

Angelica Bababanoff.

From Edmund Wilson

In The Nahm

Nov
1943

3927

Italian socialist in period before world war
one - confidant of Mussolini in his early
"pseudo-Socialist" phase: member of the
Zimmerwald peace movement - ~~which~~ she helped
to keep alive in Europe in the first European
belligerence (1914-19) - joined the Bolsheviks
in 1917 - became first Secretary of the Comintern

Disillusioned by the tactics of the Comintern &
the Cheka was eventually "liquidated" -
by exile (gentler ways than!)

Went to Sweden - wrote her autobiography

"My Life as a Rebel" - Had worked so hard &
suffered so deeply through the war & the
disillusionments with her colleagues that she

"felt like an old woman at 43"

Knew & used many languages - Then became
a poet - poems written in all the languages
she knew Russian / Italian / German / English /
French / etc.

Angelica Balabanoff -

3927

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She said that the poems flowed from her
"I seemed to be overwhelmed, carried away by a
flood of rhythm". It saved her from
collapse & brought her relief & consolation

She continued to lecture & quoted her
poems to close: or gave recitals of
them. They were published in 1943.

"Edmund Wilson in "Essays in Criticism"
says of them

"If anybody has been wondering, in this era of spy
infested States, of hideous mechanical warfare,
and of stream lined political pressure
groups - if anybody has been wondering what
has become of humanitarianism, of
socialist internationalism and of militant
intellectual courage - well here they all
are in this book.

Defeated and driven underground, in the case
of Angelica Balabanoff by fascism, by
Communist chicanery, by nationalist wars,
they have burst out by another channel."