

INTERNATIONAL NOTES

By Alexander Trachtenberg

French Party Adopts New Constitution

A committee has been at work since the Tours Congress revising the constitution of the party which was made necessary by the division of the Socialist forces. Until the present the party continued under the name Socialist, though the dissident Longuet-Renaudel faction claimed that name. The new constitution which was ratified by a special party convention on April 17, changed the name of the party to "Communist Party, French Section of the Communist International." The new name is to apply with the beginning of next year. The objects of the party are defined as favoring "international action of the workers, the political and economic organization of the workers into a class party for the conquest of power from the bourgeoisie, the socialization of the means of production and exchange, leading to the transformation of the present capitalist society into a communist society."

The principle of centralization has been brought into the various organs of the party and the national committee has been given more powers. The parliamentary fraction has been made more responsible to the party. The national committee is to supervise the activities of the deputies. A representative of the committee is to sit with the parliamentary group. Important matters are to be taken up in joint sessions between the deputies and the national committee. Each deputy must give fifty days for propaganda work for the federation which elected him and fifty days under the direction of the national committee. It was also proposed that the deputies be taxed 250 francs a year for the party, but that was turned down by the convention.

The parliamentary groups have been the nests of reformist Socialism and have on numerous occasions discredited the party by their activities in parliament. Consumed like the other Socialist parties with the desire to control larger numbers of seats after each election, the party closed its eyes to the records of its candidates. Beginning with Millerand's entry into the cabinet down through its experiences with Briand, Viviani, Guesde, Sembat, Thomas, Varrone and his stalwart forty social-patriotic deputies, Renaudel et tutti quanti, the party had to pay dearly for the failure to exercise a control over its elected officials which was characteristic of the period of the Second International and which contributed greatly to its undoing. The parliamentary fractions were kingdoms unto themselves, and instead of their functioning as agencies of the party for the advancement of the movement, the party was subordinated to them, and in the case of many deputies it merely existed as an apparatus to secure their elections and insure their continuance in office. Even in the United States where the Socialist Party has had only a taste of parliamentarism through its representatives in a few city and state legislatures and in Congress it came to grief largely because of the emphasis upon this feature of Socialist activity and because of the failure to exercise sufficient control over its elected officials. Gross violations of party platforms and principles, total disregard of party discipline and the refusal to consider the wishes of the membership was the rule rather than the exception with our elected officials.

The parties uniting under the banner of the Third International are adopting different tactics regarding parliamentary action and their elected public officials. Considering parliamentary action not as a thing in itself and not as the most important function of the Socialist movement but subordinating it rather to the general purpose of the movement and keeping good watch over its spokesmen from the tribunes of legislative halls, the parties of the Third International will not suffer the indignities which the parties of the Second International experienced and will win back to political action the workers who have come to look upon it with disfavor because of the past performances of some of our parliamentarists.

South-African Socialists Merge and Join Third

The divergent Socialist groups of South Africa have

heeded the call of the Third International for unity of all revolutionary Socialist elements in each country and have laid the foundation for a United Communist Party at a joint conference held last month at Johannesburg. The conference made a careful study of the 21 conditions of affiliation which were set forth by the Second Congress of the Communist International, and voted to accept them. Having in mind the clause providing for the adaptation of the Communist movement of each country to the specific politico-economic conditions of that country, the delegates interpreted Point 3 as not being at the present moment fully applicable in South Africa and explained Point 7 as meaning a repudiation of reformism within the Socialist movement. The conference agreed that the emphasis on reforms tended to neutralize the revolutionary character of the movement and to delude the workers from the paths of the class struggle. "The International," the militant organ of the South-African International Socialist League, expresses great hopes for a strong Communist movement in South Africa.

Before unity could actually be perfected, the South-African Socialists dispatched two of their members as delegates to the Third Congress of the Communist International which will begin June 3rd at Moscow. Their arrival at the Soviet capital has already been reported.

Communist Party Formed in Spain

Since the return of the Spanish Socialist delegation to Russia a split in the party became imminent. Prof. de los Rios who headed the delegation came back determined to oppose affiliation with the Third International on the basis of the 21 conditions. Comrade Rios wanted complete autonomy for the Spanish movement and was willing to allow a platonic alliance of the party with Moscow. He was also opposed to the emphasis which the Communist International put on the principle of proletarian dictatorship and stressed in his report "the contempt in which the notion of liberty and democracy" were "held by Russian leaders."

While the Socialist delegates travelled to Russia, Spanish "democracy" inaugurated a campaign of fiendish persecution of the labor unions which called forth a protest and an appeal for aid from the conservative Amsterdam Trade Union International. A former member of the Cortes and professor of jurisprudence at the University of Granada, Comrade de los Rios, has failed to properly evaluate the class struggle which has been raging in Barcelona, Madrid and other industrial centers. His report on the trip to Russia has been very properly made use of by reactionary forces in his and other European countries and by Samuel Gompers in this country (see May issue of American Federationist).

The Spanish Socialist Party has been joining and withdrawing from the Third International during the past two years. The return of the delegation to Russia brought the matter to a head. At the party convention held at the end of April, the delegates favoring immediate and "with no strings attached" affiliation with Moscow bolted and formed a Communist party. A national Executive Committee consisting of Quejido, one of the founders of the Socialist Party, Anguiano, former national secretary of the party, Virginia Gonzales, Arenas, Beci, Mancebo and Gil was chosen and plans were laid for the organization of the party on a national scale. Many of the sections now affiliated with the S. P. will bodily join the new party. A Madrid section has already been formed by the Executive Committee. Those who know the revolutionary history of the Spanish proletariat and have followed its activities have no doubts that the class-conscious workers will acclaim the leadership of the new party. The divorce with reformism in revolutionary Spain was believed of paramount importance and long due. Under the guidance of the Third International, the militant Socialist movement of Spain will now assume a definite character, leading the workers to greater achievements in the cause of their emancipation from wage slavery.

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In the Name of Law and Order

The Socialist Party Convention
From the Italian Front