

of a doubt the incomparable stupidity of our ruling powers and purveyors of public opinion. For weeks the Convention was heralded as a dark conspiracy of "German agents," "dangerous traitors," etc., etc. When the Convention finally met, it turned out to be as tame and insipid an affair as was ever held in such turbulent times, and as loyal as any "opposition" could ever be expected to be, even if it were the Kaiser's own. If there were any pro-Germans there, they must have been of the Henry Weissmann, American-flag-waving variety. As to "disloyalty"—there was not a sign of it. In fact, the chief characteristic of the Convention was its utter character-and-purposelessness.

And how could it be otherwise? Just think of a "near-Socialist" and "near-Internationalist" movement with "gumshoe" Bill Stone of Missouri and Negro-baiting Vardaman of Mississippi among its patron saints and John D. Works of California in its inner council! Not to mention Hardwick of Georgia.

The proceedings of the "Constituent Convention" of this remarkable movement fairly mirrored its "constituent" elements. The quality of its "statesmanship" was exhibited in the principal address of the Convention, delivered by Congressman Mason of Illinois, who referred contemptuously to the question of war-indemnities as a question of "what one European king shall pay another in damages"; which is, of course, a matter of supreme indifference to cracker-barrel statesmen.

And the other war-problems were treated in similar "statesmanlike" fashion. Although the principal object of the Convention was supposed to be the "formulation" of terms of peace, it adjourned without saying anything on the subject beyond approving the peace-terms stated by President Wilson in his reply to the Pope, as behooves good men and true. And in order that there may be no mistake as to just where the organization stands, its Executive Committee issued a manifesto to the American people in which it declares its loyalty in the following significant language:

*"We are not discouraging enlistments. We are not obstructing the conduct of the war."*

This from the authors of the St. Louis "majority" report!

At the time when this manifesto was being issued at Chicago by the supposedly "disloyal" ones, the approved forces of loyalism were gathering at Minneapolis for a Convention of their own. Of this gathering little need be said—all "patriotic" gatherings look so much alike that when you have seen one you have seen them all. Had this gathering occurred before August, 1914, there would have been something interesting about it: a "patriotic" gathering with well-known socialists as the principal officiators would then have been a novelty, indeed. But during the past three years these things have become too common to deserve any special notice. After the performances abroad, nothing that our own "loyalists" could do at Minneapolis could excite any interest. Compared with such gatherings as that at Minneapolis, even the Chicago "constituent," etc., was interesting. For there was, after all, no way of telling in advance what the nondescript and characterless crowd gathered at Chicago might do. While here, the "loyalty" chains of the participants made any deviation from rule utterly impossible, and one could tell in advance practically every word that would be said and every gesture that would be made there.

There is one thing, however, that is interesting in connection with this Convention—the fact of its being held. The interest is one of surprise: *Why, in view of the performance at Chicago, was it necessary to hold another loyalty convention at Minneapolis?*

In commenting on this subject, the *New York Volkszeitung* asks: Since the People's Council adopted the point of view of the National Alliance, why the continued hatred (of the constituted authorities) towards the People's Council?

To which we might add the query: Since the People's Council and the National Alliance stand for essentially the same things, why the fervent enthusiasm of some Socialists for the one and blind rage against the other?

B.