
Fight Capitalism:

Letter to the Editor of the *New York Call*, May 2, 1919.

by J. Lederer

Published in the *New York Call*, May 2, 1919, pg. 6.

Editor of *The Call*:

A socialist of 30 years' standing, I have had several occasions to watch controversies in the party, and have read with great interest the various letters of Left and Right Wingers.

It is only natural that in a movement consisting of the most intelligent and most thinking workers there shall exist a difference of opinion regarding tactics. There is hardly any difference as to fundamentals, but as to tactics, or the question "How to get there" in the quickest and surest possible manner, that was always, more or less, the bone of contention. The old SLP split up on this question, and it seems to me that the present Left Wingers are almost identical with the old SLP, and if DeLeon were alive today he certainly would be a very happy man. After all, the time has come to admit that DeLeon was a master mind, and if not for some petty unfortunate personal and temperamental qualities he would have remained a great leader in the American socialist movement. But he made very much the same mistake as most of the present Left Wingers and some of the Right Wingers are doing today. Intolerance was his mistake, and above all I implore all comrades to learn to look upon each other with kindness and with tolerance. As long as we feel and know that matters in dispute are the result of honest differences of opinion we ought to respect each other, and do nothing to create unnecessary bitter animosity, and

I appeal in the name of our great cause to the rank and file not to permit a few hotheaded fire-eaters to use any abusive mudgutter language at our meetings, and any violator in this respect ought to be treated with a bucket of ice-cold water poured over his head as soon as he violated the first principles of discussion.

Much can be said about the merits of the questions at issue. For instance: is it not peculiar and contradictory that many of our fire-eaters who condemn all reforms or "immediate demands" of our party platform, and advocate only the propaganda for the overthrow of capitalism, are very active union members and take part in strikes for a few cents more a day or a few hours less work per week? Months of striking and untold suffering are practices by these irrevolutionists for the sake of a little reform on the economic field, but to try to force a few reforms and elimination of at least the worst kind of abuses from our capitalist masters by political action and propaganda — which is so much easier than economic struggles and would benefit millions whereas the other may benefit only a few — that is considered treachery to socialism, and comrades who have devoted the best part of their lives to our great cause are called all kinds of vile names, just because they refuse to swallow all of the phrases of those who style themselves Left Wingers. Remember there is nothing perfect in this world, and even the sun has its spots, and the Socialist Party, no doubt, has its faults,

and always will have some, but be fair, be reasonable, and use common sense and comradeship in your discussions.

The party is organized on democratic principles, all have free speech and free discussion, so why organize separate organizations and split your energies and hold meetings and scheme not how to fight capitalism — oh, no! — but how to fight your own comrades and how to either rule or ruin the party.

Keep cool: there is no use to shoot firecrackers, discuss the party's affairs honestly, earnestly, and try by convincing arguments to get control of the majority of the party members — this is the only way to do constructive work, worthy of the aims of the Socialist Party.

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Edited by Tim Davenport.

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