

everything in its power and a little more to make autocracy and reaction the dominant factor in this country. It talked about the liberties that must be preserved and then acted in exactly the opposite direction. It is a remarkable fact, indeed, that the Senate was doing far more to protect the rights and the constitutional guarantees of the people than the so-called "popular branch" of our government. Men like La Follette, Gronna, Hollis and a few others showed real courage and more independence from the war-mongers and the White House than even the better class of representatives in the House. It was in the American Upper House that the Censorship Bill was defeated, that the Espionage Act was fought so hard that it looked for a few weeks like a sure loser, that the pernicious paragraph in the food control bill was fiercely attacked and that a serious attempt was made to get a strong hold of the war-profits. The House, at best, acquiesced after the Senate had shown fight, but it never originated anything worth while. It proved much inferior to its "plutocratic branch," always playing the second fiddle and ever so often the more vehemently capitalistic one. In this connection again attention must be called to the totally unsatisfactory record of the Socialist Congressman, Mr. Meyer London. His whole activity during this momentous session was of such inferior character, showed such an astounding indifference to every fundamental question that arose and to practically every debate of importance that occurred that several of the more progressive Democrats and Republicans proved themselves of much higher value to the people at large. His voting record is equally bad and not only justifies but demands his expulsion from the Socialist Party, since he either directly voted in favor of or in many cases failed to record his vote against war measures and appropriations for military and naval purposes.

If Mr. London is right, let us do away with the provisions of the Party Constitution which automatically expel any elected official who votes for military or war appropriations. But if he is wrong—and we are firmly convinced that he is—justice should be done, as provided for in our party laws. Nor need we hesitate for fear of making Mr. London homeless. He will be received,

with open arms, by the many-sided, fifty-seven-varieties-in-one National Party to which, in spirit, he already belongs.

The biggest fight in Congress was waged around the conscription act, which was passed in the House on April 28 with 397 yeas and 24 nays and in the Senate on May 1, with 81 yeas and 8 nays. It authorized the raising of all organizations of the Regular Army to the maximum enlisted strength authorized by law; the drafting into Federal service of the National Guard and the National Guard Reserves; and the drafting of a force of 500,000 men upon the principle of universal liability to service. The bill also authorized the President at his discretion, to raise and begin the training of an additional force of 500,000 men; and to raise such ammunition and depot batteries and battalions as he might deem necessary, and such recruiting training units as might be necessary to maintain the drafted forces at maximum strength. From this it can be seen that the President is authorized not only to conscript 500,000 plus 500,000 men but as many men "as be necessary to maintain the drafted forces at maximum strength." That may mean two, three, five or seven million men . . .

We are all familiar with the provisions of this act. But it contains one feature that deserves more than the negligible attention generally accorded to it. It is the clause that exempts members of well-recognized religious organizations whose existing principles forbid its members to participate in war in any form, from service in the naval and military forces, except for such service as the President may declare non-combatant. We find here the same distinction in favor of religious bodies and faiths that has characterized legislation of our times. Only recently, the amendments to the Immigration Laws of the United States recognized the right of asylum for people persecuted for religious reasons but failed even to mention political refugees. Here again we see the same attitude. The man who is a conscientious objector from other than religious scruples is disregarded—nay, more—is branded as an outlaw, as a traitor and a coward. Mr. Baker, Secretary of War, relieved the situation somewhat, it is true, by an order, issued last August, which promised a more lenient treatment of conscientious objectors; how this promise will be carried out remains to be seen.