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## POLITICS

## On the United Front

by L. Trotsky.

\*\* The function of a Communist Party is to lead the proletarian revolution. In order to call upon the proletariat to seize power directly and in order that this may be realized, the Communist Party must be supported by the overwhelming majority of the working-class.

But as long as it has not such a majority at its command, it must fight to win over the majority.

It can accomplish this only if it is an absolutely independent organization with a definite program and a rigid discipline. For this reason it must sever all ideological and organizational connections with the reformists and the centrists, who are not striving for the proletarian revolution, who neither want nor are able to prepare the masses for the revolution, and who through their attitude and action are only hindering such work. Those members of a Communist Party, who in the name of the "United Front" regret its severance from the Centrists, only betray themselves by showing that they have not even as much as mastered the Communist alphabet, and that their presence in the Communist Party is purely accidental.

After the Communist Party has gained its independence and achieved the ideological homogeneity of its membership, it struggles for influence among the majority of the working-class. In this struggle a quicker or slower tempo may be adopted according to the objective circumstances and the expediency of this or that tactical move.

It is self-evident that during this period of preparation the class-struggles of the proletariat do not cease. Various conflicts with the employers, with the bourgeoisie and with the government take place, in which the initiative is sometimes assumed by the workers, and sometimes by their enemies. The working masses perceive the necessity for united action, be it unity in defence against the capitalist attacks or unity in attacking their enemy, only to the degree that such conflicts touch or affect the life-interests of the working-class as a whole or of the majority or of one of its parts. The party which deliberately opposes this necessity for unity of action on the part of the working-class will inevitably be condemned by the workers. Hence the question of the united front is in its origin and essence not a question of mutual relations between the Socialist and Communist Parliamentary fractions or between the Executive Committees of these parties at all. The problem of the united front arises out of the necessity of enabling the workers to organize a united front in their struggle against capital, in spite of the splits, which in the present epoch are inevitably taking place in the political organizations of the working-class. To those who do not comprehend this task the party is a mere propaganda-association, and not an organization of mass-action.

Where the Communist Party is as yet only an organization of an insignificant minority, the question of its attitude towards the united mass-front can be of no great importance or of any practical organizational significance. In such cases the mass-actions are directed and led by old organizations which, thanks to their mighty traditions, still play the decisive role.

Again, in those countries where the Communist Party is the only leading organization of the workers, as in Bulgaria,

for instance, there can also be no question or problem of a united front.

But in those countries where the Communist Party has already reached the stage of a large political organization which has not as yet however become the deciding factor, that is, where it has succeeded in organizing one-fourth or one-third of the class-conscious proletarian vanguard, the problem of the united front will loom up in all its importance.

When the party consists of *one-third* or *one-half* of the proletarian vanguard, it means that the other half or the other two-thirds is organized by the reformists and centrists. It is clear, however, that those workers who are still supporting the reformists and centrists are also interested in bettering the conditions of their material existence and in their greater freedom of struggle. It is therefore necessary to adopt such tactics as would not make the Communist Party, which on the morrow is to incorporate all three-thirds of the working-class, an organized obstacle in the course of the proletarian struggles.

But what is still more: the Communist Party must itself seize the initiative in effecting and maintaining unity in the course of these struggles. It is only in this way that it can possibly attract and approach the other two-thirds that do not as yet follow it, since they neither understand it nor confide in it.

Without effecting a radical and final breach with the Social Democrats, the Communist Party would never have become the party of the proletarian revolution, nor would it have been able to take the first serious step towards the revolution. It would have remained the Parliamentary safety-valve of the bourgeois state forever.

Whoever fails to grasp this, does not know the first letter of the Communist alphabet.

Had the Communist Party not followed the path which at every given moment enables it to undertake common actions of the Communist and non-Communist masses (Social Democratic workers included), it would only have betrayed its inability to win over the majority of the working-class to the road of mass-action. It would then have degenerated to a Communist propaganda society; it would never have developed into a party of the proletarian revolution.

It does not suffice to gain a weapon; the weapon must be sharp. It does not suffice to whet the sword; we must know how to use it.

It does not at all suffice merely to unite the Communists under organizational discipline, after we have separated them from the reformist chaff. It is necessary that this organization be capable of leading all the united actions of the proletariat on every field of its life-struggle.

This is the second letter in the Communist alphabet.

Does the united front apply to the working masses alone or does it also hold for the opportunistic leaders?

This way of putting the question is the result of a misunderstanding.

Of course, it would be better if we could simply rally the working masses about our flag and our practical slogans of the day, without the reformist, political, as well as trade-union organizations. But were such the possibility, the problem of the united front would never have come up in the form it now assumes.

The very *raison d'être* for this problem is that certain, very considerable parts of the working-class belong to and support these reformist organizations. Up to the present it seems that they

have not had enough experience to justify their withdrawal from these reformist organizations and their joining ours. But judging by the mass-actions that are facing the proletariat, the circumstances in this respect will eventually change. We are striving to accomplish this. We are on the way but not quite so far. At the present time the organized part of the working-class is divided into three groups.

The first one, the Communist group, is striving for the Social Revolution. That is the reason why it supports every movement of the workers against the exploiters and the bourgeois state, even though it be a mere partial movement.

The second one, the Reformist group, is knitting the cloak of reconciliation with the bourgeoisie. But in order not to lose its influence over the workers, it is compelled to support the partial actions of the exploited against the exploiters, against the real wishes of the leaders of this group.

The third group, that of the Centrists, is continually vacillating between the two first groups and has no backbone or significance of its own.

It is thus that the existing conditions make possible the uniting of the workers in these three sorts of organizations and of the unorganized masses influenced by these organizations for common action in a number of proletarian life-questions.

We repeat that not only are the Communists not to oppose such common actions, but they are to assume the initiative for the following reasons. First of all, the greater the masses drawn into the movement, no matter how limited the initial issues of struggle may be, the greater will their self-consciousness and self-confidence be, and the more determined and ready will these masses be to advance. This means that the increase of the mass-character of the movement revolutionizes it and in this way created the conditions favorable for the slogans, methods of struggle and the Communist Party's role of leadership.

What the reformists dread is the potential revolutionary spirit of the mass-movement. Their pet arenas are Parliaments, trade-union councils, arbitration-boards, and ministerial ante-rooms.

But what we are first of all interested in is to drag the reformists out of their holes. Any Communist who doubts or fears such a step is like the "swimmer" who has read and approved the best handbook on the art of swimming, but who does not dare to go into the water.

Hence the united front is a presumptive of our willingness and readiness to make our actions correspond in practise to the attitude of the reformist organizations, only, in certain definite questions and within certain definite limits, and only insofar as such organizations still express the will of considerable parts of the fighting proletariat.

But have we not severed our connections with them? Yes, because we did not agree in the basic questions of the labor movement.

