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JOHN REED Editor
EADMONN MACALPINE Associate Editor
MAXIMILIAN COHEN Business Manager
Editorial Board

N. I. HOURWICH M. ZUCKER
B. D. WOLFE J. WILENKIN

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Phrases and Facts

ON Friday, May 30th, after expelling some forty thousand members from the Socialist Party because they believed in Bolshevism, the National Executive Committee wound up the proceedings with a "statement on Party policies" issued to the world, which is a mixture of lies and hypocrisy in about equal proportions. This statement condemns the Peace Treaty of Paris, declares its support of Soviet Russia and Communist Hungary, protests against intervention, "repudiates" the Berne Conference, and goes on record as being in favor of industrial unionism instead of craft unionism. From this it would appear that the National Executive Committee had adopted Left Wing principles—until one analyzes the document.

The statement begins with the declaration that "the Socialist Party at all times consistently and uncompromisingly opposed war." But we know that many of our Party "leaders," including the Socialist Congressman, were at times in favor of the war—"to save Russia," for example.

"It supports wholeheartedly the Soviet Republic of Russia and the communist government of Hungary, and vigorously protests against intervention, etc." But it opposes just as "wholeheartedly" any tendency toward Bolshevism or Communism in the United States, and expels all Bolsheviks or Communists, stigmatizing them as "anarchists."

"In Germany, Austria and countries similarly situated, its sympathies are with the more advanced Socialist groups" (in America it expels such groups from the Party).—"in their efforts to force their governments into a more radical and immediate realization of the Socialist program." This is either a verbal trick to deceive the Party rank and file, or it betrays the real incapacity of the National Executive Committee to understand the situation in Germany, and the Social Revolution in general. The Spartacists and Communists are not making efforts "to force their governments" into anything; they are attempting to get control of the governments.

"It realizes the necessity of re-organizing the Socialist International along more harmonious and radical lines. The Socialist Party of the United States is not committed to the Berne Conference, which has shown itself retrograde on many vital points, and totally devoid of creative force." But also "it is not affiliated with the Communist Congress of Moscow." Certainly not! The rank and file won't stand for the Berne Conference, to which, nevertheless, the N. E. C. made a determined attempt to "commit" us. But again, the Moscow Congress is "dangerous"—so we'd better wait for a "harmonious" International.

"In the field of domestic policies," the Socialist Party is utterly opposed to the reactionary A. F. of L. leadership. In vague terms, the N. E. C. hopes for "the industrialization of all national and international unions." Not a word for the unskilled and the unorganized. Complete silence about the I. W. W.

"Certain abuses have crept into some Locals of the Party, due to an over-valuation of the importance of practical politics"; but on the other hand, "the political activities of American Socialism must neither be abandoned or emasculated." Whatever that may mean. We presume that this is an unqualified endorsement of the Party Congressional Platform for 1918, which does not apply to "certain Locals," but to the whole Party. This is the kind of thing which has destroyed the Socialist movement in America; and so amount of statements from the N. E. C. "on the one hand, on the other hand" will blind the rank and file of the movement to the evils of political social-reformism any

longer.

The statement closes with a declaration concerning the necessity of renewed organization and propaganda, to profit by "the protest, discontent and smouldering revolt" engendered by the reactionary policies of the ruling class and its government. But this is a general statement. It leaves it to be inferred that all the discontented elements in the country must be brought into the Party; nowhere does it mention the working class as the only class with which the Socialist movement is concerned.

Six months ago the N. E. C. would not have dreamed of mouthing such revolutionary phraseology. It is now doing so only because the rank and file of the Party is determined upon winning the American Socialist movement to revolutionary Socialism. But no one can talk the language without meaning it, or at least understanding it. And by this time the Party membership knows enough to distinguish between phrases and facts.

Deporting the Aliens

THE National Executive Committee has hastened to obey Hillquit's call for a split in the Socialist Party by the arbitrary suspension of seven Language Federations, approximating some 30,000 members, or one-third the entire membership of the Party. This action is taken without any notice and no hearing has been held to decide on the facts in the case. The chief "crime" of which these federations were guilty, according to the bald story emanating from the National Office in Chicago, was "an organized systematic attempt to carry pending referendums in the interest of the Left Wing". In other words the N. E. C. punishes the Language Federations for agitating for their ideas, just as the capitalist courts punish Socialists for propagating their philosophy.

We are informed that this action was taken after nearly two days had been given to the matter, and that it followed the consideration of a "mass of documentary material accumulated in the National Office". We can imagine the howl about "democracy" which would go out from this same office if the District Attorney announced that after considering a mass of documentary material for nearly two days he had decided to indict the N. E. C.! Surely there are enough "famous" lawyers on the N. E. C. to know that this method—where the prosecutor, judge and jury are one and the same, and where the defendant is not even apprised of the fact that he is under charges, much less given a hearing—is not in accord even with the bourgeois conception of "justice". It is claimed that Stilson of the Lithuanian Federation, appeared and acted for the whole seven groups, but even the most gullible will find it hard to believe that on such an important question the seven Federations would agree to only one representative, and particularly a representative of one of the numerically smaller groups, to state their respective cases.

