

Mr. Fish Endorses the Socialist Party

By I. AMTER

BEFORE opening his investigation of Communism in the United States, Mr. Fish stated quite frankly that the Fish Committee was not investigating "socialism, anarchism or pacifism." This statement was not made because the United States Congress had limited the scope of the investigation, but because the Congress knew quite well that socialism, anarchism and pacifism are perfectly safe movements and social ideas, as far as imperialism is concerned. During the investigation Fish reiterated, when the Socialist Party was drawn in, that it was not being inquired into, and that the position of the Socialist Party is a correct one. This is quite an endorsement of the Socialist Party, which the workers should understand and know the reasons for.

The Socialist Party of the United States, like its sister Parties in Europe, is a social-fascist Party, with concepts, line and practices conforming to the conditions in the United States. We shall not attempt within the scope of this article to analyze the whole position of the Socialist Party, but shall take some outstanding phases of its activity in the United States and give the reasons why therefore Mr. Fish has endorsed the Socialist Party.

The imperialist and colonial world is in crisis. With the sharpening of the crisis, the question of proletarian revolution is the order of the day, with revolution taking giant steps in China and with overthrow of governments, particularly in Latin America, as daily occurrences (which are the result of imperialist machination, but based upon the deep-going social unrest arising out of the economic crisis). Before the working class of the entire capitalist world stands the question: *For or against* capitalism. The economic crisis poses this question in sharp form.

While this struggle goes on, with the masses suffering misery which has no prospect of ending, but on the contrary, of deepening, the building of socialism in the Soviet Union proceeds at a stormy pace. This places the question before the masses even more sharply, and therefore, owing to the activities of the Communists, the Socialist Party more openly shows its character and meets with the endorsement of the Fish Committee.

Let us examine six questions, which are basic to the life of the

proletariat, and the position of the Socialist Party on these questions. Then we will understand how, in the last election campaign, the capitalist press—*New York Times*, *Herald-Tribune*, *Telegram* and *World*, leading capitalist organs of the metropolis—could and did endorse the candidacy of Norman Thomas, Heywood Broun and Jacob Panken, giving them wide publicity in the campaign and expressing the hope that they might be elected to the United States Congress.

Unemployment. Keeping even pace with Herbert Hoover, the Socialist Party has continually understated the number of unemployed in the United States, using the figures of Hoover, and even today not conceding more than 7,000,000 unemployed. Many months ago, William Stuart, director of the U. S. Census Bureau, declared that there were between seven and nine million unemployed. Since that time, unemployment has increased, so that the number is well over ten millions. Why this understatement by the Socialist Party? Because the Socialist Party, as a supporter of capitalism, did not dare to face the basic crisis in capitalism. It looked upon the crisis merely as a cyclical crisis, as in the past, which would be overcome, even though with some direful results for the working class. The Socialist Party of the United States, like its sister parties in other countries, sees the need of stabilizing capitalism, opening the factories in order that the workers may “through the ballot based upon reason” change the system and “vote in” socialism.

The Socialist Party is opposed to struggle against unemployment and at most has adopted in very small form the policy of petitioning for unemployment insurance and in the few state legislatures in which there are state representatives of the Party, of introducing bills (Pennsylvania, Wisconsin). The Socialist Party, as the third party of capitalism, not only does not engage in struggle, but decries and condemns all struggle. Norman Thomas witnessed the clubbing of the October 15 delegation at the New York City Hall and smiled when the police slugged our comrades. Norman Thomas and Morris Hillquit begged the police not to club the unemployed “unless they resort to violence.”

But even more, in the socialist towns of Reading and Milwaukee, where unemployment is rampant, the socialist administrations have clubbed the workers and rejected every demand for unemployment relief. On the other hand, the Socialist Party applauds the “progressive” administration of Detroit, where Mayor Murphy hands out doles to a small number of selected unemployed, selected with a view of dividing up the unemployed and gaining support of part of them.

Mr. Fish knows that the fundamental crisis of capitalism cannot

and will not be overcome, and therefore he can and does endorse a Party which is calm and advocates only the most peaceful methods of "struggle" to the hungry masses.

Wage cuts. Concomitant with the deepening of the crisis and the growing unemployment, has proceeded an orgy of wage cuts and worsening of conditions in the shops. Keeping pace with their colleagues in Germany and England — and utilizing the action of the capitalists in those countries as an excuse—the American capitalists have engaged in widespread wage cuts. This has resulted in a growing wave of strikes of unorganized and organized workers in all parts of the country—New Orleans (longshoremen and street car men), textile workers (in the south and east), miners, and agricultural workers (in California). In many of these strikes the Socialists, through the Muste wing, have taken over the leadership, both of organized and unorganized workers.

