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# THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL

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# The Third International

By BORIS SOUVARINE.

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## The Eclipse of the International.

On the 4th August, 1914, the Workers' International breathed its last, and that watchword of Socialism: "Death to militarism," which should have rung out clear and strong above the tumult of mobilisation and the clash of arms, was unheard by the peoples of the world. No doubt this cry of revolt from a workers' movement animated by a true solidarity of the exploited against their task masters would have been promptly stifled by the death-dealing implements of war, and by the weight of censorship and martial law, *but ere its defeat it would have awakened the consciences of thousands, who, in their turn, would have awakened thousands more.*

Thus the opposition of the workers to militarism would have swiftly followed on the declaration of war, instead of supervening years later, and the governing classes would have had to reckon from the start with an opposing force to whose ranks every additional day of warfare would have brought fresh recruits, until they assumed revolutionary strength. But, instead of this, the International remained silent.

The International, that is to say its executive and its representatives rather than its component sections, has never, unto this day, refuted the shameful conduct to which its members had to submit, and which subsequent events have fully shown up. The men who were pledged to denounce capitalism and all its crimes suddenly forgot their sacred trust. They gleaned from the columns of the capitalist press reasons, which, in their minds, would exonerate them from blame in becoming traitors to their cause, by exchanging their sense of human solidarity for "patriotism." They forsook their Socialist credo: "*Proletarians of the World Unite!*" Endeavouring to make others forsake it also, commanding their victims: "*Proletarians destroy one another!*"

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Prefexts must be found in order to send men to slaughter, but these were easily available. In Austria, Pan-Serbianism served as an excuse. In Russia they advertised the need of helping Serbia. In Germany they denounced the Cossack menace. In France they made much of the threatening Prussian militarist caste. In England they appealed for aid for stricken Belgium. In all countries they voiced loudly such catchwords as; "Right," "Liberty," and "Civilisation." Everywhere "National Defence" was a commanding reason for men to shoulder the burden of war, to obey the ruling classes, to suffer and to die for their country.

The "leaders" of European Socialism such as Jules Guesde, Hyndman, Plekhanov, Victor Adler, Scheide-  
man, Vandervelde, who had taught us the principles of the *class* struggle and of the solidarity of *class*, soon found bonds which would link together the exploiters and exploited of the same country, and of the interests common to both masters and slaves. Thus did the masses become identified with the "nation," thanks to these specious sophisms and to the degradation of the most outstanding Socialist truths.

Thus was the proletariat won over to crime in order to safeguard the interests of an oligarchy which Socialism has ever denounced as a robber and a usurper. And yet these "leaders" of the International were in no wise unaware that war, under whatever pretext it may be fought, is but the result of the imperial politics of all the ruling castes in Europe. They well knew that the happenings of the week previous to August 4th, 1914, were of only secondary importance, they were but the *immediate provocation* and not the *causes* of the war. Had these "leaders" not taught us themselves to discern the deep and tremendous reasons which make the capitalist management of the world nothing less than a war-generating machine? Is not modern warfare but the violent interpretation of rival interests and economic jealousies which modern capitalist society has split into opposing camps?

Up to the eve of war the words "general strike" and "direct action" were for them the supreme interpretation of the popular desire for peace. "Not an ounce of

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*our flesh, not a drop of our blood, not a man, not a cent will we yield you*" said they, not deeming the causes of conflict worthy of the life either of a French infantryman or of a German grenadier. And those who did not believe in the efficacy of a general strike, said to the masses: "*Shoulder your gun, but turn it against your exploiters.*"

Suddenly the Socialist creed completely changed its colour to such a degree as to be unrecognisable. Within twenty-four hours it was identifying itself with "national duty" and its words of command were directly opposed to those tenets with which we were all so familiar. They exacted allegiance to the war from all Socialists, even insisting on their becoming combatants. They forbade any "disturbance" whether at the front or in the rear, meaning thereby either agitation or revolt. Opposed to militarism as the workers were in times of peace yet had they to submit to it during the war.

Such was the attitude suggested by the behaviour of the "leaders" of the International, at the most crucial period in the life of the people when the revolution through which Europe was passing should have forced Socialists to stand loyally by those ruling principles which justify their existence. But this treachery was not the result of the weakness of a day, but was unavoidable owing to the previous policy of those forever disqualified "leaders" whose shameful conduct we have already hinted at and mean to discuss later. The confusion caused by the declaration of war on August 4th, 1914, might have excused a temporary slackening of their beliefs, for which we should not have blamed them unduly, had they subsequently repudiated their action and repaired some of the damage they had caused. But instead, they wished to justify themselves in their sudden change of camp, and out of their error even founded a new political creed, which amounted to nothing less than perfidious treachery to their old flag.