Are we nevertheless to seek an understanding with them? Yes, in all cases where the working-masses that follow them and those that follow us are willing to fight together, and where the reformists are more or less compelled to become the instruments of such struggles.

Will they, however, not claim that although we broke away from them, we nevertheless need them? Yes, indeed, their tattlers can say it. In our own ranks, some comrades will fear it. But the great working-masses—even those masses which do not as yet follow us or understand our aims, but who see and observe two or three simultaneously existing labor organizations—will upon observing our attitude, come to the conclusion that in spite of the split, we are energetically working for an united proletarian front.

Of course, the policy adopted for the united front does not guarantee an actual united front in all cases. On the contrary; in many, yes, in the majority of cases an agreement will be achieved only partially or not at all. But it is necessary that the fighting masses are always given the opportunity to convince themselves that the failure to effect unity of action in any particular case is not due to our irreconcilability but directly to the lack of inclination on the part of the reformists actually to fight.

Since we enter into certain agreements with the other organisations, it is self-evident that we must institute a definite discipline. But this discipline cannot be absolute. In cases where the reformists proceed to obstruct the struggle to the detriment of the movement and against the trend of circumstances and the will and spirit of the masses, we always retain the right to proceed as an independent organization and to carry on the struggle to the bitter and without our provisional half-allies.

This may of course result in an intensified struggle between us and the reformists. But in such a case it will not be

the mere monotonous and barren repetition of one and the same idea in a closed circle; but if our tactics prove right, it will mean the extension of our influence among new proletarian masses.

Only a journalist who thinks he is warding off the reformists by always criticizing them with the very same expressions and epithets, without as much as leaving his editor's desk, only he who actually fears a collision with the reformists in the presence of the masses, who also fears lest the working masses get the opportunity to compare the Communists with the Reformists under varying conditions of the mass-struggle, only such a journalist can interpret this policy in terms of an approach towards the reformists or reformism. Under this veil of revolutionary fear of "approach" we find hidden—*political passivity*. It is *passivity* that wishes for the continuation of that condition that permits of strictly separated and limited fields of activity, of distinct meeting-audiences and press, both for the Communists and reformists.

We have broken with the reformists and with the centrists in order to have unlimited freedom to criticize betrayals, deceptions, indecision and division in the labor-movement. For this reason we cannot possibly accept any agreement which in any way limits our freedom of criticism and agitation. We participate in the united front; but not for a moment do we dissolve in it. We take part in it as an independent unit. For it is in the struggle that the broad masses will convince themselves that *we fight better than others*; they will see that we fight with more determination, self-consciousness and cleverness. In this manner *we accelerate the formation of the united revolutionary front under an undisputed Communist leadership*.

## The Political Crisis in India.

by Shramendra Karsan.

\*\* Mahatma Gandhi the leaders of the non-cooperation movement in India has been arrested by the British Government at Sabarmati, four miles from Ahmedabad on March 10, 1922. This bit of news given out by the London India Office brings home to us the realization that the curtain for the final climax in the political crisis in India has been lifted. The arrest of Gandhi is a direct and determined challenge of the British government, which desires to test the strength of the Indian people. The conjecture may not be unfounded that the British cabinet after mature deliberations gave the secret order to the British officials in India to curb the freedom of the moving spirit in Indian politics. They argued perhaps that the desire to fight for complete independence of India is confined only to a few men. Already the most prominent leaders like the Ali Brothers, Chitta Ranjan Das, Mohi Lal Nehru, Lala Lajpat Rai, Abdul Azad Kalan and hundreds of others have been imprisoned by the British government. At the time of the arrest of the Ali Brothers, the government was very apprehensive about the outbreak of the revolution. It was Gandhi who pleaded with the violent revolutionaries to give him an opportunity of making an experiment in his peaceful revolution. The elimination of Gandhi from the arena of active Indian politics then suggests many possibilities.

On the eve of the arrest of Gandhi, Montague, the British Secretary of State has been forced to resign. Montague acted, it is intimated, in publishing a despatch of the Viceroy in a manner which defied of the British Cabinet. It is of course an explanation for the consumption of those who play with political phrases. But the significance of Montague's resignation has to be sought elsewhere. The foreign office of the British Government is the most autocratic and centralized department in the world, and its direction has remained in the hands of those few persons who are trained in the art of aggression and exploitation. There is not a single political party—Labor or Liberal—which has ever questioned the divinity of the British Foreign Office. Montague published the despatch of Lord Reading not because he had any secret sympathy with the aspirations of the Indian people but because he, being at the helm of the government, understands that the British rule in India is in peril. And he wanted to let the world know. Lloyd George himself declared sometime ago in the British Parliament in order to satisfy the Unionists that iron hands must be used in India and the Indian people must not question the sovereignty of the parasitic king. The difference between Montague and Lloyd George is that the former sees that the passing away of British rule in India is imminent unless some sort of understanding is made with the Indian people by satisfying certain immediate grievances; while the latter aims to become the champion of civilization by crushing the Indian people by force of arms, which have been strengthened at the expense of Germany. Both are enemies of the freedom of India and friends of English imperialism.

The dispatch which Montague published is a clever plan to work out the old policy of *divide et impera*. It states that the British government in India urges among other things:—

- 1— The evacuation of Constantinople.
- 2— The suzerainty of the Sultan over the holy places.
- 3— The restoration of Ottoman Thrace (including Adrianople) and Smyrna.

The fulfilment of these three points is of the greatest importance to India, it added. In other words Lord Reading, the British Viceroy, and Montague are of the opinion that the settlement of the Khalifate question will alienate the Mohammedans from the independence movement in India.

These intellectually bankrupt statesmen and their advisers fail to recognize that the Amritsar massacre and the Khalifate are not the most important questions in Indian politics today. One needs to be acquainted with the spirit that was displayed in the Indian National Congress, held in December last.

Hasvat Mohani, a very influential leader, moved a resolution at the Congress advocating complete independence of India and the establishment of a republic. The methods he desired to adopt were regular warfare with the British military forces. Despite the fact that many intelligent leading men were prevented from attending the Congress owing to their imprisonment, Mohani was supported by a considerable number of delegates. The failure to pass the resolution did not mean the reluctance of the Indian people to fight the British in the battle field. It simply proved that a little more time was needed to perfect the plans. Mohani spoke out the minds of the revolutionaries who are convinced that the British will never leave the soil of India until they are compelled to do so by force.

As the situation is being developed in that direction, and the day for final reckoning is approaching, Lloyd George is exercising all the faculties of his foxy trickeries. It has been his policy to make a settlement with Ireland before the Indian situation becomes critical. He could then use some of the Irish to do Britain's dirty work in fighting the Indian revolutionaries.

He also expected to do the same trick in Afghanistan, Egypt and Mesopotamia. Though Afghanistan has made a treaty with England, the Afghans have made it very clear that their friendship does not mean hostility to India. Independence of India, they recognize, will alone stop the sinister intrigues of the British in Asia affairs. Freedom of India will be a blessing to the neighboring states.

