales and various papers, all asking for an office.<sup>29</sup> This

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., Appendix, 69.

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was the multitude that was insistent upon replacing all incumbent officials by the anxious office-seekers. Schurz objected to this procedure, for the presidents and the department heads would hardly have time to become acquainted with their offices. In a situation such as this Schurz proposed the creation of a non-partisan Civil Service Board to be appointed by the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate. This Board comprised of nine men was to prescribe the qualifications for admission to the service taking into

consideration such items as age, health, character, knowledge, and ability. They were to provide for examinations to cover the last three items; rules governing the applications of such persons; and subjects to be covered in the examinations. To facilitate the holding of the examinations the country was to be divided into districts with one or more convenient and accessible places. The Board was to supervise the examinations personally or delegate proper persons to do so. They were also to report to Congress at each session on the new rules and regulations, and the results of their examinations and investigations concerning candidates for Civil Service positions.

All applicants were to be graded. Appointments would be made from among those whose names were highest on the list. To prevent arbitrary promotion to a higher grade, an examination must be taken for the advancement. All examinations were to be open to all persons who filed applications. All officials, too, were to come under the provisions of the act, except post masters. Any vacancy in any office must be filled from the list.

The Board was to advise the President who could select any name on the approved list. Thus, this provision was in keeping with the constitutional provision concerning presidential appointments. Senator Howard, of Michigan, questioned Schurz on the possibility of an infringement upon the presidential power to make appointments. Schurz explained the free choice of the President from among those found competent. Senator Warner, of Alabama, asked if the act would not prevent

the President from appointing to office anyone who did not file an application. To this, Schurz replied that the President could select a person whom he wished to appoint to an office. The Civil Service Board, however, must ascertain his fitness for the position.

The purposes of these sections were to remove the partisan character of the Civil Service and to obviate the pressure on a new administration. It would accustom office-holders to the practice of having men in office belonging to other parties. By including a one year probation period during which an office-holder could be removed without a statement of cause, Schurz maintained the elasticity of the old system of selection. This was also to still any arguments that might arise accusing him of attempting to establish a bureaucracy.

In case of a vacancy, for any reason whatsoever, the head of the department was to file a report on the services of the ex-office-holder. The report and testimonials were to be kept on file and could be used by the officer in submitting a new application. It was also provided that if the President saw fit he might reappoint an office-holder which might be considered as equivalent to a certificate of good behavior and efficiency. In such a case, it would not be necessary for the candidate to submit to another examination. Thus, Schurz paved the way for the President to maintain an efficient Civil Service. Schurz realized that the bill was not a cure-all, but he felt that it would raise the



respectability of the service. The certificate of fitness which was to be issued by the Board would be a mark of distinction. Moreover, by placing officials of one party alongside those of other parties, Schurz planned to create a non-partisan administration of government. As always, he sought to abolish the quadrennial rush for offices. By providing for a Civil Service Board all opportunities for importunity would be eliminated, and a thorough reform would be attained.

Senator Williams, of Oregon, questioned Schurz on the possibility of electing a President who would achieve such results without Congressional action. Schurz asked him if any President had not been elected upon whose integrity and wisdom the highest hopes of reform had been built? Schurz further asked what President could willingly rise and say, "I will have no longer a partisan organization in the public service," and still hope to control the greed of his partisan followers? Schurz refused to "believe that true republican government is in a sense necessarily wedded to organic disorder and demoralization," and that it would suffer if ignorance and mercenary motives were suppressed. He was sure that the people would sanction the use of an examination of applicants and the exclusion of those found to be intellectually and morally unfit for public office. The removal of corruption and demoralization derived from partisan patronage would restore to political activity the best elements of the population.

He also provided that the Board should establish rules and regulations for removal during the period of probation and throughout the period of service. Any officer removed was to appear before the Board, which was to judge the validity of the removal. This was to remove all doubt of dishonesty in the system that he advocated. It was also to forestall any arbitrary removals.

The bill permitted women to enter the Civil Service.

The Board was also to be subjected to a close scrutiny by the President for inefficiency and members might be removed by him with the consent of the Senate.

Senator Howard, in opposing Schurz's substitute amendment, stated that he had no confidence in it and considered it a "dream of a political millenarian, who entertains the hope that the political millenium will some time or other come, when nobody will be recommended or appointed to office except as may be entirely fit for it." The Michigan Senator saw no such day in the offing for it is a maxim of government "that the representative shall be as near to the constituent as possible." Howard also maintained that the bill would establish privileged class, an office-holding aristocracy, and, "if it were practicable, one of the most objectionable and odious." He hoped the measure would be rejected. Although Schurz's substitute amendment was defeated, the original bill with minor changes was passed a few days later.

On March 3, 1871, Senator Trumbull proposed the following amendment to the Civil Appropriations Bill:

"That the President of the United States be, and he is hereby, authorized to prescribe such rules and regulations for the admission of persons into the Civil Service of the United States as will best promote the efficiency thereof, and ascertain the fitness of each candidate in respect to age, health, character, knowledge, and ability for the branch of service into which he seeks to enter; and for this purpose the President is authorized to employ suitable persons to conduct said inquiries, to prescribe their duties, and to establish regulations for the conduct of persons who may receive appointments in the Civil Service."<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 3997; Revised Statutes, Sec. 1, 753.

With the adoption of this amendment, a control over the Civil Service was established but time and practice showed it to be inadequate.

When Grant tried to obtain the Senate's confirmation of the treaty to annex Santo Domingo, Schurz was offered all the patronage he wanted if he would support it.<sup>31</sup> This offer

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<sup>31</sup>Papers, II:403.

was made by two White House emissaries, apparently at the President's instigation and with his full approval. Schurz's refusal to accept such offers and his control of Missouri politics led the President to appointment of men to federal offices in Missouri without extending to Schurz the privilege of "senatorial courtesy."

## Section II

The Liberal Republican Movement in Missouri, which was

led by B. Gratz Brown and Carl Schurz, brought about the enfranchisement of the former Southern leaders and the defeat of the regular Republican Party led by Charles D. Drake. Schurz saw it as a reprisal to those "spoilsmen and wire-pullers" who had attempted to control the state politics by advising the President as to appointments to federal offices. This advice was based upon the information that certain officers preferred one Republican candidate to another. After the state Republican convention, in which the enfranchisement of ex-Confederate leaders was voted down, the Liberal faction meeting at a new convention voted for it. Those office-holders who favored the candidates selected by the Liberal Republicans were advised by their superiors that their services were no longer required.

An example of federal interference in the gubernatorial campaign was a letter read by Schurz addressed to the federal office-holders from the State McClurg for Governor Committee. McClurg was the incumbent seeking reelection.

"Dear Sir:

The State Republican committee have a great and imperative need of funds at once, to carry the campaign to successful issue. An assessment of one percent of the annual gross receipts of your office is therefore called for, and you will please inclose that amount, without delay, to the treasurer, E. S. Rowse, in the envelope inclosed.

This assess is made after conference with our friends in Washington, where it is confidently expected that those who receive the benefits of federal appointments will support the machinery that sustains the party which gives them pecuniary benefit and honor. The exigencies are great, and delay or neglect will rightly be construed into unfriendliness to the Administration. We do not look for such

a record from you, and you will at once see the propriety and wisdom of the earliest possible attention to the matter.

Isaac Sheppard  
Chairman of the Committee<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Congressional Globe, 41 Congress, 3 Session, 125.

While this note did not come directly from the Administration the implication was there. It showed what practical political managers of a patronage machine were capable of doing in the name of an administration.

As if the above letter were not sufficient to convince the Senators, Schurz cited the example of a federal judge who threatened to remove the "trembling" office-holders from their positions if they dared to transgress the rules laid down by him. He also cited a letter from George D. Orner, the Collector of Missouri, to Colonel Daniel E. Saunders, a deputy collector of the Fifth District, asking for the resignation of the latter because the role he was pursuing in state politics was detrimental to the Radical party of Missouri. Orner was gracious enough to admit that Saunders was an honest official and that all of their transactions had been most pleasant. Schurz closed this with a prayer: "The Lord save the Administration and the party if such influences succeed further in governing their course."<sup>33</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

Drake insisted that Schurz had betrayed the Republican party in Missouri, and called it a measure of "premeditated

war" against the Grant Administration. He quoted Schurz as sustaining the movement against the resolution of the Radical Republicans which refused the franchise to former Southern leaders. Schurz believed "that the resolution was drafted and introduced by some wag who wanted to show to General Grant's good sense to what depth of abject flattery that greed of spoils would descend which is always ready to throw aside sacred pledges for public plunder." This to Drake appeared an effort to carry a part of the Republican party over to the Democrats, thereby giving them control of the state.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., Apendix, 6.

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Drake admitted that he had advised the President to remove those office-holders who had bolted from the regular party on the proposition that no administration should keep in office a man who is inimical to it. He held that offices were not made to enrich the enemies of an administration. Holding such policies, it is not difficult to understand why Drake found Schurz to be a bitter opponent. Schurz was determined to promote the realization of certain principles and measures for the public good, whereas Drake labored to enhance the good of the party machine. The result was shown in the defeat of Drake's attempt to obtain a second term in the Senate.

With such a start, Schurz attempted to spread the movement

throughout the country. It was his opinion that it would be immoral and impractical to conceal the evils of the administration. He realized that to reveal all would probably result in his own political demise, but he was bound to carry on to gain further support. He viewed as demoralizing and dangerous a talk which considered Grant as a "saviour of the party," since no cause could survive if identified with one person. To dispose of the Grant-as-a-Saviour cause he asked Jacob D. Cox, former Secretary of Interior, to inform him of the possibility for the development of an aggressive Liberal movement in Ohio.<sup>35</sup> He felt confident that his principles

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<sup>35</sup>Papers, II:176.

would gain many converts before the presidential election of 1872. Schurz believed that if the office managers were ousted the liberal and vigorous element within the party could assume the leadership. To accomplish this, the Missouri and the Ohio movements would have to be encouraged by the independent press. Then, by controlling the presidential election much could be accomplished for Civil Service Reform since such patronage politicians as Chandler, Conkling and Cameron would be held at bay.<sup>36</sup> Schurz was rather adamant in making

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<sup>36</sup>Papers, II:252-253.

the party one of reform by suppressing the bad elements within it. He resolved to "fight it out on this line."<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid., II:257.

Schurz carried his crusade for a reform party to the nation. One of his widely distributed speeches was given in Nashville, Tennessee on September 20, 1871, in which he advocated "a general house-cleaning, to knock off the dust and to extinguish the vermin," to "restore our public life to the purity and high tone of the first years of the Republic."<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 257.

