

Part II. Continued from last issue.
SERRATI'S MOTION.

The motion of the Serrati section is that of by far the largest group in the Party. Perhaps this is partly due to the fact that Serrati is Editor of the "Avanti!" and, therefore can press his views home every day: it is also partly because it adopts a centre position, expressing the revolutionary sentiments with which the party is surging, without breaking with the old political tactics, on which, until recently, the hopes of the vast majority of Socialists in all countries were entirely concentrated.

Serrati's motion states:

That the Party Programme of 1892 is now superseded, and proclaims the Russian Revolution as "the most fortunate event in the history of the workers." It affirms that, since no dominant class has renounced its despotism until constrained by violence and the exploiting class has always defended its privileges by violence.

The Conference is convinced that the Proletariat ought to have recourse to the use of violence, for defence against the violence of the capitalist class, for the conquest of power, and to consolidate its revolutionary conquests.

It affirms the necessity for both technical and spiritual preparation for the revolution.

It decides to take part in election contests, in order to make propaganda for communism and for the overthrow of the capitalist system.

It recognises that the present organs of local and national Government cannot be transformed into instruments for liberating the workers; and that such organs must be replaced by workers' soldiers' and peasants' councils, workers' economic councils, and so on. These councils functioning at first under the capitalist domination, will be instruments of the violent war of liberation, and afterwards will become the organs of social and economic transformation and reconstruction in the Communist Social Order.

The violent conquest of power by the workers should be followed by the transitory dictatorship of all the workers.

During this dictatorship Communism should be realised after which, with the disappearance of classes, every sort of class domination will also disappear, and the free development of everyone will become a condition of the free development of all.

It is therefore decided that;

1. The organisation of the Italian Socialist Party shall be prepared according to these principles

2. That the Party shall adhere to the Third International.

3. That it shall work with the industrial organisations in the class war.

We have condensed the main points of this long resolution, and set them forth here, because this is the resolution which was actually adopted by an overwhelming majority and now becomes the official policy of the Italian Socialist Party.

THE ABSTENTIONISTS' RESOLUTION.

The motion of those who believe the time for participating in electoral contests is now past, and who call themselves simply Communists, stated:

1. That the programme of 1892 is out of date, and that the Party should form an integral part of the International Communist movement, accepting the Moscow programme, and engaging itself to observe the discipline of the International Communist Congress.

2. It declared incompatible the presence in the party of those who proclaim the possibility of proletarian emancipation within the ambit of the present "democratic" régime, and who repudiate the method of the armed fight against the bourgeoisie by the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

3. That the Party should assume the name "The Communist Party of Italy."

4. That the Party should abstain from the electoral struggle, intervening in the contest only to make known the reason of its attitude and engaging all the organisation and force of the Party in the work.

5. That the organs of the workers should be armed with the practical means of warfare necessary for the attainment of the Communist programme.

A manifesto was issued by the abstentionists together with the resolution, from which we have condensed the most outstanding points. This manifesto surveys the situation and outlines a revolutionary programme, the setting up of the Soviets, socialisation of banks, industries, the land and so on. It calls for the setting up of a Provisional Committee before the proletarian triumph, which will direct the struggle against Capitalism and arrange for the election of the Soviets.

The second point in the abstentionist's programme, that which dictated the ejection from the Party of the Reformists who say that the workers can be emancipated within the bourgeois Parliamentary system, and who repudiate the Revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, received support from many of the Maximalists, who, though still wishing to run Parliamentary candidates, desire the Revolution and the Soviets. Abigail Zanette and another woman comrade, with Altobelli the only women delegates who addressed the Congress, announced that though they would vote for the Serrati motion, they wished that it might have excluded the Reformists from the Party. Indeed the logic of the debate was with the Abstentionists and there were signs that large numbers of delegates were aware of that, though the Serrati motion secured upwards of 48,000 votes and the Lazzari motion upwards of 16,000, whilst the Abstentionists' motion had only 3,627. Many voices cried out: "Bordiga! next year you will have the 48,000." Bordiga smiled carelessly, for he believes that the Revolution will have arrived in Italy before next year's Socialist Congress can be held.