The puppet princes of Hedjaz and Mesopotamia are financed and maintained by Lloyd George's government in order that the people of those territories do not rise in revolt and thus help the cause of the Indian revolutionaries. Moreover, the troops which are being used in these places may be withdrawn for use in India.

The recent declaration of the withdrawal of British suzerainty in Egypt has convinced the Egyptians of the hypocrisy and fraud of the British imperialists. One of the safeguards which the Britain want to maintain is the control of the Suez Canal so that the dispatch of the British troops to India is not hampered.

British imperial policy is entirely centered on India. Lloyd George and his British government's moves must be studied from that standpoint. In so far the Indian policy is concerned, he is supported by his constituencies. No one in England with the exception of the Communists desires to let India have her complete emancipation.

To alienate the sympathy of the Moslem world towards India has been a kind of pastime of the British politicians in season and out of season.

Gandhi has been the leading figure in India. The elimination of Gandhi from the actual field of activities will at once convince the Indian people that the principle of pacifism is not workable as long as the germ of imperialism and exploitation is lodged in the lungs of world politics. The revolutionaries who kept absolutely silent, as they did not wish to hamper the work of Gandhi, will now be able to assert that the only thing the British respect is the mailed fist.

There is no party in India which does not resent the arrest of Gandhi. There are abundant evidences to prove that even the Moderates are becoming restive, particularly when they see the stupendous military expenditures. Dr. Gour, for instance, vehemently attacked the policy of Lord Rawlinson, commander-in-chief. Rawlinson urges the so-called Indian legislature to acquiesce in the expenditure of nearly 50% of the entire revenue for military purposes. No sane-minded Indian can advocate such a pernicious policy. Of course, the government will spend the money without any consideration whatever for Indian public opinion.

The British government has already dispatched several regiments of British troops to India, as they no longer trust the Indian soldiers. How far the Indian people is organized militaril can only be guessed from the various symphoms. Not long ago the Moplahs have fought very bravely, without any assistance from outside. Nearly a month ago the peasants in Chan Chauri Thana in the district of Rai Berrily in the United Provinces attacked the police and killed several of them. The heroic Sikhs of the Punjab are well organized and openly known as the *Akali Dal*. In their official organ, the *Akali Azad*, they have plainly repudiated the sophisticated claim of sovereignty of the British crown. The Sikhs are brave and well-versed in the arts of modern military science.

In the Ganlur district, Madras, the people are not paying any taxes to the government. Their slogan is no taxation to a government which is not their own. The consequences which follow from the refusal to pay taxes are not unknown to them. They are most assuredly prepared to fight the issue out.

The capacity of the Indians to organize their forces has been proven on several occasions. Even English newspapers like the "Statesman", published in Calcutta for the interests of the English government in India, admit the strength of the organized forces which are working for the emancipation of India. It states in its issue of November 18th, 1921: "To be perfectly frank, it must be admitted that the Indian city of Calcutta spent yesterday Nov. 17th, 1921) under the Gandhi-raj." That is the control of the city remained in the hands of the Indian people under the leadership of Gandhi. It was not only one city or one hamlet, the entire country was under the control of Gandhi and the non-cooperators on the day of arrival of the Prince of Wales.

The real situation in India is this: the movement has passed into the hands of the common people who are the backbone of society. A Congress proclamation pointed out:

"Clerks, lawyers and students may attend to their normal business, but the people, the real people of India, who are with the movement will refrain from work" (London "Daily Telegraph", Dec. 30th, 1921).

It gives a clue to the understanding of the heart of the Indian movement. It is not an exaggeration, to say that the movements in India are directly and indirectly controlled by the laboring masses. And the moment the masses take a thing in their own hands, they give it the finishing touch.

The English newspaper, the "Statesman", should therefore not be surprised that "there was little evidence of the existence of British rule."

The Amrita Bazar Patrika, an Indian paper, in its issue of Nov. 18th, 1921, truly says: "We do not expect that anything will open the eyes of the bureaucracy or Viceroy. But writ large on the *hartal* of Calcutta is—*Revolution*."

It goes on to say that the "nation has transferred its willing allegiance from British rule to its truly representative body, the National Congress."

These are the indications which may help us to see the effect of the arrest of Gandhi on future political developments in India.

The Indian laboring masses are awakened. They realize their potential strength. The revolutionaries who have followed the policy of watchful waiting will be forced to activity. Undoubtedly the British government is inciting other people to bring about a premature revolution, but the Indian people who have to depend on their own resources and strength, will know when to strike. Gandhi may come and Gandhi may go, but the revolutionaries are marching on. India is determined not only to make herself free but also to destroy the hegemony of the British Empire so that the millions of the toiling masses may breathe freely—economically, politically, and socially. The arrest of Gandhi looms large as a signal for coming startling events in the arena of Indian politics.

## THE LABOR MOVEMENT

### Unemployment Processions in Warsaw.

by L. Domski (Warsaw).

\*\* It is but natural that the wide-spread unemployment in Poland should embitter the masses. This indignation is all the more natural as neither the government nor the Sejm, where the social jingoes are very noisy, have done much to relieve the

hardships of the masses. For the hundred of thousands out of work\* the Sejm has voted the meagre sum of 8) million Polish marks while at the same time it granted to the capitalists, credits amounting to 40 billion Polish marks.

The indignation this policy had aroused in the masses vented itself in great processions of the unemployed who, naturally, are following the Communist slogans. In an attempt to divert the tide into the quieter channels of their party and pacify the masses with a resolution of protest and a deputation to the government, the social patriots of the P.P.S. called an unemployment meeting on February 25th. This well-conceived plan was, however, brought to naught by the Red Trade Union Federation which called its followers to a mass-meeting to take place at the same hour and at the same place as that of the P.P.S. because the section could never have obtained a permit for a meeting of its own. On the day of the meeting the social jingoes did not admit the Communists to the platforms which were guarded by a cordon of trusted hangers-on of the P.P.S. The workers, however, received the social-patriotic speakers with loud sneers and interrupted them repeatedly; the deputy Barlicki, especially, was prevented from finishing his address. When, however, the Communist deputy Lanzutski, who for want of a platform was raised upon the shoulders of the workers, addressed the meeting, he was enthusiastically applauded.

When the Social Democrats left the meeting place in order to demonstrate their disapproval of Comrade Lanzutski's speech, and walked to the government palace, they were followed by but a few hundreds. The many thousands remained around the now deserted platform and listened to Comrade Lanzutski finishing his speech.

The resolution adopted at the meeting demanded payment of an unemployment dole, trade relations with the Soviet republics and labor control over the allotment of the billions credit granted to the capitalists.