In collaborating with the bourgeoisie, in sharing the responsibilities of the capitalist policy of the war, in becoming members of the "Sacred Union," in accepting the aims of Imperialism, in resisting every hint of Proletarian Revolution other than in the "enemy countries,"

in all these ways have they done more than merely sever their connexion with Socialism—they *have passed over into the class camp of the enemy.*

Many Socialists are not well informed on these points, and that is our reason for writing thus. We propose to study the causes of the death of the Second International and to deduce therefrom any lessons which are to be gained. We wish to combat the infection with which its carcass is surrounded; namely, the miasma of misconceptions, of spurious sophisms which have survived it, and which nothing can disinfect or purge.

Finally we propose to define the organisation and working of the Third International, which rejects those men and those ideas that war has poisoned, which calls to its councils all revolutionary workers and all Socialists whose creed was undamaged by the crisis of August 4th, 1914; the Third International is born of the war, baptised by trials and sufferings, sanctified by revolutions, and its young strength will be to-morrow irresistible.

## **The Rise and Fall of the Second International.**

If the downfall of the Second International and its leaders was rendered inevitable by the policy it adopted after August 4th, 1914, its former policy had rendered that defeat inevitable.

Eaten out by an opportunism which was disseminated by a revolutionary Marxist interpretation, undermined by doubt in the presence of essential problems, content to delve in equivocal terms and in contradictory solutions which solved nothing, this organisation of International Labour crumbled at the first shock. We certainly recognise the merits of its work during the last twenty years, and in no way ignore either its considerable educational propaganda or the spiritual influence which it exercised on Europe and upon the world. None but the members of the bourgeois régime would deny its beneficial work for peace and for the liberation of Labour. But the salvation of the proletariat, to which cause Socialists have dedicated their lives, makes it necessary that we should sternly judge our faults. The future

commands us to sever the bonds which link us to the past, and the new International has torn us from that International which is a thing of the past.

If that great organisation of the past is dead, it has not been killed by the war, rather has it held within itself the festering germs of its own decomposition. The historico-political conditions wherein it was born and bred contaminated it with poisonous ferments. As Charles Rappoport has justly said of the Second International: "It possessed from the start a defeated soul."

The defeat of the Paris Commune, the implacable bourgeois repression and the discouragement which ensued, overshadowed it and became at last an obsession.

The First International was that of theorists . . . . . and of dissolutions. The Second was that of recruiters . . . . . and of unity. The desire for a large membership obsessed the Socialists during the eighties. To this task they especially applied themselves, endeavouring to increase the membership of the various parties, and were wholly preoccupied with the avoidance of a new proletarian disaster. The idea of the invincibility of numbers was their pole-star, and thus it was that they underestimated the importance of economic crises which might confer political supremacy on the revolutionary élite, nor did they value sufficiently the homogeneous doctrine enabling that élite to realise their programme and thus gain the support of the masses.

Keen in recruiting, eager to give their supporters a field of immediate satisfaction, the Second International gradually lost sight of the final aim of Socialism. They forgot the luminous doctrines of Marx and Engels which exhort their disciples *at all times when the proletariat grows restless to emphasise the necessity of a radical change in the present laws of property.*

Under the cloak of realism it repudiated "illegal" action as dangerous, and regarded a revolutionary seizing of power in catastrophic circumstances as a mere utopia. Under the pretext of educational and preparatory activity it sacrificed the revolutionary training of the masses. It made the vote and parliamentarism the essential weapons of the proletariat, at the same time teaching that the action of the masses as a means of help-

ing forward the movement, was a dangerous method to employ.

Nevertheless, if Socialism decided to carry on the political struggle, there was nothing to indicate that this struggle must of necessity be identified with parliamentarism. On the contrary our interpretation only looked upon electoral action as a means of agitation, and parliamentary action as an adjunct to direct action.

Electoral appeals and parliamentarism were only to be means of propaganda, only special aspects of political action.

Jules Guesde, at the period when he still drew his inspiration from Marxism, remarked that the struggle at the ballot box was only the preparation for the armed struggle (Congress of Nancy, 1907). This formula and many others remained merely platonically.

Reformism, which had been apparently overcome at the International Congress of Amsterdam, triumphed over those who had overthrown it, by inoculating them with it. Electoral successes intoxicated the parties to the extent of giving them a sort of feeling of security and of assurance of certain victory by means of the normal and progressive growth of votes, and of the number of elected Socialists. They forgot the lessons of history which Marx had underlined, the decisive rôle of "midwife helping the new order in its birth pangs," the ever-increasing oppression of the State, as day by day the transference of power from one class to another becomes more imminent, the inevitability of a gesture of conservative will power on the part of the privileged on the approach of real danger.

