
Out-Scheidemanning Scheidemann

by Morris Hillquit

Published in the *New York Call*, v. 10, no. 139 (May 19, 1917), pg. 2.

If Philipp Scheidemann has really been guilty of the offenses against the Socialist movement with which he is charged, his name is justly held in contempt by the whole world outside of Germany. But Scheidemann is at best a bungling amateur compared with our own accomplished masters in the art of party treachery.



The main counts in the Socialist indictment against Philipp Scheidemann are:

1. That he has supported the government of his country in the war, in disregard of the international Socialist declarations against war.
2. That he has acquiesced in the policy of "civil peace," thus surrendering the workers to unbridled exploitation and oppression.
3. That he has permitted himself to be used as a tool by his government in its efforts to inveigle the people of other countries into the war on Germany's side.
4. That in the hour of crisis he has betrayed the principles of international socialism, and descended to the role of an apologist of a narrow nationalism and a ruthless militarism.

"Patriotic" Socialists Do Likewise.

All this our American "patriotic" Socialists have done as fully and thoroughly as Philipp Scheidemann. And it will not do to differentiate be-

tween them on the ground that one supports the principle of autocracy and militarism and the others fight for democracy and freedom. To Philipp Scheidemann the war of his fatherland is truly a campaign for the preservation of his country's political integrity and the dissemination of a superior *Kultur*, as our war is one for the protection of American rights and for the democracy of the world from the point of view of our Scheidemanns. Since the beginning of the world every war has been a "holy war" in the eyes of its supporters.

So far, then, the analogy is complete, but from this point we must apologize to Scheidemann for comparing him to the American variety of "Social Patriots." Deep as he may have sunk, he has not reached the low level of their personal indecency.

Worse Than Scheidemann.

Scheidemann has not libeled his party in the capitalist press. They have. Scheidemann has not denounced his fellow Socialists who differ with him in their views on war as traitors to their country. They have. Scheidemann has not turned spy and informer against his comrades or invited criminal prosecution against them. They have.

A.M. Simons, William English Walling, J.G. Phelps Stokes have filled the eager columns of the capitalist press from one end of the country to the other with venomous attacks upon the Socialist Party, branding it as a dangerous and crimi-

nal aggregation of foreign-born and pro-German traitors.

William English Walling, Charles Edward Russell, and Ernest Poole have denounced the Stockholm Conference [forthcoming Sept. 5, 1917], the first general and genuine attempt to revive the Socialist International, as “the most dangerous of the kaiser’s plots to cash in his military victories.” They have asserted that its special object is to bring about a separate peace between Russian and the Central Powers, and have broadly intimated that our party representatives to the conference should not be allowed to leave the country.

They did not hesitate to turn over the malicious denunciation to the war censorship bureau of the government, which speedily and cheerfully gave it to the entire press of the country, with an official endorsement and with the request that it be given the largest possible publicity as “the base for further and specific attack.”

Ask “Discreet Authority.”

Winfield R. Gaylord and A.M. Simons have turned over the St. Louis anti-war resolution to

United States Senator Husting of Wisconsin for action by the government, with the interesting advice that “there is no need of estranging the great mass of Socialists and those who sympathize with them by any drastic action,” but that “there is occasion for the discreet use of authority for the prevention of general circulation of this pernicious propaganda.”

The material and suggestions thus obligingly furnished to the reactionary Senator from Wisconsin was used by the latter in support of his argument “on the necessity of taking measures calculated to protect ourselves from disloyal and treasonable utterances and publications, and disloyal actions, and agencies and combinations, and organizations.”

As a result of the active and insidious propaganda of our “comrades,” some prosecutions have already been instituted against party members. Others will no doubt follow.

I know of no instance of such brazen treachery in the whole history of the international Socialist movement. I know of no Socialist Party in the world that would stand for such “comradeship.”

Edited by Tim Davenport.

Published by 1000 Flowers Publishing, Corvallis, OR, 2007. • Non-commercial reproduction permitted.