
Hourwich Asks “Precise Charge”: Government Shrouds Case with Mystery, Says Speaker Jailed for Talk on Russia.

[press statement of December 6, 1917]

Unsigned report in *The Evening Call* [New York], † v. 10, no. 341 (Dec. 7, 1917), pg. 7.

Charles Recht, attorney for Nicholas Hourwich, who, with 3 others, was arrested for making a speech, calling for a convention of Russian workers in this country, on November 18 at Bridgeport, Conn., and charged with treason, gave out a statement yesterday made by Hourwich in jail.

Hourwich claims in this statement that he did not discuss any of the political or economic conditions in this country. His entire talk, until interrupted and arrested, was confined to Russia only and it was not condemning but calling for a united Russia. The statement reads:

When interviewed yesterday by his attorney, Mr. Charles Recht, 110 West 10th Street, [New York] City, at the Fairfield County Jail, Bridgeport, Conn., Nicholas Hourwich said:

“The subject of my lecture was the necessity of holding a convention of Russian colonists in America under the auspices of the Russian embassy in this country. I was to speak also incidentally on the Russian Revolution insofar as

it opened up new industrial possibilities for the skilled workman in Russia, and also about the change which has taken place in the attitude of the [Russian] embassy in America as a result of the March Revolution.

“I spoke for about an hour, and before I had an opportunity to describe the conditions in Russia, I was arrested. I did not speak about the political or industrial conditions in this country; in fact, there was no occasion for any remark of that sort.

“The police took from me, among other things, the following ‘incriminating’ documents: An application for a civil service position in Washington, giving my entire history and photograph. The photograph, however, was not, as jubilantly proclaimed by the Bridgeport press, that of the IWW leader William D. Haywood, but my own, to be attached to the application as required by the civil service commission.

“Of course, I am very much interested to learn what are the precise charges against me, for although I have been in jail for 2 weeks, the government has shrouded the entire case in deep mystery.”

† - The Socialist Party’s *New York Call* changed its name to *The Evening Call* on Dec. 3, 1917, in an effort to do an end run around post office censorship when the “Morning Call” lost its mailing privileges. Volume numbers were retained under the new name and the paper’s format was unchanged. The revised publication seems to have been geared towards newsstands for delivery.

Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport.
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