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## POLITICS

### Soviet Russia and Genoa.

by Karl Radek.

Moscow, January 10, 1922.

#### The Invitation of the Soviet Government to the International Conference.

The conference of the Prime Ministers at Cannes decided to call an international conference in March, which is to deal with the question of the reconstruction of Europe. Soviet Russia was officially invited to this conference. Neither France nor the United States, whose representative, Ambassador Harvey, was present at the conference, raised any objection against this decision. This step signifies a great change in the international situation. The Supreme Council has finally and officially recognized what the greatest authorities among the economists of the capitalist world have said, namely, that without the participation of Soviet Russia there is absolutely no possibility of the reconstruction of the world's trade and industry. But this decision means still more; it recognizes the fact that the Allies who hoped against hope that the Soviet power might perhaps be overthrown by famine, have now realized the utter futility of such hopes and are convinced that the Soviet power is the only possible power in Russia. The leading political organ of France, the "Temps" is compelled to make the following statement: —

"Notwithstanding the crimes committed by the Soviet Government, it is nevertheless the only power which is now in a position to carry on the national policy of Russia. The Soviet Power defends the national independence of Russia against enemy attacks and against foreign intrigues; it speaks in the name of the Russian people".

This admission on the part of the leading organ of the intervention policy is an admission of the futility of that policy. It does not mean that the Entente will make no more attempts to overthrow us by force of arms, but it does mean that the Allies have realized the barrenness of all such plans and that they now want to conclude peace with us.

This decision on the part of the Allies is the result of three years' fighting and of one year's watchful waiting with the bayonet in hand, in expectation of an overthrow from within; it is the most important event in world politics. Furthermore it means that even with the extremely slow development of the world revolution, it proved impossible to destroy Soviet Russia, and that the breach we made in the government system of world capital in 1917 remains as such. A state of equilibrium is setting in. In the midst of a capitalist blockade and with such a slow development of the world revolution, Soviet Russia was not in a position to make progress on the field of socialist reconstruction. It was even compelled to retreat a step or two and to make greater concessions to world capitalism than it would otherwise have done even in petty-bourgeois Russia, had the proletariat of at least one industrial country come out victorious. But the capitalist governments are not in a position to undertake a fight against Russia. They are compelled to tolerate this workers' and peasants' country, and to seek a modus vivendi with it.

#### The Recognition of Soviet Russia.

The telegram in which the English government notified the Soviet Government of the Cannes decision to invite the Russian

representatives to an international conference reads that at this conference the conditions for recognizing the Soviet Government will be taken up if the latter so desires. This is only a subterfuge. The very invitation of Soviet Russia to an international conference which is to work out plans for a world economic reconstruction already means the recognition of the Soviet Power, if under certain conditions the latter is willing to assume the obligations which the capitalist powers believe are necessary to lay upon Russia in order to draw it into international trade. There is no special question of the recognition of the Soviet Power nor any special question of economic cooperation. The question of the recognition of the Soviet government is merely one of the conditions for loans and reparations and the security which the Soviet government will give for the loans, the payment of interest and for loan redemption. The Soviet government does not seek any moral diploma from the governments of Lloyd George, Briand or Harding, nor has it any use for the recognition of our virtue by governments which oppress their working masses. What we want are real, material relations with them, and it is just these relations that compel the capitalist governments to cease their agitation against Soviet Russia. Not so long ago the French government wanted to have nothing to do with us; in its hope that it would finally defeat us, it called the Russian gold "stolen gold" and labeled the Russian factories and mines as "expropriated" factories and mines. But from the very moment that the capitalists of all countries begin to realize that they cannot defeat us by force of arms, and begin to enter into actual relations with us, they are compelled to recognize our government, and to consider that which they will get from us not as stolen but as legal.

#### The Conditions for the Recognition of the Soviet Power.

The Soviet government can speak very openly and clearly of the conditions for its recognition; the more clearly and openly these conditions are made known to the whole world, the less chance will the March conference have of turning into a fiasco and ending in nothing.