Lulled into false repose, they did not give to imperialism and to the threats of war the attention that a more rigorous logic should have demanded. Instead of looking upon imperialism as an attribute of capitalism, inseparable from the régime to which its fate is linked, our parliamentary chiefs looked upon it merely as an error of bourgeois politics, a mistake which the governing classes would renounce whenever we should prove to them that it was harmful to their interests. Reformism was the cause of the birth of a vague sub-conscious, but real notion, *that it was possible to reform bourgeois society and politics.*

Many were the Socialists who awaited from the hands of the bourgeoisie both disarmament and peace, as later, in a paroxysm of aberration, they awaited from President Wilson's influence those benefits which Socialism expects solely from the mission of the proletariat. Such a heresy proves that we must not play with reformism: Socialism must eliminate it or perish.

Inspired by this spirit which respected *the form* of the Marxian interpretation whilst emptying it of its revolutionary *content*, which extinguished the flame and only preserved the ashes, *Socialists held as legitimate colonial expansion*, that detestable aspect of imperialism, by affirming the need for the colonies to traverse the phase of capitalist production prior to the abolition of their subjection. The most cynical confirmation of this thesis was that of the Italian reformers who were banned from the party at the time of the expedition to Tripoli.

Finally, when faced by the prospect of a European war, the misinterpretation of the fundamental principles of the class war was disclosed, side by side with the theoretical affirmation of the responsibility of the régime, formulated as if to rid themselves of a painful task, the Second International proclaimed the necessity of "national defence" and the "defence of an invaded country."

To borrow thus the bourgeois phraseology which Socialist language would have expressed as "*defence of capitalist privileges*" and "*sacrifice of the proletariat to the interests of the class oppressing them, to a country they did not yet own,*" was this not renouncing revolutionary opposition, a renunciation by which the possessing oligarchy were soon to benefit?

It is true that the International further proposed a popular agitation as a means of ending the war, and hastening the fall of capitalism. *But this is precisely an absolute contradiction.*

To defend the bourgeois mother-country excludes all hypothesis of revolution: events have amply proved this.

The adhesion to "national defence" subordinates all proletarian schemes to the victory of one imperialism over all other competitive imperialisms, the collaboration of classes for the benefit of a privileged class, the participation in power, the credit votes, etc., etc., all diminish the



probability of a rising "before the enemy."

The fumes of nationalism have long obscured these truths; to-day they appear in so crude a light that the simple exposure of events constitutes the most damning evidence against opportunism and its champions.

## **The French and German Socialists, the grave diggers of the 2nd International.**

When the first days of August, 1914, saw the irreparable accomplished, that is to say when the Socialist previsions announcing the inevitable transformation of capitalist competition into imperialist war were realised, *the two fractions of the International, on whom should have fallen the task of resistance to the enterprises of the governing classes, renounced all resistance.*

The German fraction, which had denounced the policy of the Empire, and of its Austrian ally, which had held up to scorn Chancellors and Ministers, Pan-German squireens and junkers, which had vehemently condemned the ultimatum to Serbia as a provocation to war, accepted the accomplished fact, and submitted to the war, to its methods, to the régime. Its representatives in the Reichstag unanimously voted the war credits, with the exception of one member, Fritz Kunert, who deliberately walked out of the chamber. (This fact was not allowed to leak out till after the termination of the war).

The French faction, which had denounced the policy of the Republic and of its Russian ally, which had abused President Poincaré and his ministers, together with the nationalist diplomatists and financiers, which had vehemently condemned the alliance with Russia as likely to lead to war, accepted likewise the accomplished fact, and submitted to the war, to its methods, and to the régime. Its representatives in the chamber unanimously voted the war credits.

The vows of the past were forgotten, the International solidarity of the workers had disappeared. The solidarity of the exploiters and of the exploited was established.

In Germany and in France there were a few opposing

elements to the abdication of parties and of leaders, but at first their number was infinitely small. They succeeded in profiting by favourable occasions in expressing their fidelity to international Socialism, and in resuscitating the revolutionary spirit. They discovered means of revolting against "Socialist discipline," in the name of Socialist doctrine. Their lack of discipline towards the parties saved the honour of Socialism in Germany and in France, saved Socialism itself.\*

But for a long time their voices were stifled, and only the traitors to Socialism were able to speak in the name of Socialism in voices that could be heard. They spoke, they wrote, they acted, unfortunately for the proletariat to their eternal shame.

If they had renounced the Socialist interpretation because they were powerless in face of chauvinism let loose, at least they should have remained silent, and have waited for the propitious moment to utter a Socialist protest. They need not have put their programme into action, but, at least, they should not have renounced it.

