

Preface

Works concerned with the IIIrd International (March 1919 - 1943) and its influence on the political and social development on the international level during the period between the two world wars have been listed in three important bibliographies : the pioneering work by Giuliano Procacci, *L'Internazionale Comunista dal I al VII Congresso, 1919 - 1935*, which appeared in the *Annali dell'Istituto Feltrinelli*, I, 1958 ; the detailed inventory by Vlasta Krupickova, *Bibliografické Pomůcky. Soupis literatury k dějinám Kommunistické Internacionaly*, which appeared in Prague in 1964 and took into account the sources of the principal Czechoslovak collections; and the work by Witold S. Sworakowski, *The Communist International and its Front Organizations*, which offers close to 3,000 titles from collections kept in great American libraries (the library of the Hoover Institution, the Library of Congress, the libraries of Harvard University and Colombia University, and the New York Public Library) and four European institutions: the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam, the Feltrinelli Foundation in Milan, the Slavonic Institute in Stockholm and the Library of Contemporary International Documentation in Paris.

With these works as basis, Vilém Kahan, a political émigré of Czech extraction and bibliographer at the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam, undertook to enlarge the collection on the Comintern for the period 1919-1979, chiefly by studying the inventories of fourteen institutions representative of the western world. In addition, as he was unable to return to research his work *in situ*, he completed his research by consulting bibliographies published in Central and Eastern Europe, of which the most important titles are listed in his introduction.

The Bibliography of the Communist International 1919-1979, prepared by Vilém Kahan, will comprise three volumes. It will list those publications by and about the Comintern which have been published in more than twenty languages. The first volume alone includes 3,186 descriptive notices. It refers to works from the seven congresses from 1919 to 1935 and to the sessions of the Executive Committee, as well as to studies concerning the Communist International which appeared from 1919 to 1979.

The editorial preparation of the first volume could not be completed by the author; after his death in 1985, the manuscript was given to Karel Bartosek, who had showed a special interest in the undertaking and had been a lively source of support to the author.

The second volume assembled by V.Kahan, which is already in an advanced stage of preparation, will treat the publications of organizations affiliated to the Communist International and studies concerning them: the Red International of Labour Unions, the Communist Youth International, the Communist Peasants' International, the Women's International, the Red Sporting International, the Cooperative Section of the Executive Committee of the Communist International and the Industrial Aid International.

Without wanting to give a historical account of the edition of the bibliography by V.Kahan, it is fitting to make mention here of the interest which Professor Giuseppe Del Bo of the Feltrinelli Foundation and Pero Damjanović, director of the Institute za Savremenu Istoriju in Belgrade, showed in the project a good ten years ago: the protagonists of the edition had already envisaged a co-edition among several scientific institutions.

It is time to give the edition its tangible form in order to put the works which V.Kahan actively worked on for so many years at the disposal of researchers. This is why the International Institute of Social History, the Feltrinelli Foundation and the Library of Contemporary International Documentation decided in 1988 to jointly realize the publication of this bibliography, to share responsibility for it and in particular to include it in their respective publication programmes.

The international collaboration between these three European institutions had already proven successful, especially in the collection of sources and archives; let us mention in particular, while remaining in the same field, the collection of archives of the Unified Secretariat of the IVth International. As a second example, we can mention the programme to recover and preserve the documents related to Argentinian social history, a programme which will without doubt be extended to include Brazil and Chile.

The first volume of the *Bibliography of the Communist International* is now available. Let us hope that its reception by historians and by all those - researchers, trade-unionists, politicians, journalists - who are interested in political and social issues from the period during the two world wars and in the development of international issues will permit us to complete the planned programme in its entirety.

The editors