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# An Erroneous Impression: Letter to the Editor of the *New York Call*, May 13, 1917.

by Patrick Quinlan

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Editor of the Forum:

Prompted by the statements which have been published in *The Call* and in the capitalist press regarding the war program of the Socialist Party, as proclaimed by its Emergency Convention [St. Louis: April 7-14, 1917], I beg leave to correct the erroneous impression which has somehow prevailed since the convention adjourned.

Unwittingly by some, and maliciously by others, it has been made to appear that the convention split on the war question, and that a majority and a minority report were the result. This suggestion, if I might call it such, is wrong. There is no majority report; nor is there a minority report.

There were majority and minority reports submitted by the Committee on War and Militarism, and one of those — it so happens to be the report endorsed by the majority of the committee — was adopted by the convention, and accepted as such, as its report to the membership. It was and is, therefore, the only report.

The others — that is, the Boudin and Spargo reports — were overwhelmingly rejected. A hastily written and ill-considered document on war was drafted by a few delegates, but was never submitted to the committee appointed for such work, and was presented to the delegates at, practically speaking, the last minute, when several of the delegates had left the

convention for their homes.

The proponents of the document did not claim that their handiwork should be pitted against that of the Committee on War and Militarism. Their paper was not even discussed by the convention, but allowed to go to the membership for referendum vote, as the constitution ordained.

This should never have happened were it not for the well meaning, but absurd, notion that many delegates had on democracy and the rights of minorities. They signed a document which they did not approve of, and when the results of their hasty and ill-considered signatures dawned on them, many of the signers openly regretted having penned their names to what is now mistakenly termed “the minority report.”

And here I must call attention to the fact that the majority report of the Committee on War and Militarism was moved for adoption by Walter Dillon of New Mexico, one of the signers of the Boudin report.

This brief letter must not be interpreted as a contribution to the discussion now going on in *The Call*. Should the occasion warrant it, I may later on have my say.

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*Edited by Tim Davenport.*

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