

ARTICLE

S.L.P. ON TOP

Report from the Copenhagen Int'l Congress.

Running Fight Between the S.L.P. and the S.P. in the Latter's Attempt to Seize the S.L.P. Seat on the Int'l Bureau—S.P. Methods Defeat Themselves—Unity Resolution—Action in Favor of Wezosal.

COPENHAGEN, Denmark, Sept. 2.—In a day, at most in two, the 8th International Socialist Labor Congress, which opened in this city on the 28th of last month in the brilliant manner reported from here on the same day, will close.

In matters concerning the United States, the Congress opened in fact two days earlier, on Friday, August 26, when the International Bureau began its preliminary session. From that date on until to-day there was an almost uninterrupted struggle between the Socialist Labor Party and the Socialist party, resulting in the S.L.P. on top.

It will be remembered that in the Fall of 1908, almost immediately after the elections when the S.P. felt the breath knocked out of it by the election returns; when it found its illusions concerning the million and a half votes openly expected as a "conservative estimate," and the three million votes privately expected, had vanished into thin air; when, worse yet, beginning with the empire city of New York, and in almost all the industrial centers of the land the vote of the previous presidential year had dropped;—in short, it will be remembered that in the Fall of 1908 a motion was launched by one Work of the S.P. Executive Committee for the State of Iowa to move that the International Bureau give both the two American seats on the Bureau to the S.P., in other words, that the S.L.P., whose representative on the Bureau I am, be removed. Iowa being one of the States in which the S.P. had lost heavily, the move evidently was intended to choke off the

voice of the S.L.P. in the councils of the International Movement, and leave the S.P. a free field on which to buttress up with fresh false claims the claims it had previously set up and which events were demonstrating as false.

It will furthermore be remembered that in November of last year Mr. Victor L. Berger, in pursuit of the above move, came to Europe; attended the November session of the International Bureau; there moved that the seat occupied by me be given to him; and finally, that, his move being then and there thoroughly exposed by Paul Kretlow, whom the Party had appointed my substitute for the occasion, Berger's efforts failed.

There remains only this antecedent to add. The S.P. delegation came to Copenhagen early, and early began to wire-pull for the purpose of unseating the S.L.P. from the International Bureau.

Well, then, on Friday morning, when the Bureau met, Berger was there. It is customary at the sessions of the Bureau for a sheet of paper to be passed around on which each "member of the Bureau, present," inscribes his name and the country from which he hails. I signed my name. When the list was complete I took a look at it, and found Berger's signature on. Just as the chairman was about to adjourn the session, I rose and said: "I desire some information before this session adjourns. I see on the list of those who have signed themselves present as 'members of the bureau' three names from America, myself and two others. I desire to know how many delegates America is entitled to here, and what their names are." The answer was given by the International Secretary Huysmans as follows: "America is entitled, like all other countries who have no parliamentary representation, to two delegates on the Bureau. They are, for the Socialist party, Hillquit, and, for the Socialist Labor Party, De Leon. If any one else is present he can only be an alternate." The answer amounted to a striking out of Berger's name from the list. That was "first blood."

One should think that, upon that rebuke administered by me to Berger's attempt to appear as Bureau member, and also to Hillquit, who sat beside Berger as chaperon, the gentlemen would have learned caution. It was otherwise. Hillquit rose up immediately and said: "What Comrade Huysmans says is partly correct and partly incorrect. It is incorrect to say that the American delegates represent several parties. They represent America. It is correct to say that I and De Leon are the present members of the Bureau. But next Monday the delegations from America

will meet and, as at Stuttgart, elect by majority, as all other nations do, another delegate in De Leon's place."

The quibble of claiming that the representatives from America, or from any country that has different parties, did not represent their own parties but represented their respective countries, together with the double falsehood of claiming that all other nations elect their representatives on the Bureau by majority vote, and that such was the procedure observed at the previous Int'l Congress, at Stuttgart, by the two delegations from America, recalled to my mind the Hillquitian feat, performed in America when he was trying to rob the S.L.P. of its name, and which consisted in presenting at court thirty-one affidavits to the correctness of an affidavit that did not exist.