The policy of the Musteites and those related or associated with them is clear: to build up the American Federation of Labor and form a so-called "progressive" wing in it. Mouthing radical phrases of militancy and action, the Muste leadership not only suppresses all militancy but also openly betrays the workers. Thus in Marion, North Carolina, the organizer advised the workers to "bring bibles and not bullets on the picket line." The next day six of the workers were shot down in cold blood by the deputy sheriffs. The strike there as in Elizabethton (three times), Reading, Danville, Kensington, was sold out and the workers returned to work under worsened conditions. In the most recent strike in Philadelphia, the organizer ordered the workers back to work under threat of outlawing the strike and revoking the union charter.

In the "straight" socialist-led unions, such as the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and International Ladies Garment Workers Union, the socialists practice open class collaboration with the employers, engaging only in sham battles (Amalgamated in Philadelphia), and assisting the manufacturers in lowering the conditions of the workers. The Amalgamated, which arose out of the heat of struggle against the American Federation of Labor in 1912, is now moving rapidly back into the fold of the American Federation of Labor.

Why should Mr. Fish not endorse leadership of this character? Why should he investigate the Socialist Party, which openly collaborates with the capitalists, denounces the militant workers, and, as in New York, uses Tammany Hall gangsters and police to slug the militant workers? Does not the cooperation of Matthew Woll, the stalwart bulwark of American imperialism and frank enemy of the American workers, with Norman Thomas, testify to the trust-

worthiness of the Socialist Party as far as American imperialism is concerned? The rising militancy of the workers under Communist leadership makes this endorsement of the Socialist Party so much more important for capitalism.

Negroes. On no field is the capitalist class more in dread than that of Negro work. The outrages to which the Negro workers and peasants have been subjected for decades, the treachery they have endured and are enduring through the Negro misleaders, the policy of making themselves useful to capitalism (white capitalism, with a timid suggestion of the right and necessity of creating a Negro petty bourgeoisie), the acceptance of crumbs from the white bourgeoisie by the Negro liberals, have helped to draw a line of deep demarcation between the Negro masses and this leadership. The crisis has weighed down with especial weight upon the Negro workers and poor tenant farmers and share-croppers — unemployment, evictions, diseases due to undernourishment, etc.—resulting in rapid radicalization of the Negro masses and a willingness to fight. Increased manifestations of white chauvinism on the part of those strata of white workers that are under the influence of the bourgeoisie, resulting from the rising militancy of the Negro workers which, at the same time, brings about greater unity of the Negro workers with the more exploited white worker, the intensified propaganda of the capitalists and the government, and the increasing lynching of Negro workers as a means of terrorizing the Negroes, point to the Negro problem as a problem "filled with dynamite."

The Communist Party, at a mass trial, expelled a member of the Party for white chauvinism. This might have been considered merely a demonstration before the workers of the determination of the Party to uproot white chauvinism from its ranks. The capitalists considered it of far greater significance. They recognized that in combatting white chauvinism and in declaring its principles and policies openly to the Negro and white workers—of a bitter struggle for social, economic and political equality for the Negroes, against every form of discrimination, for self-determination and for the right of the Negroes to a state of their own in the Black Belt of the South—the Communist Party is taking over the leadership of the Negro masses, smashing the fake policy of the liberals and of Garveyism and its adventurism, romanticism, and open betrayal of the masses. The struggle against white chauvinism is the essential step in the unification of the Negro and white workers in the proletarian struggle. Therefore, not for nothing was this trial featured on the front pages of the leading capitalist newspapers.

The Socialist Party, on the other hand, merits the full endorsement of Mr. Fish for its fascist position and policies on the Negro

question. This is best exemplified by the socialist congressional platform of last year in which the major demand for the Negroes is "rigid enforcement of the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments with reference to the Negroes." This is expressive of complete faith in capitalist democracy—and so crassly in opposition to fact that one cannot but see why Mr. Fish endorses the Socialist Party.

But in practice, the matter becomes quite clear. Norman Thomas refused to speak to Negro workers during his congressional tour. The candidate for lieutenant governor of Texas declared it would be a serious mistake for the Socialist Party to take up the Negro question for 40 or 50 years. Heywood Broun, "leader" of the Socialist Party, declared that:

"I would not now sanction the efforts to enforce the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments to the constitution. We must face the fact that in the year 1930 they cannot be put universally into practice except through coercion and the use of armed force."

In other words, since the gaining of rights for the Negroes and the elimination of the discrimination under which they suffer require "coercion" and eventually will demand the use of "armed force," therefore the Socialist Party mouths platitudes that sound radical and trusts to the rigid enforcement of the constitutional amendments, which, in their own words, are "unenforceable."

The Negro problem is "dynamite." The socialists, like the capitalists, believe in using the lynching rope to suppress the Negro, as against the Communists who are mobilizing and organizing the Negro and white workers for joint struggle for Negro rights.