Some sober right wing Socialist also told us that in their view the Congress will have reached the Abstentionist position within the year. As a matter of fact, it is not only in the question of preparing directly for the revolution, instead of dallying further with Parliamentarism, that the Italian Abstentionists are thorough-going revolutionaries. It seemed to us that even in Italy, the approach of the Parliamentary election has a tendency to delay revolutionary action, though not as in Britain to cool revolutionary speech.

THE RISE OF THE ABSTENTIONIST MOVEMENT IN ITALY.

We were eager to know how the Abstentionist movement had arisen in the Italian Socialist Party; whether it had had an originating leader, and had started from one centre. We were informed that the movement had developed spontaneously in all directions, each section ignorant of the existence of the rest. Only at the Congress itself had the Abstentionists learnt their full strength, and how widely they were diffused. Comrade Bordiga kindly sup-

plied us with a table, which shows the strength of the movement in various parts of the country.

Branches of the Italian Socialist Party adhering to the Abstentionist position:—

Departments:		No. of Branches:
Piedmont	Northern	23
Lombardy	"	3
Liguria	"	3
Emilia	"	4
Venetia	"	1
Venice Gealia	"	1
Tuscany	Central	9
Marches	"	3
Umbria	"	1
Campania	Southern	5
Apulia	"	4
Catalonia	"	4
Abruzzi	"	1
Sardina	"	1
Sicily	"	3
		3417 votes.

This important movement, important because it is composed entirely of those who are prepared to proceed to revolution, is of very recent growth. In Turin, where it comprises one-third of the Socialist Party, it arose because it was felt to be the logical outcome of the Executive's decision to join the Third International and to recognise the necessity for the dictatorship of the proletariat, a policy approved by the Party as a whole. The Abstentionist group was formed in Turin immediately after the strike of July 20th and 21st, but the discussion from which it sprang had been going on for some time before. The Abstentionist movement in Naples, which has absorbed practically the whole of the Socialist Party there—the Party is not large in the South—began immediately after the Armistice, when the prospects of the next General Election came under review. At Naples is published a weekly organ of the Abstentionist movement, which is called "The Soviet" and has a circulation, as yet, of only 3,000 copies weekly.

Bordiga, who moved the Abstentionist resolution and was its principal spokesman at the Congress, is a young civil engineer of Naples and looks curiously like the press photographs of Bela Kun, though probably, if one saw the two men together, one would find them absolutely unlike. He is full of energy; every evening following the Congress he addressed a public meeting on "Bourgeois Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat." His thought is exceedingly clear-cut: he declares himself a doctrinaire. In speaking he makes sharp-pointed references to the big wigs of the movement; and it seems at times that his very presence excites passion in the assembly. His voice is rather harsh and exceedingly penetrating: it lacks, at least it lacked in the Congress, that emotional quality which sways those very numerous people who are moved rather by sympathy than by logic. But he makes an impression on the Congress greater than that made by any other delegate. When he is speaking all attention, especially that of the platform, is upon him, and when others were speaking, he, in the centre of a group of comrades in a box at the extreme right of the stage, seemed to cause all the speakers to refer to him and his sayings whilst he punctuated the speakers' remarks with caustic comment. Nevertheless he seems to be on quite friendly terms with the Maximalists whom he attacks.

In conversation they dismiss him and the Abstentionist movement by saying that Naples always produced extreme types of just his quality, and that the Neapolitan extremists later degenerate into reformists, and yet again one finds them consulting with him! The fact that he is the spokesman of the logical position—the position towards which the movement is inexorably tending—is the power behind this combative and enthusiastic personality. Moreover, though its detractors may seek to dismiss the Naples movement as a local eccentricity, the Abstentionist movement

is developing roots everywhere: it is a movement that makes a special appeal to the workers. Boero, who seconded the motion, was the only workman to address the Congress.

BORDIGA PREDICTS A SPLIT.

