

EDITORIAL

## EASLEY MUFFED HILLQUIT.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**HERE is being circulated by the Gompers element at the present *session of the A.F. of L. at Atlanta a neat 9x6 pamphlet entitled "Socialism and the National Civic Federation."*

The pamphlet consists of two letters—one from Mr. Morris Hillquit, of the National Executive Committee of the Socialist party; the other from Ralph Easley, of the National Civic Federation.

Mr. Hillquit's letter, about two pages long and dated June 16 of this year, is addressed to Mr. Easley. It is condemnatory of the Civic Federation, an organization, the policy of which, whatever its claims to the contrary, the letter characterizes as the shrewdest game by the employers of any country; as "the most subtle and insidious poison" administered to the organized labor movement; and one that "robs it [the organized labor movement] of its independence, virility and militant enthusiasm, hypnotizes and corrupts its leaders, weakens its ranks, and demoralizes its fights." The letter closes with the statement that "the Socialist party is employing all efforts at its command to save American labor from the benign influence of the National Civic Federation."

Mr. Easley's letter is dated July 21 and is an answer addressed to Mr. Hillquit. Mr. Easley's letter takes up the remaining seventeen pages of the pamphlet.

Mr. Easley could have used one-half, one-third, one-tenth the space to much better and directer purpose.

Instead of elaborately proving that Mr. Hillquit had not read this, and that and the other part of Mr. Easley's pamphlet which had called forth Mr. Hillquit's letter; instead of elaborately bringing home to Mr. Hillquit the mutilation of this, or that passage which he quotes; instead of entering upon discursive argumentations touching the history of the Civic Federation and its Kirby foes;—instead of all such prac-

tically irrelevant polemics, Mr. Easley could have settled Mr. Hillquit in short order by—

1. Quoting from the official stenographic report of the “National Convention of the Socialist Party, held at Chicago, Illinois, May 1 to 6, 1904,” pages 177–178, the substitute, offered by delegate Ott of Wyoming for the Trades Union resolutions that lay before the convention, and which substitute closed with this paragraph:

“The Socialist Party also wishes to denounce before the workers of this land the treacherous, deceitful work of the conglomeration between several labor leaders so-called, and the captains of industry such as the National Civic Federation and other like institutions, and brand these federations as instruments of the capitalist class to perpetuate the system of to-day, and to use organized labor as tools for that purpose.”

2. Quoting from the same official stenographic report, page 190, as follows:

“Del. Hillquit: I move to table the substitute. Seconded.

“The Chairman: It is moved and seconded to table the substitute offered by Comrade Ott.

“Question called for.

“The motion was put on the question of tabling the substitute, and was declared carried.”

3. Quoting from the official stenographic report of the “National Congress of the Socialist Party, held at Chicago, Illinois, May 15–21, 1910,” the last national convention of the S.P., pages 278–279, the substitute, offered by delegate Cassidy of New York for the Trades Union resolutions that lay before the house, and of which the closing and summing-up paragraph ran as follows:

“Resolved, That we declare it to be the duty of our agitators and of the publishers of our papers and our literature to teach our members and friends the principles of Industrial Unionism to enable them not only to make propaganda for our party and general principles of Socialism among their fellow members of whatever union, craft or otherwise they may belong to, but also to carry to them the message of common action against the common enemy, and of Industrial Unionism generally, and thus hasten the day when our party, in its struggle with the Beast of Capitalism, will not stand any more as at present with its back unprotected or outflanked by the outposts of the Civic Federation, but will, like our sister parties in Europe, be backed by a powerful revolutionary army of Industrial organized workers, unconquerable and victorious.”

4. Quoting from the same official stenographic report, page 288: “The substitute was lost by a vote of 58 noes to 23 ayes,” Mr. Morris Hillquit being entered on the roll call on the same page as “absent.”

5. Asking Mr. Hillquit how, if the Civic Federation is the subtly and insidious poison to the organized Labor Movement that he claims, he could himself move to table a resolution to that effect in his party’s national convention of 1904, and secure its tabling; or how he, though again a delegate to his party’s national convention of last year, happened to absent himself when a resolution in line with the views that he expresses regarding the Civic Federation, was up for action? And,

6. Asking Mr. Hillquit to reconcile the statement that his party “is employing all efforts at its command to save American labor from the benign influence of the National Civic Federation,” with his party’s twice overwhelming vote, solemnly recorded in national conventions, against resolutions that breathed hostility to the said Civic Federation?

That would have been vastly more to the point, and certainly a direct method to prong Mr. Hillquit, and hold him and his words up to popular inspection.

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