Imperialist war. The increasing menace of war is to be seen not only in the intensified preparations both ideological and material, but in the increasing "pacifist" propaganda on the part of the socialists and liberals. The American Socialist Party, conforming to the line of the Labor and Socialist International, supports the League of Nations. It endorses the London Naval Treaty and the Kellogg Peace Pact—all excellent war measures. Under the aegis of these three plans, imperialistic preparations for war have increased. The crisis has sharpened the situation, as tremendously in the tension between U. S. and British imperialism in Latin America, and French and Italian imperialism in the near east.

But above all, as far as American imperialism is concerned, it is apparent in the open display of force and violence in foreign affairs to a greater degree than ever before. Thus in Central America, although Nicaragua is supposed to be an "independent" state, it is ruled by American marines. This is "deplorable" in the eyes of the socialists, but "unavoidable." In China, the socialists side with the hangman Chiang Kai-shek. In India, they supported Gandhi,

while the British labor government was slaughtering the Indian workers and peasants. The American Socialist Party endorsed the position of the Labor and Socialist International, through its representative Hillquit, but individually Thomas, Oneal "criticized" and hoped the British socialists "would not disgrace the international." But their temper was moderated by the statement of one Seidel that "*we might do the same if we were in the same situation.*"

Internationally they support the actions of their sister parties: the German social-democrats, who are trying to put across the Young plan, the 10% wage cut and lowering of the unemployment insurance, in coalition with the Bruening government. They support the dictatorial power granted by Paragraph 48 of the Weimar constitution. The American Socialist Party applauds the imperialist harangues and proposals of a Blum or Renaudel of France. Fenner Brockway, a "left" socialist, "assailed" and "criticized" the British labor government for its policy on India, but when MacDonald made peace with Gandhi, Brockway joined with him in betraying the Indian masses. Now Brockway, MacDonald, Norman Thomas and Hillquit approve the handing of the exploitation of the masses over to the Indian capitalists, landowners and princes, with the purse strings and army controlled by British imperialism. The American Socialist Party also applauds the social fascist sell-out and co-operation of the Austrian social democrats with the fascists.

Why then should Mr. Fish not endorse the Socialist Party? Despite all "pacifist" declarations against war the Socialist Party supports American imperialism and the taking of "American culture to the more backward countries"; and thus it merits the full endorsement of the Fish Committee.

In face of the feverish preparations for war being made against the Soviet Union, the position of the Socialist Party is of great interest. The Labor and Socialist International in May, 1930, called upon the Russian workers and peasants to rise against the "terror," and pledged full support of the L.S.I. Hillquit, for the American Socialist Party, signed the appeal to the Russian workers to overthrow the Soviet Government and establish a capitalist "democracy." Following upon this appeal, Abramovich made a tour of the United States, spoke under the full protection of the police, and upon leaving the country took along a bag of \$14,000 with which to carry on the work of "liberating the Russian masses." This part in the plot of the mensheviks, whose trial concluded in Moscow a few weeks ago, has been fully exposed.

A discussion has taken place in the Socialist Party on the question of the Soviet Union. The position of the Party on this question is

embodied in the resolution adopted at the convention on January 31, 1931. The convention repudiated

"all counter-revolutionary movements inside or outside of Russia which aim at the violent overthrow of the Soviet Government and bases its hopes for progress in Russia upon the reform and democratization of the Soviet regime. . . . We condemn the denial of elementary civil rights, the policy of governmental terrorism and the ruthless suppression of all dissenting opinion which prevail in Russia. . . . The socialist movement opposes all undemocratic tendencies in society at large or within the movements of the working class."

Hamilton Fish, Matthew Woll, another lieutenant of the imperialist class, subscribe to this view. This is the pronouncement of Herbert Hoover and Charles E. Hughes. This is the point of view of American imperialism. Therefore Mr. Fish cannot but endorse the Socialist Party.

Within the Socialist Party is the group of "militants," whom the Lovestonites consider the group that will transform the Socialist Party into a "real" revolutionary working class Party. This group, headed by Stanley and supported by the Rev. Muste, demands a recognition of the achievements of the Five Year Plan and the necessity of learning from it for the building up of the system in the capitalist countries.

"The Socialist Party," the Stanley resolution declares, "therefore takes a friendly attitude towards Soviet Russia and will utilize, whenever and wherever possible, appropriate features of the Soviet system for furthering the spread of socialism in the United States."

But

"we look forward to . . . the cessation of the extermination of minority opinion which is inconsistent with the socialist ideal and blinds workers to the fundamental achievements of Soviet Russia."

This differs not one iota from the resolution of Hillquit, Lee, and Thomas. So also say Hoover and Hughes—so speaks American imperialism. And this is the group which the renegade Lovestonites acclaim as the group that is "revolutionizing" the Socialist Party!