The next unemployment procession which took place on March 2nd had a somewhat more stormy ending. It began before the municipal labor bureau where a great number of unemployed had gathered. After having been addressed by a Communist speaker, these workers formed a procession which moved to the square in front of the theatre. Here again speeches were delivered, and the ever-swelling mass decided to march to the government palace. Hastily summoned police and mounted gendarm's were, however, at first unable to stem the tide of the angry masses, and had to wait for the arrival of a squad of mounted police to disperse the crowds.

The bourgeois press which has taken alarm at the stormy demonstrations of the unemployed, clamors for anti-Communist measures. And not in vain—a number of arrests were effected on the occasion of the last procession. In view of the extent of unemployment (which so far has only decreased in the textile industry), persecutions of Communists will prove an ineffectual means to pacify the enraged masses.

## Progress of the Lockout in Denmark.

by Sigvald Hellberg (Copenhagen).

The slogans of the trade-unions given out for the present lockout have been followed by all workers including those employed in industries where a counter-strike had been called. Public and trade-union meetings have nearly unanimously expressed themselves in favor of a general strike. A number of provincial organizations have sent delegations to the central body in Copenhagen demanding that a general strike be called.

The central body which represents 280,000 workers does its utmost to sabotage this request. A large majority of labor had declined the proposed compromise; the Communist speakers' demand for "united front for defensive" nearly everywhere met with the approval of the workers. The trade-union Executive in Copenhagen, however, steadfastly refused to bow down to the wishes of labor, but again took up negotiations with the employers, and after one week on February 10th submitted the following new proposals for a compromise:—

1—The extension of working hours in the building trades, contained in the compromise of February 3rd which was rejected by labor, is to be postponed for the time being and the eight-hour problem is to be referred to a commission of representatives of both the employees and the employers, that is, that the settlement of the question is to be delayed for a few months.

\* According to the last report of the Minister of Labor, their number is 300,000, a figure which, it is safe to say, is far below the actual number.

2—The extra pay for the first two hours of overtime (which so far was 50%) is not to be 25%, as stated in the first compromise but higher (very probably 30%).

3—The (according to the index figure) varying wage resolved upon in the first compromise is to be interpreted that the first 6% in either the increase or the decrease of the standard of living should not be followed up by either an increase nor a reduction of wages.

As early as on the afternoon of February 10th the employers met and decided to decline the new compromise proposal; they are determined to have the first proposal accepted and in this count upon the assistance of the majority in the trade-union executive who had already advised the workers to assert to the first proposal and will now do their utmost to avert a general strike. For these reasons the employers trust that they can compel the workers to accept the first compromise.

Nothing certain is known as to the next steps of the reformist labor leaders. The employers have already decided upon a new lockout which will affect 100,000 workers. Labor demands that the executive call the general strike.

The passive attitude of the workers will almost certainly result in their defeat. Unemployment doles are only being paid in some industries and there only to those who had been out of work two months previous to the lockout.

The Communists continue to advocate active defensive tactics.

## The Struggles of the German Agricultural Proletariat.

by H. Rau.

\*\* There is a strong ferment in the German agricultural proletariat. Its standard of existence can be said to be the worst of the entire proletariat. The wages of farm-hands are extremely low, they range between 800 and 1200 marks yearly. Even the new agreements signed by the German Federation of Agricultural Laborers raise the wages scarcely above this amount. The maximum wages amount to from 13000 to 14,000 marks yearly. A contrast with the minimum standard of existence as determined by Dr. Kuczynski shows how insufficient these amounts are. The calculations of Kuczynski are based on the prices during February of this year, in the meantime a new rise in prices has begun.

The dissatisfaction of the agricultural proletariat is not alone due to the question of wages but above all to the miserable housing conditions, to the increasing disciplinary punishments of the "agitators", the long hours of labor (2800-2900 hours a year), the unlimited amount of overtime work that can be demanded according to the agreements, the outlawing of Workers' Committees, the arbitrary rule of the owners of the estates. In its new agreements the German Union of Agricultural Laborers has not done away with these evils, in fact, has not even tried to do away with them.

Why does the Union not dare to solve the problems in the interest of the farm-hands? This can be explained by the union of the Central Committee of the Federation with the Employers' Federations in the "National Working Alliance of Agricultural and Lumbering Employers' and Employees' Associations". In this alliance the Social Democratic Central Committee backs up the demands of the agrarian capitalists, which are stated in a so-called "relief work". The supposed "relief work" for the purpose of doing away with the economic and financial distress of the German people is however nothing more than an aid to German agrarian capital, for the demands of the same purpose: the removal of all governmental regulation of food industries, tax privileges for agrarian capital, "law and order", and protection against interference with the production of food products. For these demands the Social Democrat Georg Schmidt sounds the call for a "united front of agricultural employees and employers". In the agreement mentioned above one reads the following:

"By means of its own strength and its own means the entire German rural economy shall carry on the mighty relief work (!) for the rescue of the German national economy (!) and in a continuous cooperation of employers and employees shall bring about an increase of production sufficient to safeguard the national food supply. The National Working Alliance of Agricultural and Lumbering Employers' and Employees' Unions, too, is filled with this will to help. Its aim is to strengthen and preserve the united front of agricultural economy by means of harmonizing the interests of all employers and employees in the agricultural industry."



It is clear that the Central Committee of the Laborers' Federation by this declaration opposes every struggle of the agricultural laborers for a betterment of their standard of living. In accordance with this are its orders to the various provincial and district leaders of the Federation. The agricultural proletariat will however not be able to get higher wages or abolish the evils mentioned above without a struggle against their exploiters, against agrarian capital.

At the same time the agricultural laborers know from the experiences of their past struggles, that a struggle on their part can only be successful if they lead it unitedly. This is especially true now that they do not alone have the employers as their enemies but also have an enemy in their rear, due to the treachery of the trade union bureaucracy. The inevitable struggle of the agricultural laborers thus will have to be carried on under very trying circumstances.

To overcome the opposing elements is the work of the inter-fractional agricultural conferences that have already taken place and are still taking place in almost all of the large agrarian districts of Germany. Typical of the spirit of the agricultural workers is a statement of a farm-hand organized in the Federation (D. L. V.) at the conference of the functionaries of the "Free Agricultural Workers Union" and the D. L. V. held at Halle on the 5th of March. He said, "Economic necessity forces us agricultural laborers into an united front". The united front that the agricultural laborers are creating includes the laborers organized in the Christian Agricultural Workers' Federation as well as those in the D. L. V. and in the "Union" and also the unorganized. Against the orders of the bureaucracy of the D. L. V. the agricultural workers are forming a united front not with the employers, as Georg Schmidt recommends, but a united front against the employers, an united front for struggle. The leadership of this movement of the coming struggle lies in the hands of committees elected by the agricultural workers at their conferences, which are composed of agricultural workers without regard to party or trade-union affiliation.

