

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 9, NO. 266.

NEW YORK, TUESDAY, MARCH 23, 1909.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

TURMOIL IN HOLLAND.

By DANIEL DE LEON

A SPLIT has taken place in the Social Democratic Labor party of Holland. The Marxist element separated from the parent body, and now gathering head to set up an independent political organization.

The facts—are they to be deplored? are they not to be deplored? it is yet too early to determine—culled from *Het Volk*, the organ of the parent organization, are these:—

There is a Socialist paper in Amsterdam called *Tribune*, and which is edited by acknowledged Marxists. The editors of the *Tribune* criticized the administration of the party, especially the attitude of its delegation in parliament, and, of these, Troelstra in particular, to an extent that caused the latter to take offence. Sides were taken. Of the two extreme wings, one the Troelstra wing, condemned the *Tribune* absolutely; the other, the *Tribune* wing, condemned the Troelstraites as absolutely “revisionistic.” Between these two extremes the bulk of the membership, among whom there were many Marxists, shaded into a variety of shades and sought to establish harmony. Conferences to this end were held. The conferences only aggravated the situation. It was then decided to hold an extra party convention. The same took place at Deventer. There a proposition was introduced to attach to, and issue as a supplement of the daily, *Het Volk*, a weekly Marxist paper. The *Tribune* element did not fancy this proposition. They considered it an admission that *Het Volk* was not Marxist, and, consequently, that to place a Marxist publication virtually under the wings of *Het Volk* would result in scuttling the Marxist purpose. The proposition prevailed, only a few votes being cast against it.

Evidently encouraged by the great strength that they developed, the Troelstraites thereupon adopted successively two resolutions purporting to interpret the proposition that was carried. The first proposition was to the effect that the

Tribune was ordered to discontinue; the second that the editors of the *Tribune* stood expelled from the party. The interpretations put upon the original action of the convention so angered many of the Marxists that they forthwith proceeded to secede from the party and to move for the establishment of a party of their own, the *Tribune* being, of course, continued.

All judgment of the wisdom or lack of wisdom that is animating the Troelstraïtes on the one side, and the “Tribunists” on the other is, at this distance, and at this stage of the game, risky. Suffice it here to quote from *Het Volk*, the organ of the parent organization, a letter by Mrs. Van Holst-Roland, herself a Marxist, and one of the Marxists who did not secede, expressing the sentiment that the conduct of the party is so harsh towards the insurgents that it tends to make difficult the posture within the party of the Marxists who have remained loyal to it.

Mrs. Van Holst-Roland’s estimate is disputed by *Het Volk*. Her words, coupled with their criticism by *Het Volk*, sound ominous. They seem to justify the conclusion that the Socialist Movement of Holland is facing a crisis, involving nothing less thorny than a decision regarding the practical path to be followed in order to blend practical with theoretical soundness.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

Uploaded July 2010

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