

The fact is that the formulation as well as the adoption of the so-called "majority report" was the result of a series of political tricks and manoeuvres such as has seldom been seen before at a Socialist convention.

Leaving out minor differences of opinion, the delegates to the convention formed three main groups: (1) In the first place there were those who were uncompromisingly opposed to the co-operation of the working class with any ruling class under any circumstances. They took their position on the class struggle, which to them meant the opposition of internationalism to nationalism, in the sense that Socialists have neither the duty nor the right to defend their nation because it is theirs, disavowing any common interest between the capitalists and workers of any nation as opposed to any other nation, which could be asserted or defended in war. As a consequence they were in favor of condemning the participation by Socialists in any war declared and prosecuted by the ruling classes. This meant, of course, the taking of a strong position against supporting the present war by the United States against Germany and a readiness to fight it with all weapons at their command. It also meant the condemnation, express or implied, of the support which the European Socialists, particularly those of Germany, gave to their governments in the present war.

(2) Then there were those who believed that there was no opposition between nationalism and internationalism; that internationalism was based on "enlightened" nationalism; that nations and national cultures must, therefore, be preserved; and that the working class of any given nation had certain national interests of a material and spiritual kind in common with the ruling classes of that nation, which it is to its interest and sometimes its duty to defend. They took the position that the European Socialists were justified in supporting their governments in the Great War. But they were opposed, for various reasons, to the present war, and were in favor of the Socialists of this country carrying on an energetic campaign against "our" war, provided the means employed are legal and respectable.

(3) And, finally, there were those who agreed with those in the

second group on all questions of principle, but differed with them on the practical question of attitude to the present war here in this country. Their main contention may be summed up in the assertion that "what's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander"—that if the European Socialists had the right to change their tactics after the war had become an accomplished fact, giving up "useless and barren opposition" in favor of a "constructive" policy, the American Socialists had the right and duty to do likewise. Their position to the war, both in Europe as well as here, could be summarized as follows: The war is a fact which we cannot change. It is here against our wishes, but that does not change the fact of its being here. To attempt to oppose it would not only be useless, but against the interests of the working class of this country as well as against the interests of the nation. We cannot possibly desire the defeat of this country—a thoroughly democratic country—by any other country, and particularly not by an autocratic country such as Germany. Such a defeat would greatly injure the material and spiritual interests of the workers of this country. An attempt to hamper the prosecution of the war would, in addition, alienate from us the masses of the people of this country, so that Socialism could not make any headway in this country for probably a generation to come. The only "sane" and "practical" thing to do under the circumstances is to adopt a "constructive" policy looking towards the protection of the interests of the workers in the *manner* in which the war is prosecuted and while it lasts.

The three groups were about equal in strength. Or, if a nearer approximation be attempted it would perhaps be a correct estimate to say that the third, or "pro-war," group could muster on a straight issue about fifty votes, or one-fourth of the convention, while the remainder was about equally divided between the other two groups.

Under these circumstances, it is quite evident that no majority could be found in the convention for any declaration which attempted to state principles as well as lay down a policy, and which at all attempted to be consistent and free from contradictions. The "pro-war" party could agree with the "center" on a declaration of abstract principles, but not on an attitude towards the