While on this tour Schurz again wrote to Cox proposing that the movement open its ranks to Progressive Democrats.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>Papers, II:314

Schurz speaking in Cincinnati accused those who obtained a Civil Service position through partisan methods of seeking a reward for service to their party as a means to benefit themselves and not the public. The tenure of such a position would depend upon the fidelity with which the office-holder served those who had appointed him. The true purpose of the public office would then recede into the background.<sup>40</sup> He

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<sup>40</sup>Cincinnati Commercial, October 20, 1871.

pointed out how positions were doled out on the basis of state quotas.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

The tour actually began the Liberal Republican movement on a national scale, and convinced Schurz that many people were in sympathy with him. Schurz also carried his program



to the floor of the Senate.

Returning to Washington for the opening of Congress, Schurz again heard President Grant promise to reform the Civil Service. A promise that was viewed by Schurz and his reforming colleagues with much misgiving. On December 13, 1871, Senator Anthony of Rhode Island moved to create the Committee of Investigation and Retrenchment a permanent committee. This indicated that Schurz was alone in his dispute with the President and his advisers. Trumbull then submitted an amendment to define the duties of the committee, which would have made the committee a detective agency with absolute power to investigate all branches of the government service.<sup>42</sup> The administration forces in the Senate claimed

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<sup>42</sup>Congressional Globe, 42 Congress, 2 Session, 86.

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that the proposed bill and amendment was an insult to Grant who had promised a reform of the service. Senator Edmunds, of Vermont, their leader, stated that when the original Committee on Retrenchment had been organized in 1866 the Civil Service had been in a demoralized condition, a situation no longer prevalent in 1871. Schurz answered that the reasons for establishment of the first committee were still present as was demonstrated by the scandals in the government service.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 91.

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Schurz claimed that the American people demanded an honest government, and the exposure and overthrow of corruption

regardless of any party or person.<sup>44</sup> These people were

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 95.

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joining the liberal movement against the President. His object in trying to obtain the passage of the bill was to uncover, denounce, and correct any and every abuse regardless of the interest of any party or person. Senator Morton of Indiana, an administration supporter said:

"I am not mistaken about the whole drift of this debate. It has been to show that there is corruption existing under this administration, and gross corruption. The drift of this debate is a reflection upon the Republican Party."<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 99.

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Schurz ridiculed Morton's speech and pointed out that although everyone claimed to be for reform, as soon as someone actually advocated it, he was denounced for trying to destroy the party. Schurz insisted that the senators must either choose between reform or the party managers, but for himself he would fight for reform unceasingly.<sup>46</sup> Although the

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 129.

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amendment was rejected, the original bill was passed with minor amendments. But the effect of the bill was immediately destroyed when such men as Buckingham, of Connecticut, Pratt, of Indiana, Howe, of Wisconsin, Harlan, of Iowa, Stewart, of Nevada, Pool, of North Carolina, and Bayard, of Delaware, were

named to the committee.

Schurz's action in behalf of the bill was criticized in an editorial in the New York Times. It indicated that while men like Schurz, who were arrayed against the administration, demanded great license for themselves and exercised the right of "aspersing character" howled with rage when their own conduct was scrutinized. This referred to the contention of the reformers that they were abused because they condemned the administration. The Times accused Schurz of placing himself on a pedestal. To show that the Missouri Senator himself was not lily-white a dark picture was painted of his political career.<sup>47</sup> The criticism was unfair and contained

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<sup>47</sup> New York Times, December 28, 1871.

hardly a grain of truth. He was accused of seeking to replace Henderson as Senator in 1868-1869 when the facts of the case showed clearly that Drake was first to announce General Loan as the candidate for the office. They accused Schurz of persistently pressing the President for appointments in the Civil Service.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

The Nation, one of the few anti-Grant periodicals, rushed to Schurz's aid by sarcastically comparing him to Tom Murphy, New York's "Boss" Tweed's henchman, who as collector of the New York Customs House was praised by the Times, despite the fact that it was publicly known that he had swindled the

government out of a large sum of money.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Nation, January 4, 1872.

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Following this Schurz spoke in his own behalf. He ably refuted the Times indictment indicating that the case was stated falsely.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>Nation, January 11, 1872.

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This exchange of invectives did not harm Schurz but served to keep the issues of the movement before the people. Schurz claimed that the presidential announcement in favor of reform was but a sham, for when the Civil Service Commission submitted a plan, the administration showed its true colors claiming that the idea of reform was in every way demonstrated as an impractical and mischievous delusion.<sup>51</sup> This naturally

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<sup>51</sup>Papers, II:317.

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was ridiculous to Schurz to whom the reform of the partisan Civil Service seemed to have become an obsession.

Samuel Bowled, the editor of the Springfield Republican, proposed a plan to Schurz whereby the Democrats were to retire from the political stage and a new "Great Reform" party be formed.<sup>52</sup> Somehow the proposal did not appeal to Schurz

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 253.

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despite his previous plan to admit liberal Democrats to the reform movement. His reason for this can be understood since

the inclusion of all Democrats would have turned many "true reformers" from the movement. His reason was sound but unfortunately the movement fell into that very error.

The Chicago Tribune supported the movement when it commented favorably on a speech Schurz gave at Cooper Union in New York City. It was regarded not only as the speech of a "pure, wise, sagacious, honest and eloquent" man, but as of "one who had risen above political expediency, and who was in earnest in his endeavor to save the Republican party from the dangers that it had been exposed to by the corrupt leaders" To Schurz was attributed the desire to save the party from the inevitable ruin that it was headed for because of centralization of power and the coercion of the people by patronage despotism. The speech closed with the following admonition:

"You cannot stop the movement in which we are engaged. The men, who have undertaken it, have risen above party dictation. They have ceased to measure their convictions of duty by the rules laid down in a party caucus....The objects they aim at stand to them above mere party considerations. Those who are now in good earnest working for constitutional government and reform will not be led by their noses in the opposite direction. This movement will go on; by your joining it, you can make it greater and more beneficial in its influence; by your opposition, you cannot arrest it. You might as well attempt to stop the Mississippi in its flow."<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup>Chicago Tribune, April 16, 1872.

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This was a rather confident speech, but it was a true expression of Schurz's belief on the prospect of the ensuing

campaign. To James G. Blaine, the leader of the administration forces, it was an effort of dissatisfied partisans.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>James G. Blaine, Twenty Years of Congress 1861-1883; II:517.

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This was echoed by the Nation which lamented that many persons who were dissatisfied with the administration for selfish reasons would be drawn to the movement and that there would be no way to keep them out.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>Nation, April 18, 1872.

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An invitation was issued to all Liberals to meet in a National Convention at Cincinnati May 1, 1872. Here at the convention was committed the greatest error of the movement. It was the result of the mistaken idea of Carl Schurz that to carry out successfully the program of the movement the convention was to run as impartially as possible. There were to be no political bargains in favor of any candidate. With such an opinion Schurz allowed himself to be selected permanent President of the convention. In his acceptance speech Schurz reviewed the necessity of a change in government. It was but a restatement of the evils that he had reviewed previously in the Senate. The fifth clause of the platform read in part as follows:

"We therefore regard such thorough reforms of the Civil Service as one of the most pressing necessities of the hour: that honesty, capacity, and defility constitute the only valid claim to public employment; that the offices of the government cease to be a matter of arbitrary favoritism and patronage, and that public station

become again a post of honor. To this end it is imperatively required that no President shall be a candidate for reelection.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Liberal Republican Convention, (New York, 1872)

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The reason was that if a president were limited to one term, he would not try to construct political machines based on patronage to insure reelection.

However, the platform was not the mistake that Schurz had allowed to be committed when he refused to stay on the convention floor. The error became apparent when the question arose as to the choice of a candidate. Charles Francis Adams, a descendant of two presidents and the leader of the New England reformers, was the choice of nearly everyone. It was generally considered that after each delegation had paid its complimentary duty to its favorite son, Adams would be the unanimous choice. But this did not materialize, mainly because of two reasons. The first was the selection of Schurz as permanent president. Schurz was the most prominent man at the convention, and for the fact that he was a naturalized citizen he would have obtained the party nomination for the presidency. When he removed his presence from the floor he also removed his strength and power of persuasion. This allowed the very thing he tried to evade to creep into the proceedings--political maneuvering and bargaining. The second was the split in the Illinois delegation over the vote for Trumbull or Judge David Davis. This also led to political bargaining.

In his speech upon taking the chair Schurz implicitly indicated Charles Francis Adams as his choice for the party nomination. When this news reached Missouri, it kindled fires of unrest among those supposed colleagues of Schurz, Frank Blair and B. Gratz Brown. Brown, the favorite son of the Missouri delegation, was earnest in his aspirations for the presidency. Blair and Brown rushed to the scene of action where Adams, Brown, Greeley, and Trumbull were leading candidates for the nomination. Adams, though outdistancing his opponents, did not have a sufficient number of votes to close the balloting. In "smoke filled rooms" Brown and Blair met the managers of the Horace Greeley candidacy. The outcome was the formation of a Greeley and Brown ticket. The Adams managers, though despondent at the receipt of this news, regarded the nomination of the New York Tribune editor and publisher an impossibility. This would have been true if a union would have been effected with Trumbull, and if Schurz had been on the floor and his services available. But Trumbull votes seemed to dwindle away to either Adams or Greeley, thus creating somewhat of a deadlock. Then, B. Gratz Brown carried through a coup d'etat in a performance of extraordinary effrontery. It was just that, for one rule of convention procedure was that the usual speech in favor of any candidate was forbidden. Without taking any cognizance of this rule Brown thanked his supporters for their votes but he was withdrawing from the race in favor of the man he felt was the most likely to succeed, and that man was Horace



Greeley. This was a signal for a tumultuous uproar from the southerners, New York, New Jersey, and Vermont delegates. The effect was spontaneous as sections of other delegations joined. The work of the combination was successful. Adams, who had had 325 out of the necessary 358 votes lost ground as the delegations broke and the erudite editor obtained the nomination. If the Trumbull faction had formed a combination with Adams in opposition to the Greeley-Brown group the movement would have forged ahead instead of slipping backward, and Adams would have received the nomination. The objection to Greeley as expressed by those interested in good government was his Radical policy in the previous decade, and many reformers withdrew their support. Greeley's letters of the period reveal that while he did not actively seek the nomination, he did try to undermine the basic programs of the movement, through his personal representative, Whitelaw Reid, who had successfully managed the coup.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Donald Seitz, Horace Greeley, 370.

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Since Schurz was the permanent chairman, he was accused of being a party to the bargain. The basis for this was his permission to Brown to make his speech and his refusal to bolt as did those earnest friends of the National Reform movement whose expectations had been deflated. Another reaction was the statement of the administration organs that the convention was a triumph over Carl Schurz.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>Chicago Tribune, May 8, 1872.

