

Not Hillquit Alone--But the Socialist Party

By SAM DARCY

(A Criticism of the "Left Socialist" position towards Hillquit's suit to recover Soviet Baku Oil for the czarist owners.)

THE recent events connected with Morris Hillquit's suit to recover for Czarist clients, oil shipped by the U.S.S.R. to foreign markets indicate that many people have been misled by the hypocritical phrase-mongering used by the socialist party, and especially the "left group." Many facts (known to those who were in 1917, 1918 and 1919 involved in the discussion) around the question of war, of the Russian Revolution, of trade unionism, etc., have been too long let to lie idle, buried in the files of libraries and comrades' homes. Since the time of the original break with the reactionaries of the Socialist party facts about the murder of militant workers by "socialist" officials, facts about imperialist intervention against the Soviet Union organized by the social traitors, facts about the sell-out of strikes, all facts have shown the contemptible anti-workingclass role which the so-called Socialist party now plays.

Are the workers or middle class people who support the Socialist party in full knowledge of these facts? It can hardly be! The Socialist party has succeeded in blinding and prejudicing many people against learning the truth about its own infamy by accusing the Communists of fanaticism, dogmatism, and wild-eyed extremism, while parading its self-declared virtues of open mindedness and fairness.

That miserable sheet, the New Leader, which holds itself up as a paragon of fairness, is in fact the most hypocritical of all. Donald Henderson, one of the most active members of the Socialist party, the organizer of one of the largest and most active Socialist party branches in New York City, a candidate on the socialist ticket for State Senate, and a member of the Socialist party City Central Committee, fed up on radical talk and reactionary activity and finally nauseated to the full by Hillquit's suit against Soviet Baku oil, wrote a letter to the New Leader discussing the question and suggesting what he thought would be a remedy to the situation. For the moment we would like to say that the remedy was a "left" socialist remedy and in fact no solution for the workers at all. However, the New Leader typical of liberal open-mindedness refused to print even this letter. This was the last straw for Henderson, who resigned from the Socialist party and joined the Communist Party. Comrade Henderson's letter was printed in the Daily Worker of August 4.

Our Party certainly welcomes Comrade Henderson and also any sincere worker who using his intelligence sees through the smoke screen of pretty pink speeches, the counter-revolutionary acts and leaves the mis-named Socialist party.

Comrade Henderson had been a member of the Socialist party for two years. And in his letter there are mirrored some misconceptions which are now being in other forms spread by the so-called left socialists. This is not surprising. We do not live in a vacuum—we are always influenced by our surroundings. Comrade Henderson, as other workers who joined our ranks from the Socialist party, is now going through a period of shaking off the misconceptions absorbed in those two years spent in Socialist party ranks. Recent events have opened the eyes of many Socialist party sympathizers who are ready to listen to the truth about that organization.

First let us consider the immediate issue which aroused such a storm in the "socialist" ranks, namely, the Morris Hillquit suit to seize Soviet Union oil for the former czarist owners. Socialist party branches adopted resolutions against Hillquit. This was followed by similar resolutions of the Young People's Socialist League. And finally the pious faced Norman Thomas wrote a letter doubting the wisdom of Morris' action. The most militant of all the positions taken by the opposition to Hillquit within the Socialist party is contained in Comrade Henderson's letter to the New Leader. In this letter Comrade Henderson sets forth, amongst others, the following demand for the Socialist party rank and file:

1. Demand the immediate dropping of this case by Morris Hillquit.
2. Demand the resignation of Morris Hillquit as Chairman of the National Executive Committee. Appeal to the National Committee to remove this man.

This undoubtedly conveys the idea that Hillquit violated some Socialist party principles in filing this suit. Or at least that this suit is a departure from Socialist party practice. This same argument was made in the resolution adopted by the Brownsville branch of the Socialist party where Hillquit's withdrawal was demanded. Comrade Henderson in his letter declares:

"...the more he (Hillquit) insists on his viewpoint as a lawyer the worse his position as a supposed leader of the workers becomes. minority which has taken advantage of special conditions to gain and hold power through force and terrorism. Its reign of blood is almost as abhorrent as war among nations.