They did renounce it. They not only submitted to the war, they accepted it, then they approved it, then they justified it, then they magnified it, and thus they prolonged it. After the vote of credits, the symbol of the renouncement of opposition, the French Socialists entered the bourgeois government, while in Germany an active support was given to the Imperial government. This was followed by a refusal to link up international relations. Later on the omnipotence of the army staff, the dictatorship of war profiteers, the censorship, the state of siege, the "war to the end" (that is to say till imperialist appetites were satisfied) were all, one after the other, accepted. Finally came adhesion to the counter-revolution.

In their apostacy they adopted all the bourgeois

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\*TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.—In England the British Socialist Party broke away in 1916 from the fraction dominated by Hyndman and his "patriotic" followers; these latter taking the name of the "Nationalist Socialist Party." The British Socialist Party has throughout the war, and the subsequent armistice and "Peace" kept up a strong and consistent agitation against militarism and in favour of internationalism. The I. L. P. is mainly pacifist, and its interpretation is not based on the class struggle.

D. B. M.

theses, which they had formerly denounced. They each invented their theory of the first aggressor, the Germans laying the blame on the Russian mobilisation, the French on the German attack, as the principal event justifying their new attitude. They pretended to forget that, according to the luminous formula of Montesquieu, *the real responsibility for a war rests not on him who declares it, but on him who renders it inevitable*, and that, for us Socialists, it is the actual régime under which we live which renders war inevitable.

One of the characteristics of their policy was the repudiation of international policy, common to all Socialist parties. *Each group of opportunists maintained that his country was in some special sort of situation necessitating a special policy.* Each one was a revolutionary—for a neighbouring country. The French opportunists applauded the revolt of Karl Liebknecht, and the German opportunists approved the protests of the French Internationalists. Both declarations were hideous hypocrisies.

Logical in their opportunism, Vandervelde, Jules Guesde, Albert Thomas, etc., adjured the Russian nation not to revolt, but submit docilely to Tsarism. *The war first, the republic later*, wrote Guesde. The Russian revolution was a crime against the cause of the Allies, and therefore according to our Socialist-patriots against Justice and Socialism. On the other hand the German revolution was beneficial from the Socialist-patriotic Russian point of view; the Russian revolutions were beneficial, those of Germany and of Austria were criminal.

Thus does opportunism lead Socialists to espouse the interests of their respective bourgeoisies, and revolutionary Socialists cannot fight the ones without the others. *As a matter of fact they should oppose the opportunists more firmly because they are more dangerous than are the declared enemies of Socialism, because of the Socialist mask behind which they hide.*

## **The Renaissance of the International on the Ruins of the International.**

It must be recorded that the Socialist parties of France, Germany and Belgium, which made common

cause with the bourgeoisie, were, before the war, *united parties*. In other words they had an all-pervading desire to preserve their unity at the cost of reciprocal concessions of tendencies, concessions which allowed profound disagreements, rendering all common action impossible to remain behind a facade of resolutions of unanimity. The evident results of these tactics was great electoral success . . . and at the decisive moment complete abdication.

On the other hand, in the various countries where the Socialist fractions kept their distinct organisations, answering to distinct conceptions, revolutionary internationalism was much strengthened.

In Russia, the Bolshevik and Menshevik Social-Revolutionaries fought against the war. Any betrayals only amounted to the secession of individuals; and in no way compromised the parties. The Social-Democrats of Poland and of Lithuania adopted the attitude of the Bolsheviks, the Bund that of the Mensheviks. The Polish Socialist Party of the Left, which had broken away from the Right, remained faithful, whilst the Right declared for the war.

In Great Britain, the British Socialist Party and the Independent Labour Party protested against the war. The betrayal of Hyndman and of a handful of his friends was of no real consequence.

In Italy, the Socialist Party, which had broken with the Reformists, remained Socialists and internationalists, whilst the reformist fraction claimed solidarity with Italian nationalism.

In Bulgaria, the so-called "narrow" Social-Democrats (because of their doctrinal intransigence), in Serbia, and Roumania, the Social Democratic Parties remained firmly opposed to the war.

Finally, in the United States the *Socialist Labour Party* and the *Socialist Party*, both refractory to chauvinism, remained parties interpreting the class struggle and revolution. The few "intellectuals" who approved of warlike intervention were forced to leave the Party.

In France and in Germany, where the united parties abdicated from one day to another their independence and their rôle of revolutionary opposition, the overpower-

ing weight of the organisations crushed down the minorities in whom were incarnated the Socialist conscience. Nevertheless, these minorities grew and increased in strength in proportion to their power to deliver themselves from a discipline whose letter killed the spirit.