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Schurz's own reaction is seen in a letter to Horace Greeley immediately following the convention.

"My whole heart was and is in the cause I have so laboriously worked for, and it is with a grief, which I cannot express, that I see a movement so hopefully begun, so noble and so promising, dragged down to the level of an ordinary political operation and stripped of its moral power."<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>Papers, II:367.

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He doubted which was the best course, to continue on or to start anew. But he was resolved that whatever he did it would not be dictated by any selfish motives. Schurz could hardly go backward because it was he who had been the guiding light of the movement in the early days and for him to withdraw, though it would remove the reform support from Greeley, it would mean that the cause would disappear from public notice. He was resolved to force Greeley to commit himself irrevocably to Civil Service Reform. To achieve this he began by offering advice to Greeley. He suggested that Greeley in his letter of acceptance, advocate the creation of a commission to determine appointments and renewals in the Civil Service in accordance with the manner prescribed in the party platform.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid., II:372.

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A series of editorials in the New York Evening Post

advocating a new election caused Schurz to reconsider his position. He began to agree with this trend but he shied away from any attempt to lead a break from the Cincinnati convention. He offered to do anything to escape the necessity of supporting Greeley but he would not do so as the sole leader of such a movement but would collaborate with others.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Ibid., II:378.

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Greeley's letter of acceptance was not as strong as Schurz had suggested.

The Republican party, convening at Philadelphia June 5, 1872, answered the Cincinnati convention in section three of its platform:--

"In the so-called Liberal Republican party we find no attractive political virtue and no important distinctive principle. It is manifestly an organization created by personal designs, and by feeling so embittered and intense that it is prepared and solicitous to form an alliance with the Democratic party, as the only possible method of accomplishing its narrow and unjustifiable purposes."<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>National Union Republican Convention, June 5, 6, 1872. Reported by F. H. Smith.

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The platform advocated ability and integrity as the base of tests for offices. This rejection by the Republican party of the Cincinnati platform once again caused some doubt in the mind of Carl Schurz as to what course he should pursue. He advocated going both directions at the same time. He sought to pin Greeley down with definite statements for reform while

he conspired with others in the possibility of establishing another nomination and the repudiation of Greeley. He wrote to Greeley asking him to clarify his position.

Without coming out directly for Greeley, Schurz began his campaign against the administration. Unable to attend a convention of Illinois Liberal Republicans on June 26, 1872, he sent a letter which was to be read. In it he urged the union of the people of the north and south to break the prevalent despotism of party spirit, "which, in the shape of personal government rules our National legislation," and to disband the corrupt office-holders who demoralized and subjugated public opinion, and stood in the way of reform.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Chicago Tribune, June 27, 1872.

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On June 29, 1872, the leaders of the reform movement met in New York to consider the action proposed by the Evening Post. Here Schurz realized the fallacy of establishing a third party against Greeley and Grant. The Reform movement could not weather the storm of a lost election. Godkin would not admit the probability of Greeley's carrying out his campaign pledges anymore than Grant had done in 1869. He supported Grant. He warned Schurz not to believe in any pledges, however unequivocally stated, that Greeley might make. Greeley refused to make any pledge that could not be discarded if he was victorious. He was resolved to make no commitments on a Civil Service Board, and decided to "defer it to the judgment of a Congress imperverted by the adulterous commerce in

legislation and appointments. #64

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<sup>64</sup>Papers, II:391.

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The failure of the New York conference to nominate a third candidate practically forced the weakened Democratic party, meeting in Baltimore, to accept the Cincinnati platform and candidate. This unfortunate situation cost the movement all chances of a successful election, for many southern Democrats bolted the party to favor the President, who was more acceptable to their line of thought.

Paul Strobach, who led a portion of staunch German Republicans, indicted Schurz publicly for his action. Strobach was confident that the party, like an "affectionate, forbearing, and forgiving Mother," would welcome Schurz back when he realized that he had been duped.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup>Ross, op.cit., 150-151.

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The Nation sparing no adjectives in belittling the campaign efforts of Carl Schurz, but Schurz in his own fashion, generally ignored the charges made against him. He chose rather to inform his hearers of the inconsistencies of the administration. He showed how the President took up superficially the reform of the Civil Service to still the popular demand. He quoted General Benjamin Butler, one of Grant's friends, as declaring that "Civil Service reform is humbug." Schurz retorted that Grant and Butler had made it such. The

service became a vast political agency dedicated to the principle of obtaining the reelection of Grant as the political conscience of the office-holder was controlled despotically by pouring government money into the contested states. Officials were becoming the servants of a party and a man. The idea of such an administration, to Schurz, was a bit of "impudent mockery, a barefaced jugglery attempted upon an intelligent people, and a prostitution of a great cause." To do away with all this he asked that true reform start from the top.<sup>66</sup> In his other speeches Schurz accused Grant and his

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<sup>66</sup> Papers, II:404-406.

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assistants of most everything that would apply to a corrupt civil service. Some might be discounted as prejudiced and antipathy but in the main it was all true and basically just. It was his contention that if "necessary reform could not be accomplished inside of the Republican party, it must be accomplished outside of that party."<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Chicago Tribune, August 11, 1872.

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But all this did not aid the cause enough for the antipathy to Greeley was appalling. The final result showed that the people were against the erudite ex-editor whose past was not as trustworthy a basis for future actions as was that of Grant. When the vote was counted, Greeley emerged with 66 electoral votes against the President's 276. From the

division of the northern vote it is apparent that Charles Francis Adams would have carried the eastern German votes which Greeley had lost. These would have been sufficient to defeat Grant.

The result of the election was not immediately apparent for Congress passed two acts empowering departments which were investigating frauds or irregularities to subpoena witnesses to appear in federal courts.<sup>68</sup> Shortly after Congress

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<sup>68</sup>Statutes at Large, 183-184.

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had reconvened Schurz received a letter from a Louisiana editor, O. C. Bryson, asking the Senator to intercede for him in obtaining a postmastership in Louisiana. Schurz gave three reasons for not complying with the request. First, he was out of favor with the administration because of his actions. Second was his opinions on Civil Service rendered it impossible for him to advocate the removal of an incumbent for political reasons, and thirdly, newspaper editor Bryson should preserve his independence.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>69</sup>Papers, II:500.

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In his second inaugural address Grant refrained from mentioning Civil service reform. He chose to take his re-election as a vote of confidence. The vote of confidence had an auspiciously hollow ring to it for it was not Grant who had been elected as much as it was Horace Greeley who had been defeated.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>William B. Hesseltine, Ulysses S. Grant, 316.

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The year 1873 was uneventful in the movement for reform as Congress and the administration were primarily concerned with the scandals and the panic. The Civil Service Board lost much when George William Curtis resigned as its chairman because of the lack of congressional cooperation. The partisan element did its job well and Grant soon dropped all efforts to further reform.

Grant, in his annual message on December 1, 1873, asked for a special congressional committee to confer with the Civil Service Board to devise rules to govern appointments which would not only secure the services of honest and capable officials, but also would give them a degree of independence while in office.<sup>71</sup> This was to a great extent a sham for he

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<sup>71</sup>Ed. James D. Richardson, Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 4208-4209.

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returned the burden of reform to Congress which would hardly move to curtail its own practices. Thus, with no positive movement on the part of Congress or the President the practice of the "Spoils System" was restored. Grant, probably with some qualms of conscience, again placed the burden of blame for the failure of the board on Congress in his annual message of December 7, 1874, in which he practically invited Congress to adjourn without the passage of any legislation on the subject. If Congress passed no law he would consider it as a tacit



disapproval of any such legislation.<sup>72</sup> In a cabinet meeting

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<sup>72</sup>Ibid., X:4254-4255.

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on March 9, 1875, Grant gave orders to abandon the principle of Civil Service Reform and to return to the former method of appointing employees.<sup>73</sup> The only conclusion to be drawn

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<sup>73</sup>New York Daily Tribune, March 11, 1875.

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from this action was that Grant could not help making such appointments unless Congress tied his hands. Congress replied to Grant's accusation that it was at fault with the charge that the bill had established a Civil Service Board through which the president had power of enforcement.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>Ibid.

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Schurz resigned from the Senate and embarked on a lecture tour throughout the north. He was wildly acclaimed by German-Americans as he offered vindication for his actions. Thus, in retirement Carl Schurz carried on the fight for civil service reform. He refused to take the defeat of 1872 as the final castigation of the reform. He hoped that the Centennial year of American freedom would inspire the American people with higher and nobler impulses of patriotism and that the 1876 campaign would not be run again in the old party ruts.<sup>75</sup> By taking up the cudgel once again he was eventually

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<sup>75</sup>Papers, III:152.

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able to bring the issue squarely before the people. But he had to wait for an unforeseen opportunity to carry his principles into practice.

### Section III

In 1873 Schurz journeyed to Germany for his first true vacation in several years. While in Europe he received several communications requesting his return to America to lead the Republican forces in the Ohio gubernatorial campaign, to which he replied that the independent element should stay out of active politics until the presidential campaign. It was his plan to decide which party to support after the parties had indicated their stand on reform. As his objections were satisfactorily answered in subsequent letters, Schurz returned to America. The importance of the election caused this change of opinion. Both parties believed that as the Ohio election went so would all the elections of the year, and it would be a forecast of the election of 1876. The two candidates, Governor Allen and ex-Governor Hayes were considered possible presidential nominees for the following year.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Gorrest W. Clonts, "The Political Campaign of 1875 in Ohio," Ohio Archaeological and Historical Society Quarterly, V, XXXI:39-69.

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Schurz strongly approved of Rutherford B. Hayes and his stand for "sound money" and reform and his campaign oratory was a deciding factor in the election which Hayes won by 5,544 votes.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Hamilton J. Eckenrode, Rutherford B. Hayes--Statesman of Reunion, 103.

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With the revelation of more scandals in the Grant administration Schurz stated publicly that it was necessary to reform the Civil Service to send the "thieves to jail and to infuse into the whole machinery of the government a sense of honor that will prevent corruption instead of merely punishing it." He found substantiation of his arguments in the "Whiskey Ring" trials, which had revealed that campaign funds were being raised by public officials; that a transfer of internal revenue supervisors would have broken the Ring; the government could have been saved large sums of money, and reform would have prevented a disgrace of the public service. As a result he thought that those who had "the interest of the country sincerely at heart should not permit the question of the purification of government to be obscured by anything else...."<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>78</sup>New York Daily Tribune, December 13, 1875.

