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EDITORIAL

MORRIS HOEHN AND G.A. HILLQUIT.

By DANIEL DE LEON

READERS of *The People* are familiar with the corrupt dealings that the officers of the Socialist party in St. Louis were guilty of during the municipal elections of two years ago.

It will be remembered how on that memorable occasion a Democrat, Owen Miller, appeared to the S.P., besides the Democratic ballot; and how a member of the S.P., one Emil Simon, appeared on the S.P., besides the Republican ballot. It will also be remembered how, when *The People* announced the facts, those who engineered the deal pretended that Simon's nomination by the Republicans was made without his knowledge and consent, and was repudiated by him. It will further be remembered that the letter of the said Simon to his Republican nominators was published in these columns, showing that so far from "repudiating" the nomination, the gentleman "appreciated the honor bestowed upon" him by the Republicans. It will also be remembered that G.A. Hoehn was the leader in these performances. Finally, it will be remembered that a healthy element within the St. Louis organization rebelled against such corrupt practices, and, with the aid of the State organization, succeeded at last in having the charter of the Hoehn body revoked, and Local St. Louis reorganized with the Hoehnites left out.

With these facts for background, certain passages in the printed and officially circulated minutes of the session of the S.P. National Executive Committee, December 10–12 of last year, stand out in high relief.

At the said session of the said N.E.C. a letter, addressed to the State Committee of the Missouri S.P. which had reorganized the St. Louis body, was reported and adopted in which reference is made to the Hoehn bunch as "comrades" who, "in the interests of our movement as a whole . . . ought to be in the party," and wherein further allusion is made to the bunch as follows: "it is equally evident that the

Socialist movement of the State of Missouri will gain infinitely by harmonious work and co-operation of all good Socialists within the State.”

With not a line or a word does the letter deny the charges against the Hoehnites. Indeed, the charges are too notorious and documentarily proven for any attempt at refutation. Accordingly, the letter of the N.E.C. of the S.P. to the S.P. State Committee of Missouri, is a plea for the rehabilitation of the Hoehnites; it is a plea for the State committee to annul its own act of purging its St. Louis Local of corruption; it amounts to more; it is a pronouncement in favor of the corrupt acts, a declaration that the acts for which the Hoehnites were disciplined were acts “in the interests of” the S.P., and that such acts vindicate the doers as “good Socialists.”

If the letter in question went no further it would be a document that brands the high S.P. officials of corruption. It would expose them as men whom their organization need look to for no protection against corruption. But the letter goes further. Misquoting Art. XII, Sec. 9, of the S.P. national constitution, which authorizes the N.E.C. to enter a State and order a referendum of its membership only in case the State officers are controverted, and notwithstanding there is no such controversy in Missouri, as evidenced by the circumstance that the N.E.C. itself addresses the Missouri State Committee as such,—notwithstanding all this the letter in question threatens the State organization with “the extreme measure” of intervention and reorganization, unless the State Committee consents to an “amicable” settlement with the aforementioned “good Socialists.” In other words, the letter does not only exhibit the national officers as “neutral” in matters corrupt, it exhibits them as active partisans in favor of corruption—so partisan that they are ready to violate their own constitution, and, with shysterish duplicity, seek to befog the clean element of their party by trying to invest themselves with a jurisdiction that their constitution expressly denies them.

Somehow, when reading the said letter of the N.E.C. of the S.P., one catches certain whiffs not altogether unfamiliar. The smirking at political corruption, and shyshtering in behalf of the same, smell Hillquitish. They recall the smells that the breezes wafted from the New York Court Room when, eleven years ago, Mr. Morris Hillquit, in the attempt to rob the Socialist Labor Party of its name and decking his Volkszeitung Corporation with the stolen feathers, indulged in certain “reasonings,”

and also presented in Court 31 affidavits to the correctness of an affidavit that did not exist—and his clients and his case, along with himself, were fired out of Court. The whiff that is emitted by the letter in question recalls so forcibly the whiffs of eleven years ago that the question forces itself upon one's mind, Who drafted that letter to the Missouri State Committee? Let's find out. Why, it is Hillquit, the identical hairpin of old!

Morris Hoehn, G.A. Hillquit, lo natural born geniuses fused, and transmuted.

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