
The Majority Report

by Eugene V. Debs

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At the recent Emergency Convention [St. Louis: April 7-14, 1917], called for the purpose mainly of defining and declaring the position of the Socialist Party toward the present war and toward war in general, three reports were submitted by the committee chosen to deal with that important matter and submit the result of its deliberations to the convention. A majority report and two minority reports were submitted. We advise our readers to carefully examine each of the reports which are now before the party for a referendum vote.

The majority report, submitted by a large majority of the committee and adopted by an overwhelming majority of the delegates composing the convention, is the report that in our opinion states the true internationalist position of our party and the one that ought to be adopted and made the party's permanent anti-war platform.

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The majority report has been violently assailed by some hitherto prominent members of the party. They are entitled to their opinion. They assert that the majority report is "treasonable." We have not a bit of patience for this charge. To us it seems base and cowardly. Let the capitalist press, and not our own comrades, bring this charge. There are time when it is "treasonable" to be law-abiding and when to be "treasonable" is to be true to revolutionary principles and to the cause of humanity. We are aware without being reminded

by our own comrades that the charge of treason may be brought against us by the servile hirelings of Wall Street who can construe the law to fasten the charge of treason upon any undesirable citizen, and that, like Karl Liebknecht, we may be put in jail or have to face a firing squad, but we would rather a thousand times meet such a fate than to be craven and cowardly as to resort to parlor tactics when red hell threatens to engulf us for feat of being deemed "treasonable" by the wolves of Wall Street.

The opponents of the majority report charge it with being pro-German. The charge is untrue. If it were true we would be just as strongly opposed to it as we are now in favor of it. This charge comes with poor grace from those who are themselves pronounced pro-Ally, and this alone sufficiently accounts for their opposition.

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We are neither pro-German nor pro-Ally. We are Socialists, international Socialists, and we have no use, not one bit, for capitalist wars.

We have no enemies among the workers of other countries; and no friends among the capitalists of any country; the workers of all countries are our friends and the capitalists of all countries are our enemies.

The class war is our war and our only war. We have no interest in national wars for ruling class conquest and plunder. In all these wars the workers are slaughtered while their masters wax

fat in the spoils of conquest.

The time has come for the workers to cease fighting the battle of their masters and to fight their own; to cease being slaughtered like cattle for the profit of the ruling class and to line up in the class struggle regardless of race or nationality for the overthrow of class rule and for the emancipation of their class and humanity.

These are our principles and convictions as international revolutionary Socialists, and if this be treason we plead guilty and stand ready to take the consequences.

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The charge has been brought against the majority report that it encourages the Central Powers to wage the present war for the extermination of democracy and for extending the domain of autocracy and Prussianizing the world. Ye gods! And this is from men who have been recognized as leaders in the Socialist movement.

Let me remind these accusers that they are lined up side by side with the vultures of Wall Street without an exception — with Morgan, Rockefeller, Schwab and company; that they are hand in glove with Elihu Root, the deadly enemy of Russian refugees and the arch-foe of the working class and the common people.

Would they have us simple enough to believe for one moment that Wall Street is recruiting an enormous standing army and a navy... to fight for freedom and self-government, for justice and humanity?

These arch-enemies of democracy, these plunderers of the people, these corrupters of the courts, these debauchers of the electorate, these ruthless exploiters of the working class and de-

spoilers of the nation, these red-handed murderers of our comrades at Ludlow, Cabin Creek, Calumet, Everett, and a hundred other places, these are our enemies and the enemies of our people, and it is a farce and a mockery, if not a crime, to attempt to persuade the working class of America that these, their brutal, relentless, uncompromising enemies, are their friends and waging a war in which they have plunged the nation for their freedom and for democracy and self-government.

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In their opposition to the majority report these comrades express the fear that it may be adopted because the great majority of comrades do not understand it. Precisely! They have little faith in the intelligence of the lower herd. It is too bad that the great majority are too ignorant to pass intelligent judgment upon a report which declares that the Socialist Party is opposed to having its members slaughtered in capitalist wars; too ignorant to appreciate the fact that Morgan, Rockefeller, and their plutocratic gang are their friends and putting up millions of their stolen dollars to save the poor American workers from Prussian militarism.

We are for the majority report. It states our position in plain terms and we propose to stand by it. Those who believe that it is “treasonable” and fear to be suspected of treason to capitalism, and those who believe that Wall Street is waging war to free the working class and democratize the world may leave the party but the party will live, it will appeal as never before to red-blooded Socialists, and it will bear its revolutionary banner proudly forward to victory.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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