
Thou Art Not Dead, O Liberty!

While Plutocratic Interests Prussianize the United States, True Americans Who Believe in Democracy and Peace Hold Inspiring Conference at New York, and Organize Permanent People's Council to Fight for Freedom in this Country

[events of May 30-31, 1917]

Unsigned article in *Appeal to Reason* [Girard, KS], no. 1,123 (June 9, 1917), pg. 1.
Editor of the *Appeal* was Louis Kopelin.

The destroyers of democracy have had their day! Our day is dawning!

Democracy's first line of defense was formed in New York City on May 30 and 31 when the First American Conference for Peace and Democracy met in the very stronghold of the nation's plutocracy and combined ringing protest with earnest discussion of the two great, momentous issues that have crowded all others for the time being aside — PEACE FOR THE WORLD AND DEMOCRACY FOR AMERICA.

The purpose of this epoch-making gathering, which was attended by sincere democrats from all over the land, was to secure the coordination and cooperation of the liberty and peace loving elements of the United States for the one supreme task that lies immediately before us — that of bringing peace to the bleeding world and saving the threatened democracy of the United States.

Men and women of all shades of belief and from various walks of life — Socialists, single taxers, humanitarians, prominent churchmen and ministers, men of independent political belief, representatives of labor unions and working class delegates from farm and factory — thrust into the background their minor differences of opinion and united in a common aim and effort to defend the cause of humanity and progress. Such persons as

Morris Hillquit, Victor Berger, and other prominent Socialists; Daniel Kiefer, well-known single tax advocate; Rev. Jenkin Lloyd Jones, Chicago minister; Judah L. Magnes, eminent scholar and a Jewish rabbi of New York City; Scott Nearing, a professor of Toledo University; and Miss Lola M. LaFollette, daughter of the Republican Senator from Wisconsin, met on common ground in perfect harmony and joined forces in the battle for peace and democracy.

In the two days' conference the chief topics discussed were America's aims in the world war, and the question of world peace; conscription and the safety of free speech, free assemblage, and a free press; protection of the rights of labor during the war; the Russian revolution and its remarkable influence upon the international situation.

The Conference passed resolutions calling for a clear statement of America's war aims and declared for a peace program of no forcible annexation, no punitive indemnities, and the free self-development of all nations; this program was based upon President Wilson's "Peace Without Victory" address before the United States Senate, and demanded that the President stand by his position as stated in that address.

Conscription was vigorously denounced as being undemocratic and un-American, as well as

unconstitutional. The Conference passed resolutions calling for the repeal by Congress of the Conscription Act.

The position of conscientious objectors to war was considered and the Conference resolved to make strong efforts to secure exemption from military service for those whose consciences are deeply and unalterably opposed to war and the killing of human beings.

The rights of labor must be upheld in the midst of war and if anything should be guarded even more zealously and insisted upon even more firmly owing to the peculiar menace of the reactionary war spirit, the Conference decided. It resolved to use its utmost influence to this end.

In discussing the Russian revolution, great stress was laid upon the impetus given to the movement for peace by the Russian revolutionary government's renunciation of aims of conquest and indemnity and its demand that its allies make similar renunciation. It was the unanimous opinion of the members of the Conference that free Russia will prove the most powerful peace factor and, if the United States should cooperate in making these aims effective, may succeed in bringing an early peace. It was felt very strongly that hopes

for peace depend greatly upon the attitude of this country.

A permanent organization was formed that will work steadily and strenuously for the objects of the Conference.

The Conference ended the evening of May 31 [1917] with a tremendous mass meeting in Madison Square Garden where 20,000 lovers of peace and democracy met and heard hopeful, inspiring addresses by a number of the delegates. The message of the delegates was received with the greatest enthusiasm. The vast crowd was a mighty unit for peace. In spite of the presence of a large body of peace and secret service agents, the meeting was the biggest and most successful peace meeting that has been held in the country.

The First American Conference for Peace and Democracy will prove a history-making event.

A full report of the Conference, including the speeches of the delegates, will be published next week in the Appeal's Special "Peace Without Annexation" edition, which will also contain President Wilson's "Peace Without Victory" address upon which the Conference based its demand for a statement of peace terms.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

Published by 1000 Flowers Publishing Corvallis, OR, 2008. • Non-commercial reproduction permitted.