

Communists Cannot Ignore Religious Question, Says International

TE:—In this space each week "Worker" publishes a report of recent enlarged executive committee meeting of the Communist International. This week's article takes up the religious question. Next week we shall publish a review of the tremendous strides made by the Communist International and the Red International of Labor Unions during the last six months. This week's instalment follows:

The support that the Swedish comrades gave to the Norwegian dele-

gates was one of solidarity even though they disagreed with them in principle. The Norwegian Labor Party is a mass party, while the Swedish party, being based on individual membership, is not so large, although better organized and trained. There is a splendid youth organization in Sweden, which naturally took the side of the Communist International in the dispute with the Norwegian party. The vacillating attitude of the Norwegian party which, owing to the activity of certain comrades of the Central Executive Committee, even threatened to leave the Communist International infected the

Executive of the Swedish party, which gave its support. The Young Communists of Sweden, on the other hand, refused to countenance the action of the C. E. C. of the Swedish party, and thereby got into trouble with the Party Executive. The Youth organization was fully endorsed by the Enlarged Executive, if not formally, at least ideologically.

The unrolling of the assistance given the Norwegian party by the Swedish Executive brought to light another vital question. The leader of the Swedish party is an old revolutionist, Comrade Hoeglund. He assisted in the organization of the

Young Communist International. He participated in the Zimmerwald conference. He has been in the left wing for many years. But he not only has fallen from grace in the matter of the Norwegian party, but also has assumed a completely un-Marxistic attitude on the question of religion. Accepting the formula that in *relation to the state*, religion is a private matter, Hoeglund declared that religion was an entirely private matter, even as regards the party. Members of the Swedish Communist Party have engaged in religious practices of the modern sort and have considered that being that it was a private af-

cupation, the party had no right to interfere or protest. Hoeglund deviating from the Marxist concept of history as a materialistic one, was found rambling in the fields of metaphysics in several articles which he wrote.

Thus an incident developed into an important episode. The Communist International has taken the stand that every communist instinctively and logically must assume. Religion in relation to the state is a *private* matter, and communists must fight against state support of the church. State interference in the right to believe or not to believe or to be an

Atheist as every conscious communist is. In relation to the party, however, every member must understand that religion is *not* a private matter. The Communist Party exists not merely to liberate the workers from economic and political thralldom, but to free them ideologically. Hence the work of liberation from old, fossilized ideas from religious obscuratism must begin within the party ranks. Communists must understand that Marxism denotes a *clearly defined uniform concept of life, of which Atheism is a consistent element.*

Propaganda among the workers must be conducted most carefully

The peculiarities of the workers, who have been under the domination of the church so many centuries, must be taken into consideration. The party will not exclude any member who still holds religious ideas, it will not refuse to admit any worker who is religious. In the United Front, will co-operate with groups and organizations, even of Catholic and Christian workers, recognizing that education will dispel their religious fancies. But as a party it will fail to conduct educational work enlightening the workers on the nature and content of religion, and to free them from its domination.