In Germany, some weeks after the declaration of war, Karl Liebknecht began his fight against the Empire, the capitalist régime, and German imperialism, and also against the treacherous Social-democracy. Supporting him were Rosa Luxembourg, Franz Mehring, Otto Rühle, Paul Levey, Clara Zetkin, Karl Radek, and many others less known, who undertook the historic task of destroying in the German people the militarist spirit, patriotic submission, and docility to the suggestions of the renegades of Socialism; and of leading them on to the revolution. The annals of international Socialism, and of human progress will blazon among their greatest the names of these heroes

In France since November, 1914, Pierre Monatte denounced the war policy of Syndicalist leaders, and resigned from the Confederal committee. With him Merrheim, and later Bourderon and other Syndicalists who had remained faithful to the International, to its ideal of peace and solidarity between nations, to its principles of struggle against the possessing class, attempted the renewal of international relations, and the restoration of its original tactics.

On the occasion of the convocation of a conference of Socialists from neutral countries at Copenhagen (November, 1914), of Liebknecht's declaration in the Reichstag (2nd December, 1914), of the Socialist and Syndicalist conference of Allied countries (London, February, 1915), they did their best to echo the pacifist appeals of Denmark and of Germany, and to make of the Allied conference the first step towards the International conference.

In the Socialist Party there were with Bourderon, Fernand Loriot, Charles Rappoport, and later Louise Saumoneau and Alexandre Blanc, seconded by militants less known, but of absolute devotion, who constituted the opposition group.

By the side of these artisans of the new International,

Socialists more hesitating in their attitude, but haunted by noble scruples, and by an imperfect notion of Socialist duties reacted against the absolute betrayals of the majorities. In Germany it was "Opposition inside the Organisation" led by Haase, Ledebour, Kautsky, Hoffman, Bernstein, Louise Zietz, Dittmann, etc. In France it was the "Minority" with Brizon, Raffin Dugens, Lonquet, Pressemane, Mistral, Mayeras, Paul Faure, Verfeuil, Delepine, Maurin, Dunos, etc. These two fractions, whom Socialist logic scared, who did not dare to adopt the principles and the tactics of the out-and-out revolutionaries, who were troubled about preserving "Unity" with traitors, and who consequently condemned themselves to impotence, nevertheless played a useful rôle through their resistance to chauvinism. The German fraction showed itself more active than did the French, and destroyed the pernicious unity of Social Democracy by forming the Independent Party, appealing from the Reichstag benches to the people, in favour of a popular rising.

These groupings, whose socialist spirit was not completely obscured by the war, used their efforts without any general vision, without co-ordination, in the same way as did the parties or fractions among the Socialists of neutral countries (Switzerland, Holland, Sweden, Norway, Greece, Portugal), who were inspired with similar ideas. International Conferences were necessary. The first one met at Zimmerwald, the 5th September, 1915, a place and date of primary importance henceforth in the history of Socialism.

## **Zimmerwald, Kienthal, Stockholm, Moscow**

The Swiss and Italian Socialist parties multiplied attempts to re-establish contact between international Socialists, and determine a basis of common action against the war. In September, 1914, the conference of Lugano confided to the Swiss party the task of re-establishing relations between the parties which were formerly linked in brotherhood, but who had now become belligerents or neutrals. Similar efforts were attempted by Troelstra. The Socialist Party of America suggested the reunion of a Congress at Washington, undertaking at the same time its

organisation and its cost. These prospects failed in consequence of the hostility of the French and Belgian parties.

The Swiss party attempted to assemble at Zurich the Socialists of neutral countries. This resulted in another failure. At the same time the Italian Party sent Morgari to France charged with the mission to request the International Socialist Bureau to meet. The 19th April, 1915, Morgari had, at the headquarters of the Socialist Party in Paris, an interview with Vandervelde, the President of the I.S.B., and with the leaders of the party. He found himself up against the systematic refusal of the French and Belgium Socialist-patriots. Renaudel declared that the International was *the hostage for right and justice* (sic.) And in reply to Morgari, who stated that in spite of opposition the Socialists who were faithful to Socialism would find means of meeting, Vandervelde said, "*we will prevent it.*"

It was thus apparent that all attempts to reconstitute the International from the elements which had betrayed it would be useless and sterile.

*All that could be done was to call together the parties and the fractions which had remained Socialist and internationalist.* On May 15th, 1915, the congress of Bologna decided to convoke an international conference in spite of the hostility of official parties. On June 11th, a preliminary session took place at Berne, at which the nature and the object of the conference were established: *it was agreed that this initiative on the part of the Italian and the Swiss parties was not taken with the intention of forming a new International. At this epoch only Lenin and the Bolsheviks had sufficient insight to discern the necessity of founding a third International.* But their influence was not yet felt. Their help, however, was precious in the organisation of the conference.

