
The First Month's Activity of the New Executive Committee: A Brief Report [events of Aug. 7-25, 1920]

by "M.K."

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During the first month of the existence of the new Executive Committee of the Communist International, constituted August 7th, its work was carried on in the atmosphere created by the [2nd] Congress [July 19-Aug. 7, 1920]; the atmosphere of direct communion with the representatives of the proletarian revolutionary movement of the whole world. This work was almost totally devoted to the immediate task of the movement: the strengthening of the Communist Parties of the different countries, the elimination therefrom of all reformist and opportunist elements, and the uniting of all bona fide revolutionary Communist forces.

Among the parties represented at the Congress, particularly "rich" in opportunist elements, the largest and most considerable was the Independent Social Democratic Party of Germany (USPD). The delegation of this party was invited *in corpore* to the meeting of August 9th which was devoted to the elucidation of the mutual relations between the Party and the Communist International. In opening the session the Chairman of the Executive Committee, Comrade Zinoviev, put the following three questions clearly and definitely before the representatives of the German Independents: 1. Do they think that any one of the questions interesting the USP has not been sufficiently elucidated by the Congress? 2. Do they

consider the conditions for the adhesion to the Communist International, as confirmed by the Congress, acceptable to their Party?; and 3. What is their attitude towards the demand of the Congress regarding the expulsion of the Right Wing Social-Traitor elements from the Party?

To the first of these questions the entire delegation had to answer unanimously in the negative. But after this their unanimity came to an end, in regard to the second and third questions, the same discord which is a characteristic feature of this almost million-membered Party was revealed in the delegation consisting of 4 members. The representatives of the Left Wing tendency, Comrades [Ernst] Däumig and [Walter] Stoecker, declared openly that according to their opinion the USP "must immediately join the Third International, which had become strengthened and enforced owing to its Second Congress." (Däumig) "Only the dictatorship of the proletariat," said Comrade Däumig, "only the struggle by all means can lead in all countries to the overthrow of the bourgeoisie... This struggle can be carried on successfully only under the condition that the forces of the world proletariat will be united in a single, solidly organized International with a single theory and practice.... And, certainly, there must be no place in the Party for people holding the same views as the Second International

and openly sabotaging the demands of the Communist International."

The Right Wing leaders of the Party, [Artur] Crispien and [Wilhelm] Dittmann, while declaring that "in all theoretical and important principled questions" there were "no serious dissensions" (Crispian) between the Party and the Communist International, complained, nevertheless, that the "concrete formulation of the theses [the 21 conditions] gives rise to dissension," that "in the formulation of the paragraphs regarding the armed uprising and illegal work, the lawful possibilities of the Party's struggle on the basis of bourgeois class society had not been taken into account" (Dittmann). Speaking of the exclusion of the Social-Traitors from the Party, Dittmann advanced a peculiar theory of "tolerance" and "loyalty," completely imbued with petty bourgeois prejudices on the question of "freedom of opinion." While agreeing with the statement that the Party should not be a "public house," he affirmed with great pathos that the absence of "theoretical differences of opinion will kill all mental life in the Party." He reproached the Communists that, while preaching the principle of centralization, they themselves violated it in some cases. Lastly, both he and Crispian complained bitterly that the Communists wished to carry discord into the Party and to cause a split in it.

To all these complaints of the champions of "high virtue," Comrades Zinoviev and Radek explained to them that "we stand for centralization when it concurs in a closer uniting of all the revolutionary forces, but not when it leads to the strengthening of the Party center, carrying on a non-revolutionary policy," and Comrade Zinoviev dotted his i's in declaring that centralization in our eyes is not an aim, but a means of struggle, an arm of war. Comrade Zinoviev pointed out to them that the "free thinkers," Messrs. Kautsky and Hilferding, give a moral weapon into the hands of our enemies, that in the circumstances of our epoch there is and can be no "pure theory" and that

there can be no talk of "loyalty" with respect to our class foes. "We are not bound to be loyal to people who give a moral weapon to the bourgeoisie. We are bound to sow a feeling of hatred against them."

In reply to the complaints against a scission in the Party, Comrade Zinoviev answered unequivocally: "Either a weeding out of the party, or a scission.... There are situations when a scission is the first and most sacred duty of a revolutionist." He expressed the attitude of the Communist International towards the USP in the following words: "Without you, if you wish! With you, if you wish! Against you, if you enter into a struggle with us!"

The weeding out of the opportunists from the Communist party was discussed in the meeting of the Communist International of August 11th. This time the subject was the Italian party. Against the exclusion of such gentlemen as Turatti, Modigliani, Darragona, etc., none of the Italian comrades raised any objection; only some of them, as for instance, Com. Serrati, asserted that the exclusion must be carried out skillfully so as "not to lose the masses" (which, be it said, according to the statements of these same comrades, do not at all favor the opportunists), that a "proper justification" must be found, etc. As a result of this meeting the Executive Committee decided to address the appeal to the Italian workers...

