

# World Socialism

## POLAND, FRANCE, RUSSIA

By HERBERT ZAM

The series of one-day general strikes in Poland called by the Socialist Party, the "Bund" (Jewish Socialists) and the trade unions as a protest against the new electoral laws, have been highly successful. A

majority of the workers in Poland struck for periods varying from one to 24 hours. It was a significant act of labor solidarity against reaction and fascism.

In Warsaw a majority of the workers struck. The strike was complete among the metal, textile, chemical and building workers. In the munitions factories the strike lasted one or two hours. A large number of the tramway workers also struck. The strike was 100 per cent effective among the Jewish workers, the result of the influence of the Bund.

In Lodz, Byalistok, and other industrial centers and in many agrarian communities the strike was also effective, a conclusive demonstration by the working class, peasantry and national minorities of their opposition to the new "election" laws.

### More to Left

The strike further indicated the strength and influence of the Socialist Party. At its last convention the Party moved definitely to the left, replaced the extreme right wing leadership with a more left leadership and adopted a series of left resolutions. Since then it has ceased all collaboration with the government and has become the outstanding opposition party in the Sejm (parliament).

As a result of this new position, the Party has been rapidly growing and gaining in influence and prestige among the workers. The Bund (Jewish Socialists) is also a left wing organization, and has a great influence among the Jewish workers and middle class.

The tremendous opposition to the new electoral laws generated among the population has been reflected in parliament, where the government had expected the adoption to be a mere formality. Instead the opposition is fighting every inch of the way and is effectively exposing the government's plans. At times the debate became very turbulent, and several deputies, particularly Communists, were expelled. The Socialist substitute (for free popular elections and proportional representation) was defeated; but the vote is very interesting. There were 70 votes for it, 216 against it, 124 absentions and 34 ballots were void!

### Without Majority

On the final vote the government project carried, receiving 211 votes. Only 89 voted against, 7 ballots were void and some 140 deputies did not vote at all. Thus, the "democratic" revision of the constitution was achieved. Even without a majority, the government enforces its will upon parliament.

During the debates the Socialist deputy Chapinski created a sensation by showing that the report of the government on the electrical laws was taken verbatim from a book written in 1896 by Pobledonosteff, arch reactionary, right hand man of Alexander III and bitter enemy of Poland.

Chapinski concluded amid awed silence. "The Russian Tsar had his Pobledonosteff, and now Pobledonosteff has his Polish Tsar." The Socialists will continue the

fight against the government in and out of Parliament.

According to the new election laws, only some 300,000 people will be eligible to elect the Senate, which will have enormous power. Some 10,000,000 people will be eligible to vote for deputies to the Sejm. The Communist Party has addressed a proposal for a united front and a joint ticket to the Socialists, Bund and peasant parties. As a number of parties have already indicated their intention of boycotting the elections, the question of a united front is held in abeyance until it is decided whether to participate in, or to boycott, the elections.

### France

The enormous outpouring of the French masses on Bastille Day in demonstration against fascism show conclusively the effectiveness and value of the United Front. All

Greetings of solidarity were cabled the French Socialist Party on Bastille Day by the national executive committee of the Socialist Party of the United States.

those who were gloomily predicting that the united front would drive the middle class into the arms of fascism received a decisive answer in the adherence of the Radical Socialists liberals to the anti-fascist front after a good deal of vacillation. Had there been no powerful united working class center to attract the middle class, the fascist elements would have been victorious among the Radical Socialists.

The success of the united front in France will go a long way toward eliminating the Communist phobia from which many Socialists are still suffering and which was so ruinous in Germany. The victory of fascism is assured unless the forces of the workers can unite. And the Socialists must take the lead in this work of unification.

Further results of the united front in France are the negotiations which have begun for the re-establishment of trade union unity. Representatives of the CGT (Socialist led) and the CGTU (Communist led) are already meeting in Paris, and while there are many differences, it is almost certain that the negotiations will end successfully. It is interesting to remember that when the united front in France first began, the Socialist trade union leaders had great misgivings, and hung back. Now they have swung into the movement completely.

### Russia

Following upon the semi-liquidation of the Young Communist League, which in the future becomes a purely cultural organization, the Society of Former Political Prisoners was also liquidated. The formal reason was that it no longer had any functions, as the mutual assistance it had provided was being well taken care of by the government. The real reason, however, was indicated in an article in the "Bolshevik," official organ of the Communist Party, which accused the Society of glorifying the former fighters against czarism, especially the Narodniki.