From the 5th to the 8th September the Conference was held at Zimmerwald which was the first manifestation of the life of the renascent International, and which uttered the great call for peace. A few days before the meeting, Morgari had made a supreme attempt among French Socialists to obtain their participation in the conference, or at least that they should send a delegate without mandate or vote who would exercise, as Morgari put

it, the duties of "an honest spy," at the same time assuring them that only German "minority Socialists" would be present. *He only met with a fresh refusal*, including that of Pressemane.

The conference, at which only Bourderon and Merrheim represented French Socialism and Syndicalism, issued a manifesto denouncing Imperialism as the cause of the war, disclosed the real objects of the war on the part of the two capitalist coalitions (thefts of territory, grabbing of oil and mineral wealth, the conquest of markets and of ports, pillage and spoliation, the subjection of other races to bourgeois oligarchies) all this hypocritically baptised under the name of *national defence*; and called upon the proletarians of all countries to take united action on the basis of the class struggle, in order to impose peace.

The "majority Socialists" of France and of Germany attacked the Zimmerwaldians with hatred and fury, covered them with insults and sarcasms, after first having attempted a conspiracy of silence. But the international and pacifist idea had made a start, and nothing could stop it. Not all the accumulated blame heaped upon it could prevent the awakening of the proletariat.\*

From April 24th to 30th, 1916, a second Zimmerwaldian conference was held at Kienthal. Three French deputies, Brizon, Blanc, and Raffin Dugens, represented French Socialism, passports having been refused to militant organised workers. The Kienthal Conference confirmed and solidified the Zimmerwaldian resolutions. *It insisted on the fact that real peace could only come about as a consequence of Socialism*, and invited the proletariat to fight resolutely against the capitalist régime. But, while attacking the International Socialist Bureau it did not go as far as to announce the necessity of breaking with it. At the same time as future action was decided on, a divergence of views made itself felt; among the Zimmerwaldians two tendencies appeared.

*The Left*, whose interpreter was Lenin, looked upon the break up of the Socialist patriots as inevitable, and foresaw the necessity of founding the Third International.

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\*The British Socialist Party appointed delegates to Zimmerwald, but passports were refused by the British Government.—D.B.M.



*The Right* held that joint action was still possible with repentant traitors.

The Left was revolutionary. The Right was merely pacifist. *Events have irrefutably proved that the Left were right in the position they took up: it was revolutions which ended the war, and it is quite clear that the world war will break out again if the world revolution does not forestall it.*

Although the Left was in a minority at Kienthal it forced its views upon the third Zimmerwaldian Conference, which met at Stockholm in 1917. The resolution which was then passed called upon the workers of the world to join in the permanent struggle for the liberation of humanity. Two months later, the circumstances favouring, and their will inciting, the Bolshevists, forming the largest element of the Zimmerwaldian Left, passed from theory to practice, and undertook the realisation of their programme.

The Bolshevist revolution has helped us to interpret Socialist parties and men. *The war had been the touchstone of their GOOD WILL; the revolution was the touchstone of their WILL.* The formal organisation of the Third International—it being practically in existence—is an inevitable consequence of this revolutionary WILL.

By taking the initiative of organising at Moscow the First Congress of the Third International, *with the assent and the active help of the members of the commission elected by the Zimmerwaldian Conferences*, the Bolshevist Party accomplished a necessary task in agreement with all those international Socialists who believe in the necessity of a proletarian revolution *and who desire it.*

What does it matter that men who subscribed to the action taken at Zimmerwald and at Kienthal are to-day opposed to the Third International, in which they fail to recognise the logical consequences of the ideas which they expressed in the past? At a given moment they did reflect the spirit of the advanced guard of Socialism, others translate to-day its revolutionary and liberating aspirations; men pass away; ideas remain, become clarified, and find new interpreters.

~~From~~ *On March 2nd, 1919, at Moscow, the Congress of the Communist parties* (named thus to distinguish them from

the reformist Socialists) *decided to constitute themselves into the Third International, and founded the "Communist International," the official name of this new organisation.*

This Congress further decided:

*That the definite constitution of the Communist International would be the work of the next Congress (the present formation being only provisional).*

That the direction of the C.I. is confided to an Executive Committee composed of a representative of each affiliated party.

That the parties adhering to the C.I. before the Second Congress takes place have a right to a seat on the Executive Committee. Thus the First Congress of the Communist International was careful not to impose too rigid conditions on the parties whose affiliations they invited, and reserved the definite foundation of the Third International for this purpose, with the co-operation of all the adherent groups.