The Int'l Secretary promptly tackled those statements of Hillquit that fell under his jurisdiction. He said: "It is an error to claim that representatives of opposing parties represent, each, the whole country and not their own parties. As to all countries electing their representatives on the Bureau by a majority vote cast in joint session that is neither the fact, nor is the principle acceptable. Take Russia, for instance. If majorities at joint sessions elected the representatives, then the majority party could wipe out the representation on the Bureau of the minority parties."

Thereupon I took up that portion of Hillquit's statement of which I had special knowledge. I said: "I feel compelled to take the floor to rectify the statement of Hillquit that, at the last Int'l Congress the two delegations elected their representatives on the Bureau by majority vote cast in joint session. The fact is we came together only to apportion the votes—a new thing at Stuttgart. For the rest, it is without foundation in fact to say that we voted jointly for the representation on the Bureau. I am not responsible for Hillquit on this Bureau, and he is not responsible for me, as we otherwise would be if we had voted jointly. The fact is that each delegation appointed its own party representation on the committees of the Congress; the fact is that, even on the subject of apportioning the vote of the two parties, we proceeded upon a principle that amounted to each having equality of vote." And I rubbed this in three times, seeing I translated myself into German and French. This was "second blood,"—and Hillquit looked it.

"Third blood" was drawn by the S.L.P. the very next day. Hillquit returned to the charge. When the Bureau opened he introduced a resolution in which he said

the S.L.P. had ceased to exist, etc., and according to which the vote cast by the members of the Bureau was to be according to their vote in Congress. Against this, as I stated in answer, I had no objection; but I insisted that the resolution in no wise decided, as Hillquit claimed it did, the issue of the previous day. I uttered the warning that the introduction of such a resolution under the claim that it decided the question of how the two American delegations elected their representatives on the Bureau could only be a surreptitious attempt to decide the latter question by a motion which, on its face at least, did in no wise concern that issue. The language of the Int'l Secretary and of several other representatives caused Hillquit to take back water. He declared he did not mean to affect the status of the S.L.P. on the Bureau. With this formal declaration on his part I declared myself in accord with his motion.

All this happened before the Congress met, and it all had the effect of materially affecting Hillquit's reputation for straightforwardness with the bulk of the Bureau.

The next day the Congress opened. The following day, Monday, the National Sections—that is the name given to the delegates and delegations of each nationality—met. The only thing that could concern the American Section was reapportionment of the respective votes of the two delegations—S.L.P. and S.P.

When the American Section met I moved the status quo. Spargo, S.P., moved that one vote be given to the S.L.P. and the other 13 belonging to the American Section be given to the S.P. Had Spargo stopped there, the S.L.P. delegation would have debated the motion; and the S.L.P. delegation, rather than bother the Bureau to whom an appeal lay in case of inability to agree, would have yielded the point, and it would have granted the S.P. the privilege of paying 200 francs more as dues to the Bureau—each vote costs 100 francs. But Spargo did not stop there. He announced that “happily or unhappily” his delegation were under strict instructions to cast their votes for both seats on the Bureau. I then demanded from the chair, Mr. Robert Hunter, whether that was his view regarding his party's instructions. He answered in the affirmative, and there was nothing to do but for the S.L.P. delegation to withdraw from the joint session. Upon the question of the seat on the Bureau the S.L.P. was determined to yield not an inch. An appeal to the Bureau being inevitable further discussion was a waste of time. We withdrew, and the secretary of our delegation notified the Int'l Secretary of our appointments:—myself on the Bureau and the names of our appointees on the five Congress Committees.