With the turn of the year Schurz planned for the election of a reform president in the centennial year by working from the inner circles of the Republican party to secure a large reform delegation to the national convention.<sup>79</sup> The selection

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<sup>79</sup>Papers, III:218.

of the Republican party to carry out his plan was based on his support of the "sound-money" principle. This fact, though not considered on the same plane of importance as that of reform, was a deciding factor. To carry out his plan Schurz

wrote extensively to friends in the middle west urging the candidacy of Charles Francis Adams for president and a meeting of Independents to devise ways and means to prevent the campaign from degenerating into a scramble by the politicians for the spoils. He saw great possibilities of rectifying the error of 1872. He observed that various papers throughout the country were taking up the fight against the administration. The Boston Transcript stated that "Reform was the only Party hope." The Philadelphia Times called the prevailing scandals the "Influence of a sordid Administration." The Rochester (New York) Union and Advertiser stated that the people would have no more of the disgrace of the administration.<sup>80</sup> These

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<sup>80</sup>New York Daily Tribune, March 4, 1876.

opinions rose from a reaction to a series of scandals climaxed by the Belknap affair, which brought to light concrete evidence that the machinery of government was honeycombed with corruption. However, Schurz saw the possibility of a victory by a third party composed of Independents if neither party accepted the challenge and even if there would be an unsuccessful election, enough votes would be cast to show popular opinion.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>81</sup>Papers, III:222-223.

As a challenge to the Republican party and the Democratic party to start bringing forth honest reform candidates Schurz, with such Independents as William Cullen Bryant, of New York, Henry Cabot Lodge, of Massachusetts, Horace White, of Illinois,

and Theodore D. Woolsey, of Connecticut, issued on April 6, a circular letter inviting all those interested in reform to meet in conference May 15, 1876. The circular emphasized the wide spread corruption in the public service, which disgraced the United States in the eyes of the world and threatened to poison the vitality of American institutions, and the uncertainty to the public mind and of party counsels. They believed that as there was a patriotic desire struggling for effective expression inside of the existing political organizations, a conference of such people could consider what might be done to prevent the November election from becoming a mere choice of evils, and to secure the "selection of honorable men who will satisfy the exigencies of the situation and protect the honor of the Republic."<sup>82</sup> The phraseology of this document

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<sup>82</sup>Ibid., 228-229.

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showed clearly that Schurz was its guiding force.

On May 1, 1876, the Schurz sponsored Republican Reform Club of New York City convened and stated its aims:--calling for reform; economy of public offices; selection of honest statesmen; and a reformer as the party nominee for the presidency.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>83</sup>New York Daily Tribune, May 2, 1876.

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The constant repetition of demands for a reform candidate resulted in a movement by the machine politicians to push the nomination of James G. Blaine. Blaine, who for years

had wielded great power and influence in the national government and yet never used his tremendous power to uncover corruption, would be a fitting reform candidate acceptable to those people who desired to reestablish the moral character of the government.<sup>84</sup>

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Papers, III:239

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The meeting of Liberals and Independents at the Fifth Avenue Hotel in New York, just one month before the Republican convention, presented a remarkable gathering of 150 to 175 intellectuals. The work of Schurz in this convention earned him the title of "that impractical genius" as he made his crusading spirit felt. Woolsey, a former President of Yale, was selected the chairman of the meeting while Schurz was named chairman of a committee to draft a plan of action. Thus, Schurz while not assumeng direct control of the meeting was actually its driving force. By heading the executive committee his position was similar to that of the party managers of the Democratic and Republican parties. All resolutions were to be referred to his committee. As an expression of the sympathies of the "Fifth Avenue Conference" an address was framed which indicted the "Spoils System" and called upon "all good citizens to join... and support no candidate who in public position ever countenanced corrupt practices or combinations, or impeded their exposure and punishment, or opposed necessary measures of reform."<sup>85</sup> After reading this address, Schurz

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Papers, III:243-245

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gave a short speech in which he stated "that the weight and breadth of the movement did not depend entirely upon the names appended to the address as 'the virtue of the cause is in the cause itself.'"<sup>86</sup> The editorial comment of the New York

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<sup>86</sup> New York Daily Tribune, May 17, 1876.

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Tribune on the convention is priceless, for it illustrated clearly how the opposition uncompromisingly ridiculed the members of the meeting as men who had failed in politics and had quarreled with both great party organizations. This fact of failure was hardly one to commend them to lend counsel. The editorial concluded that the two great parties had failed, and not the men of the Fifth Avenue conference. While the conference had accomplished nothing in the way of immediate and tangible results, it did start a movement that was eventually followed by both parties in their conventions.

President Grant and James G. Blaine were the leading candidates for the Republican nomination. Grant was ruled out because of a no third term precedent but the Blaine-for-President movement gained momentum because he was apparently free from the scandals of the Grant Administration, despite the fact that he had connections with the monied interests. Hayes, another potential nominee, by virtue of his victory in Ohio, was rather reticent and chose to remain aloof from bargaining so that he could maintain his independent position.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Eckenrode, op. cit., 131.

When the Republicans met in convention on June 14, 1876 at Cincinnati the national German Republican group presented a resolution in which they stated that "the honor and integrity of the Republic lies primarily in a regulated system of civil service, based on moral character and capacity, and not solely on political appointments."<sup>88</sup> Not to be outdone by the German

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<sup>88</sup>Eckenrode, op. cit., 131.

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faction, George William Curtis, as spokesman for the New York Reform Club, delivered an address on the necessity of civil service reform. The speeches and resolutions popularly acclaimed by the delegates indicated that the Schurz plan of boring from within had worked successfully. The expressions by these two groups, with whom Schurz was so intimately associated, set off the reforming instinct of the convention, and the platform contained a clause that did not seem to be retractable in case of a victorious election. It asked for a constitutionally regulated civil service. To further the cause of the movement Rutherford B. Hayes, was named as the party standard-bearer. Hayes is frequently called a "substitute reformer" for he was really a substitute for the most available reformers, Adams and Curtis, who were unable to garner enough votes to win.

The Democrats acted similarly when they selected Samuel J. Tilden of New York as their presidential nominee. He had been largely responsible for the final collapse of the "Tweed Ring." Tilden was a true reformer but his stand against "sound money" lost him the support of men like Schurz.



Hayes sought Schurz's advice on the matter of framing a proper letter of acceptance. Hayes expressed a desire to return to the system used in the pre-Jackson era, and pledged himself to only one term, and the fulfillment of the party platform.<sup>89</sup> Schurz in pledging his support called the message

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<sup>89</sup> Charles R. Williams, Life of Rutherford B. Hayes, I

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the "most comprehensive, clearly defined civil service reform program that will be faithfully carried out." It offered an opportunity for civil service reformers to "fight with a chance at real success."<sup>90</sup> Schurz advised Hayes to ask that office-

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<sup>90</sup> New York Daily Tribune, July 13, 1876.

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holders be not assessed for campaign funds, but the Governor replied that he did not see how he could act effectively.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> ED. Charles R. Williams, Diary and Letters of Rutherford Birchard Hayes, III:335.

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The Democrats considered the letter of acceptance as containing well meant promises, whose carrying out the Republican party would prevent. Schurz cautioned Hayes to make a statement that he was not under obligations to anybody.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 341-342.

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Hayes took this advice and wrote a letter to A. F. Perry, of Cincinnati, who headed the electoral ticket of Ohio. In it he authoritatively stated his views, denying all practices claimed by the opposition.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>93</sup>Ibid., 355.

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Throughout the campaign Schurz addressed his speeches to those independent voters who held the balance of power. He acted independently of the party while campaigning for its platform and candidate. It seemed that all this was to be in vain since the Democratic nominee, Samuel J. Tilden, was an actual reformer who had obtained the support of much of the New England faction of the "Fifth Avenue" conference. The election in November left everyone in doubt until just prior to the inauguration. The disputed election and the "eight to seven" decision made Hayes an unpopular President from the day of his inauguration. But throughout the period of doubt the Hayes-Schurz correspondence continued as the latter offered advice on the formation of the cabinet. As a result Hayes determined to make no appointments to take care of anybody.<sup>94</sup> On February 25, 1877, Hayes offered Schurz

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<sup>94</sup>Ibid., 417.

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the choice of the post of Secretary of Interior or that of Postmaster-General. Schurz accepted the former.

On March 5, 1877, Rutherford B. Hayes was inaugurated President of the United States. His inaugural address was to a great extent a repetition of the letter acceptance. The bombshell of the day was the announcement of the cabinet:-- William M. Evarts, of New York, Secretary of State; John

Sherman, of Ohio, Secretary of the Treasury; Carl Schurz, Secretary of the Interior; Charles D. Evens, of Massachusetts, Attorney-General; D. M. Key, of Tennessee, Postmaster-General; George W. McCrary, of Iowa, Secretary of War; and R. W. Thompson, of Indiana, Secretary of the Navy. A diversified cabinet and not one party-leader in the group. Such men as Conkling, Blaine, Cameron, Logan and their followers were very bitter. They were opposed to Evarts, Key and Schurz. The appointment of the latter aroused more criticism than the others as the party leaders accused Schurz of being not only an impractical man with no executive ability but one whose head was full of transcendental theories, and with all this, the appointment of Schurz was confirmed by the Senate, 44-2.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>95</sup>New York Daily Tribune, March 12, 1877.

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On the whole the entire cabinet was the embodiment of the pledges made by Hayes.

On March 12, 1877, Schurz took over the duties of the Interior department. In a short address to subordinates he promised that there would be no sweeping changes until a thorough examination of the situation could be made. At the cabinet meeting that day Schurz and Evarts were requested to draft a set of rules to govern appointments and removals in the federal service.<sup>96</sup> A set of regulations was drawn up and

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<sup>96</sup>Ibid., March 13, 1877.

the cabinet officers used them.

Schurz lost no time in putting his theory into practice by ruling that no appointments were to be made on patronage; no removals would be made except for cause, or unless a reduction of staff was found to be necessary; ratings of the clerks were to be made by the heads of bureaus on the basis of efficiency; and civil service rules governing appointments and removals were to be posted, so as to raise the standard of excellence of the department.

The cabinet endorsed this bold move and positions which had expired were not filled immediately, since the officer or clerk retained his position. The result of this movement meant that federal positions would not expire in March, 1881, but in April and later. Thus, the Hayes cabinet was able to prevent extensive and misdirected appointments by the succeeding administration until *after* the situation had been studied. The cabinet also considered the general application of the step taken by Schurz to reappoint worthy and efficient office holders.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>97</sup>New York Daily Tribune, March 27, 1877.