## **The Communist International, its Programme and Forces.**

In this small pamphlet we do not presume to give a complete exposition of, or to study deeply, the problem of the International, but only to emphasise its essential points, and rapidly to translate in concise form the ideas proclaimed by the *Communist International*. These are defined with vigour and clearness in the *Manifesto* and in the *Resolutions* of the First Congress.

The C.I. declares that the hour of the "final struggle" between proletariat and bourgeoisie, as expressed by the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848, has arrived.

It assigns to us the following task: "to gather up the revolutionary experience of the working classes, to rid the movement of the unhealthy blend of opportunism and social-patriotism, to unite the forces of all the truly revolutionary parties of the world proletarians, and thus to pave the way for, and to hasten the Communist revolution all over the world."

It imputes the responsibility for the war to the capitalist régime and to the conscious will of the governing classes of Russia, Germany, Austria, England, France,

Italy, and the United States, a responsibility which is amply proved by the Russian diplomatic archives.

The C.I. sees in the consequences of the war surprising revelations of the contradictions of the capitalist régime, the condemnation, without appeal, of the theory denoting "the progressive steps of Capitalism towards Socialism," upheld by the reformists. These latter contested the Marxist theory of the "pauperisation of the masses" as being the provocative cause of revolution; war amply demonstrates this pauperisation, this material impoverishment to which physiological poverty must be added.

Besides this, the state ownership of the economic life inevitably accomplishes its ends. It remains to be seen who will be master of state-owned production, the bourgeois or the proletarian State. If the working class does not wish to pay tribute to the capitalist clique, it must "seize hold of economic life, even though it be disorganised and destroyed, in order to ensure its being rebuilt on a Socialist basis."

In order to "shorten the time of crisis through which we are passing" we must establish "the dictatorship of the proletariat which does not look backward, nor does it take count of hereditary privilege or right of property, which, contemplating solely the salvation of starving masses, mobilises to that end by every means in its power, decrees the necessity of work for each individual, institutes discipline as an urgent need of the workers, in order not only to heal in a few years the horrible wounds made by the war, but finally to raise humanity to great and undreamed of heights."

The Communist International repudiates as a snare so-called bourgeois "democracy." Facts prove that in all fundamental questions on which the destiny of man depends, *it is a financial oligarchy which rules*, by virtue of "the weapons of falsehood, demagoguery, persecution, calumny, corruption and terror, which centuries of slavery have placed at their disposal and which the privileges of capitalist technique have multiplied."

*Bourgeois democracy has but one aim—to disarm the exploited by giving them the illusion that they dispose of legal methods by which they can impose their claims.*

The Communist parties should endeavour to create that proletarian democracy which would abolish classes in abolishing economic privileges; their political expression must be Soviets, that is to say *Workers' and Soldiers' Councils*, a new type of proletarian organisation which will be self-governing. These Soviets represent political power; the organisations of industry and of production being vested in professional syndicates that are in direct touch with the technical organs of power of the Soviets. Such are the principal outlines of the Communist International defined in detail by the voted resolutions.

In short, these are the terms of the *Manifesto* itself : "if the war of 1870 dealt a blow to the First International by the revelation that behind its revolutionary and social programme there was no organised force of the masses, the war of 1914 has killed the Second International by demonstrating that over and above the powerful administration of the workers were parties subservient to bourgeois control."

"If the First International foresaw and prepared the way for approaching developments, if the Second International collected and organised the proletarian millions, the Third International is the International of the action of the masses and of revolutionary realisation."

The principles, the programme and the appeals of the Communist International have been systematically hidden from the masses by bourgeois speakers and their press and by social opportunists.

In France the facts are still unknown to the masses, and the prominence of the opportunists is due to this ignorance. But where facts were known and advertised the Socialist workers' organisations joined the Third International which gathered together the élite of the proletariat of the world.

The following is a list of the affiliated organisations:

In Russia, in Finland, in Esthonia, in Lettonia, in Lithuania, in White Russia, in Ukrainia, in Armenia, the *Communist Parties*.

In Poland, *The Communist Labour Party* composed of the fusion of the former Social Democratic Party with the Left Polish Social Party, holding a majority in the Workers' Councils.

In Germany, the *Communist Party* (Spartacists), and since December 5th, 1919, the *Independent Socialist Party*.

In Hungary, the *Communist Workers' Party* formed June 12th, 1919, by the fusion of the former Social Democratic Party with the young Communist Party.

In Austria, *The Communist Party*.

In Bulgaria, *The Communist Party* (formerly narrow Social Democrats). Since the Congress of May 25th, 1919, the most powerful organisation in the country.

