

THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL, THE EMANCIPATOR OF THE WHOLE PEOPLE

Workers Party Is Praised for Its Initiative and Work Since the Fourth Congress

NOTE.—In this space each week "THE WORKER" is publishing, in instalment form, a report of the recent Enlarged Executive Committee Meeting of the Communist International. Each instalment takes up a separate question treated by the world gathering of Communists at Moscow, a gathering that received but scant attention in the daily press. This week's instalment takes up the question "Democratic Centralism Misunderstood." It is as follows:

"Democratic Centralism" Misunderstood

Several slogans of the Communist International have been misunderstood and consequently have produced confusion in the ranks of the Communist parties. Thus, the issue of the "United Front" was misconceived, and as a result it was misapplied. "Democratic Centralism" has not been understood in Scandinavia; particularly in Norway. Norway, therefore, played a considerable role at the Enlarged Executive. The lessons that are to be drawn from this case will be wholesome for the entire Communist movement.

The Norwegian Labor Party is an anomaly in the Communist International. It is made up of trade unions, individual membership being an

exception. Altho instructions had been given to the Norwegian comrades to transform the party into one of individual membership, they continually asked for time—which was granted. But in seeking for time, the comrades were impelled by two different motives. One faction, of syndicalist origin, is instinctively opposed to centralism, even when it is qualified as "democratic," with all the rights and privileges that democracy has within the field of centralism as understood in the Communist International. The other, an opportunist and not thoroly Communist faction, opposes centralism, because of an unwillingness to accept instructions that will give uniformity to the Communist movement.

The discussion of the Norwegian question, which was the discussion of "Democratic Centralism," revealed several more spots. Within the Norwegian Labor Party is a group of students who issue a magazine called the "Mot Dag." This group is only partially communistic, and yet has exerted considerable influence over the party. This has been an influence that not only demanded autonomy for the Norwegian Party, but also assumed a most dangerous aspect, in that some of its members manifest anti-semitism.

The discussion demanded evidence, and the evidence was produced. Articles, statements, and the arguments made at the Conference itself, particularly by a member of the "Mot Dag" group, demonstrated that an element was at work in the Norwegian party that would be harmful to the whole Scandinavian movement.

What are the limits of "centralism"? What are the rights of "democracy" within this centralism? It is clear that, since the expansion of imperialism on an international scale, it has become increasingly necessary for the proletariat to have an international organization and international direction, if it is to gain power. The workers of the separate countries cannot fight their battles alone against the internationally organized capitalists. It is extremely difficult to differentiate between national and international lines. Is the Ruhr question a matter concerning only the German party, or one concerning the French party alone? Or is it not rather an international question, involving not only these two parties, but the British, Belgian and Italian parties as well?

Who should coordinate the activities of these parties, if not the Communist International? To whom

should be left the question of tactics and strategy: the separate parties—or should not rather the Communist International, as the sole body that has an international survey, direct the action? Did the Italian question concern only the Italian comrades, and therefore did not concern the Communist International; or did not the very failure of the Communist Party of Italy to get together with the Socialist Party, lead to the violent reaction that dominated Italy and encouraged the White Guards of other countries to follow in the path of Mussolini?

Zinoviev Lauds Workers Party

And surely, as Zinoviev pointed out in his report, the interference and decision of the Communist International in the American question at the Fourth Congress, to the effect that the Communist Party of America, in obedience to the conditions prevailing in the country, must come out into the open, were based on the idea of "democratic centralism: on the right and duty of the Communist International to interfere in what appears to be purely national questions, when a settlement cannot be effected by comrades themselves. The American delegates to the Enlarged Executive could only confirm and applaud

the fact that the decision of the Communist International had reinforced and solidified the party, which today is working as a unit. Zinoviev praised the activity of the Workers Party of America, which showed that it had the insight and will to lead the workers.

What then are the rights of democracy? There are problems that are purely national—administrative and technical. The Communist International has not and does not intend to interfere in such matters—provided they can be settled within the country itself. But there are times when the Comintern is too mild, too unwilling to interfere. The Comintern has allowed the British Party to carry on without interference too long, so that today the British Party is unable to function. Well, might the British comrades have asserted that the British affair is an affair entirely British. But they have taken a different view, and seeing that they cannot settle the matter and that the advice and experience of the Communist International, of the representatives of all countries and not the Russian comrades alone, will serve best in unraveling the entanglements into which they have fallen, they have come to the Com-

unist International for settlement of their problems.

Not grasping the nature of "Democratic Centralism," the Norwegian and Swedish Parties demanded that the members of the Executive Committee of the Communist International be elected by the respective countries, and not by the Congress of the Communist International. This is a species of federalism that is intolerable and inconsistent with Communist principles, which demand that the Communist International be a REAL international and not one composed of federated bodies. It must have in its Executive not men who are responsible to their National Executives, but men responsible to the highest body in the world, the Congress of the Communist International. Hence the Executive must be composed of men whom the Congress considers fit for directing the affairs of the whole revolutionary movement of the world.

The Norwegian question and the question of "Democratic Centralism" were the occasion of the most heated discussion, in which the Norwegian comrade, participant in the "Mot Dag" group, assumed a challenging and defiant attitude, and accused the Comintern of being responsible for

any trouble that has arisen or might arise in the Norwegian Labor Party.

It was discovered, however, that he was riding on a wave of a majority of two votes (94 to 92) which his faction, secured at the last convention of the Norwegian Party. Altho his faction also included the syndicalistically inclined comrades, it was clear that the syndicalists and especially their leader are an integral part of the life and history of the Norwegian Labor Party, with characteristics that time and experience will eliminate. In the opposition, however, were a large part of the Party and the Young Communists, who pledged their support to the Communist International.

The united demonstration of the Enlarged Executive, who accused the Norwegian comrade, Comrade Falk, of applying disruptive tactics and of being made of the stuff of which fascists are made, because of his anti-semitism, revealed clearly what the stand of the parties of the world is on this most vital factor in international revolutionary action and strategy—"democratic centralism."

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Next Week:—"The Religious Question Cannot Be Ignored By Communists."