

Words and Facts

ONE of the evils of the old Socialist Party was its trimming of sails to catch every breeze of opinion that might bring votes and members. While pursuing a fundamental reformist and petty bourgeois policy, the Socialist Party was not unwilling to make concessions in words to revolutionary opinion. The old Socialist Party resembled nothing so much as a mass of dough, assuming a different shape at each slight pressure.

You would imagine that this policy would have ended with the revolution in the Socialist Party, resulting in a clear division of the movement—the old party at the right, the Communist Party at the left, and the Communist Labor Party in the centre. But there is still a group in the Socialist Party pursuing a policy of camouflage; this group preens itself upon being revolutionary, shouts ecstatically about the Communist International and imagines it can deceive the International into admitting a reformist party such as the S. P.

This "Left Wing" group is apparently organized around the "Chicago Socialist", organ of Local Cook County Socialist Party. In issue after issue this paper urges affiliation of the Socialist Party with the Communist International. But "The Chicago Socialist" shows absolutely no understanding of Communist principles and tactics.

Affiliation with the Communist International does not simply imply affiliation: it implies an acceptance and understanding of the fundamental principles and tactics of the International. The "Chicago Socialist" however pursues a consistent policy of reformism and petty bourgeois opportunism; it has no conception of the mass character of the proletarian struggle; it emphasizes votes and parliamentarism precisely as did the old Socialist Party. There can be no affiliation with the Communist International without realization of the stern requirements of revolutionary Socialist reconstruction.

In its issue of October 18 the "Chicago Socialist" in an editorial on "The Constitutional Convention" says:

"The most logical place to express Class Solidarity is at the Polls.... The class conscious vote is a real protest. When it is small the Capitalists smile, when it grows the Capitalists ponder; when the workers give a united expression and prove that the Capitalists have not the consent of majority of the people, then the workers will take their seats at the table."

This is clearly an acceptance of reformism and the parliamentary conquest of power. The gentlemen responsible for this formulation have not only learned nothing during the past five years; they have apparently not read (at least not understood) the Manifesto of the Communist International, since this Manifesto uncompromisingly maintains that the conquest of political power by the proletariat is an extra-parliamentary process proceeding by means of mass action; in this process electoral campaigns and parliamentarism are neither decisive nor of major importance, although necessary.

The "Left Wing" of the Socialist Party repudiates the fundamental tactic of the Communist International, while urging affiliation with the International!

The emphasis on parliamentarism means using the bourgeois parliamentary state to introduce Socialism. That this is the reformist position of "The Chicago Socialist" is manifest in its urging an amendment to the State Constitution of Illinois (the Gate-

way Amendment) "that would give the people a chance to alter or amend the constitution at any time when a reasonable number of voters demanded." This is the old moderate Socialist conception of "democratizing" the capitalist state, making its machinery "responsive to the will of the people," and then using this "democratized" parliamentary state to "introduce Socialism".

The democratizing of the capitalist parliamentary state is a sheer impossibility. The capitalist state must necessarily under the conditions of Imperialism become more and more despotic, more and more responsive, not to "the will of the people," but to the orders of finance-capital. The central defect of the old moderate Socialism, out of the miserable collapse of which has come the impetus for the Communist International, was precisely this reformist conception of democratizing the state, of gradually centralizing the means of production in this state, of basing the coming of Socialism upon the "majority of the people," which means class reconciliation and class co-operation. This conception evades completely the problems of the proletarian mass struggle for the conquest of power.

The Communist International makes it clear that the capitalist state never can be used for the introduction of Socialism; that the task of the revolutionary proletariat is not to capture the capitalist state but to conquer and destroy it, the proletariat developing its own organs of state power (Soviets). This new proletarian state, developing directly out of the industrial producers and functioning temporarily as a dictatorship of the proletariat, breaks the capitalist power of resistance and introduces the industrial administration of the Communist Republic with its abolition of the state.