On the following Wednesday I brought up the matter before the Bureau. I showed out of the official reports of the S.P. itself that its allegation of 53,375 members was a gross exaggeration; I showed by the official election returns that their claim of large growth in votes was not in keeping with the facts, seeing they had dropped heavily all over the land, in New York alone so heavily that our joint votes in that city were now below what the S.L.P. vote alone was 11 years ago when they split away. I showed that the cry of growth based on the Milwaukee victory was fictitious. On this point I said: "Imagine a France or a Germany, or any other country in Europe, in the New York, in the largest city of which, a certain party presents the picture I just described; imagine that in the second city, the Chicago of which, that party's vote declined from 47,000 to a little over 17,000 last year; imagine that in the third and fourth and fifth cities, the Philadelphias, the San Franciscos and the St. Louis of which country, the vote had been annihilated despite fusion with the capitalist parties as happened in St. Louis; imagine that such decline in votes is the feature of a certain party generally, but that in a city of the 13th rank, in a Milwaukee, there was a municipal victory. Could it be justly claimed that that isolated victory typified such a party all over the country? Would not the conclusion rather be that the condition of such a party all over the country typifies the victory in that city of thirteenth rank?" Finally I exposed the degree of reliability that could be attached to the utterances of the S.P. by inviting the Bureau to contrast the signed report by Berger of what took place last November, when he applied for the seat of the S.L.P. on the Bureau, with the official report issued by the Bureau itself. I held up the two documents and contrasted them.

This settled the question of the seat on the Bureau. Berger who tried to speak, was denied the floor by the chairman, who reminded him that only De Leon and Hillquit were the American members of the Bureau. In opposition to me spoke Hillquit. He said not a word about the seat on the Bureau. He only wanted for his party 13 out of the 14 votes allotted to America. His speech was the regulation anti-S.L.P. speech of the S.P.-ite:—the S.L.P. was dead; only De Leon was left; the S.P. had 53,375 members; the S.L.P. was only a tremendous impediment to the S.P. hurting the S.P. everywhere; and more to the same effect. Hillquit was answered by Rosa Luxemburg with a neat incisive speech. She said: "The leading feature of Hillquit's speech is an inextricable contradiction to me. I do not understand how, if the S.P. is as large as it claims and the S.L.P. consists of De Leon only, one single

man could so tremendously hurt 53,375 others.” The matter of the S.L.P. seat on the Bureau being considered settled in favor of the S.L.P., the S.P. motion to reduce the S.L.P. vote in the Congress from 3 to 1 was put. Even that carried only by the narrow margin of 3. The vote stood 10 for the status quo, and 13 against, there being a number of important members absent on committees who were too well informed to have voted with that purely accidental majority. A European wit who was present remarked that what gave the S.P. that majority of 3 was the speech of Rosa Luxemburg; that she, being violently hated by the nationalists of Eastern Europe, whatever side she took they took the opposite. I answered that I would rather have 1 vote for the S.L.P. with Rosa Luxemburg’s speech than our former 3 without that speech. Another observer present informed me that S.P. delegates had been going around saying: “The S.L.P. has nothing—only one rotten daily paper.”

But—did I say the matter on the Bureau was settled? Even those best acquainted with the antecedents and underhanded methods of Mr. Hillquit would have been excused for not anticipating the gentleman’s next move.

It will be remembered that Hillquit had introduced a resolution according to which the members of the Bureau were to have as many votes as the individual parties which they respectively represent held in the Congress, instead of, as now, 1 vote each. It will also be remembered that I expressed myself in accord with the plan. Now then, after the S.L.P. vote was reduced from 3 to 1, there appeared along with that proposed Hillquit resolution, an amendment tacked to it and providing that NO PARTY SHALL HAVE A REPRESENTATION ON THE BUREAU UNLESS IT CASTS 2 VOTES IN THE CONGRESS, and that amendment bore the signature of Troelstra of Holland headed by the signature of—whom?—Mr. Hillquit!!!