Bordiga told us that the large vote given to the Maximalists is accounted for by the fact that many Socialists desire to give Parliament a last chance before abandoning it. He does not think it so certain as others do that the Socialist Party will have the expected great success at the polls.

He believes a split in the Party to be inevitable: when it comes, he says, the greater part of the Serrati faction will join the Abstentionists, and the smaller part will fall back with the Reformists. In the Abstentionist movement, he told us, there are few "intellectuals": the majority of its members are of the working-class. In Turin and some other places the Abstentionists are working closely with the Workshop Committees. Many Turin Abstentionists believe that the industrial councils of workers, which are now being built up to perform economic and technical functions, will eventually form the Soviets: Bordiga does not think so and he believes this conception to be dangerous. He believes that the representation of the workers as a class, in the Marxist meaning of the phrase, should be independent of any accident of trade, especially in the period of expropriating the capitalists. The Soviets at this stage should, in his view, be above mere industrial divisions, as purely economic functions will be taken over by economic councils. He agrees that the economic function is more important than the political: nevertheless, he says, Soviets, unless dominated by Communists, will not secure Communism. He points out that there is Communism in Russia because the Soviets are Communist, and there is not Communism in Germany although there are Soviets. He says this is because those Soviets are not Communist. [They would now be Communist however had the Spartacist Revolution succeeded, we believe.] He believes that the Communist Party has as big a function to fulfil after the initial Revolution as before. A Communist majority in the Soviets, he says, makes possible the continuation of the revolution, and unless the Russian Soviets had been Communist, they would not have made the Soviets an organ of proletarian dictatorship.

He says that during the preliminary stages of the Revolution the Soviets should consist of members of the Communist Party only, and that before the Revolution the Party should prepare a list of persons who are to assume the preliminary Executive functions.

We observed that the Russian Revolution did not proceed in this way; that all workers were eligible for election to the Soviets; that the Communists were originally in a minority in the Soviets, but that they demanded all power for the Soviets, trusting to the inevitable drift to the left when the workers had secured control, to bring the majority round to their way of thinking. Bordiga replied that observation of the Russian Revolution should teach us to take a shorter cut to the same objective.

In asserting that in the early stages of revolution the Soviets should be confined to Communist workers, Bordiga was expressing his personal view to us for this is not indicated in the manifesto and resolution of the Abstentionist faction, though the preparation of a Communist professional Executive finds a place in it.

After the Congress the Abstentionists met and decided to remain in the Socialist Party, and to propagate their abstentionist views only within the Party and not amongst the workers

Those who, both prior to the war and on its outbreak, denounced the aggressiveness of our real governing class, have now been rewarded for their fidelity to truth by the recent publication of Lord Fisher's "Memories." This gentleman has proved that the British press lied throughout the war—as some of us knew it would have to do to retain its circulation and power over "public" opinion—(a) as to British unpreparedness; (b) as to the "peaceful" intentions of the inner circle of the British Government. Lord Fisher now boastfully writes that he had prepared a scheme in 1905, (after the Secret Treaty with France had been signed by Lord Lansdowne, which "changed our Francophobia to Germanophobia thence-forwards") to bottle up the German Fleet at Kiel, wipe it out, and land an army on the Pomeranian coast; and, he it noted, without a declaration of war, as in the case of the onslaught, carefully chosen again be it remembered, against Soviet Russia. So much for the honest intentions of our Governors in regard to "the war menace which came down like a meteor from the clouds" (*vide* the daily press and a certain critical weekly in August, 1914.) It was this same gentleman—who, besides his pay of £30 weekly in 1914, received a big pension out of public funds and a peerage—uttered words which frighten the namby-pacifists amongst us, that in war "you must be ruthless, relentless, remorseless." He knew the game of politics and Imperialism!

Today we are heading straight for a continuous war with Russia. I know personally of an officer who was taking out his regiment to Batoum at the time of the Railway Strike, to guard the Persian oil pipe line of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, in which the British Government is financially interested to the tune of £2,200,000. (See "Hansard," June 18, 1914, when Lord Grey got a Liberal House of Commons to vote the funds for this business.) What is more, the railway line at Murmansk, built by British money has not been abandoned. Oh dear, no!

