

# DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 10, NO. 322.

NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, MAY 18, 1910.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

## WHICH IS THE TRUTH?

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**A**MONG the official documents submitted at the Socialist party convention (they call it "Congress") now sitting in Chicago, is one by Victor Berger, entitled "Report of the Secretary to the International Socialist Bureau." The passage of the report concerning the application of the S.P. for both the American seats on the Bureau is as follows:

"Then the motion of your delegate came up to grant the Socialist party of America both of the two seats in the International Bureau. The chairman of the session, Comrade Vandervelde, was inclined to declare the motion out of order. He claimed that the Bureau had no jurisdiction in this respect and that the matter must be decided by the next International Congress, or, more correctly, by the American delegates at that congress.

"However, your delegate took the floor. He explained in a few words that the Socialist Labor Party had gone downward continually since the year 1898; that it now legally and practically had ceased as a party, and that it had only a nominal paper existence.

"Your delegate stated that the Socialist party had 42,000 members and cast 450,000 votes, while the membership of the so-called Socialist Labor Party could not be determined. However, at national referendum, they only cast about three or four hundred votes and their vote in the last presidential election was less than thirteen thousand. Your delegate, moreover, pointed out that under these conditions the Socialist Labor Party could at best be considered a propaganda club. And that as long as we had over ninety-seven per cent. of the total Socialist vote cast, and even a large(r) percentage of the membership, it was ridiculously unjust and unjustly ridiculous to grant the Socialist Labor Party the same representation as we have, that is, one man each on the Bureau.

"Whereupon the representative of the Socialist Labor Party, a man by the name of Kretlow, who lives in Berlin, Germany (and whom nobody seemed to know, and least of all the German delegates), began to recite a long story that the Socialist party of America is made up of ex-preachers, lawyers, business men and bourgeois only; that it was not a workingmen's party and that all the workingmen were in the Socialist Labor Party.

"I did not answer any of these so-called arguments, because it was

plainly to be seen from the faces of those present that he made exactly the same impression on them as on me.

“Only when Mr. Kretlow claimed that we were fusing everywhere with the Republicans and Democrats, I interrupted with the words, ‘That is a lie.’

“And by that time the patience of the chairman and of the Bureau seemed to be exhausted. Mr. Kretlow was told to sit down and the Bureau went on with its other business, with the decision that the matter of the election of the two secretaries for America should be left entirely to the American delegation in Copenhagen.”

The official report, issued by the Bureau itself, in the *Periodical Bulletin of the International Socialist Bureau*, No. 2, Page 43, is as follows:

“The Secretary—The S.P. requests the Bureau to grant them the two delegates for the United States and to withdraw the representative from the S.L.P.

“Berger—The secretary of our party has already in a letter stated his reasons, which I second. The S.P. has 44,791 members, the S.L.P. barely a thousand. At the national elections the S.P. obtained 424,483 votes; the S.L.P. 14,000; therefore the S.P. represents 97 per cent. of the working class, the S.L.P. barely 3 per cent.

“The *Weekly People*, in their number of January 9, 1909, published a balance sheet as to work accomplished in the six months from July to December 1908, which shows that the receipts {a}mounted to \$1,877.74, expenses to \$1,737.18, difference \$140.56. For the same period the receipts of the S.P. amounted to \$70,757.37. I am not exaggerating when I say that the S.L.P. is decreasing daily.

“In the same way that it would be illogical to grant representation to a localist Berlin group side by side with Social Democracy, it would be just as illogical to allow an organization, which has only a nominal existence, to keep its warrant. After all, it is not a question of exclusion, but of equitable representation.

“The Chairman—It seems to me that this question can only be settled at the Congress of Copenhagen. (Adhesion.)

“Kretlow—I agree, but still I must reply to Berger. Socialism in the United States has a situation of a peculiar nature. The most important question does not consist in quoting statistics, but to see if labor organization has a solid foundation. In no country of the world is capitalism so powerful as in the United States and the day when Socialist organism becomes dangerous, the governing class will destroy the revolutionist parties, if these do not form an effective basis of resistance. The number of votes does not amount to anything. It is a mirage. Numerous members of the S.P. have had enough of the tactics of this party. Recently the Denver group resigned. In certain centres the S.P. has made common cause with

the Democrats and the Republicans and has transgressed the resolutions of international congresses.

“Berger—That is not exact!

“Kretlow—Remember St. Louis! I do not wish to divide the working class. My Party desires unity on the basis of the resolutions of Amsterdam. To this request for unity we have received a reply in the negative. Examine the publications of the acts of the S.L.P. Examine those of the S.P. You will see that we are sincere and devoted Socialists.

“Berger—I ask permission to reply.

“The Chairman—I will consult the assembly. This debate is useless. I propose to refer the question to Copenhagen. (Adhesion.)

“Our agenda is exhausted. I beg to thank the delegates present and close the meeting. To our meeting at Copenhagen!

“The meeting was closed at 6.15 o’clock.”

Not a few, it will be observed, are the serious discrepancies between the two reports. Among these discrepancies is that of “Kretlow being told to sit down” (according to Berger) and the shutting off of Berger (according to the Bureau’s *Bulletin*).

Which is the truth?

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Uploaded May 2011

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