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Schurz created a Board of Inquiry to test applicants for positions and office-holders as to their fitness, and inform him of the results of such examinations. He gave this instrument judicial powers to ascertain with all fairness the basis of appointment or dismissal. To further the cause Major

George M. Lockwood, who as chief clerk of the Patent Office had had no connection with any of the political intrigue under Chandler, was appointed Chief Clerk of the Interior Department. These measures were necessary for Schurz had the hardest task of the entire cabinet, as the appointments made by Grant to the Pension and Indian Bureaus were notorious. The Pension Bureau was the first to be cleansed. When the news of many dismissals in the Interior Department was announced on April 15, 1877, many opponents charged Schurz with failing to live up to his promises and forgetting to dismiss only for inefficiency. To which Schurz informed the press that all removals in the Pension Office had been recommended by the Board of Inquiry and all efforts at reinstatement by political influence would be to no avail.<sup>98</sup> Further evidence carrying

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<sup>98</sup>Ibid., April 17, 1877.

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theory into practice was given when an examination was held to fill the vacant position of examiner-in-chief of the Patent Office. It was a practical examination in which the applicants had to show specimens of their work and a knowledge of the patent field. The result was that the Civil Service Commission of the Interior Department selected the three highest and gave their recommendations to Schurz, who selected Henry H. Bates, of New York, and promoted Mr. Wilber, of Connecticut to the position held by Bates.

The most startling repercussion of the dismissal of clerks

of the Pension Bureau was due to the inclusion of General Meade's sister. The General's political influence caused much pressure to be brought on the secretary for her reinstatement. In all fairness to Schurz and his reform board the General's sister was proven to be inefficient by proper inquiry. The department as well as the entire cabinet came in for rebuke when one "Gail Hamilton" began to write weekly letters to the New York Daily Tribune claiming inefficiency and political intrigue in the Hayes administration.

To abolish corrupt financial practices Schurz ordered all department heads to submit for his examination a budget of estimated expenses.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., April 19, 1872.

Taking a positive stand on the issue of reform Hayes wanted political and congressional interference curbed by legislation that would also establish rules for Civil Service Reform.<sup>100</sup> But it was in the Interior Department that the

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<sup>100</sup> Diary and Letters of Hayes, V.III:430.

few real tangibles results were apparent in the first months of the Hayes' administration. Schurz realizing that heads of several departments were open to external influence set aside two hours every week to interview any clerk on the business of the department. This Schurz hoped would serve to rectify any wrongs and inspire the personnel to better work.

As an example of an examination given to applicants for

an office, those who sought positions were asked to brief a business letter, the purpose being to test general ability, comprehension, and intelligence. In other tests, candidates were asked to fill in a series of questions designed to reveal the same results. The results of the various examinations were compiled and studied to determine the most efficient means of testing for various types of offices. All this was designed to create a business atmosphere in the Interior Department. A further example of an examination is the questionnaire sent to applicants for the positions of surveyors-general. They were asked for statements of education, skill, type of experience, evidences of military service if any, if employed by the government, federal or state, and character references.<sup>101</sup> This questionnaire became a permanent feature

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<sup>101</sup> New York Daily Tribune, May 19, 1877.

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of civil service reform.

The second job of cleaning house was the Indian Bureau which was rotten through and through. The Government paid \$6,000,000 a year in the effort to solve the Indian problem while obtaining no results except scandals and wars. Schurz appointed a special board in June to investigate the bureau. The board uncovered every sort of corruption. Working on these findings, Schurz dismissed the Indian Commissioner, the Chief Clerk, and the worst of the subordinates. The department shakeup led to a decrease in Indian disturbances. But the

discharged corruptionists, like those formerly in the Pension Bureau, began a war against the Reform Secretary. They clamored for a complete investigation of the charges, and were accomodated as Schurz appointed a special Board of Inquiry to accumulate the necessary evidence.

The aforementioned "Gail Hamilton" continued her attacks against the administration. Before she could charge Schurz with inefficiency the Secretary in a statement to the press stated that "inasmuch as Gail Hamilton's statements have repeatedly been shown to be utterly wild and entitled to no credit, he now, beforehand, declines to be interviewed again concerning her stories or what she may set forth."<sup>102</sup> "Gail

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., August 7, 1877.

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Hamilton," whose true name was unknown, devoted her next letter to the cause of General Meade's sister. Her argument, in summary, was that as the General had won the battle of Gettysburg, his sister should be restored to her position.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid., August 23, 1877.

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It is hard to imagine a more ludicrous argument than this.

The steps taken by Schurz in behalf of reform were comprehensive. They were followed closely by all the cabinet officials except Sherman, who was reluctant to follow the lead of Carl Schurz, but with sufficient pressure on the part of the President he installed a simulated Civil Service Reform



The events of the first eight months showed that Schurz had wielded a great influence in the formulation of executive policy. Proclamations by Hayes had carried out many of the items that Schurz had urged. He urged impartial appointments, no participation of office-holders in elections, state or federal, and forbade removals except for cause. When Congress reconvened in October the party leaders clamored for reorganization of the cabinet by dropping Schurz, Key, and Evarts.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>104</sup>New York Daily Tribune, October 30, 1877.

In his first annual report Schurz asked Congress to enlarge his powers of office to take proper care of the exigencies in the Indian Office. He told how the rules hampered further investigations of the service, and how agents were unequally paid. He asked for an appropriation to establish an investigation service. In order to remove fraud he suggested a graduated salary and asked for the right to appoint agents instead of having religious societies do so. His objection to appointments by such societies was that they were made on political basis.<sup>105</sup> These were not entirely forthcoming as

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<sup>105</sup>Executive Document I Part 5, 45 Congress, 2 Session, 400-403.

he was in virtual disgrace. But Schurz carried on the work in his own fashion.

In January 1878, the Washington Post published an article that Schurz had resigned. The basis of this story was that Schurz and the rest of the cabinet had recommended Samuel

Hays for the St. Louis Post Office. President Hayes appointed Chauncey I. Filley instead and Schurz tendered his resignation which the President refused. Hays was appointed to the Berlin mission.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>106</sup>New York Daily Tribune, January 11, 1878.

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The investigation of the Indian Bureau came to a climax in January 1878. There were tremendous repercussions when Commissioner Smith and Galpin charged that they were not permitted to speak in their own behalf. To this Schurz replied that Galpin had spent twenty days before the board speaking in his own behalf and cross-examining witnesses that had appeared against him. Smith was afforded a similar opportunity.<sup>107</sup> Smith and Galpin were duly discharged.

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<sup>107</sup>Ibid., January 16, 1878.

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The opinion of Republican Congressmen was that Schurz had proved himself inefficient in the Department of Interior. He was regarded as an adventurer, a political charlatan, and a doctrinaire. They accused him of making it impossible to get any business transacted when he tried to exercise jurisdiction over the various departments; that he attempted to build up a system of bureaucracy comprised of men without politics; and as an influential advisor to the President, it was impossible to maintain harmony. Such action had weakened Hayes in the opinion of the party men.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>108</sup>Ibid., April 15, 1878.

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The work that Schurz had done for one year from October 1878, was tremendous. He achieved the reform without the consent of the Senate and his annual report showed that it was successful. Working on approximately half the budget of 1874, 250,000 more Indians were provided for, and the Indian Service was reformed to a great extent.<sup>109</sup> The Pension Office showed

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<sup>109</sup> House Executive Documents I, Part 5, 45 Congress, 3 Session, 493-494.

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that there was an increased amount of work on a smaller appropriation and by a greatly reduced staff. The remaining clerks, realizing that their positions were secure as long as they were honest, industrious, and efficient, were inspired to a closer application to duty.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> House Executive Documents I, Part 6, 45 Congress, 3 Session, 815.

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When Schurz became Secretary of the Interior, he found a corrupt, inefficient, and indolent department known for the scandals which emanated from it. He left it as a perfect example of the application of the theory of Civil Service Reform. While his conduct was radical it served as a perfect basis for wide reform in the future. He improved governmental relations with the Indians; simplified the Pension and Patent bureaus; saved the government large sums of money, and restored to the people their faith in public service.

Thus, while Schurz had conclusively proved that he was not a theorist but a practical man, the task still remained to

place the theory into practice throughout the federal service.  
It was to this that he devoted the remaining years of his life.

### Chapter III

#### Civil Service on a National Scale

##### Section I

After disproving that Civil Service reform was impractical, Schurz proceeded to establish it on a national scale. His joy at the nomination of General James A. Garfield by the Republican Convention of 1880 was dissipated after reading the latter's acceptance letter. He felt that it "forecasted the reestablishment of the party machine.... and of a return to congressional patronage." Taking exception to Garfield's stand that congressional action would be able to regulate the Civil Service on sound principles, he showed that unless the President took the initiative by cutting off patronage, congressmen would not curtail their enjoyment of the system.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Papers, I:2.

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This was a change in his position, for Schurz, as Senator, had urged that only Congress could effectively curtail the use of patronage.

Garfield answered the charge by stating that his plan was to sketch the outline of a bill fixing a tenure of office for all minor offices and to send it to Congress with a message urging its passage. In this fashion he planned to have public opinion force its passage.<sup>2</sup> This did not make much

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 44.

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of an impression on Schurz.

To further the cause of a permanent Civil service Schurz campaigned in behalf of "Good Government" which he defined as "A government which well understands the public business, and understanding it transacts it within the limits of its constitutional power, intelligently, honestly, and justly,"<sup>3</sup> He

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<sup>3</sup>Presidential Campaign Documents 1880, issued by the Union Republican Congressional committee, (Washington, D. C. 1880), Speech at Indianapolis July 20, 1880.

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showed how the Hayes administration had proceeded along these lines to a more efficient government. He ridiculed the idea that the Democratic party would reform the Civil Service since it had begun the patronage principle of "to the victor belong the spoils." The fact that a party so interwoven with such traditions could speak of reform meant nothing less than the wholesale removals of Republicans in favor of Democrats.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

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The New York Daily Tribune viewed the speech as an evidence of the cordial interest of the administration in the success of the Chicago ticket.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>New York Daily Tribune, July 21, 1880.

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In another campaign speech at Newark, Schurz promised that if the Republican party allowed corruption to seep in once again, he would be the first to leave the party, and join another which was able to remedy such evils. He showed that the loss to the government through fraud and sharp practice

had decreased from \$.24 per \$1,000 in the Grant administration to \$.80 per \$1,000,000. This loss compared to that of the last Democratic administration was even more astounding, for then it was \$3.81 per \$1,000. These figures were garnered from the reports of the Treasury Department.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>New York Daily Tribune, October 19, 1880.