To name these conditions would mean to call the attention of the entire capitalist world to the actual state of affairs in Russia. The Allies have mentioned the question of the recognition of the old debts. This question is more of legal than real significance, at any rate for the next few years. In the next few years, Soviet Russia will have no means of paying the old debts. Indeed, no government occupying the Kremlin would fare any better; every one of them would be compelled to say, "When the debtor is penniless, the bailiff is powerless". A White government would not be able to make gold out of paper, nor would it be in a position to take from the starving peasants grain and raw materials to the extent required for the payment of the old debts. The fact that in the last few weeks the question was raised as to which debts we recognize, is only an attempt to compel us to recognize any and all debts humanly possible. This attempt is only a tactical move. It is absolutely unimportant to make any classified table of debts. Only one thing is important; namely, whether the Allies will furnish Russia with credit sufficient to insure the economic reconstruction of Russia. Even if Soviet Russia were today to declare itself ready and willing to recognize 100 billion gold rubles of debts—and no one in this world knows how big Russia's debts are—the Allies would not benefit in the least by it, for they would only be getting a scrap of paper. Is there any one who now believes that, about 20 years from now Germany will still be paying debts? The Allies themselves do not yet know whether a year

from now they will not be compelled to cancel all debts among themselves. There is hardly an intelligent man in all the Allied countries who could prophesy what the relations of the powers and the prospects for the fulfilling of obligations which one government or another may have assumed will be ten years from now. The recognition of debts is to give this or that government a privilege in the concessions that are to be given as security for the loans which are now put at Russia's disposal for its economic reconstruction. The main task of the conference will be the determination of the amounts of the loans, the organizations that are to furnish them and the conditions upon which they will be made. Everything else is of secondary and diplomatic nature.

#### Soviet Russia and the Capitalist Powers.

The reentrance of Russia into world commerce and the fact that it is drawn into relations with the present system of government present a series of questions of a general and special nature. Is it possible to employ capital in its territory as long as the dictatorship of the proletariat exists? At first the Allies put certain conditions to us. They wanted to dictate to Russia certain changes in its system of government. Soviet Russia declared that it would not permit such intervention. The fact, therefore, that now the Allies say nothing about these conditions, shows that they are willing to take into consideration the fact that 150,000,000 Russians are not negroes of the Congo nor helpless like China (helpless for the present). It means that the Entente is beginning to wake up to the fact that although at the present moment the Soviet government and the Russian working class consider it necessary to draw upon foreign capital, the Allies will nevertheless be compelled to find or create the necessary legal forms or institutions for increasing production in Russia. This will happen as soon as the employment of foreign capital ceases to be a mere subject for newspaper discussions and becomes an accomplished fact. Capitalism existed under feudal power, under enlightened absolutism and in the democratic as well as in the oligarchical republic. Capitalism is capable of adapting itself to various conditions; it will also be compelled to reckon with the conditions existing in Russia, and it will only reckon with them if these political conditions are stable and as long as its profit is guaranteed. On the other hand the new economic policy and system of laws adopted by Soviet Russia present no rigid form. In Russia there will be no pure capitalism and no pure Communism; there will be no pure capitalism as long as the Soviet Power of peasants and workers exists, and there will be no pure Communism there as long as the international working class has not won its victory and as long as it does not manifest the real benefits of the Communist system of production.

Another general question of our relations to the capitalist powers concerns those enterprises which are beyond the powers of a single capitalist group and which require concerted action. Should such steps actually be undertaken, the Soviet Government would of course not reject them. The crux of the question is the following—under what conditions are the enterprises established and of what nature are they? Do these conditions threaten the independence of Russia or do they mean the enslavement of Russia? All negotiations for consortiums have so far been only of a theoretical nature. Firstly of all gigantic enterprises of this nature require billions. Without America an international consortium is an impossibility. But *does* America now intend to engage in such gigantic enterprises as may require the creation of an international association, and does it at all intend to participate in the reconstruction of Europe? On the 31st of March, 1921, the long-term loans of America amounted to \$16,000,000,000. The short-term debts amounted to \$7,500,000,000. The interest now due on American government debt is now more than \$1,000,000,000. In 1914 the total government debt of America amounted to less than \$1,000,000,000. The American budget for 1914 amounted to \$1,000,000,000. We thus see that America must now pay more interest on its debts in one year than its entire debt amounted to before the war, and more than the entire American pre-war budget. Under these circumstances the most important question for America is that of new taxes. The keynote of President Harding's inaugural address was mainly the question of reduced expenses. This necessity for reducing expenses was one of the main driving forces that led to the calling of the Washington Conference. At present it is very difficult in America to get credit for house building. First-class cities can obtain loans only with great difficulty. The so-called "Liberty Loan" is quoted very low on the Stock Exchange. America does not know how it can possibly receive the interest upon the loans made by it to the Allies; in the meanwhile they are being paid with American taxes. The financial situation in both England and France is very unfavorable. It is clear that the Entente

