

this period has been reached, then it is the duty of the Italian movement to apply the methods that were so effectively used in Russia in July, 1917, the method of offensive mass action against the bourgeoisie. If, however, Serrati and his followers are right, if there is, at the present time, no promise for a successful revolution in Italy, then it becomes the immediate duty of the party to strengthen its organization, to educate the working class to an understanding of its revolutionary aims, and to turn the passionately excited proletariat of Italy into a class-conscious power that will be ready to carry out great and decisive revolutionary actions. Serrati was not opposed to the expulsion of the opportunists. But he vehemently opposed the Third International when it—or rather its Executive—presumed to dictate the time and the number to be expelled. And for certain very definite reasons. A group of Communists that we learned to know in the Left Wing movement here in the United States, of the well-meaning but headless and impetuous type, under the leadership of Bordiga, had organized a Communist Party before the Livorno Convention met. Just as the Left Wing organization, by its passionate aggressiveness, made it impossible to withdraw from the Socialist Party more than a fraction of those who were at heart in accord with its position—and the Third International to-day realizes only too well how gravely this Left Wing was mistaken in its tactics—so it was impossible for an Italian Communist Party to create a strong revolutionary labor movement so long as it stood under the control of these impetuous elements. For this reason Serrati was unwilling to break with Turati at the present time, as the latter, whose influence in the party was, after all, comparatively small, would act as a counterpoise to the superenthusiasts of the Bordiga group. In other words, he believed that it would be possible to create a strong revolutionary movement, against Turati, in the same party with Turati, much sooner than this could be done in a separate organization made up of and controlled by elements whose spasmodic irresponsibility is always repellant to the slower thinking masses. The opinion recently expressed by the leaders of the Third International concerning the American "split," namely that the methods used by the American Communists to divide the Socialist Party were wrong, is even more true in the case of Italy. With this difference, that there this grave mistake is being made with the sanction and under the instructions of the International Executive itself.

What followed in Italy after the Livorno conference is well known. The new Communist Party immediately embarked upon an offensive campaign. It believed that the Italian revolution was imminent, and adjusted its tactics to meet this situation. The first immediate result they achieved was the resuscitation of the Fascisti, a comparatively unimportant nationalist organization, founded and led by socialist renegades, who answered the offensive campaign of the Communist Party with such vicious brutality that Communists and Socialists were driven from the offensive into the defensive. What we see in Italy to-day is not a civil war, con-

ducted by a mighty proletariat to win or to hold itself in political power, but a fight that has been forced upon it by its enemies, that threatens to choke the whole labor movement in its own blood. Not the Red Terror, but the White Terror rules in Italy to-day, and how thoroughly these counter-revolutionary elements control the situation may be seen from a cable message from Florence that appeared in the New York Globe sent by its correspondent, Hiram K. Moderwell, who is well known for his reliability as well as for his sympathy with the radical labor movement.

Florence, Italy, May 4.—When the writer attempted to enter the office of the Florence Labor Union Federation to ask about the Fascisti anti-Bolshevist campaign the office was locked, and a nearby shoemaker explained that the labor men rarely visited it.

"They are afraid of the Fascisti," he added.

"Where is the Communist deputy, Caroti, who once organized the restaurant waiters' strike in New York?" I asked.

"He has had three different addresses in the last three weeks," was the reply. "He is now hiding from the Fascisti."

"Where can one attend a Communist election meeting?"

"There are no such meetings. The Communists cannot meet because of the Fascisti."

In this city there are none of the "Viva Lenin" or "Viva Revolution" signs, which a year ago covered all the walls of Florence. This is the result of the sensational Fascisti campaign. The Socialist and Communist labor unions do not dare hold propaganda meetings or take part in the elections, as their leaders and agitators are in constant danger of death. The Fascisti organization, which three months ago was confined to a small bitter-ender Nationalist organization in Romagna and Tuscany, is now a nation-wide organization, with branches in nearly every city and village in Italy. The leaders claim 2,000,000 members. "Ever ready" action squads are prepared to go at any moment to undertake any violence at command.

In this connection, the fact that possibly neither Socialists nor Communists will participate in the elections that are about to take place in Italy, speaks volumes.

Paul Levi, at that time chairman of the United Communist Party of Germany, attended the Livorno Conference, and upon his return published an article in the "Rote Fahne" (the Red Flag), the Berlin official organ, in which, in carefully and diplomatically chosen words, he took sides with Serrati. He insisted that there is, in the Italian Party, an overwhelming Communist majority, divided from each other by differences of only secondary importance, that these groups were being torn asunder by the impossibilist attitude of the Italian "100 per cent Communists," as it was being inspired and supported by the Executive of the Third International, and that the more moderate group, instead of being won for the revolutionary movement, was being driven into the ranks of the Opportunists.