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The efforts of Schurz and the Republican "Bloody-Shirt" campaign united the independent and radical elements to carry Garfield into the presidency. When the time came for Garfield to formulate his cabinet Schurz suggested that it should be a constitutional council and not an assemblage of party leaders. For the Treasury, Interior, Postal, and Judicial Departments he advised that men be appointed who would serve the public interest and be loyal to the President without supervision. Schurz suggested various men of such character.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Papers, op. cit., 80.

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After the fall election of 1880 and the senatorial elections in January, 1881, Schurz realized that the Democratic senators were serious in their belief in civil service reform. To save the face of the Republican party, Schurz suggested to Garfield that the administration forces strongly advance the cause or else the Democrats would do so and would receive all the credit.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 87.

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With the inauguration of Garfield, Schurz retired to private life cognizant of the fact that civil service reform had a dull future. The deluge of office-seekers was unprecedented in the history of the country. Garfield, however, refused many of the demands made and sought to make appointments according to the fitness of the candidate.<sup>9</sup> While

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<sup>9</sup>John C. Ridpath, History of the United States of America, XI:5567-5570.

Garfield was so beset Schurz became editor of the New York Evening Post, and carried on the fight for the realization of reform. With constant repetition, Schurz urged the formulation of rules based on the proposals he had made as Senator and on his experiences as Secretary of the Interior.

The assassination of Garfield and the rise of Chester A. Arthur to the presidency was, to all appearances, a calamity, for Arthur had been associated with Conkling, a machine politician.<sup>10</sup> The shooting of Garfield by a disappointed

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<sup>10</sup>Papers, IV:146-147.

office-seeker created an overwhelming demand for a complete reform of the civil service. Senator Dawes, of Massachusetts, who had formerly belittled Schurz's efforts of reform, evolved a bill himself. It was his plan to build a pyramid of responsibility. The division chiefs of each bureau were to be responsible to the bureau secretary of each department. He, in turn, was responsible to the President. The purpose of



this procedure was to make appointers wary of making bad appointments. Schurz said this would only transfer the pressure of influence from the secretary to points of least resistance. He advised Dawes to forget his plan and concentrate on the passage of the Pendleton Bill.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>New York Evening Post, August 5, 1881.

It was at this time that the National Civil Service Reform Association was begun by a determined and able group composed of George William Curtis, Carl Schurz, Richard H. Dana, Dorman B. Eaton, William D. Foulkes, and Lucius B. Swift. Curtis was elected President, and Schurz was elected Vice-President. It became a pressure group for the passage of a reform bill.

To the astonishment of all reformers Arthur in his first message to Congress emphasized the desirability of reform and the merit system.<sup>12</sup> He asked Congress to consider and pass

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<sup>12</sup>Fuess, op. cit., 282.

the Pendleton Bill. This turn of events won Schurz's sympathy and he proceeded to promote the formation of local reform societies in his editorials.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>New York Evening Post, September 1881 to February 1882.

The pressure exerted upon Congress was sufficient to force the passage of the Pendleton Act in January 1883 which was

signed by President Arthur on January 15. The New York Daily Tribune attributed the essential features of the bill to the Civil Service Reform Association.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>New York Daily Tribune, February 12, 1883.

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While this act was the first comprehensive reform bill passed by Congress, it did not go into details as did the Schurz amendment to the Trumbull bill. Whereas Schurz's amendment provided for a nine man board, one-third of which was to be changed every three years, the Pendleton provided for a three man board of which no more than two members would be from the same party. This provision placed a certain political taint in the measure. The rules to be established by the board were practically the same in both measures--except that Schurz once again went into more detail. The second difference was that while Schurz placed most of the civil employees on the civil service list the reform law created a classified list for those assuming offices in the future, and those already employed by the government were not included in the security of positions. One provision of the law that was not provided for by Schurz was that no more than two persons of one family were to be employed by the government. The genesis of this provision can be found in Schurz's annual recommendations and reports to Congress as Secretary of Interior. The law also provided that Senators and Representatives were not to recommend any person for positions unless to satisfy an inquiry of the board as to character. It also provided that there were

to be no payments by employees to political funds.<sup>15</sup> The

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<sup>15</sup>Code of Laws of the United States (Washington 1935) Title 5, Chapter 12, Paragraphs 632, 633, 635, 637, 638, 641, 642; 81-82.

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genesis of this provision was in Schurz's recommendations to Hayes and the latter's proclamation of June 22, 1877.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Richardson, op. cit., 4402-4403.

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Shortly after this event Schurz resigned as editor-in-chief of the Post. He had accomplished much in this capacity. He had urged the passage of a Civil Service Reform bill; the establishment of local reform associations, and the unfitness of James G. Blaine as a presidential nominee. Upon his resignation as Secretary of State in October 1881, Blaine began to work for the Republican presidential nomination in 1884. Schurz announced in no uncertain terms that Blaine's personality and public record made him unfit for such an honor.<sup>17</sup> To relieve public resentment that might rise as a

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<sup>17</sup>New York Evening Post, August 8, 1882.

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result of such attacks, Blaine had claimed to be a civil service reformer. In reply E. L. Godkin, Schurz's associate editor of the Post, wrote a scathing editorial denouncing Blaine. Blaine, laboring under the impression that Schurz was responsible for the editorial, retaliated on September 19, in the Chicago Tribune, charging that as Secretary of the Interior Schurz had done little or nothing to put his "noble

theories" into practice. Schurz replied that if Blaine wanted to answer the Post editorial he would have to abuse someone other than Schurz.<sup>18</sup> The reason for Blaine's antipathy was

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<sup>18</sup>Papers, IV:154-156.

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that he resented the fact that Schurz would not back him for the presidency.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Fuess, op. cit., 283.

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Following his retirement from the editorship of the Post Schurz settled down to live a more peaceful life. In 1883, he was again back in the public light when an article appeared in the North American Review by George W. Julian to show that the Land Office of the Interior Department was under the influence of the railway corporations.<sup>20</sup> The implication was

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<sup>20</sup>George W. Julian, "Railway Influence in the Land Office," North American Review, CCCXVI:237-256.

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that Schurz permitted such a condition to exist. The ex-Secretary refuted the charges made by Julian in an open letter that brought him considerable praise.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>New York Daily Tribune, March 16, 1883; Papers, IV:168-184.

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The remainder of the year was spent in lecturing, writing and advising. In 1884, Schurz again moved to seek the election of a president honestly pledged to reform. Before a meeting of the Brooklyn Young Men's Republican Club, attended mainly

by Independent Republicans, Schurz sounded the keynote of the gathering when he said:

"The real element of Strength for the Republican party is the popular belief that it contains the elements of reform in sufficient preponderance to direct its policy. The views that shape administrative reform will be the issues of the coming campaign."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>New York Evening Post, February 23, 1884; The Nation V:38, February 28, 1884, 180.

He also outlined a program for the Independents, making it clear that under no circumstance would Blaine be an acceptable candidate.

The leading candidates for the Republican nomination were Blaine, Arthur, John Sherman, John A. Logan, and George F. Edmunds. General Logan, who was the favorite of the Grand Army of the Republic, wrote to Schurz asking for his aid in attempting to obtain the party nomination. But Schurz advised him to refrain from seeking an office that could not be his, because he could not possibly carry the pivotal state of New York since he was considered a friend of the old party system. Schurz considered New York the pivotal state since it was there that civil service reform sentiment was strongest because of the prevailing dissatisfaction with machine politics.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Papers, IV:194-195.

Senator Preston B. Plumb sought Schurz's advice as to what Republican would be the most likely to succeed. He also

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wanted to know the possibility of carrying New York. The answer to the latter was that "New York must be considered a doubtful state" and would have to be carried to win the election. A strong reform candidate like Edmunds could do so but not Blaine or Arthur. Schurz continued to say that if Blaine were nominated the Independents would break with the party rather than support him.<sup>24</sup> To which Plumb replied that if the party

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 200-202.

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carried as sufficient a number of other states, it could get along without the doubtful state of New York. The tenor of of his letter showed that Blaine's promise of reform had hit its mark and the Senator seemed slightly befuddled as to what to do.<sup>25</sup> That the vote of New York might be overcome Schurz

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 203.

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regarded as faulty reasoning because any candidate who failed there would experience similar difficulties throughout the nation.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 203-204.

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Not having been able to establish a reform machine as in 1876 Schurz saw James G. Blaine become the Republican nominee on a platform calling for the further extension of the classified list.<sup>27</sup> Schurz in a letter to G. W. Pittman declared

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<sup>27</sup>Appleton's Annual Cyclopedia 1884, 769.

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himself against Blaine and the Republican party, because as a party of moral ideas, the Standard bearer of National Honor it has chosen a man who stands convicted of using his position for pecuniary advantages to the highest position of the Republic."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Papers, IV:204-205.

A committee of independent Republicans called a protest conference to meet June 16, 1884, in New York. Here resolutions, offered by Carl Schurz, were adopted. They pledged their opposition to Blaine and looked forward to the Democratic nominations.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Appelton's, op. cit., 770.

Schurz wrote to Thomas F. Bayard, of Delaware, who was a candidate for the Democratic nomination, pledging his full support, and giving his view of the Republican situation as he saw it. He pictured Blaine as weak within his own party with a large campaign fund at his disposal.<sup>30</sup> It was Schurz's

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<sup>30</sup>Papers, IV:205-206.

opinion that the only strong Democratic candidates capable of defeating the Republican speculators were Bayard and Cleveland. The opinion that the latter could not possibly carry New York because of Tammany objections was nonsense to Schurz, for it would increase the independent vote for the New York governor. He regarded the seeming friendship of Tammany Hall and Bayard

as dangerous and advised the latter to sever all such relations.<sup>31</sup> In reply Bayard agreed with Schurz on the advisability

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 206.

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of Cleveland's candidacy.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 209.

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To Schurz the greatest danger threatening American republican institutions was the deterioration of public moral~~ity~~ "which will spread rapidly and become pernicious with the election of Blaine." This would mean the "eventual destruction of republican government by rot and disgrace." The only remedy was a union of those of great moral spirits to defeat Blaine, because he knew that the reformer was right but felt that he was wrong in 1884.<sup>33</sup> This opinion expressed publicly

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 211-212.

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and in private correspondence gave Blaine much concern. John B. Henderson sought in vain to reconcile the two men.<sup>34</sup> Schurz

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 212-213.

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could not see the Republican candidate as a "jolly Prince Hal" who upon becoming president would become the wise and judicious "Henry V."<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 215.

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The selection of New York's Governor, Grover Cleveland, as the Democratic candidate obtained the support of the reformers and the Independents as he had the reputation of being a sincere reformer.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Appelton, op. cit., 773.