governments will hardly be in a position to make big government loans. But as soon as the question of drawing upon private capital comes up, every attempt is met with the troublesome problem of the currency in which this consortium is to make a loan. The British idea of a consortium has already met with loud protest because it proposed a loan on the basis of the English pound, thus crowding out France and Germany, for the English rate of exchange is considerably higher than the French one. It stirs us to laughter when we read in the Paris "Temps", that France will never agree to participate in financial enterprises which are intended to put the Russian people under the care of trustees and to cause it damage. The Soviet government is so much the less willing to agree to such operations.

#### The Tactics of the Entente.

No one will accuse the Soviet government of not clearly comprehending international politics or of not being aware of the benefits that may accrue in the speedy calling of the international conference for a solution of the disputes which may lead the way to the economic reconstruction of Russia. We are also able to appreciate the significance of the Allied request that the president of the Council of People's Commissars, Comrade Lenin, should participate in the international conference in person, on the ground that if he comes, all the Prime Ministers will attend and the matter will be taken care of quickly. Were we disposed to be humorous, we would say that until now the Allied gentlemen and their press have represented Lenin as the autocrat of all Russia; in such a case the reference to the Premiers is not quite in place. Under those circumstances it would be necessary for the American and French presidents and the King of England to participate in the conference as the equals of Lenin, the autocrat. But quite the contrary is true. The request that Lenin come personally is a tactical move whose purpose is self-evident. The Allies take it for granted that before the Soviet delegation makes any decisions, it must ask Moscow first; they take it for granted that Lenin decides questions independently. If Briand or Lloyd George meet a few bankers and decide upon a course of action, of course they can then do as they please, because the banks in question hold the press and the Parliamentary groups in their hands. But things are altogether different in the country where a workers' and peasants' democracy actually exists. There the President of the Council of People's Commissars is only an executive, and important decisions require not only that the voice of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee be heard, but in questions of special importance the calling of the Soviet Congress is required by law. The Allies should not labor under any illusions just because of the fact that at the public sessions of the Soviet Congress there was no opposition when the question of recognizing the debts came up. Many heated discussions took place in the communist caucuses as well as in the non-partisan group, and we can show the Allies reports from numerous provinces, and even from local Soviet Congresses, where a considerable part of the peasants protested very strongly against the burdening of the masses by the recognition of the debts. The Soviet government must take all this into consideration in all its negotiations. Perhaps the demands that the Allies will put to us and their concrete plans and suggestions will require that, during the negotiations, the authorities among the leaders of Soviet Russia be at the helm and in direct contract with working and peasant masses.

The international conference must take place as soon as possible, but it must be carefully prepared. If the countries in question are not to have called this conference in vain, they must see to it that the delegates of all countries have a clear idea as to what questions will be dealt with so that they can prepare the public opinion of their respective countries for the matter in question. The Tower of Babel of the Versailles Conference has had such results that now—"three days" after Versailles—the Allies have to call new conferences to deal with the economic reconstruction of the world. The lessons of Versailles must be given particular attention, because Russia is not in the same position as disarmed Germany was at Versailles.

## To the Working People of France and Germany

Men and women of the working people, brothers and sisters of Germany and France! Instead of the Rhine the blood-stream of the world war should divide you. Such is the desire of the rich and exploiters in both countries.

But, look you! The world war has welded you together in a common fate. In France as in Germany the working people mourn for hundreds of thousands of slaughtered sons, for millions of cripples and invalids. In France as in Germany the

working people threaten to break down under the load with which the world war has burdened their sore backs.

