
Radicals Join Pro-Germans: Platform Action of Socialists: Old Principles Discarded for “Mass Action”

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(Written for *The Journal*.)

There is a dangerous and dishonest phase of the resolutions adopted by the special Socialist convention at St. Louis [April 7-14, 1917] that has escaped public notice. It is not simply that this resolution endorses a narrow jingoistic nationalism stamped with the Prussian double eagles. That endorsement was secured only by an alliance between the friends of German militarism and the semi-anarchistic elements in the Socialist Party. That alliance consummated as despicable a piece of treachery as was ever perpetrated.



Favor Anarchistic Term.

The so-called “impossibility,” “syndicalist,” or extra-political faction has hitherto been most

bitterly fought by the nationalistic Germans. This extreme faction was in a minority at St. Louis, as it has been in all other Socialist conventions. There are certain phrases that this faction had always sought to have incorporated in Socialist declarations. These called for “mass movements” and “mass action.” These phrases are a part of the anarchistic literature of the world. They are always understood to mean extra-political activity, such as riots, general strikes, great processions, and violent revolt. They never appeared in any Socialist document in this country until they were placed in the resolution upon war at the St. Louis Convention.

They were placed in that resolution by pro-German nationalists, hitherto their most virulent opponents, as a means of gaining the support of the extremists. This extreme faction understood that these phrases pledged the party to the use of violent measures against the war and the means of carrying it on. The adherents of this faction are sincere, devoted fanatics. Many of them would willingly sacrifice liberty or even life in defense of their principles. Hitherto they have accepted the decision of the Socialist majority against such methods. They left the St. Louis Convention believing their opponents to have been converted and that violent resistance to war had been endorsed and would be waged by all. This would be bad enough if true.

Nationalists Not Converted.

But the Prussian nationalists were not converted to anarchy. They are only willing to sacrifice these poor devils to help Prussianism. These politicians will lead no anti-enlistment riots. They will organize no prohibited processions to protest war and meet machine guns. They will give out interviews from their offices regretting such violence.

These German jingoes wrote these resolutions. They know better than any others the traditional meaning and implication of such phrases. They placed them where they are to lure fanatics to death in the interest of German imperialism.

This charge is fully justified by the fact that these same men fought most bitterly in international congresses to prevent the adoption of similar phrases when their adoption might have blocked the road of this same German imperialism. They were serving the same masters in Stuttgart [1907], Copenhagen [1910], and St. Louis.

I would be a traitor to America, to democracy, to Socialism, and to humanity if I left unexposed this murderous treason to all these things on the part of men whose only excuse must be their mad devotion to German autocracy.

A.M. Simons.

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