The agricultural laborers in the whole are conscious that their struggle does not alone deal with economic questions, but that it will be of great political importance. Because it means to ward off the attacks against their right to organize, attacks that are covered in the so-called relief action with the word: "protection against interference with production", i. e. denial of the right to strike. Because it means to struggle against the tax privileges of agrarian capital, in order not to be burdened to a still greater extent by taxes. The struggle is thus also against the government that suppresses the railroad workers, against the government that robs them of their right of organization. At the same time the struggle is led against the policy of working alliances, against the peace policy of the Social Democratic trade-union leaders.

From all this one can conclude that the coming struggle of the agricultural laborers will surpass all the past ones as far as bitterness and determination are concerned and that they demand the fullest sympathy and support of the industrial proletariat. Common interests bring the agricultural and the industrial proletariat together; the work of the Communists will be to further the common struggle.

## IN THE INTERNATIONAL

### The United Front and the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia.

by Alois Neurath (Prague).

\*\* In 1920 the Czech class-conscious workers parted from their social patriotic leaders, in March 1921 the German proletarians followed, and during the end of November of the same year the German and Czech class-conscious proletarians united into the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia. The C.P.C. is now able to organize the revolutionary struggle of the working-class without being exposed to the sabotage of the opportunists and social patriotic leaders. Every worker who is only superficially acquainted with the political struggle of the last six years understands very well that the split of the old social-imperialistic political parties forms the most primitive prerequisite for the revolutionary class-struggle.

When we issued the slogan of the proletarian united front, the trade-union and socialist papers represented the situation as if the Communists were merely interested in forming new watchwords, in order by this method to win the proletariat for

its political actions. But our delegates have not let an occasion slip by without showing the workers that all of their so-called social and political gains are in danger, that the capitalists are attacking the eight-hour day, and that they are preparing a general cut in wages. Last year at the time that the conflict in the metal industry began, we told the workers that the capitalists would not yield if they saw that they only had to do with the metal workers. If it were not possible to get several other large trade-unions to show solidarity in practice, then the arrogance of not only the capitalists in the metal industry, but of all the rest of the exploiters could not be kept in bounds. The Right Socialist trade-union leaders and the Social Democrats made fun of our slogans; but at the end of the struggle the workers were forced to understand that we had been right. Then came the struggle of the financial magnates against the bank employees. The Communists told the proletariat that without doubt the bank employees would also be defeated if larger groups of manual workers did not come to their aid. Again the trade-union leaders tried to discredit our attitude. The workers, however, saw two things: first, that their trade-union leaders and their Right Socialist parliamentarians carried on negotiations with the government and formulated a few phrases about solidarity with the struggling bank employees, and second, that the struggle, however, ended just as the Communists had predicted. Before Christmas 1921, the decisive group of capitalists, the *mine barons*, began the attack. The Communists said: "This struggle is decisive. If the mine owners win, then the advance of the entire bourgeoisie of Czecho-Slovakia cannot be stopped, and your defeat is inevitable." The slander of the Right Socialists was in vain. In large meetings the workers expressed their attitude, demanded the extension of the struggle and for the present the general strike of the miners. The capitalists hesitated. They postponed the struggle. In the meantime war was declared against the state employees and they were defeated. They, too, had been left without any support.

And now began (the beginning of February) the great struggle in the mining industry. The problem was now to show in what way the extension of the struggle and the defensive front could be prepared and achieved in practice. As soon as the united front is mentioned, the Socialists of the Right try to shift the basis of discussion. They do not speak of the struggle and its organization but of the bureaucratic prerequisites for a proletarian united front and of the preparation and organization of a "proletarian congress" and the like. The mistrust of the workers (and in this case not alone of the Communist workers) is immediately aroused when they hear of new bureaucratic institutions. The workers ask: "The capitalists want to diminish our income, that is, lower our standard of living, increase our misery. What can we do against them?" The demand for a proletarian congress is rejected. Our party and our delegates pointed to the last struggles and said to the miners:

"The entire bourgeoisie and the government with all the powers of the state are standing behind the mine owners. If you are defeated, then a decrease in wages will follow in all the other branches. You will be defeated, if you, as miners, are forced to remain alone in the struggle. You can only repulse the attack of the capitalists if your front is broadened to include the workers of other vital trades and industries, especially the workers of the transit and transport industries. It is therefore your business to force your leaders to prepare the struggle and so prevent a definite defeat."

We went to the Right Socialist trade-union organizations and all the Socialist parties and told them essentially what we had explained to the workers. In order to deprive the demagogues of the Right beforehand of all excuses we declared from the beginning that we did not put up a single political demand. We do not speak of the struggle for political power, nor of the Third International, we merely are speaking of those things that are for the proletariat at present the most decisive, namely, of the aim of the bourgeoisie to restore the productive apparatus of the capitalist economic system at the cost of the workers and of law we can prevent this aim. The Social Democrats in the Trade Union Executive and the Socialist parties became extremely embarrassed. The Czech trade-union leaders and the Right Socialists, by far smarter and sharper than the German separatists, answered our letters, after the struggle was nearing its end or ended. The German separatists did not give any answer at all, all the more did they rage in their political newspapers and their trade-union journals.

Have the workers understood us?

Completely. They have above all understood—and that was the most important—that we are really serious, that we really want to build up a united front. They have seen and they will feel it still more clearly now, that everything that we have

said about the struggle, about its course, about its end, is entirely correct and above all they recognize very clearly that this shameful end could have been prevented, if the trade-union leaders had respected our proposals.

A conference of the secretaries and delegates of the miners, which took place in Prague, accepted the agreement which had been made by the coal barons and the trade-union leaders. We have already reported here about this agreement, and shown how cleverly the defeat had been covered up. However, when the delegates came home, they were received with great indignation, especially in Mährisch-Ostrau, the most important coal district of Czecho-Slovakia. In a vote taken at the pits, 90 % of the workers voted against the agreement. Only gradually as the results of the agreement begin to make themselves shown, as for instance, is the case in the Falkenau district, do the workers recognize the extent of the defeat.

During the last months the wage earners without regard to their political affiliations have seen that the C.P. has honestly tried to bring about all the necessary prerequisites for the trade-union leaders and the Right Socialists to prevent our endeavors. Before the outbreak of the next struggle the workers will want to decide in time if and how the front of the wage earners shall be extended. Whether or not it will suit the trade-union leaders, they will have to, willingly or unwillingly, sit down together with us and seriously talk about the organization of the struggle. The workers will also see to it that such only trade-union leaders will be sent to the conferences as they can trust. In this way, that united proletarian front will gradually develop which will not alone be able to repulse the attack of the capitalists but itself begin an attack. A few dozen or a few hundred bureaucrats cannot build up a united front at proletarian conferences and congresses; this united front will not be able to be anything else than the fruit of long drawn-out struggles and bitter experiences.

## The Communist Movement in the Dutch East Indies.

by Gerard Vanter (Amsterdam).

