

What The Communist International Has Been and What It Must Become.

THESES PRESENTED TO THE SECOND WORLD CONGRESS, OF THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL.

By G. ZINOVIEV.

We are on the summit of a mountains pass. The Comm. International will now have to work at quite another tempo than it has been doing so far. During the fifteen months of its existence the Comm. International has grown colossally. On the eve of the First Congress of the Comm. International we had the following picture: on one side the Second International, much shaken and compromised, but still uniting, although only formally, the largest old Parties; on the other side, in most countries, the first groups of daring men just raising the banner of Communism. It is not now. Today we have on the one side the Third International, into whose ranks almost all the old Parties are hurrying, and with important organizational support in every country, and on the other side, in place of the Second International, simply a heap of ruins.

The Communist International has been up to now chiefly an organ of propaganda and agitation. Now it is becoming a fighting organization, which will have to guide directly the movement in different countries. During the first year of its existence the Comm. International was only the standard-bearer for the international proletariat just arising for the decisive battle. The Comm. International is now becoming the practical organizer of this grandiose world struggle, the greatest in history.

This lays quite new duties on the Comm. International. So long as it was a question only of some Party expressing its sympathy with us, the Comm. International had nothing to lose by that. But when the question touches upon the desire of Parties only yesterday constituting the Second International, to join as organizations of the Third International, we must be doubly careful.

The most important question is, what attitude is the Comm. International to adopt in regard to the Independent Party of Germany, the French Socialist Party, the Socialist Party of America, the Independent Labor Party of England, the Socialist Party of Switzerland and several other groups—in a word to the whole "centre"—which are now at the crossroads between the Second and Third Internationals. The rank and file members of these Parties, the workers, are pushing them into our ranks, and the leaders of the "centre" are now declaring their more or less final decision to join the Third International.

We think it is necessary first of all to insist that all the above-named Parties should make it perfectly clear to themselves what the Third International is becoming, and what are the liabilities undertaken by each Party on joining it.

The Comm. International insists categorically on the necessity of breaking with reformism and reformists not only for Parties in which the partisans of our views form the majority, for instance, the Parties of Italy, Sweden, Yougo-Slavia and others. Let these circumstances be taken first of all into consideration by the representatives of the above-named old parties desirous of joining the ranks of the Communist International. This is our first wish.

We have now become acquainted with the reply of "Freiheit", the central organ of the German Independent Party, to the well-known program-letter of the Executive Committee of the Communist International addressed to this Party. First of all we are surprised that the answer to our document is not signed by any one. Under the articles in "Freiheit" there is no signature of the Central Committee of the Independent Party. That means that this is not the official answer of the Central Committee of the Party. At the same time the articles are not signed by any individual writer. We have before us simply a series of anonymous articles. But that is not the only point. The chief thing is that in the whole seven articles the authors have managed to dwell all the time on minor details and give no answer to the chief questions of principle proposed by the letter of the Executive Committee of the Comm. International. In these articles are minor "refutations" of facts of secondary importance, also long-winded lamentations of the effect that the Russian Communists, although well-informed on Russian matters, are much less informed as to German needs. There is a series of Jesuitic onslaughts in the Hilferding spirit and a heap of well-intentioned electric phrases after the manner of the watery "Socialism" of Crispin. But in the articles of the Independents you will not find a true, open-hearted, frank answer of revolutionists to the urgent questions asked so decisively. The fact is that the rank and file members of the German Independent Party, the workmen and workwomen, are pressing their leaders ever more and more, demanding an honest friendly declaration on their unconditional joining of the Communist International, whereas the right leaders of the Central Committee of the Party are delaying this unification and endeavoring one more to get off with empty phrases.

