

is usual in such cases, the convention came upon us like some elemental force, in a haphazard and disorderly fashion, without any chance for a proper discussion by the membership of the work which it was to do, and, in many instances, without the membership having a voice in the selection of delegates.

The convention itself largely reflected the circumstances which brought it about, and the manner in which it has been called together: It showed a considerable excess of passion and resentment over clearly thought out principles and policies. There was in evidence an enormous amount of passionate hatred of war, and strong resentment against party leaders, here as well as abroad, who have led, or were ready to lead, the proletarian masses into the shambles of capitalism. But, I am sorry to say, very few signs of a carefully considered theoretical position on the subject of war and peace, or of a well thought-out rule of conduct which the working class of the world could apply in practice when confronted with this problem. The deliberations of the convention were, therefore, more a matter of groping blindly by instinct than of calm judgment and logical reasoning. That under such circumstances it is particularly human to err goes without saying; and we need not, therefore, be surprised to find many who were seeking a revolutionary mode of action catching at empty but glittering phrases.

It was only natural that such a convention should fall a prey to the machinations of the party bureaucracy which has led it into the wilderness of barren opportunism and which has practically destroyed the party during the past two and a half years by not permitting it to find itself and to take a decided stand on the questions which have agitated the world since the outbreak of the Great War. And it did. With the result that we are now exactly where we were before the convention met, with no definite position on the burning questions of peace and war—the relation of nationalism to internationalism, of the class struggle to national struggles, of the defence of small nations, or how far class-conscious workers may join hands with other social groups in defence of or for the furtherance of democracy. All of these questions were studiously avoided by the astute managers of the conven-

tion, and the declaration adopted by it has therefore nothing to say on these momentous subjects—being nothing better than an ill-assorted collection of soap box immaturities and meaningless generalities; assertions which cannot be defended when taken literally, and which must therefore be taken with a mental reservation which renders them utterly worthless as a definite statement of position; all trimmed and garnished with qualifying adjectives which makes their apparent meaning nothing but hollow pretense. In short, instead of a definite statement of position we have a document which will mean one thing to Berger in Milwaukee, another to Harriman in California, still another to Hogan in Arkansas and yet still another to Lee in New York.

Only one thing is clear and unmistakable about this document: it is as clear a pronunciamiento against the war declared by the United States against Germany as could possibly be desired. This practical declaration is, however, in glaring contradiction to the theoretical basis upon which it pretends to rest, and is rendered valueless for all practical purposes by the absence of a solid foundation of Socialist principle. We have had similar declarations in the past, but they had no practical effect whatsoever because they suffered from the same vice. And signs are not wanting that the present declaration will fare no better. In fact, it has already been flagrantly and ostentatiously violated by our representative in Congress, with the usual result: the party has swallowed the bitter pill with a wry face, but the leaders of the alleged majority who were so loud-mouthed in their pretended revolutionarism in St. Louis keep mum when it comes to real action. It is the fate of all such hypocritical pronunciamientos that their sponsors should not then defend them, whenever such defence might lead to an exposure of the real motives which actuated them in adopting it.

I spoke of the leaders of the "alleged majority" when referring to those who framed the so-called "majority report" of the St. Louis Convention. And I want it clearly understood that the declaration which was adopted at that convention does not represent the views of a majority of the delegates to that convention, and would at no time have commanded the support of a majority of the delegates had the matter been squarely presented to them.