What about the practices of the Socialist Party? In addition to the acts of treason of Abramovich, member of the executive committee of the Labor and Socialist International, the Socialist Party is carrying on a most venomous campaign against the Soviet Union, belittling the achievements of the Five Year Plan, declaring that not socialism but capitalism is being built in the Soviet Union. The Jewish *Daily Forward*, sister organ of the Berlin *Vorwärts*, is more slanderous and malignant than the foulest capitalist sheet. The Fish Committee can well trust to the socialists to carry on the most vicious campaign against the Soviet Union.

The confessions of the mensheviks on trial in Moscow showed the ramifications of the menshevik conspiracy against the Soviet Union. These men knowing that they would be condemned to death for their damnable part in the international imperialist-menshevik conspiracy against the Soviet Union, which embraced military intervention in the year 1930 in its plans, disclosed the threads in the plot, named the socialists involved, the trips they made to the Soviet Union, their connections in Berlin and elsewhere and other intimate details of the plot. They challenged Abramovich to go to Moscow and bear witness to the contrary. Far away in Berlin Abramovich raved. Far away in the imperialist countries the socialists disavowed their accomplices on trial in the Soviet Union. The American Socialist Party disclaims all connection with the plotters; the Dutch socialists declare that they only oppose the dictatorship; the Labor and Socialist International hotly repudiates all intentions of participating in military invasion against the Soviet Union. But none of them explain how, *before the trial, the Labor and Socialist International vigorously protested the innocence of the fourteen accused and demanded their release!*

By their own statements, the socialists betray their position: they repudiate the Proletarian Dictatorship and the class line of the working class against the capitalist class. They demand "democracy for the whole people"; they stand for a restoration of "democracy" (capitalist democracy) in the Soviet Union, and therefore are for the liquidation—that is the overthrow and destruction—of the Soviet Government.

The "militants" are the essential cover for the rotten capitalist character of the Socialist Party. In this period of the decline of capitalism, accentuated by the world economic crisis, and the concomitant radicalization of the working class, the capitalist class and the Socialist Party, true to their function, must find ways and means of misleading and betraying the working class in the interests of the capitalist class. As enemies of the Proletarian Dictatorship—more violent even than the capitalists—the socialists are the most rabid hounders and persecutors of the working class and the best friends and abettors of Hamilton Fish, fascist spokesman of American imperialism against the Soviet Union and the workers of the world.

In order to cover up the function of the Socialist Party as the third party of capitalism, by which it declares that "capitalism cannot rule against or without social democracy" (Vandervelde), and its coalition in the bourgeois governments (Germany, soon perhaps in England and France, and also in fact in Milwaukee—coalition with the LaFollettites), the "militants" have a definite role to perform.

Their role is to head off the rising radicalization of the working masses, by means of radical phrases to tie the workers tight to the crumbling capitalism system, to betray them more effectively in their struggles. To remain in the Socialist Party, now that its nature and work are clearly exposed in the Moscow trial, is a direct demonstration of the counter-revolutionary, social-fascist character also and particularly of the so-called "militants."

Social Fascism. The Socialists — and with them the Lovestoneites—complain when the Communist Party calls them social-fascists—fascists using working class language and methods. The evolution of the Mosley group out of the Labor Party of Great Britain is a classical example of how fascism develops out of the Socialist Party. The American Socialist Party, to be sure, "criticizes" Mosley, but it is proceeding along the same path. It engages in the same practices, it approves the same policies and methods that have given rise to the Mosley group in the Labor Party. Mr. Fish cannot but approve this.

The so-called "militants" in the Socialist Party are merely a replica of the Independent socialists of Great Britain—Fenner Brockway, Maxton, Cook—the "radicals"—most of whom today are with Mosley.

Social fascism arises out of the impotence of capitalism to solve its contradictions, to extricate itself from the crisis. It is the effort of the capitalist class to maintain itself by changing its method of rule from covert to open dictatorship (against which the Socialist Party hypocritically rails so loudly) and to combat the challenging radicalization of the masses. The Socialist Party, with its vanishing traditions among the working class, at times using working class language, with its "militants" demanding "more appeals to the workers," with its Musteites and Lovestoneites helping to build up the fascist leadership of the American Federation of Labor and to betray the workers and break their strikes, with the program of imperialism as its own program (with "socialist criticism"), merits full well the endorsement of Mr. Fish.

"No investigation of socialism" is right. Mr. Fish knows the friends and foes of American imperialism. American imperialism knows that Communism is its foe and the Socialist Party is its friend and tool. Mr. Fish therefore, does right in giving full endorsement to the Socialist Party as the strikebreaking, social-fascist enemy of the working class and the Soviet Union. A medal of imperialist honor for the Socialist Party.