
We Are All Socialists:

Split Need Not Weaken the Movement — Let Us Waste No More Time In Quarreling, but Throw Our Whole Strength Into the Fight on Capitalism.

by Morris Hillquit

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The split in the ranks of American Socialism raises an interesting question of policy. What shall be the attitude of the Socialist Party toward the newly formed “Communist” organization?

Any attempted solution of the problem must take into account the following fundamental facts:

First.— The division was not created arbitrarily and deliberately by the recent conventions in Chicago. It had become an accomplished and irrevocable fact many months ago, and the Chicago gatherings did nothing more than recognize the fact and give the divergent movements concrete form of expression.

Second.— The division was not brought about by differences on vital questions of principles. It arose over disputes on methods and policy, and even within that limited sphere it was largely one of emphasis rather than fundamen-

tals. The division within the ranks of American Socialism is an echo, but by no means a reproduction of the Socialist movement in Europe.

Third.— The separation of the Socialist

Party into three organizations need not necessarily mean a weakening of the Socialist movement as such. Our newly baptized “Communists” have not ceased to be Socialists even though in a moment of destructive enthusiasm they have chosen to discard the name that stands for so much in the history of the modern world. They are



wrong in their estimate of American conditions, their theoretical conclusions, and practical methods, but they have not deserted to the enemy. The bulk of their following is still good Socialist material, and when the hour of the real Socialist fight

strikes this country, we may find them again in our ranks.

In the meanwhile, and for some time to come, the lines of separation will undoubtedly remain rigid, and the natural temptation for the comrades in the different camps will be to exaggerate and to aggravate the differences.

The quarrels of political stepbrothers are always more violent than those of political strangers. It is to be hoped that the Socialist Party at least will effectively resist the temptation, for nothing could be more ruinous to the Socialist movement than frittering away its energies and resources on internecine strife.

I am led to make these observations because of certain symptoms of aggressive hostility that seem to manifest themselves in our ranks. I have particularly in view the practice of airing grievances and making accusations against the Left Wing in the capitalist press.

This is a serious infraction of Socialist eth-

ics and decency. Our quarrel is a family quarrel and has no room in the columns of the capitalist papers, where it can only give joy and comfort to the common enemy. The unpardonable offense of the Simons-Russell-Spargo crowd was not so much their “social-patriotic” stand during the war, as the fact that they rushed into the anti-Socialist press, maliciously denouncing their former comrades as pro-Germans and deliberately adding fuel to the sinister flame of mob violence and government persecution directed at the Socialist movement.

We must carefully avoid even the semblance of similar misconduct.

We have had our split. It was unfortunate but unavoidable, and now we are through with it. The legitimate constructive work of the Socialist movement is before us. Let us give it all of our time, energies, and resources. Let us center our whole fight upon capitalism, and let us hope our Communist brethren will go and do likewise.†

†- Morris Hillquit returned to New York City on September 22, 1919, from the sanitarium at Saranac Lake, NY at which he spent the previous 14 months recuperating from an attack of tuberculosis. This article, published in bold type with broad leading on the back page of the *New York Call*, was his first public statement on the split of the Socialist Party and marked Hillquit’s return to active party life.

Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport.

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