This Socialist Party camouflage spreads beyond the Communist International and includes industrial unionism. The Socialist Party Convention recently "endorsed" industrial unionism; but this was merely in words. The Socialist Party is castrating industrial unionism by using it to designate such organizations as the Amalgamated Clothing Workers—which conforms to industrial unionism neither in structure nor in revolutionary purpose.

This castration is perpetrated by the "Chicago Socialist." In its issue of October 18 "The Socialist" reprints (approvingly) an article by the editor of the "Fur Worker," which says: "Our's is not that industrial unionism run mad, which a section of the I. W. W. let loose a few years ago." This article approves an "industrial unionism" which in fundamentals is craft unionism, still retaining a large measure of craft autonomy, and concludes: "This, we take it, is the principle of industrial unionism which the Socialist Party at its special convention in Chicago endorsed." The "Fur Worker" speaks for the conservative administration of the Fur Worker's Union, against which there is now developing a membership revolt insisting upon real industrial unionism and more radical tactics. As always, the Socialist Party is united with the conservative elements in the unions.

The use of revolutionary words will not help the Socialist Party; it will be strangled by its own policy of evasion and camouflage. The Socialist Party may use the words of revolution; but the facts condemn it as counter-revolutionary. A revolutionary movement is built upon integrity, upon understanding of tactical fundamentals, and the action corresponding thereto; not upon words that never become life.

The New Life In Russia

By Angelica Balabanoff from "L'Avanti" of Italy.

YOU cannot form any idea of what is taking place here. One witnesses daily the miracle of re-organization of an old, decrepit and rotten system which only the new regenerative forces can put life into; one looks on at this work of constant renewal going on amidst attempts to boycott it, to sabotage and blockade it in all directions. The spectacle is infinitely inspiring; it fills you with pride; it revivifies your faith in human power and in the divine potency, of the ideal. With all kinds of material deficiencies and with a continuous struggle going on against the enemy without, a great creative work is nevertheless being undertaken in the domains of Science, art and the education of the masses and the new generations.

When the history of the times comes to be written, people will marvel how with such small numerical strength, we were able to resist, to rule and to regenerate an organism, so vast, complex, undermined and threatened with utter ruin. As regards the mere negative sides of the question which are being described to you with such abundance of lying and invented particulars, believe about a thousandth of what you hear. Then compare it with what is happening in other countries, and you will see that the consequences of the war are felt much less here than elsewhere: that, whilst under any other régime they would soon have led to the complete decimation of those classes least capable of resistance to them, they are here supported and shared justly all around. Therefore, when they tell you that we are living in the midst of terror and assassinations, keep ever present before your minds the fact that never before have there been so few of the latter, as at present; as to the 'terror', it suffices to compare it with the few days of struggle in Germany and elsewhere to understand that here it has been a question of a very mild sort of struggle indeed, and of methods of work which are truly patriarchal. And knowing as you do how much my temperament rebels against violence, you may believe me when I tell you that the White terror is a thousand times more cruel, deliberate and treacherous, and that all the tales that you hear about the Red terror are just so many inventions. They have had the effrontery, intentional of course, to pass off as terrorism what was merely legitimate self defense. The Lockhart trial suffices to show up the attempts that were made to damage not only us; but whole populations. I acted as translator in this trial, so I know what I am talking about—the devilish plans to blow up bridges, to reduce tens of thousands of people to hunger. It was not only a question of mere political sabotage, but also of attempts on the lives of people, as witness, for example, the plot hatched against the people's commissaires. In the light of these facts look at the mildness of the sentence passed. Those most directly concerned in the plot escaped and the foreigner who had been proved guilty of espionage was allowed to remain here. The carrying out of the sentence was put off, with a view to an eventual exchange of prisoners. And this is the "Red terror"!

With regard to the defects in the State machinery, due to the lack of capable and conscientious co-workers, a severe and remorseless criticism is kept up in the Party's newspapers, constituting an aspiration towards self-betterment only possible to a re-

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