
Millions Mourn Hillquit: World-Famous Socialist Leader Dies After Long Illness

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The Socialist movement of America and of the whole world suffered a staggering blow with the passing of Morris Hillquit, National Chairman of the Socialist Party and for decades the party's beloved leader, who died at his home in New York a few minutes past midnight Sunday, October 8th [1933].

Hillquit had been ill for several months, and for several years his general health had not been good, but few outside his immediate family circle realized the seriousness of his condition.

In all his recent letters — including a letter published in the Labor Day issue of *The New Leader* — he optimistically reported improved physical condition and promised an early return to party activity. He had recently accepted the post of chairman of the City Campaign Committee and had written a strong letter in support of the party's local ticket, and he had been listed as one of the speakers at the closing rally of the campaign at Madison Square Garden. The report of his death, therefore, was a stunning surprise to all except those who had seen him lately.

Morris Hillquit had fought off two severe attacks of tuberculosis in the last twenty years, but in his public activities he never spared himself. Last year, as candidate for Mayor in the special election caused by the forced resignation of Mayor Walker, he spent himself as never before, until his friends were alarmed at what they felt was a reckless disregard for his own physical welfare in the interests of the party.

Just before his nomination last year, Comrade Hillquit had been working on his memoirs, but he laid them aside until the

campaign was over. Immediately thereafter he resumed the work, but it was noted that something had gone out of him. He seemed tired and spent, although the spirit was undimmed. It is possible that his terrific exertions in the 1932 campaign shortened his life by years.

During the winter and early spring he spoke on a number of occasions, his last two appearances being on March 25th. In the afternoon he spoke with his usual fire and brilliance at a Karl Marx memorial meeting at Town Hall. In the evening, despite a pouring rain, he journeyed to Brooklyn to fulfill an engagement to debate Senator Joseph T. Robinson for the Brooklyn Forum, a party organization. Again he acquitted himself brilliantly, but it was noticed that he was haggard and work and very tired. His clothes were wringing wet with perspiration at the close of the debate and having difficulty in securing a taxicab, he returned home in bad condition.

He continued his work, however, but it was plain that he was failing fast. He made a few appearances at his office, and then he went to Avon, NJ.

During the summer he worked on a code for the Cloakmakers, and he was called upon to argue the code in Washington. A motor trip to New York, and then a five-hour railway journey to Washington, would have been too strenuous for him; he therefore chartered a plane and flew to the capital, there to do his last work for the union with which he had been associated for so many long and busy years.

Shortly after Labor Day he returned to New York, and he remained at home, taking a keen and active interest in all party affairs until the very end. A few hours before he breathed his last, Comrade Hillquit dictated a letter on party matters to the National Executive Committee. His last thought was for his party.

Edited by Tim Davenport

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