Could anything be said more plainly to provoke a war for "civilization" against barbarism departure from Socialist party principles and practice for Hillquit to take up this case?

To all three we answer No. Hillquit, Thomas, the Socialist party and the Second International are all united in one position against the Soviet Union. This we will now prove, Hillquitian leadership and "Socialism" is the Socialist party, whether Hillquit is there or not.

Does Hillquit's action in the oil case constitute a change of position for him? It does not. On November 23, 1930, a banquet for socialist officials was given in the Pennsylvania Hotel to help the activity of the dirtiest counter-revolutionary that ever disgraced this earth—Abramovitch. At that affair stronger stuff than water must have flowed for the orators threw all their habitual caution to the winds. Hillquit for example declared:

Russia today is a government of a small Lawyer Hillquit continually exposes Chairman Hillquit...If Hillquitian leadership and Hillquitian Socialism cannot be repudiated by the Socialist party, I call upon all workers and former comrades to leave a party which supports such misleaders and betrayers."

Are there really such conflicts existing? Let us consider the oil case (Comrade Henderson properly calls it the "oil scandal"), was there any conflict between Lawyer Hillquit and Chairman Hillquit when he decided to take up the suit? And further, was there any conflict between the position of Hillquit and Thomas in their attitude on the question or between "Hillquitian Socialism" and the "Socialism" of the Socialist party? And still further, was it a and the Soviet government? And who do you think said this?

The methods of the Communist government hurt us because we are connected historically with the beginning of their movement and it is up to us to force the Communists to clean house.

Our present attitude (non-recognition of the U.S.S.R. by the U.S. Government) pushes the Communists back among themselves and denies them the civilizing influence we could exert through trade relations.

Sounds like Spargo. Or if one considers the second paragraph alone it is the voice of the Standard Oil Co. or Harriman National Bank. But it is in reality Morris Hillquit speaking at the very same banquet. Hillquit is undoubtedly astonished that anyone should worry about a simple oil suit when he already got away with urging "force" to change a government of "terrorism... reign of blood" and barbarism.

Did the snivelling preacher Norman Thomas separate himself from Hillquit's position? Quite the contrary. Because he couldn't attend personally he went out of his way to send a letter to this banquet fully endorsing everything that took place. How about the rest of the Socialist party? Algernon Lee presided. And the New Leader carried detailed stories with glowing accounts of the glorious doings. Every important member of the National Committee of the Socialist party was either present or sent supporting messages.

Abramovitch was not to be outdone by Hillquit. On one occasion he let the cat out of the bag when he said:

The Labor and Socialist (2nd) International will not cease from attacking this system (U. S.S.R.) until the chains have been broken and freed the victims of the cruel terror which has lasted in the Soviet Union for 12 years and is now tending towards a new climax.

There is the whole coterie—the Second International, the American Socialist party, with its National Committee, the alleged left wing of the Socialist party, all represented respectively by Abramovitch, by Hillquit-Lee-New Leader, and by Norman Thomas.

Both Hillquit and Abramovitch were even more outspoken on other occasions. In June 1929 Owen D. Young had just returned from inflicting the infamous Young Plan, which even the imperialists subsequently suspended and which was aimed at lining Germany up in the anti-Soviet front. Hillquit sent a wire to the then N. Y. Telegram in which he publicly congratulated Mr. Young on his good work. The following is the text:

Mr. Young has rendered signal service in international relations conducive to peace and good will among nations. I believe that persons who perform such public services should be honored by their fellow citizens.

Only a few months before the Russian Mensheviks were caught at their sabotage in the Soviet Union and at the very moment which the prisoners later declared intervention headed by Poincare and Hoover was being organized, Abramovitch again loosened his boasting tongue. In January, 1930, while soliciting funds for an illegal paper to smuggle into the Soviet Union (the Forward alone gave him \$10,000 for this) he declared:

The next year or so will bring great surprises to those people who have become persuaded that the Bolsheviks will remain in power forever.

(To Be Concluded)