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# **Socialist Party's Stand on International Settled: Four-Hour Debate Presents Every Argument, Pro and Con, Before Vote**

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(Special to *The Call*.)

DETROIT, June 25 (midnight).— Four hours of vigorous debate preceded the taking of a vote on the Socialist Party's international relations in the convention today. The discussion covered every single phase of the subject, and every argument in favor of each of the four motions submitted to the delegates was presented. Hence, with the convention's decision that the Socialist Party should remain without international affiliation of any kind for the present, the subject is regarded as closed.

William F. Kruse, in speaking for Motion No. 2, in favor of affiliation with the Third International with reservations, said:

"You cannot swallow the 21 points," he said, "hook, line, and sinker. But that doesn't give you the right to line up with the international capitalist anvil chorus hammering Soviet Russia. The Communist International hasn't divided the workers. It has united them." There was cheering in the gallery and Kruse continued.

"The Zinoviev wrecking crew isn't the only wrecking crew in the Socialist world. There have been others. The party used to have 125,000 members. Of course some of them were Russians. What of it? I want to see the Socialist Party show its sympathy with Soviet Russia. I want to see us explain why we can't accept the 21 points. But the Third International is a weapon of the Soviet Government and we can't reject it without slamming Russia in the face."

[William] Coleman of Wisconsin, a stock workingman and Milwaukee alderman, followed Kruse.

"The capitalists told us to keep our eyes on Germany and to make Germany democratic," he said. "Then see what they did to us. They

picked our pockets while we were looking at Germany. That's what Moscow does. They tell us to think of Russia, to keep our minds there, and they split us and disrupt us. No, my comrades, our stomachs are here. We must use our heads here. We will organize the workers here. We will organize them both politically and industrially. That's our job."

Cameron King told of the disruptive work of the Communists in California. "Moscow," he said, "is a challenge to the Socialist parties of the world. Moscow didn't unite the workers. Moscow divided the workers. Didn't Louis Fraina begin two years ago to demand splits and more splits?"

King made a plea for the Vienna program.

[S.M.] Neidstadt of Maryland said that Russia knew nothing of American conditions.

"But that is our fault. Russia learned all she knows from [Robert] Minor and Isaac McBride and other bitterly hostile to our party. But why don't we send people over? Why didn't the American Socialist Party members go over to tell the truth? The Italians were opposed to the [21] points. They sent over a delegation to Moscow. The IWW didn't accept the points. The SLP didn't. They sent delegations over. We should do the same.

### **Points Not Open to Discussion.**

Algernon Lee said: "The 21 points in their very nature are not open to discussion. They are in the nature of an ultimatum, an irreducible minimum. It was interesting that after Comrade Engdahl invited us to discuss the points, he didn't. It is funny to note that Engdahl has suddenly become possessed of all the bourgeois virtues. After threatening to expel everyone for two years, after denouncing fair play and democracy as bourgeois virtues, he suddenly appeals to them all, as soon as the threat is made — I feel very unwisely — to visit upon him what he has been advocating for those who dissent from him.

"No, my dear comrades, the points are not open to discussion. You can't adopt them with the mental reservation that you'll not live up to them. I would have complete contempt for any party that would adopt the 21 points and then not expel me. As to [Motion] No. 2, we applied twice on those terms, and were rejected. How many more times should we try? Do our comrades think that if we declined the ultimatum we would be admitted? Look at Italy. There

the revolution was nearer than in any other country. There the party was deliberately split by Moscow in the face of the fiercest reaction, in the face of the murderous Fascisti. They split the party, breaking off the Communist element because the comrades there would not take dictation.

### **Longuet's Name Cheered.**

“Look at the French Communist Party, led by that noble international revolutionary Communist, Marcel Cachin, the French Scheidemann. In France there was one man who stood out for internationalism from the earliest days of August 1914, fighting against the things Cachin stood for. At first a tiny minority, growing larger and larger, until it swept the mighty French party for internationalism, that group was led by Jean Longuet.”