The situation in the leading circles of the French Socialist Party is no better. Marcel

Cachin and Frossard are making sweeping assertions in their declarations to the Executive Committee of the Communist International. At the same time the central organ of the French Socialist Party is still acting in the old spirit. In the numbers of "L'Humanite" just received (whose editor is known to be Marcel Cachin) we find, among other things, a leading article by the eminent Renaudel, in which this citizen asserts that he is willing to make Russia happy by going there if the Soviet Government will guarantee him the right of bringing with him any translators and collaborators that he wishes, and the right of moving about freely all over the country. The editor of "L'Humanite", knowing very well that Mr. Renaudel is only an agent of the League of Nations, inserts his article on the first page of the paper without a single word of objection. ("L'Humanite", June 10th, 1920). In another number of this paper (June 16th, 1920) we find nothing more nor less, than an article... by Mr. Ignatius Dassinsky. "Our Polish Comrade", as the editor of "L'Humanite" calls him, inserting the article with the polite reservation that it is the right hand and fellow-champion of Pilsudsky, the executioner of the Polish workers, the leader of the Polish White Guards fighting against Soviet Russia. "L'Humanite" desires to join the Third International, and at the same time counts among its "comrades" the counter-revolutionary bandit, a member of the Second International, Dashinsky! And in the same time number of the paper we read an article by Longuet, devoted to the "Task of the Cachin and Frossard Mission to the Soviet Republic" in each line of which the old-time "diplomacy" is evident and in which only one thing is worthy of attention, the information given by Longuet that the extreme left wing of the French Socialist Party (the Communists) resolutely declined the amiable proposal of the French Longuetists that they should take part in the delegation together with Cachin and Frossard.

Whoever is at all able to follow the daily press of the German Independents and the French Longuetists, may see quite clearly that Crispin and Longuet look upon joining the Third International as a simple formality. They are willing to make a few high-sounding "declarations of principles", but they imagine that they may join the Communist International reserving to themselves the right of Opportunist "action".

They are "in principle" for joining the Third International, but "only" out of tactical considerations they wish to wait a bit, they desire, at any rate, to preserve their "autonomy" "To recognize in principle means to refute in practice—such is the principle of all serious diplomats". These words, if we are not mistaken, were said by Bismarck. The little Bismarcks in the ranks of the Independents and the Longuetists are acting on the same principle.

"I am for joining the Third International, whose principles I recognize. But for tactical considerations I do not think that we should pronounce ourselves for an immediate joining. I share the point of view of the German Independents: first to Switzerland, afterwards to Moscow—that is to say, first an attempt to convene in Switzerland a conference of intermediary Parties and form a sort of two-and-a-half International this is the celebrated plan of the so-called reconstructors". ("La Revue Communiste", March 1920, p. 57).

The declaration was made by Raoul Verfeuil, one of the well-known representatives of the French Socialist Party, in answer to an inquiry organized by the Paris Communist journal "La Revue Communiste".

A present, it is said, several prominent leaders of the Longuetists are giving up the plan of forming an intermediary International. They see clearly that no "reconstruction" can be possible, that they will have either to join the Third International, or remain without the workers. The delegates of this party are now in Moscow. But that is no guarantee that the Party is cured of the disease of opportunism, or even it is insured against a relapse.

Or take another prominent representative of "centrist" tendencies, Robert Grimm, formerly Chairman of the Zimmerwald Commission. Six months after that he was willing to join the Third International.

When the Central Committee of the Swiss Party decided to join the Third International Grimm and his group again hesitated, and by means of a referendum helped to bring about a refusal on the part of the Swiss to join the Communist International. At present the Central Committee of the Swiss Party has again decided to join the Third International. And Robert Grimm seems inclined to work in favor of this policy. But see what Robert Grimm thinks of the importance and the role of the Communist International.

In the "Berliner Tagwacht", inspired by Robert Grimm, a series of articles entitled "International" has appeared. In the fourth of these articles we read:

"The Second International had its Interna-

tional Socialist Bureau. The role of this bureau was that of a post-box between the different sections. Any independent work or even any doctrinal directions for the separate Parties were not carried on by the International Bureau. This depended not so much on the organizational construction of the Bureau, and not so much on the personal qualities of its leaders, as on the difference in views on questions of principle which distinguished the different parties forming the Second International.

