
As to Treason

by Morris Hillquit

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Comrade [Algie] Simons' periodical outbursts in the Socialist and non-Socialist press are such masterpieces of condensed petulance and reckless misinterpretation that they cannot be taken seriously. But one phase of his latest explosion in the columns of *The Call* [April 25, 1917] merits some attention. I refer to the charge that the anti-war resolution adopted by the St. Louis Convention [April 7-14, 1917] is "treasonable." Comrade [Allan] Benson has made the same charge in the last issue of the *Sunday Call* [April 22, 1917] and both he and Simons quote copious, though anonymous, legal authorities in support of their contention.

As one of the drafters and signers of the resolution, I have carefully scrutinized and considered every phrase and word of it, and with my limited knowledge of the law, I have been utterly unable to detect any expression of "treason" in the document, except inasmuch as any opposition to the interests of the ruling classes may be considered as treasonable from the latter's point of view.

Comrades Simons and Benson, in my opinion, are borrowing unnecessary trouble. The United States government is equipped with a well organized secret service and complete staff of public prosecutors. If there is anything in the utterances of any Socialist or body of Socialists that may be twisted into a violation of the law, these agencies may be relied on to deal with the offenders promptly and drastically, particularly in these war-crazed times. Why should any Socialist go out of his way to volunteer information to the authorities and to furnish them "evidence" and "points" against their fellow Socialists?

There are some things even baser than treason.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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