It was an instance in which the theory was demonstrated that dishonesty betrays stupidity. Civilized legislative methods demanded that the purpose of a law be expressly stated. To get the S.L.P. in Congress reduced with express assurances that there was no purpose to remove the S.L.P. from the Bureau, and then bring in a proposition whereby the reduced vote would be made the ground for automatically vacating the S.L.P. seat—such a move was so obviously dishonorable that it, better than aught I could have proved, illustrated to the Bureau what the S.P. methods are which the S.L.P. was constantly forced to wrestle with; the move was so transparently underhanded that the large majority of the Bureau must have

promptly seen through it. Despite repeated efforts on the part of Hillquit to bring up his original proposition, which would have dragged up behind it that typically Hillquitian amendment to his own motion, the Bureau shoved it aside. The question of proportional vote on the Bureau is now left for the next Bureau session—some time at the end of next year.

In view of the above Hillquitism, I found it necessary to take a specific step at yesterday's full session of the Congress. A Unity Resolution; reiterating in more emphatic language the Unity Resolution of Amsterdam, was introduced by the French delegation and lay before the Congress, and was received with general applause, the S.P. delegation joining. I took the platform. I announced myself as a delegate from a country where the parties were split; I declared myself in loyal accord, without mental reservation, with the proposed resolution; and I added: "A similar resolution was adopted six years ago at Amsterdam, it was adopted unanimously, the S.P. delegation voting for, and applauding it. Nevertheless, when, in obedience with the said decree of the Congress, the S.L.P., altho' the smaller party, set pride aside, and in January, of last year tendered unity to the S.P. upon no conditions other than the principles of the International Congress, the tender was rejected. For these reasons I here call upon the S.P. delegation to take the platform, and let this Congress know whether that party's applause for, and support of, the resolution before us are merely Platonic demonstrations covering mental reservations. For my Party I here state that, by January, we shall have a committee, elected by the Party, ready to confer with a similar committee from the S.P. to carry out this resolution. I call upon the S.P. to let this Congress know what it is to expect from the S.P." Hillquit came upon the platform and answered. It would have been "money in his pocket" if he had not. His answer was that there was unity now in the United States; that the S.L.P. was dead; that our report to the Congress was "mudslinging"; and that they would receive me with open arms provided I abandoned my "harmful 'I.W.W whims against the Unions,' which are not wanted by the American proletariat." I did not care to dignify such an answer with a reply. The hypocrisy and duplicity of the answer was commented upon by many delegates with Comrade Olive M. Johnson and myself as we were leaving the Congress hall and were crossing the courtyard.

On the evening of that same day, in the Committee of which Mrs. Johnson is a member, and Haywood and Berger are the S.P. members, Haywood delivered an

excellent, genuinely S.L.P. speech in which he exposed the A.F. of L. as a body that systematically divided the workers; and he declared there was no real Union Movement in America, so long as the A.F. of L. controlled the Union situation, and we did not have a united class conscious movement. Mrs. Johnson thereupon approached him with the question whether he did not fear that "Comrade Hillquit," who had denounced the I.W.W as above stated, on that very day as a harmful whim against the A.F. of L., would demand that he drop his whim or get out of his party.

One more point of importance. The *Daily People* having brought me news of the attempted extradition of Julius Wezosal, the Lettish political refugee who is the Editor of the S.L.P. Lettish organ *Proletareets*, I introduced in the Committee on Resolutions a resolution in his favor. There had been adopted another resolution condemning the Russian attempt against the right of asylum on the person of another political refugee now in Switzerland. Wezosal's name and a short description of his case were inserted into that other resolution right after the name of the refugee in Switzerland.

The first business session of the Congress, after the opening and festive one, took place only yesterday. The Committees took up all the time. Of real and vital general importance there has been nothing before the Congress. It has been mainly a friendly gathering of men and women engaged in the Social Question from all parts of the world.

DANIEL DE LEON.

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