The whole matter stands revealed as a shameless piece of bureaucratic high-handedness and, in view of the way in which the vote for the new Executive Committee is swinging to the Left, an eleventh-hour attempt of the old committee to perpetuate itself in office. If the rank and file of the Socialist Party condones this action, then we can congratulate the seven Federations on being removed from the contamination of a Party which is disgracing the name of Socialism, and is attempting to drag the movement down to the level of the worst element in American machine politics.

In itself the action of the N. E. C. is enough forever, to condemn its perpetrators, and the weak chauvinism of the excuses it puts forward for that action merely adds to the offense. "It has been charged" says *The Call*, "that the Party has been helpless and defenseless in this campaign of misrepresentation owing to the inability of English-speaking members to read the various language publications and reply". Thus the Party has been helpless because the English-speaking members did not know it was being attacked and therefore could not reply. The foreign-speaking members, we suppose, are incapable of judging facts for themselves and are completely at the mercy of "corrupt foreign writers" because forsooth no English-speaking comrade stepped forward and set them right. Poor, ignorant foreigners, no wonder the National Security League despises you!

When the American Government began to deport alien agitators *The Call* put a little picture of the Statue of Liberty on the front page—much as Mr. Hearst puts little American flags in his paper—and began to sob about "democracy"; but now that the National Executive Committee decides to deport the foreigners from the Socialist Party, *The Call* reveals its true sentiment in its headline over the story. "N. E. C. Suspends Defiant Groups of Foreign Born," it shrieks, stressing the fact that these groups are aliens, and implying that foreign born groups will only be tolerated if they are not defiant. This is exactly the National Security League idea—foreigners can only remain here so long as they are submissive.

Interviews in the capitalist press given by mem-

bers of the Right Wing who apparently desire to have their names kept secret, covertly hint that there is to be an Americanization of the Socialist Party, and that the Bolshevik elements are to be eliminated.

The Tribune, tells how it learned at The People's House that "It is the demand of the Party leaders and the Right Wing as a whole, that the American Socialist movement be set free to develop in accordance with American conditions, with American reality and American psychology."

Just as when Walling, Bohn, Russell, Stokes, Spargo et al left the Party they used the prevailing psychology to incite the people against the movement, so today the Right Wing is attempting to use the rage worked up by the capitalist press against the foreigners to discredit the Left Wing. But they are misrepresenting the American section of the Party. All through the country the Socialist Party is swinging to the Left, irrespective of nationality. Just as the Socialist Party has been a composite of all the nationalities in the country, so the Left Wing is composed of all the nationalities in the Party. The Americans are not behind the others. We of the Left Wing are not concerned with the nationality of the membership, nor do we consider that nationality is one of the issues now being fought. Americans understand Socialism as well as any other nationality, and in the nature of things it is Americans who will dominate the Socialist movement in America; otherwise the future of the movement in this country would be very black indeed. But in the past many Americans who mistook Socialism to be a return to the ideals of Jeffersonian democracy wandered into the Socialist Party, and naturally these will remain with the Right Wing, and will ultimately swing it into a future Liberal, or if they become radical, Labor Party. For the loss of such as these we have no regrets. Their place is not in the Socialist movement and the sooner this is made clear the better for both them and the movement.

The American working class must be the backbone of the Socialist Party, and we of the Left are indifferent as to whether the members of that class are direct descendants of the Pilgrim fathers or are the latest immigrants from the outside world. Socialism is not a matter of nationality; it is these very "leaders" who encouraged the division of the Party into Federations for their own political ends, who are now endeavoring to discriminate against these very Federations. The Socialist Party in the future will be a party of the workers in America, and no divisions will be necessary, save perhaps an occasional language branch where the non-English-speaking members will be taught English and then turned over to function directly in the movement.

The Capitalist Press and the Party Crisis

ALL the capitalist papers are devoting a great deal of space to the fight in the Socialist Party. For instance, last Sunday the *New York Tribune* had a two-column story headed, drolly enough, "Socialist Party Seeks to Purge Itself of Reds".

One of the grievances of the Right Wingers against the Left Wing is that we are alleged to have "carried the Party fight outside the Party", and confided our wrongs to the general public.

During the past few weeks our editorial office and headquarters have been besieged by reporters from the great prostitute newspapers, beseeching us to "give them a story" on the Party situation. This we have repeatedly refused to do, because we consider it none of the public's business what goes on internally in the Party. However, when we refuse to comment on Party affairs, the reporters invariably say, "Well, I suppose we'll have to go up to the Rand School and get it from Gerber or Lee."

From the stories in the papers, this is evidently what the reporters have done. *The Tribune* story above referred to gives the Right Wing arguments in detail, including all the ridiculous and provocative accusations that the Left Wing is composed of "anarchists", that it is out "to use violence", and that it "expects the Revolution tomorrow." It contains, moreover, a good deal of intimate gossip which is evidently being whispered between "leaders" when they meet. For example, the statement that the "party leaders fear that the Italian Federation may have to be expelled, as it is beginning to show signs of 'Left-wingism'."

The extent to which *The Tribune* is in the confidence of the Right Wing may be judged from the following paragraph:

"The expelled foreign federations, according to such leaders as Morris Hillquit, Julius Gerber, Algernon Lee, George Goebel and Adolph Germer, have long been a sore spot on the Socialist movement in America. . . .

"What may be good in Russia may be very bad in the United States," they say. 'And we resent the attempt of people who are ignorant of America and her problems to dictate to us how we shall run our party.'"

And so the National Executive Committee has expelled several foreign federations from the Party,