
Debs and Socialist Unity.

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“Unity of Socialist elements in the United States” has become the hobbyhorse with which some Socialist Party-ites are parading in order to lure some stay comrades back into the folds of that organization. Some of these persons are well meaning. But they do not understand the fundamental difference between Lenin and Scheidemann (if we may express principles in names of those who represent them). But the greater number of them feel an uncontrollable longing for the nickels and dimes of tens of thousands of members, that the late Executive Committee of the Socialist Party has thrown out. The deep love of these Right Wingers for the Non-Partisan League and the coming Labor Party was prevented in ending in a happy marriage by the Lefts and with a temper, only inspired by unsatisfied love, they concocted a scheme to get rid of the obstacle. So they expelled the Left Wing, nearly half the party, and half of the half that was left them quit in disgust. But now other obstacles prevent the final consummation of the marriage, so these politicians realize, first, that they have robbed their party of the only excuse it had for posing as a revolutionary party by throwing out the revolutionists, and second, they have, and this is something to be still more regretted, lost countless nickels and dimes which otherwise would have probably found their way into their till.

We neither have time nor do we desire to here investigate deeper into the real cause of the unity move. Suffice it to say that in the desire to bring about unity they hit upon the scheme to induce Eugene V. Debs to accept the nomination for President from the Socialist Party, as undesirable as his candidacy may have been to them otherwise. And Debs, noble heart, bent down by the knowledge of the feud within the ranks of the Socialists, accepts, and so unconsciously helps to play the game of the scheming gents in the Socialist Party.

Without going into the question deeply by writing a necessarily extensive treatise on the fundamentals of communism, there might be said just this about the question of unity: We would advise Debs to read the arguments filed by Mr. Stedman in behalf of the Socialist Party in the court action of that party in Detroit, Michigan. We would further advise him to read the transcript of the Albany “trial.”

Should the communists unite with Stedman, who denounces them in a capitalist court as enemies of capitalist society, in order to induce that court to take property, bought and paid for by the defendants, away from them and turn it over to the law-abiding Socialist Party?

Or shall the communists unite with Mr. Hillquit, who assured the sub-committee of the Assembly in Albany that the Socialists surely would shoulder a gun and fight for “their” country should the Bolsheviks “attack” it?

Or should the communists form a happy union with Mr. Waldman, who swore to the conviction that he would by all means prefer the capitalist constitution of the capitalist-ridden state of New York to the dictatorship of the working class as desired by the Bolsheviks?

Or should the communists unite with Mr. Berger, whose hatred for them is only exceeded by his love for capitalism, and compared to whom even Scheidemann is a raving “radical”?

Now all these persons and their acts are mere incidents that can not determine the possibility or advisability of unity. These incidents, however, show us the fundamental differences in the conception of these “Socialists” and the communists. *These differences prove conclusively that there can be no unity between the two, except the communists betray the working class, whose advance-guard they are, or these “Socialists” desert the*

capitalist class, whose rear-guard they are. One is as impossible as the other without one of the two giving up its principles and accepting the principles of the other. And Debs surely would not want the communists to desert the working class in order to strengthen the rear-guard of capitalism!

What does unity mean?

When is unity desirable?

For many years the fight between the Right and the Left in the German Social Democratic Party was carried on. The split was always avoided with the merely sentimental plea for unity. Unity of organization was thus preserved.

But did the German working class profit by that unity?

It did not!

On the historical 4th of August, 1914, the Left was overwhelmed by the Right and, for a moment at least, acquiesced in the betrayal of the German working class by the Social Democratic Party. And when at last the Left realized the impossibility of unity of organization when unity of purpose was lacking, and when they finally broke away, they had to do it at a time when their chances for organization were below zero on account of the conditions created by the war. And in the November days of 1918 the Left was too weak to send the Scheidemanns after their master Wilhelm into exile. The unity of organization so long preserved in Germany then proved a detriment to the revolutionary power of the workers. The Right Wing of Scheidemann and Noske assassinated the Left of Luxemburg and Liebknecht with the power that the Scheidemanns could never have gotten without the help of the Luxemburgs and Liebknechts during the long period of unity.

Should we learn from history, or should we close our eyes to it for the sweet sounds of a sentimental plea?

Should the communists of America unite with the Scheidemanns here merely on a sentimental plea for unity?

They cannot!

They will not!

The day will come when capitalism in this country will call upon its rear-guard, the petty bourgeois Socialist Party, to save the day for capitalism, just like the German capitalists called upon the German Social Democratic Party there for that purpose. On that day, the first day of the revolution, the communists in this country will be faced by the daggers and bayonets of the Stedman-Scheidemanns. The communists will not unite and wait until they are assassinated by these friends of capitalism in the name of law and order. No, the communists of America are on their guard so they may not be caught napping.

Socialist unity means more than some 100,000 people paying dues into the same treasury.

Revolutionary Socialist unity means more than some 100,000 workers voting for one and the same man for President, even if that man happens to such a lovable and incorruptible Socialist as Eugene V. Debs.

Eugene V. Debs as the Presidential candidate of the Socialist Party is not acceptable in that capacity to the communists, no matter how acceptable he would be as a member of the communist organization.

Revolutionary Socialist unity must be a unity of action obtainable only by a unity of purpose.

The purpose of the communist movement in the United States and the world over is to replace the capitalist state by a proletarian dictatorship, exercised through workers' councils. And the purpose of this dictatorship is the creation of a free communist society, thus abolishing the state.

A unity upon that program is not only desirable but necessary. Such unity, however, cannot be accomplished by the Socialist Party and the communists coming together. It can only be accomplished if the revolutionary workers gather around the banners of communism. They must leave the Socialist Party and its leaders because those leaders are misleading the working class.

For a unity under the banner of communism we are glad to join hands with Eugene V. Debs. But the first provision is that Debs himself leave the Scheidemanns and join the real forces of the proletarian revolution, the communist movement of America.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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