
Rose Pastor Stokes Asks Privilege to Return to Socialist Party Ranks.

by J. Louis Engdahl †

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There is considerable significance in the fact that Rose Pastor Stokes, wife of J.G. Phelps Stokes, has asked to be readmitted to the Socialist Party.

She left the party, with her husband and a few others, soon after the beginning of the war, and was one of the first to identify herself with the so-called National Party, which held an impromptu gathering some time ago in Chicago and then seems to have gone out of existence.

[J.Graham Phelps] Stokes has identified himself with the Gompers American Alliance for Labor and Democracy, unmasked as an anti-Socialist organization that has also placed itself in opposition to the work of the People's Council.

When the capitalist daily newspapers learned that Mrs. Stokes had left the Socialist Party, they sent their best reporters to get page feature stories attacking the Socialist movement in this and other countries. Her desire to return to the Socialist ranks passes unnoticed.

Mrs. Stokes' desertion of the little band of emotional intellectuals who left the party, or were expelled, and the reason she gives for seeking to return to the party fold, effectually questions the sincerity of those who continue to attack the great mass of the American Socialist Party who never wavered in their loyalty to their principles. In her letter of application, Mrs. Stokes says:

I see no hope of functioning 100 percent in the interest of the common people except through the Socialist Party, and hereby apply for readmission to membership.

I left the party because I considered dangerous the party's attitude toward America's participation in the war; but the crisis created by the St. Louis resolution is past, and the present immediate danger is an imperialistic peace which, I believe, only a unified and strengthened international

Socialist movement can prevent.

Unless all individual Socialists and Socialist factions sink their minor differences and work together for national and international, social, economic, and industrial democracy, the ideals embodied in President Wilson's declarations and the principles embodied in the Russian endeavor, which have heartened and fortified the democratic and social democratic forces throughout the world, may easily fail of establishment.

I thrill to think how rapidly the world would move forward if, for instance, the German Social Democracy were to unite — if the party of the right were to unite with the party of the left — and sweep the Hohenzollerns out of power, or if the several parties of the Social Revolution in Russia were to sink their differences and go to the heart of their common purpose; or if in Italy, France, and England there were but one unified expression of the Socialist movement; and because my heart cries out to them, "Comrades, unite!" I am brought to a keen realization of my own remissness.

If I see and deplore the results of disruption and desire unity for my Comrades abroad, I must surely strive for unity here, where 90 percent of the American people, whose hearts beat warm as any in the world for humanity, need to stand as unitedly against their own and the world's anti-humanitarian 10 percent, as the 90 percent of any other country.

President Wilson's last message; the British and French government's failure to meet fully and in a spirit of frankness the democratic implications of it; the imprisonment in Germany of 300 of her left wing Socialists; the counterrevolutionary attempts in Russia, where an unseen hand not Russia's seems to be playing fast and loose — these four significant events are among the foremost impelling me to rejoin the Socialist Party. I beg, dear Comrades, that you admit me again to your ranks.

[Graham] Stokes has declared there is no chance of his returning to the party with his wife. The Intercollegiate Socialist Society, of which Stokes is President, has had some difficult sailing this year in its efforts to preserve unity of purpose among its members, who are divided on the war issue. The Socialists are in the apparent majority, but the militarists are much

†- This news report is unsigned in the original. It is attributed to the editor of *The Eye Opener*, J. Louis Engdahl.

more violent and aggressive.

Rose Pastor Stokes gained national notice some years ago when she married J.G. Phelps Stokes, known as “the millionaire Socialist.” He was elected for a time to the Socialist Party National Executive Committee. She was a Russian Jewish immigrant, who struggled for a livelihood in Ohio and in New York, and devoted her evenings to settlement work among her people, where Stokes met her. She is one of the most valuable women lecturers and propagandists in the Socialist movement.

The action just taken by Mrs. Stokes again emphasizes the divisions in the ranks of the ex-Socialists. Mrs. Stokes has started a group who now want to return to the party. There is still another group, with Upton Sinclair as its spokesman, that has signified its intention of seeking to return after the war. Another group, represented by John Spargo, contents itself with writing articles for the papers and magazines, blindly attempting to prove the alleged pro-Germanism of the Socialist Party, but does not enter actively into political campaigns to defeat Socialist candidates. Spargo,

for instance, refused to go into Dayton, Ohio, at the invitation of the local Chamber of Commerce, to campaign against the Socialists last November [1917]. Then there is another group that seems to have lost all honor and principle, that has out-jingooed the munition makers of Wall Street in their misrepresentation of the Socialist Party. In this group we find such expelled Socialists as [Winfield] Gaylord and [A.M.] Simons. Charles Edward Russell seems to waver between the last two groups. While usually advertised as a Socialist killer, he comes into a city and gives a fairly good talk on the Russian Revolution, much to the chagrin of the profiteers who pay the expenses of his appearance. The two last groups are more or less identified with Gompers’ “Alliance” and the hybrid National Party.

In the meantime the Socialist Party goes on building up its membership and perfecting its organization for the great congressional and legislative campaign this fall, and the Presidential struggle of 1920.

Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport.

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