In Roumania, *The Communist Party*, formerly the Social Democratic Party.

In Greece, *The Socialist Labour Party*, since the Congress of June 8th, 1919.

In Yugo-Slavia, *The Socialist Labour Party*, formed by the parties of Serbia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Dalmatia, and Croatia, etc.

In Italy, the *Socialist Party* (decision of March 19th, 1919); and the *Syndicalist Union*.

In Switzerland, the *Left fraction of the Socialist Party*. This Party at its Congress of August 16th, at Bâle, unanimously voted a rupture with the Second International, and, by 318 votes against 147, declared adhesion to the Third International, but the referendum annulled this last decision, 36,000 members of the Party among 60,000 not having voted; hence the equivocal situation of this Party, whose best elements have for some time formed part of the new organisation.

In Holland, the *Communist Party* (formerly Social Democratic Party) since June 29th, 1919.

In Belgium, the most backward country from the Socialist point of view, the *Communist Party* (a Flemish Federation) constituted October 12th, 1919, and the *Young Socialists*.

In Luxembourg, the *Left fraction of the Socialist Party*, numerically equal to the other fraction.

In Sweden, the *Socialist Party of the Left*, since June 12th, 1919.

In Norway, the *Socialist Party*, fairly unanimous since June 7th, 1919.

In Denmark, the *Socialist Labour Party*, and the *Left of the Social Democratic Party*, in a minority.

In England, the *British Socialist Party* (formerly the

Social Democratic Federation), the *Workers' Socialist Federation*, the *Socialist Labour Party* (of Scotland), the *South Wales Socialist Society*, and an important fraction of the *Independent Labour Party*.

In Ireland, the *Revolutionary Socialist Party*.

In Spain, the *Left of the Socialist Party*, which obtained at the Congress of December 13th, 1919, 12,500 votes in favour of the Third International, against 14,000 on the Right, and the *National Confederation of Workers* which has a membership of a million.

In the United States, the *Socialist Labour Party*, united to the *Industrial Workers of the World*, the *Communist Party*, the *Communist Labour Party*, an important fraction of the *Socialist Party*, which latter is much reduced by the double secession of the Communists, and the *Socialist Propaganda League*.

In Mexico, the *Communist Party*, a former revolutionary fraction of the *Socialist Party*.

In Brazil and the Argentine, the *Communist Parties*.

In Australia, the *Socialist Party*.

In South Africa, the *International Socialist League*.

In Asia, important groups whose organisations, paralysed by the tyranny of eastern despots, are more often than not under the direction of members living in foreign countries. The Japanese have their Committee in the United States, the Koreans in Russia, etc.

Besides these the most important of the young Socialist organisations belong to the Communist International. From the 20th to the 26th November, 1919, the First Congress of the Young International Communists met secretly in Berlin.

Fourteen groups were represented of which the following is the list:

Russian Communist Youth, 80,000 members.

Polish Communist Youth 8,000 members.

German Free Socialist Youth, 35,000 members.

Socialist Youth of Italy, 30,000 members.

Socialist Youth of Spain, 6,000 members.

Social Democratic Youth of Sweden, 30,000 members.

Social Democratic Youth of Norway, 12,000 members.

Social Democratic Youth of Denmark, 12,000 members.

Communist Proletarian Youth of German Austria, 1,000 members.

Communist Youth of the German Territory of the Volga, 1,800 members.

Social Democratic Youth of Czecho-Slovakia (District of Kladno).

Communist Workers' Youth of Hungary, 15,000 members.

Working class Youth of Roumania, 6,500 members.

Socialist Youth of Switzerland, 2,000 members.

Several affiliating organisations like those of Belgium, England, the United States, were not able to send delegates because of the actual difficulties of communications.

Thus, in the space of a few months in spite of obstacles opposed to the delivery of the message, in spite of the difficulties placed in the way of its propagandists, the Third International is grouping the whole of the organisations of the revolutionary proletariat. And the rallying of those who are still waiting to affiliate is only delayed because the masses are deceived by their leaders.

In France, the active forces of the workers' syndicates, and of the Socialist Party, are already affiliated to the Third International, and these forces grow daily in numbers. We have reason to believe that the hour is not far distant when their influence will pervade the whole organisation.

"We recognise one another," said the Communists assembled at Moscow, "as the continuators of the direct efforts, and of the heroic martyrdoms accepted by a long series of revolutionary generations, from Babœuf down to Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxembourg" May those workers and Socialists who recognise one another as the continuators of the work undertaken at the commencement of the last century by the first militant Communists, march under the banner of the Communist International, and recognise as their rallying point the purple standard on which shine the sickle and the hammer crossed, the emblem of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Russia.

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