But the Italian incident has assumed proportions that spread far beyond the confines of the Italian movement. Levi, and with him Clara Zetkin, whose revolutionary determination has always been above criticism, see in the occurrence at Livorno a dangerous entering wedge, that will inevitably split every one of the parties now allied with the Communist International. The Italian party was present at the birth of the Third International

and has ever since been one of its most important members. If what happened in Italy should be repeated in Germany, in France, or elsewhere—and the Berlin representative of the International indicated quite unreservedly that this will be the case, then the Communist movement will inevitably be disrupted, again and again and the forming of Communist Mass Parties which could become a power in the country, would be an obvious impossibility. There is only one alternative, that we return to the already thoroughly discredited theory that a small minority of class-conscious and determined Communists can overthrow the capitalist government and establish the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. To accept this theory as the highest wisdom of revolutionary socialism means, however, that the methods, and practice of violent uprisings, and secret organizations must make all agitation on a large scale not only impossible but unnecessary.

While all of these considerations were of paramount importance to Paul Levi, who was chairman of the Spartakus Bund and who, after the death of Liebknecht and Luxemburg, held the reigns of the German Communist movement in his capable hands, while they influenced Klara Zetkin, Adolf Hoffmann and the others who stood upon the same ground profoundly, there were other considerations that practically made their resignation from the Executive Committee of the U. C. P. of Germany a necessity. First among these was the recognition of the Communist Labor Party of Germany by the International as a "sympathetic party" (a party with a voice, but no vote). We have previously shown that the dominant characteristic of the C. L. P. of Germany is its pronounced syndicalist anti-parliamentarism, that it was numerically at the time when the Third International adopted its decision, of practically no importance, that the leaders and the organs of this party concentrated their activity mainly upon a series of vile personal attacks upon Levi who had become the nucleus against which their entire propaganda was directed. On the other hand it had been extremely sharp in its attacks upon the Third International, accusing it of compromising, of political cretinism, of opportunism. The recognition of this party could, in view of these facts, be regarded only as an intentional unfriendly act against the U. C. P. of Germany and particularly against the person of Levi, its chairman. Furthermore it seriously hindered the effective work that had been accomplished by the "open letter" in the labor organizations, by strengthening the influence of the syndicalist elements. This recognition of the C. L. P. permitted but one interpretation, it was virtually an order on the part of the Executive of the Third, to the U. C. P. to approach the C. L. P. and in order to perfect a union between the two parties, to sacrifice Paul Levi and the other "opportunist" leaders who shared his views. This interpretation is strengthened by the statements made by Zinoviev concerning Levi in his report to the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communists.

In short, the recognition of this numerically unimportant party was an open endorsement of the

"more aggressive" methods by the International Executive as against the systematic mass-propaganda that the "Open Letter" had inaugurated.

The resignation of the five from the Central Committee at its meeting of February 22 to 24, was therefore only logical. No Communist who could think clearly and independently, who was honest with himself and with the movement, could have acted otherwise in the given situation. Having recognized that the authoritative organs of the International were no longer in accord with their conception, that their methods were being regarded with suspicion and open opposition, they withdrew from the leadership of the organization. Under the circumstances neither a Levi, nor a Zetkin, nor a Hoffmann could hope to win their point. Every attempt in this direction would have been futile. They have been accused of desertion and cravenness. This accusation is as unfounded as it is incorrect. They knew that the party was on the point of launching new tactics, tactics that they could neither fight nor tolerate. They refused to be responsible for the occurrences which, they are convinced, would end tragically for the Communist movement and for the proletariat.

The happenings of the weeks that followed confirmed their worst fears. The new tactic was ordained to a trial by fire only too speedily. It failed. Miserably, hopelessly.

The class struggle in Germany had been becoming steadily more intense. The counter-revolution had striven to use the crisis through which Germany was passing for their own purposes. The London negotiations, with their open enmity between France and Germany, the plebiscite in Upper Silesia, preceded as it was by months of intensely nationalistic propaganda and chauvinistic hatred, and finally the increasing horror of unemployment had kept the masses in a fever of nationalistic prejudices. In this crisis the U. C. P. called to arms. It called upon the masses to answer the London negotiations with their own action. The final answer, they cried to the people, lies not in London, but with you. Say what you want, and you will get what you want. We have talked long enough! The time for action has come. The language in these proclamations became more and more unmistakable, more determined, more powerful. At the same time, the industrial crisis was assuming dangerous proportions. Negotiations in London were broken off. The bourgeoisie of Silesia and of Poland were coming to blows over the Silesian question, while the counter-revolutionary "volunteer" organization, the Orgesch, showed an increasing readiness to take up the fight against the working class.

Certainly, the U. C. P. had no reason to warn its supporters to grin and bear these intolerable conditions in silence. It is no pacifist organization like the Independent Social Democracy. It cannot play the traitor, as did the Social Democracy. It had undoubtedly become the duty of the U. C. P. to call the masses to revolt, to turn the desperation that was taking possession of greater and greater portions of the nation, into conscious revolutionary determination. The situation offered an unparalleled