\*\* The enormous significance of the national revolutionary movement in British India is further enhanced by the echo which these events are awakening over the whole of Asia. The situation in British India itself is such that a reporter of the "Times" is induced to write as follows:—

"No one can look optimistically to the future. It is impossible to see how difficulties equivalent to a catastrophe are to be finally avoided."

From a capitalist standpoint this pessimistic view is fully justified. It is an acknowledged fact that at the moment there is only one English industry in a really flourishing condition, and that is the machine manufacturing industry, which is chiefly occupied in supplying machines to British India for the textile industry.

The Dutch bourgeoisie, like the English, is anxiously endeavoring to suppress by force the slightest revolutionary stirring among the East Indian proletariat. For years the Dutch capitalists have been trying, by the most impudent and brutal measures, to destroy the organizations of the Indian workers, to suppress their newspapers, and to silence their leaders. All such recourse to force has failed to accomplish its purpose; on the contrary, the revolutionary movement is spreading more and more.

At Christmas 1921 the Congress of the P.C.I. (Communist Party of the Indonesian archipelago) was held at Semarang. The chairman, Comrade Malaka, after welcoming the 2000 persons present, expressed his pleasure that the *Sarekat Islam* (the religiously tinged economic revolutionary Indonesian organization) had also declared themselves prepared to join the Communist Party in mutual activity. Comrade Hadja Koesomo, speaking in the name of the *Sarekat Islam*, said that: "The enemies of the Communists are the enemies of the *Sarekat Islam*."

In the Indonesian islands the exploited are thus already forming their united front.

The readiness of the younger generation to take part in the struggle was well shown by the numerous children of the *Sarekat Islam* school, who, clad, in their red trousers, greeted the members of the congress with an ovation, singing the "International" with the utmost enthusiasm.

How far the movement has spread beyond the boundaries of the Indonesian archipelago was demonstrated by a telegram bearing fraternal greetings to the All-India Congress in Delhi. This telegram was signed by the P.C.I., the *Sarekat Islam* (Semarang section), the Executive of the *Sarekat Islam*, and by both the trades union executives.

The Indonesian government, as representative of the Dutch, has however not been at a loss for an answer. One of the most popular native revolutionists, the teacher Malaka, who had demonstrated the absurdity and untenableness of the bourgeois parliamentary system in his pamphlet "Parliament or Soviet", had to pay for this by being delivered into the hands of the law. The same fate was shared by our Dutch comrades Bergsma and Dekker. The former is president of the railwaymen's trade union and editor of the journal "Het Vrye Woord" and "De Volharding". The latter is also on the committee of the above named organization. Despite the great popularity of these three comrades, the Dutch government has also not hesitated to trample underfoot the sense of justice of the broad masses of the Indonesian people.

The Communist Party of Holland is faced by the difficult task of filling the gaps, for the Dutch government refuses to grant these comrades, as Communists, passports enabling them to enter the Indonesian archipelago.

The Dutch Communist Party intends, if possible, to set up a popular Indonesian as candidate in the coming parliamentary election in Holland, so that the voice of the down-trodden and oppressed Indonesian people may be heard from a public tribune.

Unless all signs fail, the time is not far distant when the exploited masses of the Dutch colonies will rise, as the masses are now rising in British India.

## RELIEF FOR RUSSIA

### Nansen on the Famine in Russia.

\*\* Having returned from Soviet Russia, the famous Norwegian recently delivered a lecture on his observations in the famine districts at a large meeting in Stockholm arranged by the Swedish Red Cross. It was mainly a bourgeois audience, in part Social Democratic ministers, Riksdag and municipal deputies; the meeting was presided by the mayor of the capital who stated in his introduction, "that experience had proved that all that had been collected had arrived at its destination in good order, and that the rulers of Russia keep their promises". Nansen's words on the ability of the capitalist states to help, on the superabundance of food products in America as well as his emphasis on the guiltlessness of the Soviet government concerning the catastrophe of nature is a complete confirmation of what we Communists have so often said. He stated:

"If we look around in the world at present, we see everywhere misery and unemployment. But that what has happened to Russia, is much more, something that is terrible beyond comparison in the history of mankind. Last fall I stood before the most representative world conference in Geneva and asked for aid for Russia. I emphasized that without aid the peasants would not be able to get a sufficient amount of seed grain. I urgently appealed to the Powers, that it was the duty of the governments to render aid. It was merely a sum of £5,000,000, but no one would consent. Months have passed since then and now the calamity in its entire extent has come upon Russia. Millions and millions are without food for themselves and their domestic animals. And the most tragic thing is that beyond the frontiers of Russia there is a superabundance of grain. In America there is so much wheat that one does not know what to do with it. In South America locomotives are being fired with corn cobs.

"In one respect the situation in Europe is much more than before: *Not alone is the famine raging this year, but it will also rage during the next year* if seed as well as food for the draft animals is not supplied. The time at our disposal is very limited. Last September the chances were much better since at that time the canals of the Volga could be used for the transport. Now, however, the transport difficulties are so great that millions of human beings are hopelessly lost, even if we receive money. Instead of a comparatively small district we have now a famine area along the Volga twice as large as France and with a population of 33 million human beings. Even if help should be sent, 5-6 millions cannot be saved; they are doomed to die.

"The reasons why the statesmen of Europe did not want to help were generally that through this aid for Russia the Soviet government would be strengthened, that no safe guarantees are given against the seizure of the relief consignments by the Bolsheviki and that the condition of Europe is so desperate that no government could go beyond its borders

to aid other countries. It is unreasonable to let millions of Russians die of starvation merely because one is against the Soviet Regime. The Soviet government bears no direct guilt for the famine. The only real cause is the drought. This afflicted Russia last year more than ever before. In Samara the rain during the most important months of April, May and June amounted to merely seven millimeters. During the serious drought of 1911 it still amounted to 32 millimeters and in normal years to 100-120 millimeters.

"I can further testify that the relief work was carried on strictly according to the agreements which I had made with the Soviet government. The agreement has not been broken in any way. The talk about plundering and robberies is not true. Such reports were fabricated by a corrupt agency in Helsingfors. I am very sorry about the propaganda that was carried on to prevent aid for Russia. I had no fear that the Soviet government would not fulfill its obligations. I much more feared that it would no longer be possible to bring aid to the starving, especially to the children. However, if that does not succeed, the Volga valley, which was once the grain store house of Europe, will become a desert country. One can thus say that for the European nations it is even a good business transaction to give aid. None of the reasons which were given against aid will stand a close examination. It is asked, 'Why does not the Soviet government save its own people?' The Soviet government has done more than one generally imagines. Thus during the fall about 13,000,000 poods of winter seed were imported. The government supports 2,250,000 people in the famine district. It has spent 150,000,000 gold roubles for the struggle against the famine. In America summer wheat was bought for great sums of money. These things are thus not trifles that the government has accomplished. One of the most terrible remembrances of my last visit there was the visiting of villages where for instance, we had food for 500 children while 1000 others were doomed to die because the food reserves were not sufficient. Last September I asked for £5,000,000. Now I come to ask the people of Europe to get £3,000,000 from their governments. With this sum we could do what still can be done. That is why I am now making a final desperate attempt. Two months ago I spoke at Geneva about the struggle against the winter and famine which was ahead of Russia. But the famine that is now raging in the Volga valley is much more terrible than I had thought. I was prepared for misery but not for inhabitants of entire villages sitting, waiting for death—too weak to get food. I was prepared to see human beings suffering, but what I saw here cannot be expressed in words. *A month ago, corpses were dug out of graves in order to devour them.* Now the condition is worse. Terrible things have happened.