Here the whole audience rocked with cheers for Longuet, the grandson of Karl Marx.

“Wand when the convention was held that brought the party into the Communist camp, led by the Social-Traitor Cachin, it was made a specific condition that Longuet should be expelled before it could come in. When such things happen, much as we regret criticism of Soviet Russia, we cannot refrain,” said Lee.

“There are two policies in Russia. One is the policy of the Soviet Government. The other is the policy of the Executive Committee of the Communist International. There have been some interesting changes going on in Russia. If they had been made by us, if they had been made by anyone except the members of the Communist International, they would have been damned as the blackest treason. Really, the changes in Russia are the work of common sense Socialist statesmen. They are breaking merely with empty revolutionary phrases, but strangely enough they are sticking with the phrases for international consumption.

Joseph E. Cohen [of Pennsylvania] said that if the party accepted the points “we would have to deport ourselves to Europe. In Germany the more genuine Communists are being expelled by the most genuine Communists. We must end the delightful propaganda among ourselves,” he declared.

## **Gallery Boos Berger.**

Victor L. Berger got a greeting of boos from the gallery. He told of the fight he had carried on against reaction and Communists at the same time.

“I am not a Communist. There is a wide difference between Socialism and Communism. There can be no Socialism without democracy; otherwise it would be despotism of the worst kind. I want no dictatorship of any kind,” said Berger.

Engdahl interrupted, crying out, “Except the dictatorship of Victor Berger.”

“Sure. But only over myself, not over anybody else,” Berger retorted. “No honorable man will accept Motion No. 1. No. 2 is the dodge of the sneak, it is a sneaky motion. As to 3, they don’t go far enough in Vienna, and so I’m not for it. We should vote for 4. We lowered ourselves when we begged admission to an International that doesn’t want us and that isn’t Socialist. Before you consider Moscow, consider America.”

[John] Willert of Ohio said: “Those who say we attack Russia lie. Our job is to build up here. This whole discussion is out of order.”

## **Flanagan Urges Action.**

[H.F.] Flanagan of Georgia furnished the sensation of the day. A quiet, shy man, he said that he was tired of waiting for something to happen. He wanted something to happen right away. He wanted to get rid of capitalism, just as the poor dog wants to get rid of the fleas at once. Therefore he would vote for No. 1. There was a wild burst of cheering, yelling, and whistling in the gallery until chairman Hillquit had to call them to order.

[Adolph] Dreifuss said:

“Will the end of capitalism be nearer with the adoption of the points? The demand for the points is the impatience of children. Moscow decides for us. Suppose we sent our emissaries to Russia, to the Supreme Court of the revolution, the Executive of the Communist International, as [Maryland delegate S.M.] Neistadt says. We haven’t many men as smart as Hillquit, and they don’t like Hillquit; but we’ll send someone. They will say there is no civil war in America. Louis Fraina and Nicky Hourwich — (cheers in gallery) — say there is civil war. The Executive Committee goes into executive session in

Moscow and decides that there is civil war. And we must abide by the decision.

“No, I’m not joking; that is exactly what happened in Italy. Serrati has lived there for 40 years. He has built up the movement. Zinoviev decides there is civil war. Serrati says there isn’t, and he ought to know. But for disputing Serrati’s word the party is split and Serrati is denounced as an agent of the bourgeoisie. There are Communist ambassadors on the Executive Committee of all the parties in the International, and their secret reports fix the stand of the International. This will never do.

### **Not Enemies of Russia.**

“We are not the enemies of the Russian revolution; we are not against the Third [International], but we must wait until they want us. We are their friends; let them be friends to us.”

Fred Feuchter, of Iowa, said:

“The youthful enthusiasts are cheering Lenin because he was successful. They cheered Berger 10 years ago because he was successful. I decided when I came that I’d vote for Motion 4 [non-affiliation], but I inquired of our locals, and they too love success. So they instructed me to vote for 2 [conditional support for the Comintern].”