The question regarding the Italian movement was discussed also at a meeting of the Executive Committee on August 25th, which was attended by the delegate of the Italian Syndicalist Union (Unione Sindicale Italiano), Comrade Borghi, who, unfortunately, reached Moscow after the close of the Congress. The following resolution was passed unanimously by the Executive Committee:

In consideration of the resolutions of the Second Congress on the question of its attitude towards the revolutionary part of the syndicalists, anarchists, partisans of the Shop Stewards Committees, and

IWW, and the declaration of the representative of the Unione Sindicale Italiano, Comrade Borghi, to the effect that he accepts the decisions of the Second Congress, the Executive Committee decrees:

1. To admit the Unione Sindicale Italiano into the Third International;
2. To commission the Small Bureau to explain in a special letter to the Unione Sindicale the duties which ensue to all members of the Unione in consequence of the Adhesion to the Third International;
3. To charge the Small Bureau to adopt all the requisite measures to bring about the union in the shortest time possible of all the bona fide Communist forces in Italy.

Moreover, in compliance with a proposition from Comrade [John] Reed it was decided to demand from the Italian Labor Confederation that a Congress should be convened immediately after the Party Congress.

While in regard to the USP the Executive Committee put the question of a scission in a categorical form, and while in discussing the situation in the Italian Party it was also necessary to raise the question of a weeding out — in all the meetings which were devoted to the discussion of the immediate tasks of the American and English movement object was, on the contrary, only to unite and draw closer the ranks of the Parties.

In America, as is known, there are two Communist Parties: the United Communist Party and the Communist Party. In its meeting of August 8th, with the participation of the representatives of both these Parties, the Executive Committee passed the following resolution:

Both Communist Parties of America (United Communist Party and Communist Party) are pledged to unite immediately into one Party in compliance with the decisions of the 2nd World Congress of the Communist International. This unification must be accomplished not later than in 2 months, i.e., by the 10th of October. Any group which will not submit to this resolution shall be excluded from the Communist International.

The question regarding the unification of the English Communist groups taken up at the session of August 10th with the participation of all

the members of the English delegation was solved in the same spirit. In his introductory speech Comrade Zinoviev pointed out that in England there are: the British Communist Party (the nucleus of which consists of the former BCP), the Communist Party, the Scottish groups, and the groups of Wales and Ireland, the Shop Stewards Committees, etc., and that the unification of these groups is no easy task because, as the Congress showed, certain serious dissensions exist between them, as for instance in the question of the Labour Party. "But this is a purely tactical question," said Comrade Zinoviev, "we are united in much more important questions: recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat, of the Soviet system, of the necessity of illegal work, etc." In conclusion, after the discussion the following resolution was passed unanimously (the English comrades voting separately and all without exception in favor of the resolution):

The Executive Committee decrees: A single Communist Party must be formed in England in virtue of the decisions of the 2nd World Congress of the Communist International.

For the solution of this problem, in the course of 4 months a general Congress of all the Communist groups and organizations of England and Ireland must be convened. In this Congress shall take part: 1. the United Communist Party; 2. the Communist Party; 3. the Shop Stewards Committee; 4. the Scottish Communist groups; 5. the groups of Wales; 6. the Irish Communists (on federative principles); 7. the Socialist Labour Party (SLP); 8. the Left Wingers of the SLP.

In addition to this resolution, the Executive Committee decreed on August 20th:

The Executive Committee recommends to the English comrades the following plan of representation at the United Congress: All parties and political groups shall be represented in proportion to the number of their members, with a minimum of 3 delegates per organization.

As to the Shop Stewards Committees, the Executive Committee recommends to the Committee of Action to organize their representation proportionately to the number of members, whereby it is desirable that not only the leaders of the movement belonging to the party should be included in the

number of delegates, but also all bona fide representatives of the views and wishes of the wider masses.

For the attainment of a complete unity in the political direction of the international political movement the Executive Committee in the meeting of August 8th decreed to dissolve all the existing political bureaus of the Communist International, replacing them by trustworthy representatives, directly responsible to the Executive Committee.

At the meeting of August 16th the question of the publication in different countries of a common organ, *The Communist International*, was discussed. The majority of the comrades complained of the great delay in the delivery of the journal, and some of them — in particular the English and American comrades — mentioned several incorrect statements in the news items and correspondence of the journal. In conclusion, it was decided unanimously that:

1. *The Communist International* as a central organ shall be republished in full in England, Germany, Austria, France, and America;
2. In the separate countries there may be

omitted only such articles as have already appeared in the given country, and all out-of-date correspondence;

3. The parties of the separate countries shall organize special auxiliary bureaus for supplying the editor's office of the Communist International with articles and information;

4. The parties of the countries in which the journal is published (with the exception of Russia) shall be bound to send to the Communist Parties of the neighboring countries from 3 to 5 copies of each number of the journal. In particular, the Austria Communist Party shall be bound to send regularly from 3 to 5 copies to the Central Committees of the Communist Parties of Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Romania, and Greece.

At the last meetings of the Executive Committee the reports of the comrades who had reached Moscow, owing to various accidents, after the close of the Congress were heard, namely: the report of the representative of the Left Wing of the English Independent Labour Party (ILP), the report of the delegate from Luxemburg, and others.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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