
Excerpt of Testimony Before Executive Session of the Lusk Committee of the New York Legislature by Archibald E. Stevenson, Associate Counsel, New York City — July 31, 1919.

From Lusk Committee Hearing Testimony and Executive Session Minutes, NY State Archives,
collection L0026-89, microfilm reel 1, pp. 1019-1022.

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Q: Following that declaration of principles that you have just read [adopted by the April 1917 St. Louis Convention], what was the attitude of the Socialist Party toward the war?

Mr. Stevenson: One of obstruction.

Q: Now, you read the name of John Spargo; was John Spargo, William English Walling, Russell Sloboda, were they all in favor of this resolution?†

Mr. Stevenson: They were not. There were a large number of members in the Socialist Party who have been active in its organization for many years, and who when the crisis came felt that their country was of higher moment than their political principles, and when this stand was taken by the Socialist Party, they withdrew.

Q: You mean the men whose names I have mentioned, did as a matter of fact, withdraw from the Socialist Party?

Mr. Stevenson: They did.

Q: Has there been any split in the Socialist Party dividing it into two so-called wings?

Mr. Stevenson: In the last 6 or 8 months the Socialist Party has been split on a question of tactics. The more conservative of the present membership of the Socialist Party remaining in what is termed the Right Wing of that party, and the more impatient or virulent organizing what is now

known as the Left Wing Section of the Socialist Party. The only difference between these two sections that is apparent from a study of the controversy is that the members of the Left Wing are more outspoken in their desire for immediate and direct action methods for obtaining socialism. It must be borne in mind, however, that both Right and Left Wings took this revolutionary stand, and consequently it should be understood that the Right Wingers are not the conservative evolutionary Socialist who were either expelled or resigned from the Socialist Party at the time of the St. Louis Convention [April 7-14, 1917].

Q: But so far as the stand taken with reference to the resolution that you have read is concerned, as late as 1917, after the entry of this country into the war, both the Right and the Left wing are in accord, are they not?

Mr. Stevenson: They are.

Q: Is there anything further that you want to call the attention of the Committee to at this time?

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Mr. Stevenson: I wish to call the attention of the Committee to the Constitution and Platform of the Socialist Party. On page 21 there appears a list of political demands and in the En-

†- "Russell Sloboda" appears to be a butchering of the names of Charles Edward Russell and Henry Slobodin, two prominent SPA figures who left the party in the aftermath of the St. Louis Resolution against the European war.

glish edition these demands number 5 separate demands. And I wish to call attention to the fact that in the German edition, gotten at the office of the Volkszeitung in this city [New York], there appear two additional demands, no. 6 and no. 7, which I should like to have Mr. Berger [Deputy Attorney General Samuel A.], who is more familiar with the German language, read into the record.

Mr. Berger (Reading): “No. 6: Opposition to compulsory military service and compulsory military training. No. 7: Repudiation of all war debts.”

Mr. Stevenson: That is all. I offer that in evidence.

Chairman Lusk: It may be received and marked.

The pamphlet referred to was received in evidence and marked Exhibit No. 299 of this date.

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Edited by Tim Davenport.

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