

Our national constitution expressly provides that the delegates to international congresses should be elected by referendum vote. Since the motion for the calling of such a conference emanated from our own party, our executive was in a position to call for nominations as early as January and to proceed at once with the election had it cared to conduct party business on a democratic basis. It did nothing of the sort. Only when the Dutch committee of the International Socialist Bureau sent out invitations did they proceed to the election of delegates—by the five members of the National Executive Committee.

By that time it was of course too late to initiate a referendum. But even then there was a more democratic way than that actually followed. The National Committee should have been called upon to conduct the election. It comes with poor grace from our Executive Committee of four men—Spargo did not take part in the election—to elect two of their own members. The members of the National Committee could have conducted the election by wire almost as quickly, and we would have been spared this painful incident.

But that is not the whole story. Not only the election procedure, but the election itself, belongs to the most incomprehensible and regrettable mistakes that have been committed by our leaders in recent party history.

Hillquit as delegate was to be expected. He would have been chosen in any referendum. The choice of Algernon Lee, whose views are, on the whole, those of the centre of the party, is perhaps understandable. But the appointment of Victor L. Berger passes all understanding. To be sure, Comrade Berger, personally one of the most likeable figures in our party bureaucracy and often honest to the point of bluntness, believed it to be a matter of course that he should go to Europe. On the day before the Executive Committee was to meet he announced in an interview in the *Milwaukee Leader*, which interviews its editor-in-chief whenever an opportunity offers itself, that he was quite certain that Hillquit and Berger would be sent to Stockholm, since the membership had elected them on a previous occasion as delegates to an international congress. He referred, of course,

to the Vienna congress, that was to be held in the summer of 1914, to which not only Hillquit and Berger, but Ameringer and London had been delegated. What Berger forgot, however, was that three years of war had passed, showing many a Socialist as he really is and not as he appeared to be. A Social-Imperialist like Berger cannot conceivably represent the party in its present complexion. Were the circumstances different our Milwaukee comrade would stand to-day with Spargo, Russell and Ghent, with the group to which as a matter of fact he belongs.

It should be noted that Berger did not seem to know of Lee's candidacy on the eve of his trip to Chicago. Later developments revealed that Berger and Lee were delegated by the Executive Committee, while Hillquit was to go in his capacity as international secretary and member of the International Socialist Bureau. But even before the question had been settled in our own executive committee, Troelstra, the well-known Dutch Socialist, in an interview cabled to the Associated Press, declared that America would send Hillquit and probably Algernon Lee to the Stockholm Conference. Comrade Troelstra proved to be a pretty good guesser.

The New York State Executive Committee has called on the National Office to initiate a referendum in accordance with the constitution of the party to elect the delegates to the international conference called by the Russian Workmen's and Soldiers' Council. The City Convention of Greater New York did likewise and five weeks have passed and nothing seems to have been done.

Will the Executive Committee wait once more until it is too late and—an *emergency* exists?

L.

Spargo & Co.

In spite of Spargo's insistence during the weeks following the Emergency Convention that the adoption of the majority resolution would make it impossible for him to work together with the Socialist Party in the future, his resignation came as a surprise. A member of the party at the time it was founded, he has been so completely identified with it, has occupied such a prominent place in our American movement, that one can hardly con-