That is not badly said. It is true, the International Socialist Review, which would not only keep us informed, but which could also discuss the most important questions, criticize, make proposals. What we need is to exercise a constant influence on the parliamentary activity, in the sense of a simultaneously putting forward of our revolutionary demands. The thing we need is the organization of an International Socialist Information Service". ("Berliner Tagwacht", Jan. 7th, 1920).

The reader can see that the group of Robert Grimm, which criticized so ably the role of the International Bureau of the Second International is now practically assigning to the Executive Committee of the Comm. International a role not much different from that of a post-box. It never enters the heads of Robert Grimm and his group to think that the Communist International must not only publish a paper, must arrange that in the parliaments the same demands shall be put forward simultaneously, but it must know how to organize the struggle of the workers with force of arms against the bourgeoisie...

They have all "moved to the left" now all those who "criticised" us during these last years. Here, for instance, is the program-declaration of the well-known representative of Italian reformist Treves. To the question of "La Revue Communiste" what Treves would say about joining the Third International, he replied:

"You ask me whether I am for immediately joining the Third International. My answer is: Yes!"

Treves is willing to join the Third International unconditionally, but he says:

"All theoretical stubbornness, all desire to lay the same obligations of program and tactics on different parties, is senseless and fatally absurd, and can only delay us in reaching the aims of the International".

This typical quotation from Treves brings us to the present situation in the Italian party, in which the majority of workmen are undoubtedly on our side, but where the most eminent of reformists, one regrets to say, feel themselves "at home" as before.

The Communist International does not intend of course, to bring all the Parties to one level. The Comm. International has proved in deeds, not merely in words, that it takes into consideration the different conditions in which Parties exist and struggle. The Comm. International realizes very well that there is a sphere of purely local questions, where the decision must belong to the given party. But Treves of course does not mean this. He attempts to preserve for himself and his reformist wing such an "autonomy" as would in reality mean a complete freedom of action for the reformist. In the notice of the editor of "La Revue Communiste" to Treves' answer, it says: "Comrade Treves is one of the leading social-reformist of Italy. But what a difference between him and our Albert Thomas, Renaudel and others!" The respected editor of "La Revue Communiste" has too good an opinion of Treves' policy. Between Treves and Renaudel no doubt there is a difference, we do not deny that. But in reality this difference consists merely in the fact that Treves and his friends defend reformism more cleverly. Reformists, we repeat, feel themselves "at home" in the Italian Party. Of the active members of the Italian delegation who came to Russia, Comrade Pozzani declared in an interview with the not unknown Russian professor Tiander, published in the paper "Huvudstats-bladet" for the 6th of June, 1920: "In telegrams which we get from our correspondents in Stockholm, the Italian delegation with Seratti at its head shows itself to be a Bolshevik one. And this opinion has spread in Finland". Pozzani protest against the false conclusion. The members of the delegation were astonished and indignant on hearing such an opinion. They all belong to the Social Democratic Party, which does not mean yet that they are Bolsheviks". And the same Pozzani declared further in its interview: "The considerable profits derived by Italy from the great war consist, in the acquisition of Trieste and Trent. Besides, Italy has occupied Bologna, with its mountains. Concerning Dalmatia and the rest of Albania these questions are still left open". When we pointed out not long ago to some eminent Italian comrades a similar interview given by Filippo Turatti in Italy, the comrades answered us good-naturedly ((too good-naturedly) that Turatti had said this in a private conversation (this was not announced in the press), and that his words were falsely interpreted. Can one show more good-nature toward reformists?

The most experienced diplomat of Italian reformism, the deputy Modigliani, who plays a big part in the parliamentary fraction of the Italian Socialist Party, has lately visited Paris. In a conversation with Longuet, Modigliani persuaded the leader of the French Independents to enter the Third International in the following fashion. He said to him: "My friend Longuet, why should we not, after all, enter the Communist International? What does it oblige us to do? In reality to nothing more than sending