

Notes of an Internationalist

No. 3—Hoglund Again a Social-Democrat.

By JOHN PEPPER.

A POLITICAL career has come to its end. Hoglund, the former leader of the Swedish Communist Party, has returned to the social-democracy. A Babbitt run amuck, who for some years shrieked so loudly that he became self-convinced of his own revolutionism, has calmed down and finally broken with the affairs of the proletarian revolution.

Hoglund was a leader of the Swedish youth movement, participated as a pacifist in the Zimmerwald conference and then directed the splitting off to the Communist International of the left wing of the mighty Swedish social-democracy.

He came to the Comintern, his enthusiasm was great, but he really never felt entirely at home in the Comintern. He found the Communist International too "Russian," too "backward," and could never subject himself to international discipline. From the very beginning down to his inglorious end, he was ever one-sidedly influenced by Swedish conditions, in the words of Bucharin, by the "Swedish Idyll." Sweden is a petty-bourgeois country without the tempests of the great cities, of the big industrial districts, without the revolutionary foundation that only the great industrial proletariat can furnish. Sweden is a country which never went thru a really serious revolutionary crisis, where revolutionary traditions could exist, where his attitude on the question of religion, in which he sought to declare religion a "private matter" also

within the Communist Party. He could never tolerate the discipline of the Communist International and fought against it with all the finesse and cannot evolve themselves. Hoglund ever felt himself a "Swede" in the narrowest sense of the word and wanted to impose his "Swedish" policies upon the Comintern. The crassest example of his backward Philistine provincial-genuity of a typical intellectual. Of course, this was no accident; the Communist International represents the great proletarian masses of the big industrial countries, the working masses of these countries in which the post-war crisis created a revolutionary situation and a revolutionary tradition. Hoglund's rebellion against the Communist International was in the last analysis nothing other than the revolt of the petty-bourgeois Swedish Idyll against the Comintern, representing the revolutionary, great industrial proletariat.

As Hoglund, in Stockholm, hoisted the Swedish flag of rebellion against the Red flag of the Comintern, he became at one blow the national hero of the Swedish bourgeoisie, and Mr. Engberg, the leader of the so-called "left" social-democrats declared that Hoglund was but a prodigal son and that the old social-democratic home-stead would ever be open for him.

For sometime Zeth Hoglund was coy, he did not want to return to the social-democracy; he founded his own Communist Party independent from Moscow, he created his own central

organ. But events have their logic even in so petty bourgeois a land as Sweden. At first Hoglund only fought against the "Cadaver obedience" of the Comintern—then he supported the social-democrats in the parliamentary elections against the Communists. At first he was only against the "methods" of the Comintern, later he identified himself with Trammæl, who was preaching a new revolution in Soviet Russia against the present one directed by Bolsheviks. At first he was only against the "dictatorship" of Zinoviev, now however, he declares himself also against the dictatorship of the proletariat and, like a converted sinner, he confesses himself "for democracy, the only method for the liberation of the proletariat."

At first he founded a fraction within the Comintern against the Comintern; then he tried to build up a fraction, international in extent, outside the Comintern against the Comintern; and now he issues the ceremonious declaration that he will refrain from all factional politics within the social-democracy.

Hoglund's disgraceful end proves clearly the correctness of the Comintern policy in Sweden, the inevitability of the split and the propriety of the methods which marshalled the entire Communist Party for the Comintern but against Hoglund.

Hoglund now becomes an official member of the social-democratic party of Branting, but politically alive, is now buried deeper and with more finality than Branting dead.