In addition to that, the secret German-Japanese Treaty, which has been withheld from publication in the British Press, (though it has already appeared in the Congressional Record Reports at Washington) explains in its clauses why Von der Goltz, the Prussian Commander, stirs up strife in the new 'liberated' countries

of Eastern Europe, (*vide* our Press), and is unmolested, in spite of their talk to the contrary, by our governing class. For General von der Goltz, like Koltchak, who recently sent his emissaries to Berlin, (see "Frankfurter Zeitung" during August), intends to carry out the workings of the German-Russian side of the Treaty aforesaid, to bring about a monarchical reaction (called a "new" Russia); and whose Government, in return for help provided for this work, would have the assistance of Japan in mitigating the hardships of the Peace Treaty and would be able to exploit the "new" Russia which they, with British guns and finance, would bring into being; whilst Japan was to have a free hand in exploiting Siberia and China. I will say nothing here about the part to be played against the United States in "opening-up" China, which has caused grave disquiet in the United States. That must be left for an article at some other time.

My point, however, in writing now is this: At a time when reaction stalks the earth, when Militarism dangles its bloody, unsheathed sword throughout Europe, the United States, Japan, and in the British Colonies, there are still reformers and pacifists who think our Cause is strong, and that the "new heaven on earth is coming very soon."

At this dark hour, it is the bounden duty of everyone who sees the light of truth burning brightly in his or her breast to help to consolidate the REAL forces of peace that still remain amongst us. And yet, forsooth, it is proposed to split up the No-Conscription Fellowship by bringing into being two satyrs, which will, on the one hand, allow the Government to sow its seeds of discord among them, and, on the other, allow Pan, their god, to laugh at the futilities of our forward, united effort towards real Peace. He knows, like his masters, that the birth of two societies from one that has gone through the fire of experience, as it has always been in history, (and the use made of the Mensheviks by the reactionaries of England, France, and Russia at the beginning of the 1918 economic revolution, to weaken the Soviets, bears this out,) will enable the forces of reaction to ride rough-shod over the one force which alone withstood them against all the powers of hell from 1914 to 1919.

"Experimentia docet!"

ARTHUR FINCH.

outside—thus it should not be said that they were injuring the electoral prospects of the majority.

The voting upon the three propositions Unitarian, Maximalist, and Communist, occupied several hours. From the platform is called the name of each delegate, the branch represented, and the number of votes: the delegate replies by naming the mover of the motion for which he wishes to vote. Italian comrades told us that this lengthy procedure is the only accurate method available: we explained the British card system to a number of incredulous hearers.

After the vote on the motions of Lazzari Serrati and Bordiga had shown the relative strength of the different factions, it was proposed that the seats on the executive should be distributed proportionally amongst them. But Lazzari objected to the proposal, saying it was best that the majority faction should have a homogeneous committee. He withdrew his name from amongst the nominees for the Executive, and thus automatically resigned the secretaryship of the Party which he has held for many years. There is an element of nobility in his resignation, and his loss as an official, in many ways will be greatly felt, for he has been a sturdy fighter: the Italian Socialist

Party is far in advance of the French and British Parties, and that is in a large part due to his work.

Lazzari's proposal to allow the Maximalist faction to have all the seats on the Executive was agreed to and that faction now controls the Party.

Serrati withdrew the proposal that Socialist Members of Parliament should place in the hands of the Party Executive a letter resigning from Parliament, which the Executive might use as and when it thought fit.

We were impressed by the way in which the Italian Socialist Party thus made a clean sweep of its old executive in order that the new policy to which it had pledged itself might be whole heartedly administered, and the fine spirit shown by the men who stepped aside now that the majority had moved beyond their policy.

Meanwhile no news has reached us that the Parliamentary Committee of the British Trade Union Congress and the Executive of the British Labour Party have yet bowed to the rank and file, which has ordered them to summon a conference to decide what action shall be taken to stop the war on our Russian comrades.

E. SYLVIA PANKHURST.