
Prosecution or Persecution?

Unsigned article from *The Milwaukee Leader*, Oct. 17, 1918.

Published in *The Milwaukee Leader*, v. 7, no. 265, home edition (Oct. 17, 1918), pg. 1

On February 2, 1918, a Federal Grand Jury found an indictment against Victor L. Berger and other Socialists.

The indictment was kept secret.

On February 22, 1918, the Governor of Wisconsin called a special election to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Senator Husting.

On February 24, the Socialists of the state nominated Victor L. Berger as their candidate for United States Senator.

The jar awakened the indictment sleeping in the office of the Federal District Attorney of Chicago.

On March 9, fourteen days after the nomination of Victor Berger and 23 days before the Senatorial election, the indictment was sprung — in every newspaper of the state.

But no papers were served on Mr. Berger. He was not arrested, but, on the contrary, found great difficulty in discovering someone who had authority to accept his bond.

It seemed at the time that publicity was the principal result of the indictment. And, needless to say, the capitalist press availed itself of this golden opportunity, and announced far and wide

that the indictment of Mr. Berger disqualified him as United States Senator.

Of course, this was a contemptible campaign lie. But it served its purpose, just as the indictment had served its purpose.

In spite of all that, Mr. Berger received over 110,000 votes — not counting those that were stolen.

• • • • •

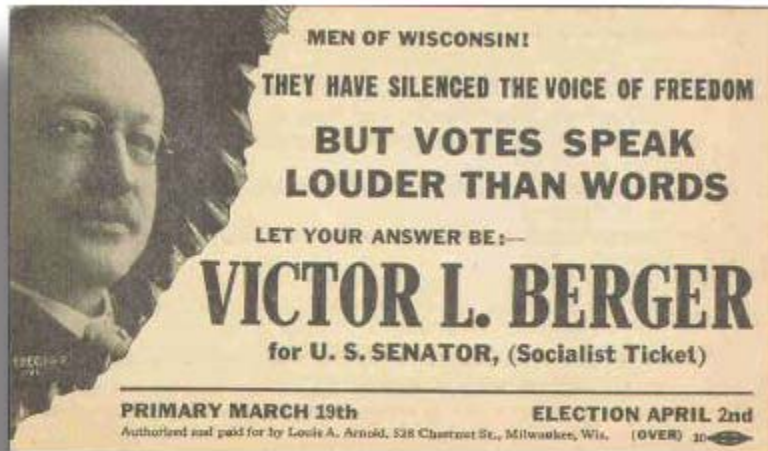
Thereupon the indictment went back to sleep. All through the months of May, June, July,

August, and September it slumbered. Why disturb the repose of the faithful servant? There are no elections in these balmy months.

However, there is an election on the 5th

day of November. This time Mr. Berger is running for Congress. All of a sudden the indictment awoke with a start and commenced getting busy.

On October 21, fifteen days before the fall election, Mr. Berger is cited to appear in the Federal Court in Chicago under an indictment found 7 months ago.



Of course, the hearing of the demurrer for the Chicago indictment could not rest 15 days longer. It had already lost 7 precious months. The fact that attending the Federal Court in Chicago will prevent Mr. Berger from attending to his campaign for Congress in Milwaukee is purely incidental. Justice can not wait.

And now, 21 days before the same election, almost the entire *Leader* staff is hailed before a Federal Grand Jury, this time in Milwaukee.

• • • • •

Yes, it is very difficult to run a newspaper with the newspaper staff in court, just as it is difficult to run for Congress in the 5th District of Wisconsin while attending court in Illinois.

But our loyal readers will understand and gladly pardon any shortcomings of their paper in these trying days.

They will do more. They and every red-blooded man and woman in this state will resent this type of prosecution and hasten to our aid as they never have done before.

Go on, gentlemen. You can not kill *The Leader* nor prevent the election of its editor. Our roots are deep down in the hearts of the many who silently suffer and silently sacrifice for justice and freedom's sake.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

Published by 1000 Flowers Publishing, Corvallis, OR, 2006. • Non-commercial reproduction permitted.