These terrible things I want to bring before the eyes of the peoples of Europe and these peoples must influence their governments. The situation is such that some day we shall have to justify ourselves before our children. The angel of death is passing along the Volga and is raging worse than during the war. *Let us act before it is too late.*"

## An Important Question

by Steklov (Moscow).

### I.

\*\* The order of the day of the session of the enlarged executive contained as a separate question the new economic policy of Soviet Russia. That is entirely correct, since the social experiences of Soviet Russia should be used and critically examined by the entire vanguard of the international proletariat. Since the existence and well-being of the Soviet Republic are of such importance for the proletariat of the world, the enlarged executive also treated the question of the struggle against the famine in Russia. The enlarged executive also passed a corresponding resolution.

As soon as we conceived of the thought of calling upon the help of the international proletariat we determined that compulsory wage deductions are the best form of assistance. We have recommended the introduction of the donation of a day's wages: wherever possible by all trade-union or politically organized workers. We have explained that in case of its realization, this measure would secure us considerable sums which we could not receive by means of voluntary gifts, etc. Without rejecting this latter means of collection, we pointed out that it would probably be of merely secondary importance.

Unfortunately it was just this less purposeful method that was adopted. True, at first news appeared in the press about the decisions of various labor groups and various trade-unions

according to which their members were forced to donate a day's wage, or an hour's pay per week. But now one hardly hears anything of such measures. At any rate they were not common occurrences. We know of no case so far that international or national trade-unions or Socialist Parties, or even red trade-unions or Communist Parties have realized the principle of the obligatory deduction of a day's wages from the wages of their members. A short time ago, the news appeared that in France, for instance, taking everything together only something over 1,000,000 francs had been collected, that in Germany still less had been collected, etc. If however, the Communist Party of France had imposed upon its members a contribution of one day's wages for the starving in Russia, we would have received at least 300,000 francs. If the French Red trade-unions had done the same we would have received 4—5,000,000 francs more. One could thus figure upon 10,000,000 francs by means of a compulsory tax without including the voluntary contributions of the workers organized in the Communist Party or in the Red trade-unions, i. e. the majority of the French workers; about the same thing can be said about Germany, Italy and other countries.

Of course, I do not intend to disparage the sacrifices that our foreign comrades have made in spite of the very serious economic crisis under which they are suffering, and that they will probably make in the future. But since we are speaking as comrades to comrades, I want to tell the truth openly, and I maintain that not everything possible has been done in this field. The cause does not lie in a lack of comradeship, solidarity, etc., but in the incorrect way of gathering the contributions. It is easily possible that the method proposed by me cannot be realized for some reason or other. But then these reasons must be stated in order to try to overcome them. At any rate it is easy to carry out the compulsory contributions at least in the Communist parties.

It will be of great value if the foreign comrades who have come together from all countries discuss this problem.

## THE COUNTER REVOLUTION

### The Social Revolutionary Directory of 1918.

by Victor Serge (Kiev).

\*\* The history of the Russian counter-revolution, infuriated by four years of war against the workers, defeated ten times, resuming the attack ten times with the cooperation of international reaction, is full of material for the militant Communist (and still more for the militant revolutionary whom experience and study have not as yet led to Communism). We are enabled to study this history through a number of documents which have just been published. I am taking the liberty of commenting on it in a few pages; and this article will contain a summary of the memoirs published on the Social Revolutionary government of 1918, which began the civil war. The work which I have studied comes from the pen of a Social Revolutionary who attended the Ufa Conference, V. L. Utgoff<sup>1</sup>. He has come to some interesting conclusions on the inevitableness of the dictatorship and the role of the middle classes parties in the revolution.

November 1917. — After less than one week of struggle in the big cities, the revolution was accomplished, bringing to the people of Europe peace, giving to the peasants and workers of Russia, the land, the factories, the shops, liberty and the future. Hardly any bloodshed! No extraordinary disciplinary measures. No death penalty. The army demobilized itself. The police disappeared. All the power was with the Soviets without even pronouncing the word "dictatorship". That was too good to be true. The class war was preparing and began. The disintegration of the old society did not bring to life a new world; but civil war.

The technicians were on strike or sabotaged. The Allied missions were hot-beds of espionage and conspiracy. There was but one thought—reestablishing the old order. The bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie organized and conspired. A big party of the middle classes called "Social Revolutionaries" armed itself for reaction. German imperialism asked itself whether it should destroy Red Russia by treading it underfoot, and while parleying and making peace, occupied the fertile Ukraine, made inroads on Central Russia and prepared an attack on Petrograd. Assassinations took place; former Social Revolutionaries killed Bolshevik commissars.

The civil war began with the revolt of the Czecho-Slovak troops. This revolt was the work of the Allied missions, and of

<sup>1</sup> Appeared in Byloé (The Past) No. 16, Petrograd 1921.

a secret society of royalists and Social Revolutionaries (*The Union for the Safety of the Country and of Liberty*). M. Novikins instigated the insurrection of Yaroslav. At Samara the members of the Constituent Assembly formed a government . . . . In order to understand the enormous difficulties which the Russian revolution in its creative work had to encounter each day for some years, in order to call to mind the tragic social disintegration which gave birth to the proletarian state, it is sufficient to realize that at this epoch, White Russia was spread around a Red Russia still without an army and practically without administration.

In September 1918, V. L. Utgoff relates that there were no less than a score of governments in Russia. 1—At the center, the government of the Soviets which was to be overthrown at any price; 2—the government of the Northern regions; 3—the government of the Don; 4—the Kuban government; 5—the Committee of the Constituent Assembly of Samara; 6—the Committee of the Constituents of Kama; 7—the autonomous government of Turkestan; 8—the government of the Caspian regions; 9—the Bashkir government; 10—the Cossack government of the Urals; 11—the government of the Urals (Ekaterinburg); 12—the government of Western Siberia; 13—the corps of Semenov; 14—the government of the Far East, formed by M. Houvat; 15—the government of Transbaikal; 16—the government of M. Derber (Far East); 17—the Duma of Vladivostok; 18—the Siberian government (military government); 19—the National Council of Czecho-Slovak troops; 20—the Autonomous Council of the region of Yakutsk. And the Turco-Tartars dispersed in Russia also obeyed a National Council, which had great influence. Six states were formed in the region occupied by German troops: 1—the Ukraine; 2—Crimea; 3—White Russia; 4—Lithuania; 5—Latvia; 6—Estonia. Five states were detached from Russia and enjoyed real independence: 1—Georgia; 2—Armenia; 3—Circassia; 4—Poland; 5—Finland.