[The Italian Federation’s Girolamo] Valenti made the most fiery and eloquent speech of the day. He told the story of the Leghorn split, how it was ordered from Moscow, how the Socialists who had built up the movement were singled out for expulsion because they wouldn’t take orders.

“Those who led the Communist Party were followers of Cachin,” he said. “We take the same position as Serrati. Away with the slogan, Socialists of the World, Divide. Up with the slogan, Workers of the World, Unite.” There were wild cheers at Valenti’s eloquent defense of Socialist unity. Even the packed Communist gallery joining.

Peter Marcus said he was for number 4, but was instructed to vote for number 2, by Rhode Island.

### **Calls Third Unifying Force.**

At this point H.F. Stanwood was seated for Oklahoma.

In the closing speeches, Engdahl said that the Third International was the greatest unifying force in the world.

Kruse, summing up for number 2, said: "Where is the Second International? In bourgeois cabinets and killing each other; German Socialists and French, with German and French union-made bullets. While the war was raging the Russians built the Third. They unified the world Socialist forces. Don't go back on our party stand of 1919, when we applied for admission to Moscow."

[Gus] Hoehn merely read the manifesto of the Vienna Working Union.

Hillquit closed for Motion No. 4:

"An attack upon the Communist International is not a direct alignment with the capitalist enemies of Russia," he said. "An international of Socialists is not and should not be the instrument of any national government. The International should impose duties. In those countries where our movement is strong the parties should help build the International to aid the movement in every country, not build up the movement in all countries to aid one country. Our comrades in Russia see the world movement only as an instrument of Russia. They never consulted us about it when they decided what we should do to help them. Comrades, don't split. Build up our movement."

Turning to Flanagan, Hillquit said: "Comrade Flanagan, I honor your ardor. I love you for it. But try to carry it out. Here, let me read you Point 1." He read it, as follows:

The general propaganda and agitation should bear a really Communist character, and should correspond to the program and decisions of the Third International. The entire party press should be edited by reliable Communists who have proved their loyalty to the cause of the proletarian revolution. The dictatorship of the proletariat should not be spoken of simply as a current hackneyed formula; it should be advocated in such a way that its necessity should be apparent to every rank-and-file working man and woman, to each soldier and peasant, and should emanate from everyday facts systematically recorded by our press day by day.

All periodicals and other publications, as well as all party publications and editions, are subject to the control of the presidium of the party, independently of whether the party is legal or illegal. The editors should in no way be given an opportunity to abuse their autonomy and carry on a policy not fully corresponding to the policy of the party.

Wherever the followers of the Third International have access, and whatever means of propaganda are at their disposal, whether the columns of newspapers, popular meetings, labor unions, or cooperatives — it is indispensable for them not only to denounce the bourgeoisie but also its assistants and agents — reformists of every color and shade.

## Engdahl and Kruse Challenged.

“Go ahead and talk that way in Atlanta,” Hillquit continued. “Talk dictatorship of the proletariat that hasn’t learned the primary lessons of organization. Talk it to your cotton mill slaves. No, comrades, we must reject the 21 points, not because we are enemies of Russia, but because we are revolutionists of the deed and not of the word, because we want action right now.”

The vote was taken in breathless silence. One delegate challenged Engdahl’s vote for number 1 in defiance of his instructions and Kruse’s for number 2. But the chair said that it was a matter between their consciences and their constituents. Then, when 1, 2, and 3 were beaten, 4 was carried.

Greeting were received from Local Kings County [New York] and from guests at Unity House, the vacation camp of the waistmakers in Pennsylvania.

Wires of greeting were sent to all political prisoners in Leavenworth. Berger, in seconding the motion, said: “I wouldn’t even send Kruse there.” No one laughed more heartily than Kruse.

*Edited by Tim Davenport*

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