

The outstanding features of the work of this Conference, aside from its failure to agree on anything, is the consistent refusal of the swamp, led by the politicians, to take definite position one way or another on clear-cut issues.

In the Committee of Twelve, the present writer attempted to force the issue of the "Withdraw from Europe" agitation made acute by Berger's recent campaign, by offering the following resolution:

"In view of the present international situation, we deem all demands for a withdrawal by the United States of its armed forces from Europe at the present time as not in consonance with the principles of international Socialism or the policies of the internationally minded working class, nor with the spirit and intent of the resolutions adopted by the Socialist Party of this country at its Emergency Convention held at St. Louis in April, 1917, and we, therefore, strongly deprecate the same."

This resolution was voted down. Instead, the Committee adopted the following, under the circumstances utterly meaningless, statement:

"The aim of the Socialist movement is not a partial or temporary peace, nor one maintained through armed power. What we desire is a universal peace, rendered secure by the removal, in the largest possible measure, of the causes which lead to war."

An attempt was also made in the Committee to force an unequivocal expression of attitude on the war generally, by the introduction of a resolution re-affirming the St. Louis resolution. This resolution, too, was defeated; and the following declaration was adopted instead: "The Socialists of the United States, while maintaining their attitude of steadfast opposition to war, must bend all their efforts in war as in peace to secure needed political and economic reforms for the workers"; followed by some more verbiage of the same inoffensive and meaningless sort.

The advocate of the unequivocal re-affirmation of the St. Louis Resolution thereupon attempted to "put teeth" into the

"while" clause by moving to insert the article "the" before the word "war," so as to bring the declaration into some relation to the present "emergency," but his attempt failed, the Committee preferring to talk of war generally, rather than of the present war.

In reporting for the majority of the Committee of Twelve, Mr. Hillquit stated that its resolution was intended to reaffirm the St. Louis Resolution "by implication." But at the same time he offered an amendment which deprived the Committee's resolution of the last vestige of resemblance to the St. Louis Resolution which it was supposed to "impliedly" re-affirm. As amended by him the passage quoted above read:

"The Socialists of the United States, while maintaining their attitude of steadfast opposition to war among nations *as an instrument of social progress*, must bend all their efforts," etc. A statement to which the most rabid pro-war man could hardly take exception.

Needless to say that such a policy of evasion and equivocation can only end disastrously for the party. It must be stopped at once, an unequivocal attitude taken, and a frank and clear statement of our position made. Even a wrong position is better than a policy of equivocation.

We, therefore, heartily endorse the demand made by Eugene V. Debs for a National Convention of delegates duly elected and accredited by the party membership to discuss the situation, with a view of meeting it fairly and squarely, and without dodging any of the momentous issues which these stirring times are pressing upon our attention.

B.

## Freedom of Thought and Speech

The bill amending the Espionage Law that was unanimously adopted in the House against the lone vote of the Socialist Meyer London,—while the Senate, once more showing itself less cowardly than the so-called "popular branch of Congress," passed it with 48 against 24 votes,—has not yet at this writing received the signature of the President. This has created the impression that