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# The Emergency Convention: An Editorial in the *New York Communist*, May 8, 1919

by John Reed

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Attributed to editor John Reed.

In its first issue *The Socialist*, the organ of the reactionary machine in Local New York, urges the party membership to support the call for a National Emergency Convention which is at present before the party for referendum vote. This call was initiated by the Left Wing immediately after the armistice was signed, though some time elapsed before the proper machinery was set in motion, and has been strenuously fought by the rights up to the present time.

The change of heart which *The Socialist* note would seem to indicate would therefore be welcome if it was inspired by honest conviction, but bearing in mind what happened at St. Louis, when the “leaders” apparently fell in line with the wishes of the membership and subsequently violated all the principles of the St. Louis Resolution, it is well to seek for the joker in the present Right Wing attitude. In the first place this new attitude is a confirmation, if confirmation was needed, of the Left Wing contention that the rank and file of the party stand for revolutionary socialism and want such a convention for the purpose of clarifying the party’s position. In the second place it indicates that the “leaders” are up to their old game — apparently accepting the will of the membership while relying upon their control of the party machinery to carry out their own purposes.

The big issue before the party at the present moment is: Which International? The party official-

dom has already declared itself by accepting Huysmans’ invitation to participate in the reactionary Second International and illegally appointing delegates to that body. Finding, however, that the sentiment of the membership is overwhelmingly opposed to any cooperation with the Scheidemann-Huysmans-Branting clique, and being saved from the disgrace of actual participation in the Berne Congress by the delay in obtaining passports, the party bureaucracy now pretends that it is anxious to have a convention where the matter may be fully discussed, and so hopes to regain the confidence of the rank and file to the end that it may dominate such convention.

The attempts in New York to disfranchise the Left Wing through “reorganization” schemes, and the New York State Committee resolution calling for the expulsion of Left Wing branches and locals, through which it is hoped to suspend the revolutionary section of the membership while the voting for delegates to the convention is taking place are a part of the general plan to control the coming convention.

It is vitally necessary that the revolutionary section of the party be on its guard against these attempts and sees to it that the delegates to the Emergency National Convention shall be men and women who will once and for all sever our party’s relations with the gang of bourgeois thugs who are at present disgracing the name of socialism in Europe.

*Edited by Tim Davenport.*

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