
Letter to Adolph Germer in Chicago from Eugene V. Debs in Terre Haute, April 8, 1918.

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Terre Haute, April 8, 1918.

My dear Adolph:—

For some time I have been thinking there should be a special convention of the Socialist Party to restate the attitude of the party toward the war and its policy and purpose when the war is over, in the light of present conditions.

To enter the national campaign this year on the war platform adopted a year ago would be a colossal blunder and make of our campaign a losing one from the start. We cannot go before the country in the present state of affairs on that platform. A year ago when that declaration was adopted, barring certain unfortunate phrasing, it was all right. Today it is flagrantly wrong and it will not do at all. You cannot defend it nor can I or anyone else in its entirety.

The Russian Revolution and Germany's treatment of Russia, especially her ruthless invasion and attempted dismemberment of that country and the reduction of its people to a Hohenzollern vassalage has created a tremendous change of sentiment throughout the world which we cannot afford to ignore.

Another matter of which we must take cognizance is the recent conference of the Inter-Allied Labor and Socialist forces held in London for the formu-

lation of the "Labor War Aims" of the labor and socialist movement. You have no doubt read the proceedings of this conference and its report. After going over this report carefully I find myself almost wholly in accord with it. It expresses the conviction and declares the attitude of practically the whole labor and socialist movements of England, France, Italy, and Belgium, and I feel that the Socialist Party of America should at this time make a similar declaration, defining clearly its present attitude toward the war and the policy it proposes shall be pursued in the making of the peace and in the reconstruction era that is to follow the war. We should have the courage to face the situation exactly as it is and make our declaration as socialists and representatives of the Socialist Party of America without evasion or equivocation to the world.

If you are in agreement with me I wish you would confer with the members of the National Executive Committee regarding the matter and see what can be done to have a special convention called to deal with the overshadowing question of the day. I feel that the necessity for action is urgent and imperative.

Please drop me a line and let me have your views.

Yours fraternally,

[Eugene V. Debs]

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