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# Shield No One: A Reply to Morris Hillquit.

by William Maily †

Published in *The Socialist* [Toledo, Ohio], whole no. 241 (May 6, 1905), pg. 5.

If it were only for the sake of carrying on a controversy with Comrade Hillquit I would not attempt to answer his article, but as there is more than a mere difference of opinion at stake I must take issue with him again.

In the first place I have not charged that the failure on the part of Local Milwaukee to nominate candidates and the subsequent endorsement of a Republican candidate for judge was part of a deliberate political deal with Judge Wallber or the Republican Party; neither have I implied such a thing. So far as the case has gone there is no reason for believing any deal was consummated and Comrade Hillquit has no cause for reading such a construction into either my previous letter or anything *The Socialist* has said. In fact we (speaking for *The Socialist* also) have not claimed the failure to nominate as an offense. We are quite willing to admit that there might be circumstances under which failure to nominate might be justifiable, although we must also say that the reasons given in the Milwaukee instance have not struck us a very weighty ones.

We have contended, however, that the endorse-

ment of a capitalist candidate is an offense at any time and in any place and in the case under discussion the offense was aggravated by the previous failure to nominate. And that there was a deliberate attempt to use the party machinery and voters to elect one capitalist candidate as against another is admitted and that is the real point the party is called to act upon.

Comrade Hillquit takes pains to show that he does not approve of what was done by Comrade Berger and the Milwaukee comrades. Then were do he and I disagree? Clearly as to whether “any punishment or disciplinary measures” should be meted out to the offenders.

If Comrade Hillquit will permit me to say so, I believe he is carrying his policy of Tolstoian nonresistance to evil just a wee bit too far, particularly in this case. And I want it understood that neither *The Socialist* nor myself have so far said a word about having somebody expelled from the party. This is where Comrade Hillquit becomes unnecessarily alarmed. I only cited what would have happened to an obscure member who would have had no Hillquit to defend him. But I do believe that any party member who willfully

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supports a capitalist candidate for any office is not qualified to represent the Socialist Party in any capacity and in this immediate case the offense is all the greater because the offender has been honored by the national party with a place on its National Executive Committee and he therefor owed and still owes a duty to the national party which rises above any petty, local political interest. Are we therefore to rest satisfied to have this individual remain on this committee, after he has violated the trust reposed in him because Comrade Hillquit is too sensitive to vote him off?

The adoption of conciliatory measures at this time such as Comrade Hillquit proposes will not relieve the national party from the discredit that arises from the act which Comrade Berger has already committed. To let the matter rest where Comrade Hillquit proposes would fasten on the party forever the stain of compromise which the perpetrator has continued to defend. I do not believe the party membership is prepared to accept such a position, no matter whether Comrade Hillquit likes it or not.

As to the Santa Barbara case: Certainly the details were not in the minutes, but Comrade Berger was fully aware of them at the Quorum meeting and he agreed in the action of the National Quorum requesting the State Committee of California to investigate, so that so far as he was concerned there was a precedent established. Nevertheless he protested against action being taken on his case similar to that taken on Santa Barbara, evidently going on the theory that what is good enough for a local in California is "heresy hunting" when applied to Wisconsin.

So Comrade Hillquit thinks that Comrade [Hermon] Titus and I have visions, does he, when we point out that Comrade Berger threatens to start a new Socialist Party to be known as the Social Democratic Party. Well, Comrade Hillquit should have been present at the National Executive Committee meeting just held in Chicago and heard Comrade Berger say that if the constitution was construed against his views "there would soon be three Socialist Parties in this country." Perhaps Comrade Hillquit would not have been so cock sure on that point. The assertion originally made that Berger threatened a new party was based upon Berger's own editorials in *The Social Democratic Herald*. Comrade Berger may have been only working one of his good natured bluffs, as he has

done before in order to get what he wanted out of the national party, but up to this writing he has not retracted what he said.

The term "alarmist" does not alarm Comrade Titus or me. We expect to be called many worse names than that — in fact, we have been called many worse names already — but that does not phase us a particle and it will not prevent us from doing our duty to the party as we see it. If there has been any justification for our getting alarmed it has been in seeing a comrade of Hillquit's standing and influence using the methods he has in order to shield a violator of the party's principles from the censure that is justly due him. Fortunately the signs are that the party does not share Comrade Hillquit's views.

Finally it is very evident that Comrade Hillquit missed the point of our article "The Parting of the Ways." This may be attributed partly to his being out of touch, or apparently so, with the national movement. If he was in touch he would understand that there has been developing in the party a feeling of discontent with the nonresistant methods used toward certain defects in the party organization, and especially along the lines of Opportunism. This feeling has been growing since the national convention just one year ago [Chicago: May 1-6, 1904], when the danger from Impossibilism on one side and Opportunism on the other first displayed itself. The Impossibilists in that convention carried on a policy of obstruction in the convention itself while the Opportunists held their caucus and fixed their slates in order to obtain control of the committees. Both elements were defeated because the real Socialists in the convention were in the majority and obstruction and slate-making were deservedly outvoted. But Impossibilism exists because Opportunism has been allowed to flourish. One is the complement of the other.

Let the national party go on record in favor of placating (and that is all it will be) Opportunism and compromise, and Impossibilism will receive an impetus from which it will take the party years to recover. Be it understood that I am not referring to the Industrial Union movement as Impossibilism. I do refer to the element of which DeLeon (who has adroitly fastened himself upon the new Industrial Union movement and who has profited more by the mistakes of his enemies than by any native wit or shrewdness of

his own) is the fantastic exponent.

That is the real situation in the party, a situation to which Comrade Hillquit is singularly blind. Once before, when the question of fusion with the Union Labor Party was up for discussion, did the mistaken notion of temporizing with evil come, nearly giving opportunity for demagogism to fasten itself on the national party, despite the warnings which were given at the time. The same opportunity will not be presented again, even though Comrade Titus and myself and those agreeing with us are to be dubbed “alarmists” for trying to prevent it.

*Edited by Tim Davenport.*

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