
Letter from Samuel F. Hankin in Chicago to Benjamin Gitlow in New York, Aug. 18, 1919.

A document in the Comintern Archive, RGASPI f. 515, op. 1, d. 4, ll. 19-20.

Chicago, Ill.
Aug. 18, 1919.

Dear Comrade Gitlow:

You already may be informed through Comrade Larkin the position Left Wing Local Cook County, Ill. has taken in regards to the coalition of the Left Wing and the so-called “Communists.” We of Chicago have not changed and we never intend to change our position. We have been fortunate enough to have amongst us the “brains” and “big men” of the already officialled “Communist” Party, and we know the kind of a revolutionary party they will organize.

We, Left Wingers, are dissatisfied with the old Socialist Party because it concentrated all its efforts during political campaigns and ignored the organization of the industrial workers. We now find the spokesmen of the Communists opposed to industrial unionism. Comrade Dennis E. Batt, the Secretary of the Communists, stated before two other comrades and me that he was opposed to the organization of the workers into one big union. We are by no means affiliated with the IWW, but we realize that it is the economic control over society which is the cause of the domination of the present state. Since the economic rule is the generator of capitalists’ power, the worker must primarily concentrate his forces on the economic field. The statement Batt made shows his opposition to industrial unionism, and that is nothing like Communism — and he and

men similar to him are the organizers of the Communist Party of America. “Nationalization of the great business enterprises and trusts” is by no means socialization. Statism is not Socialism.

It was reported to us through the Communist office that the Left Wing capitulated to the Communist Party. How much truth there is in it, we do not know. We have also been informed that *The Revolutionary Age* is near its death. We know this much that in *Revolutionary Age* no. 6, the minority group which is now organizing a Communist Party is invited to unite with the National Left Wing in the Organization of a Communist Party, in spite of the fact that the clause stating that we discontinue all conferences with the Federation groups, and instruct our Secretary to work for the Convention called by the new NEC for September 1st, for which Larkin and you voted, has been defeated. If this be true, the Left Wing did not capitulate to the Communist Party.

Comrade Gitlow, we of Chicago apply to you for full information as to the agreement between the Left Wing and Communists. We would like to know the financial position of what is left of the National Council and of *The Revolutionary Age*. Send us full information about all the transactions of the Lefts and Communists. We appeal to you because you are the only one besides Larkin from whom we can get real facts.

I suppose you know that Fraina was to speak in Chicago Friday, Aug. 15th [1919]. Well, he did not speak for two reasons. One reason is because we did not allow a traitor to the Left Wing speak

from a Left Wing platform, and the second reason is because when he heard that we would not allow him to speak, he sent in his declination as a speaker for the evening.

We in Chicago are to remain Left. We need an organizer and some Left Wing speakers badly. We have none in our midst.

Trusting that you will give us detailed information, and that you will give us your support, whenever called upon,

I remain yours for real Communism,

Samuel F. Hankin,
Secretary of the Provisional Left Wing,
Local Cook County.

P.S. Answer immediately; must have answer before Thursday Eve [Aug. 21, 1919].

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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