In the campaign, pressure was brought to bear upon Schurz to drop his approval of Cleveland because of the latter's so-called "debaucheries" and indiscretions. It was held that if the Independents were seeking a man of high moral character, Cleveland, did not merit their support. In the light of such a situation those, who opposed Cleveland so strongly, tried to stop Schurz's campaigning for the Democratic candidate.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Papers, IV:222.

Schurz laughed at the stories of an immoral Cleveland terming them "artful inventions" of some political trickster or some sensational journalist, and was determined to support the Governor until it was conclusively proven that Cleveland was inclined to such a scandalous course.<sup>38</sup> Schurz addressed a

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 223.

gathering in Brooklyn, New York, on behalf of those Republicans who were opposing Blaine. He repeated that the future of the republic was in danger of incalculable disaster and disgrace if Blaine were elected, citing the "Mulligan Letters". Though they had been read by Blaine in the Senate, Schurz placed a

suspicious meaning into them. The Schurz interpretation of the letters has been fully substantiated by impartial historians of later years.<sup>39</sup> Turning to Cleveland, Schurz showed

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<sup>39</sup> James Ford Rhodes, op. cit., V, VII:258-270; Charles A. Beard and Mary R. Beard, The Rise of American Civilization, V.II:306, 136; William A. Dunning, Reconstruction Political and Economic, American Nation Series V.22:292.

evidence of the Governor's stand on behalf of reform. The comparison of Blaine and Cleveland was a "blemished public record" versus "the representative of courageous conscience in the administration of public affairs." Schurz presented the case against Blaine in a masterful fashion indicting the candidate on all possible counts.<sup>40</sup> The New York Daily Tribune

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<sup>40</sup> New York Times, August 6, 1884.

and the New York Sun labeled the speech as impudent and nothing very new.<sup>41</sup> The Tribune quoted at length Schurz's speeches

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<sup>41</sup> New York Daily Tribune, August 8, 1884.

of the 1876 and 1880 campaigns against the party he now supported. There was some doubt as to how Schurz's philosophy could be reconciled to a change.<sup>42</sup> However, many Republican papers

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<sup>42</sup> New York Daily Tribune, August 5, 1884, and other editorials throughout the campaign.

followed the example of the Independents and turned against Blaine. The most outstanding change was the sudden appearance

of caricatures by Thomas Nast of the "Plumed Knight in the Clean Shirt" in Harper's Weekly. Nast who had ridiculed Schurz, Adams, Curtis and other independents joined these same men in a common cause.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Harper's Weekly, August-November, 1884.

Generally the campaign was one case of ridicule of Cleveland's private life thrown into the ring with Blaine's public record, a contest none too savory. Nor did Schurz escape slander and ridicule; poems were written about him and caricatures drawn.

Schurz embarked on a whirlwind campaign through the Ohio valley region endlessly stressing "The Mulligan Letters" and the inconsistency of Blaine's political philosophy in theory and practice. To counteract the Republican slander of Cleveland's private life, Schurz read into his readings of letters written by Blaine a bit of private scandal.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>Springfield Republican; Chicago Times; New York Times; Cincinnati Gazette; Cleveland Plain Dealer, September and October 1884.

The election was successful but by only 37 electoral votes, and it proved supporters of Blaine wrong for he could not win enough votes to counteract the Democratic victory in New York state. The popular votes, close throughout the country, gave Cleveland a lead of only 23,005 but sufficient enough to call it a triumph for clean politics. The Civil Service Reform Association had led in much of the campaigning

and published The Civil Service Record in behalf of good government. This was claimed to be a violation of principles established by Curtis, Schurz, and Everett P. Wheeler as it was done without the knowledge or consent of the Republicans of the Association.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>New York Daily Tribune, November 22, 1884.

This was an accusation that was entirely false for the records of the May and August meeting printed in full in the Tribune show that such acts were provided for.

In his congratulatory letter Schurz offered his advice as he had done so many times previous to this. He urged Cleveland to take a firm stand on the issue of reform so that his administration would go down in history as the turning point of our political development.<sup>46</sup> In subsequent corres-

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<sup>46</sup>Papers, IV:288-290.

pondence with the President-elect, Schurz urged the extension of the classified list; advised as to types of men for cabinet positions; and warned of the necessity of proceeding slowly and judiciously in making appointments. He offered the full aid of the Independents in any reform step to be taken by the administration.<sup>47</sup> On February 23, 1885, they had a conference

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 354-360.

at which Schurz expressed his opinion about the men Cleveland was considering for the cabinet. He objected to Whitney and

and Manning as too obscure to merit such an honor.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 297-308.

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In his letters to Cleveland Schurz would praise the President for some appointment or move and then nullified the effect by censure and more advice. Such was the case when Schurz complimented Cleveland on the selections he had made for the marshalships of Chicago and Cincinnati and in the next sentence chided him for proposed appointments to Democrats.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 401-404.

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This continual advice, praise, and censure was rather disturbing to Cleveland who tried to point out to Schurz that only the President had all the facts at hand while outsiders had only general appearances to go on. He sought to dissuade Schurz's continual urge for reform but to no avail.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 363-364.

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Early in January 1886 a quarrel broke out between Cleveland and his Republican Senate when the President refused to concur with its request to file the cause of dismissals. Schurz urged Cleveland to comply with the Senatorial request as an exhibition of his faith with the people. He also favored the passage of a bill compelling the president to file statements of cause on the removal of an officer. This would serve to still rumours that there had been arbitrary removals. He showed Cleveland cases of corruption and arbitrary removals.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 415-420.

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On hearing of Cleveland's criticism from Colonel Silas Burt, Schurz justified his stand and unless the president would accede to the Senatorial request, he threatened the president with a resolution by the Reform Association recommending the passage of a law, making it mandatory for the executive to file a statement of cause for each removal; if he complied with it, the association would commend his action.<sup>52</sup> Schurz thought

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 421-425.

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that Cleveland had done well during his first year and merited as much encouragement as possible, but he did not intend to permit the President to believe that only good was accomplished. He deliberately pointed out actions that he classified as poor and unworthy.<sup>53</sup> After a lapse of months, during which there

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 429.

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was no correspondence with the President, Schurz again began to offer advice cautioning Cleveland not to forsake reform to the benefit of the "Spoils element" in the party, and not to "sit down between two chairs" by trying to appease both factions at the same time.<sup>54</sup> Cleveland was continually urged to take

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 469.

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the middle road. The President acting independently caused more pressure to be brought upon himself by the "reform" and the

"spoils" elements.

The split with the President caused Schurz to retire from politics for a time. He wrote his "Life of Henry Clay," numerous lectures, pamphlets on Lincoln, Franklin, and the new South, and began his Autobiography. In 1888 he visited Germany once again, promising to return for the presidential canvass only if Blaine was the Republican candidate. He envisioned a Democratic victory if Cleveland would be nominated.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 491-528.

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In reply to entreaties to return and campaign for Benjamin Harrison against Cleveland in 1888 Schurz showed that the latter had done much that he had originally planned to do, while the former was but a minion of Blaine.<sup>56</sup> This was the first

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<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 510-528.

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presidential campaign since 1856 in which Schurz had not participated.

Schurz's contact with the Harrison administration was with the merchant financier John Wanamaker who had been appointed Postmaster-General. It was Schurz's opinion that the appointment had been made for pecuniary reasons.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup>Papers, V:14, 18-20.

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In 1891 Schurz again took an interest in national issues and proposed united action by the Independents in order to secure the nomination of Cleveland. A meeting of Curtis, Hale,

Potts and Schurz, who were all members of the National Reform Association, was held in February 1892. Plans were drawn for the campaign and Schurz composed a circular to be sent to all sympathizers of the Independent movement.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 83-84.

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In the campaign of 1892, between Cleveland and Harrison, Schurz did little campaigning because of illness, but for the first time in his career he emerged as the recognized leader of a group rather than as a private citizen. This came about in the summer of 1892 when George William Curtis was so ill that Schurz took over his editorial duties on Harper's Weekly. Curtis died on August 31 and Schurz became editor of the magazine and succeeded to the office of president of the National Civil Service Reform League.

While the main issue of the canvass was the McKinley tariff, Schurz regarded it "as only a part of a far more comprehensive question which is not merely economic, but political in its nature, and concerns the general working, in fact the moral vitality, of our democratic system of government." He emphasized a "democratic republic...administered...by a fairly virtuous, self-respecting, patient, self-restraining, sensible, industrious, liberty, peace, and order-loving people" as the "most excellent form of Government." This was to be attained by the vigorous enforcement of the Pendleton Act of 1883 and the establishment of those principles advocated by the Reform League. The nomination of Cleveland meant a "vigorous assertion



of public opinion in favor of conscientious, clean politics on the greatest scale."<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 87-121.

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In an editorial October 29, 1892, Schurz described civil service reform as a great issue. The support of Cleveland by many reformers who had voted for Harrison in 1888, showed that the issue was prevalent. Schurz stated that the actions of the Republican party showed conclusively that "the spirit of reform has departed from its councils," being ruled only by considerations of party advantage.<sup>60</sup> The successful election

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<sup>60</sup> Harper's Weekly, October 29, 1892.

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of Cleveland accompanied by a drop in Republican votes seems to bear out the statements of Schurz.

At the annual dinner of the Reform League, December 10, Schurz spoke on "Moral Forces in Politics," attributing the success of Cleveland to a union of Independents and Democrats which he hoped under Cleveland's guidance would be welded into a "powerful political instrument."<sup>61</sup> This method of influencing

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<sup>61</sup> Fuess, op. cit., 322.

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Cleveland differed from that of eight years before. Cleveland also delivered a speech in which he asked the Reform Association to go ahead with plans to foster the extension of the service.<sup>62</sup> Returning to the good graces of the President-elect

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<sup>62</sup> Papers, V:124-25.

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Schurz did not hesitate to offer advice on the membership of the cabinet, and the extension of the classified list. He suggested that division chiefs be brought under the civil service rules.<sup>63</sup> Schurz advised, objected and advised some

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 126-127.

more but did so in a fashion that brought Cleveland to the point of justifying his stand and showing Schurz the evidence that caused the move in question.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 128-142.

On April 25, Schurz delivered his first address as President of the National Civil Service Reform League at its annual meeting in New York City. The speech reviewed Washington in March and April. Schurz compared the throng of office-hunters to a "cloud of locusts" descending down upon the President and his cabinet. Cleveland calling it "madness for spoils in finest efflorescence." Schurz continued with his definition of civil service reform.

"It is the application of common sense and common honesty to the public service.... It is the restoration to full power of honorable and patriotic motives in our political life."<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Carl Schurz, Civil Service Reform and Democracy, April 1893.

