Call for the Third World Congress

Letter of the Communist International Executive Committee to all proletarian parties that belong to the Communist International or wish to join it.

The Third World Congress of the Communist International will convene in Moscow on 1 June 1921. The congress has been called two months earlier than provided for in the Communist International’s statutes. Nonetheless, we are convinced that the parties affiliated to the Communist International agree with us that the interests of our cause require this acceleration.

In the nine months since the Second World Congress, a broad discussion has opened up in a great many parties over the principled questions posed at that congress. In a number of countries, this clarification has advanced to the point where an open break has taken place between the Communists and supporters of the Centre. In Germany, France, Britain, Sweden, Norway, Romania, Yugoslavia, Greece, Switzerland, Belgium, and other countries, the split between the Communists and supporters of the Two-and-a-Half International is an accomplished fact. In other countries, such as Czechoslovakia, the


split is posed in the near future. In Italy, the Communists have founded their own independent party. The present Socialist Party there includes recognised reformists and wavering revolutionaries; gradually the healthy proletarian forces will leave it and publicly join the Communist International. In the United States, the unification of all Communist groups is likely in the near future.

The Communist International must take into account the totality of all these developments in the named parties. The Executive Committee of the Communist International had to take extremely important decisions during this period. It must now give an accounting for these decisions before the entire Communist International. The Third Congress must consider above all the degree to which each of the parties affiliated to the Communist International has actually carried out all the conditions established by the Second Congress. An important phase of Communist International activity is coming to an end. Prior to its First Congress, the Communist International traversed its early days, its preparatory period. Between the First and Second Congresses lay a period of initial agitation. At that time, the Communist International was not yet a rounded international organisation; it was only a banner, only a slogan. The period between the Second and Third Congresses is one of intensified and clear division and the formation of genuine Communist parties. The Third Congress will draw the balance sheet of all the accomplished work and will provide the Communist International with a finished organisation and well-honed tactical and strategic policies.

The proposed agenda of the Third Congress has been drawn up by the ECCI and published in its press.

The first point on this agenda is the Executive Committee report. During the nine months that have passed since the Second Congress, the Executive Committee had to become involved in the struggles and splits that took place in several parties. This gave rise, of course, to protests here and there against the Executive Committee. Whether the general policies set by the Second Congress have been applied rightly must be decided by the Third Congress. Above all, however, the Communist International must establish a firm and definite rule: the Executive Committee is always subordinate to the next world congress, to which it must give an accounting. Any decision of the Executive Committee can be appealed to the congress. But between congresses, the entire leadership responsibility rests in the hands of the Executive Committee. Its decisions must be carried out. Without this, the Communist International cannot exist as a centralised and disciplined international organisation. The claim of the Communist International to be an International of the deed would be hollow unless this international combat organisation had a general staff and