The map of feudal Germany around 1300 is scarcely more parcelled out. And it was in this chaos, when the bandits made and remade governments every day, that the Communist republic had to defend its existence, directly threatened in the South by the occupation of the Ukraine (the most important wheat granary), in the East by the White governments of Samara, Ufa and Omsk, who occupied and devastated the country of the Volga, the Urals and Western Siberia (the second wheat granary). With these conditions what did the revolution need in order to exist? An army — but an army which, different from those of the counter-revolutionary generals would be an army of the people, permeated with a new spirit and new customs, formed by one class for the defense of that class—a red army. And in back of this army there had to be a powerful mechanism of administration and organization, centralized and provided with formidable means of interior defense, in order to survice the permanent plotting which was going on everywhere—there had to be a proletarian state, the instrument of revolutionary dictatorship.

I submit these thoughts to the militants whose legitimate aversion for the army and the State sometimes renders them unjust to the Russian Revolution.

The enemies of the revolution needed the same weapons—an army, a dictatorship. They looked for them. That could be seen from the first attempts that they made to organize themselves in a body, at the Conference of the State of Ufa (opened Sept. 8, 1918).

The majority of the Russian governments were represented there. A large number of Social Revolutionaries (Volsky, Vedeniapin, Fortunatov, Rakitnikov, Minor, Avksentiev, Breshko-Breshkovskaya) met with Mensheviks (Lepski, Mayski, Kibrik), Cadets, royalist generals and the reactionary adventurers of all kinds. That was indeed the united front of reaction.

In opposition to the Social Revolutionaries representing the petty bourgeoisie and who, still haunted by their dream of a Parliamentary Democracy, wished the formation of a Constituent government, the Cadet L. A. Krol demanded:—

“A power strong, supreme, personal, uncontrollable and irresponsible”.

“For”, he said, “great tasks demand great resolutions”. In other words, safety for the bourgeoisie lies only in a military dictatorship.

The Conference of Ufa did not accept this proposal from the very first. The Social Revolutionaries, intellectual and already Parliamentary elements, coming from the middle class, whose interests can scarcely be adapted to the reign of the sabre and absolutism, preferred their own proposal. While the Red Army drove the White forces back to the crest of the Urals, took Simbirsk (Sept. 8th), Kazan, even Samara (Sept. 18th—25th), the Ufa Conference formed a Directory composed of one Cadet (N. I. Astrov), one Liberal general (Boldrev), one S. R. (Avksen-

tiev), the old Populist-Socialist Tchaikovsky and a representative of the Siberian government, Vologodski. In reality the Social Revolutionaries had the decisive influence. Among their ministers there was an admiral—Koltchak.

This Directory was not destined to have a long life. Admiral Koltchak was soon going to stop it, and in proclaiming himself “Supreme Ruler”, to realize the inevitable military dictatorship. The causes of this evolution must be noted.

The influence of the Social Revolutionaries rested partly on the temporary support of the Czecho-Slovak troops who had a “democratic” state of mind. In fact the Directory relied upon these proletarians and when they failed, it fell. *The Social Revolutionaries had no men*. Their inability in matters of organization was such that as Ministers they had to resort to the services of the most inferior and unsound specialists in order to maintain a semblance of order in their departments<sup>1</sup>. This startling intellectual poverty of the party of the middle classes is significant. It was an addition to their weakness of character: They had no more energetic leaders than administrators. In the atmosphere of conspiracy, of intrigue, of violence and murder, which prevailed then in the Urals and in counter-revolutionary Siberia, the S. R. leaders needed, above all, good will and energy.

The secret societies of officers sapped their influence; Bolshevik propaganda spread among the poorer classes; the atrocities of the reprisals detachments exasperated the peasants. The Directory was strangely passive.

However, its Minister of Justice elaborated a law, creating special tribunals consisting of three judges appointed to office, having extremely extensive rights, and exclusively charged with the fight against revolutionary propaganda and the internal enemy, with the right to sentence to death.

Thus the Social Revolutionary Directory instituted the terror. But it did not have the license to apply it. More energetic reactionaries wrested the power from its hands, and caused torrents of blood to flow in the whole of Siberia.

When Koltchak had accomplished his *coup de force* V. L. Utgoff met a high S.R. officer who presented the situation in these words: “We could arrest Koltchak and his friends. But who will take over the power then? The same Volskys, the same Tcherenovs who are so utterly incapable of holding it?”

Incapable and weak, what did the Social Revolutionaries think of the government of Ufa? “They wanted coalition with the bourgeoisie at any price.” For them the national question surpassed all others. They maintained that the economic and political reconstruction of Russia was impossible without the cooperation of the bourgeoisie. In their eyes “historic necessity would restore the bourgeoisie to power” as one of the Constituents wrote. The “grandmother of the revolution”, Breshko-Breshkovskaya, allied herself to this lamentable ideology. For this cause the “Social Revolutionaries” would have carried on, if they had any energy, a systematic regime of terror against the workers!

In 1918, parcelled-out Russia, where civil war broke out in all parts, desired by international reaction, was between two dictatorships. Reaction and revolution cannot conquer except by these old means: the army, the state, the law of the strongest. Red Russia was born in chaos surrounded by a world of enemies. It will live, it will conquer because it has the sympathy of the large masses of the workers and peasants, because it has—as is usual in history with the classes which progress—a élite body of men conscious of their historic task, intelligent, erudite, inexorable.

The Ufa Conference marked first attempt to oppose the revolution through the reactionary state, the united front of all the forces of the past. These attempts enlighten us upon the role of the party of the middle classes in the counter-revolution. This party appeared as the vanguard of reaction, for which its redundant phraseology, its famous ideology (Republicanism, Parliamentarism, Democracy, Socialism and ministerial coalition), particularly decisive in an epoch of social disorders, prepared the way. It was poor in men, weak, incapable of holding a power which it succeeded in taking through the prestige of democratic illusions, condemned to be ground between two forces: the revolutionary proletariat and the ancient military caste, the last rampart of the bourgeoisie. And since 1918 it has become evident that the fate of the revolution will be decided exclusively by the war between these two forces—an organized, methodical, merciless war, such as modern states wage.

<sup>1</sup> The criticisms of the incompetence of the leaders are extremely severe. “The Minister of Ways and Communications was unable to distinguish between a pressure guage and a coat-rack.” (Utgoff).