Schurz pointed out that out of approximately 180,000 positions in the national government only 43,000 were on the classified list. He advocated the extension of the list to

remove "heelers" from party organizations. Reform was "good politics" since it would abolish corruption, scandals and inefficiency.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

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If Schurz was the "Watchdog of Reform" during the first Cleveland administration, he became the "Colosuss of Reform" in the second. For under his Presidency the Reform League did not relax its vigilance but drove relentlessly for meritorious appointments of all classes. Members of the executive committee coming under the direct influence of Schurz wrote articles, editorials and pamphlets attacking those acts of the administration that they thought were scandalous and undeserving.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>W. D. Foulke, "Are Presidential Appointments for Sale," Forum, December 1893; New York Evening Post, December 1893 and January 1894.

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Schurz concerned himself not only with the reform of the national civil service, but also with the improvement of the municipal service. He addressed the first meeting of the National Municipal League, at Philadelphia, January 25, 1894, and encouraged the organization in its efforts to obtain an efficient meritorious service for municipalities.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>68</sup>Papers, V:214-231.

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In his third annual report to the National Civil Service Reform League in 1894, Schurz stressed the comparison of the

demands of reform to business. He wondered what prudent man would deposit money in a bank or invest in its stock if the officials were changed periodically, with a subsequent change of employees. The changes in the government service caused the loss of hundreds of millions of dollars which made the "government one of the most wasteful in the world. The stimulation of the mercenary spirit in officials, who obtained jobs only for financial gain, took the leadership out of the hands of able and efficient men, whose aims were high, and gave it to 'political marauders.'" Upon the completion of the simile, Schurz reviewed the progress made by the Civil Service Commission since its creation in 1883. The efficacy of the law was evident since two percent of those certified failed to maintain the expected degree of efficiency.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Carl Schurz, The Necessity and Progress of Civil Service Reform, December 12, 1894.

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Throughout the following year, Schurz continued his voluminous correspondence with Cleveland, Bayard, and others advising or criticising appointments, removals, and the extension of the classified list.

In his address to the annual meeting of the Reform League Schurz stated that when parties use officers for their own aggrandizement, "they strike at one of the vital principles of democratic government"--government for the benefit of the people. Schurz claimed the attitude of the Congressmen to patronage was one of despair and helplessness. "It has come upon us,"

he asserted, "by tradition, it is part of the political customs of the country. We are its victims, its slaves. What can we do but submit and make the best of it?" Schurz declared that if Congressmen would devote half their energy which was being wasted in manipulating patronage to the task of abolishing the detestable evil, it would soon disappear.<sup>70</sup>

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Carl Schurz, Congress and the Spoils System, December 12, 1895.

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The following year witnessed the election of a new Republican President, William McKinley. The efforts of Schurz in behalf of McKinley, civil service reform, and sound money brought about rumours that he was being favorably considered for a cabinet position. This Schurz declined to consider for it "would be a public misfortune if any...Independent" should accept any place in the government service, because it would be looked upon as a reward for services to the victorious party. He said that if McKinley wanted to show his appreciation of the services rendered by Independents in the election, "he might do so by giving friendly consideration to their views when shaping the policy of his administration, and, secondly, by retaining in office, or by reappointing a number of especially efficient and meritorious officers now in the national service."<sup>71</sup>

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Papers, V:328-329.

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As president of the Reform League, Schurz, in his annual

address in Philadelphia, December 10, 1896, stated that the significance of the Republican victory was a double defeat for the spoils politics, because:

"The party to whose cause and to whose prospects the spoils idea was most foreign proved itself in political action the most enthusiastic and efficient, while the party which invoked the spoils spirit to its aid, found the promise of spoils utterly impotent to avert its discomfiture."<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Carl Schurz, Encouragements and Warnings, December 10, 1896.

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He congratulated the League for its work in extending the classified list.

Schurz warned that the dangers that threatened reform were no "longer from open assault upon the merit system, but from insidious attempts to destroy its substance, while preserving its forms." It was his claim that the object of reform was twofold:—"To improve the character and efficiency of the public service, and...to elevate the intellectual and moral character of our political life." To realize this there were two requirements:—that tests designed to ascertain the fitness of candidates be available to all persons; and that they be of a competitive nature. The purpose of this reaffirmation of principle was to counteract the boring from within by spoilsmen to destroy the merit system while keeping its outer form.

Schurz's position as League President and leading Independent supporter of McKinley brought many pleas from office-

seekers to intercede in their behalf. His reply was an unconditional refusal unless he was asked by the administration for a recommendation.<sup>73</sup>

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Papers, V:340.

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Upon the inauguration of McKinley Schurz recommended the retention of the incumbent civil service commissioners, but if a change had to be made, only one of the two Democrats should be removed, thus, giving the Republicans a majority provided by law. He also offered the services of both himself and the League.<sup>74</sup>

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Papers, V:340-341.

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On March 23, 1879, Senator Jacob H. Gallinger, of New Hampshire, addressed his colleagues on the repeal of the Civil Service Act of 1883. In an open letter to the Exeter (N. H.) News-Letter, Gallinger attacked Schurz claiming that he "once occupied a seat in the Senate, and is now in private life, a traitor to the Republican party and its principles, I am willing to have the people of New Hampshire...pass on the question of my intelligence and integrity." Schurz answered the accusation, in an open letter to the News-Letter, by reviewing his career and the reasons for the various moves he had made. He gave evidence to show that the Reform League was non-partisan. Gallinger accused the Civil Service Board of inefficiency and denounced it as an unnecessary evil. But in the course of the controversy Schurz compelled the Senator

"to admit that the Civil Service Law was not the creature of a set of "traitors" and political hermaphrodites." To Gallinger's claim that the Republican party was the originator of the law and its "best interpreter," Schurz called his attention to the Republican platform of 1896 which demanded that "it shall be thoroughly and honestly enforced." He chided the Senator for endorsing the platform and then seeking the nullification of the law.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> New York Daily Tribune, October 1, 1897.

In his annual address to the League, Schurz reviewed the Gallinger stand as a "breach of party faith." He answered the accusations of his opponents by showing how the merit system produced a true democracy by permitting "rich or poor," "Christian, Jew or Gentile" to rise to a position in the government service.<sup>76</sup> He also expressed his displeasure at

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<sup>76</sup> Carl Schurz, The Democracy of the Merit System, December 16, 1897.

at the "tumultous" rush for spoils by party men after the inauguration of McKinley. The League passed resolutions which demanded the fulfillment of Republican platform pledges; denounced attempts at repeal, or embarrassment of the law and officials; and called for the enforcement of the "removal for cause only" clause of the law.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> New York Daily Tribune, December 18, 1897.



Schurz called McKinley's attention to the meeting and the resolutions and questioned him as to certain actions to be taken. It was his suggestion that an extension of the law and the removal of patronage disbursements from the local leaders would save the party from dividing into two camps. Schurz opined that such a division would throw the country to William J. Bryan and free silver.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Papers, V:447-450.

Following the declaration of war against Spain in 1898, the President signified his intention to "issue an order exempting certain important classes of officers from the operation of the Civil Service Law." The Reform League, believing that such a move would be injurious to the public interest, submitted a formal protest.

"We believe that changes, whereby positions and classes of positions are now removed permanently from the classified service, will be accepted not only as a step backward, but as a proof that the system is not regarded by the present administration as here, and here to stay, and will inevitably awaken doubts as to the sincerity of repeated declarations of the party now dominant in national affairs, that the law establishing it shall be thoroughly and honestly enforced and extended wherever practicable...We urge earnestly, that these grave evils may be guarded against."<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Carl Schurz, A Review of the Year, December 15, 1898.

Of this Schurz said that if the President did follow the League's advice, the "decision would be welcomed by the

advocates of Civil Service Reform with the heartiest gratitude."

At the time of the meeting McKinley had not carried out his reported intention and the protest was restated. On May 29, 1899, the action was taken and the President lost much of the Independent support. Schurz claimed that it gave "an unprecedented impulse of encouragement to...forces working against civil service reform." The spoils men cheering the action expressed the "confident hope that...the end of civil service had come." Schurz viewed the entire matter as the culmination of a general tendency of the administration in the formation of its policies. Schurz indicted the McKinley administration for betrayal, corruption and evasion. He pointed out that the evil practices which had been used extensively prior to 1883, had returned with the inauguration of McKinley's presidency.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Carl Schurz, Renewed Struggles, December 14, 1899.

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These opinions were the last offered by Schurz as President of the Reform League. In September, 1899, he resigned and was succeeded by Daniel C. Gilman, President of Johns Hopkins University.

The campaign of 1900 placed Schurz in a precarious situation for he could hardly support McKinley, who was certain of the Republican nomination, and Bryan who was the favorite of the Democrats. The only alternative was to seek a third candidate for his vote. He wrote letters to prominent men

arguing the desirability of such a move. It was upon his instigation that a "Liberty Congress" met in Indianapolis in August 1900, after he had become thoroughly disgusted with the results of the Republican and Democratic conventions.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>81</sup>Papers, V:199-200.

He planned to unite all participants behind a third candidate. However, the movement failed as no candidate of sufficient ability was available or willing to accept the dubious honor extended by a third party. Another factor in its failure was the decline of Schurz's health. Upon the failure of the "Liberty Congress" Schurz reached the conclusion that, if the Independents would rally around Bryan, McKinley could be defeated. On September 28, he addressed a meeting at Cooper Union. He opposed McKinley with the explanation that he "took part in the campaign for educational purposes..."<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>82</sup>Papers, VI;265.

As a private citizen and out of favor with the administration, Schurz exercised little influence in his last years. In 1902 he returned to deliver an address at the annual meeting of the National Civil Service Reform League. He declared that if Congress failed to pass a law placing the consular service on the classified list, the president could do so. The president could accomplish this by saying: "I consider it my duty to select for nomination the fittest persons I can find according to my experience, the best available means to

ascertain the fitness of candidates, and, as a general rule, to discover the fittest, is the open competitive examination." Thus, Schurz opened a way for the President to regulate constitutionally the federal service in an efficient and meritorious fashion.<sup>83</sup> He returned the following year for

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<sup>83</sup> New York Daily Tribune, December 12, 1902.

his last appearance before the Civil Service Reform League to indict the postal officials for their method of conducting the government service. In the main, it was a summary of many of the arguments he had been presenting for the past thirty-five years.

He died May 15, 1906. His last words were "Es ist so einfach zu sterben."<sup>84</sup> And so ended the career of one whose

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<sup>84</sup> Fuess, op. cit., 389. "It is so easy to die."

name will always be associated with Civil Service Reform. He summarized his philosophy of life in a speech in Boston, 1859, when he said:-

"Ideals are like stars; you choose them as your guides, and following them you will reach your destiny."

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