Men and women of the working-class of both countries! The necessity for the reparation of the crimes and devastation of the world war further bind you together in a common destiny. The world war was the crime of the capitalist classes, the imperialists of all countries, and it was at the same time a gigantic stroke of business for them. The restoration is to be another such, bringing the capitalists colossal profits. Pass through the devastated departments of France, and you have staggering proof of this before your eyes.

Yet after three years of capitalist "restoration", innumerable workers are herded together in miserable barracks and former dugouts, freezing, starving, without the means of human existence. What is restored, and the manner in which it is restored, is dictated singly and solely by the lust for profit of the exploiting capitalist cliques. So long as these cliques monopolize industry and the state, all those well-meant attempts to restore by means of special organizations and through the fraternal cooperation of the workers and clerks of France and Germany what the criminal war has destroyed are doomed to failure. Exploiting capital will not allow anything to reduce its profits. Only when its power in economic life and in the state has been broken down, will the working people on both sides of the Rhine be able in fraternal and creative work to take up the task of restoration on a large scale. They will, with their strong hands, tear asunder the fatal Versailles Treaty of the capitalist governments, and replace it by one of friendship and fraternity.

But up to now neither the working people of Germany nor of France have captured the power of the state; it is still their exploiters and oppressors that decide upon reparations and the work of reconstruction, while they have to look on with folded arms, and see how the victims of the war's injuries and crimes are delivered over to blackest misery and usury. Men and women of the working-class of Germany and France! You will have to put all your strength to the task, so that the laboring masses in the destroyed areas will at last be given help in their distressing need.

How can that be done? The Germans are not able to pay, as the people of France have been falsely deluded into believing. Lloyd George, the English Prime Minister, has declared that it is not possible to extract from Germany the gigantic sums fixed by the Treaty of Versailles. The Governor of the Bank of England has added "The German Empire is insolvent in the face of the terms of reparation imposed upon it. The German government itself has avowed its bankruptcy, declaring its inability to pay the total sum of gold due on the 15th of January."

What is to be done, however, if Poincaré should take the German nation by the throat with the iron fist of military measures to enforce the payment of the gold milliards fixed by the treaty. For the working people of France this would only mean the greatest misery and the most bitter privations. Germany cannot pay the reparations debt with its filthy paper-money. It has to buy currencies of high value. Speculators and usurers are in control of this market. The international circulation of money is staggering into the greatest chaos. As the value of the mark sinks, so falls that of the franc. High prices of the necessities of life mount to usurers' prices. That is not all. In the German Republic the uncrowned kings of the iron and steel industries and the bank magnates rule together with the Junkers. The reparations payments are not taken from the coffers of the rich. The government raises them by taxation of, and impositions on articles of consumption and transport charges, by reduction of wages and salaries from the scanty means of the working-class. In Germany usurers' prices synchronize with lowest wages and salaries. The Japanese coolie receives double the wage of a German proletarian. German goods are sold abroad for a mere song, for prices which acting as cannon balls smash the strongest tariff-walls. German goods go to England and to the United States as they go to France, competing with domestic industries. The starvation wages and salaries of the German working class depress the income of the workmen, clerks and officials of France. Through the sordid competition of German goods thousands upon thousands of workers in France are being deprived of employment and bread. Men and women of the working-class in France and Germany! What the possessing and ruling classes call repairing the evils of the war is but a perpetuation and aggravation of those evils for you. Protest against it! Lay upon the profiteers of both countries the grinding loads and consequences of the war. We appeal to you to defend the right of the victims of the gigantic crime of the capitalists, your own right, to bread and human existence against the unquenchable thirst for gold and

power of the possessing classes. The problem of reparations must not be solved by your enemies in society and state, but by yourselves. Let the load be taken from the broad masses and placed on the possessors! Let that be our common battle-cry of the hour.

### Working People of France and Germany in Town and Country!

The difficulties of reparation and reconstruction are growing enormously, because the world war has devastated and destroyed more than ten of the flourishing departments of France. Its aftermath has been the turning of the economic life of the whole capitalist world into a barren chaos. All the national and international conferences of the bourgeois industrial and financial magnates, men of science and statesmen, carry in their womb the seed of fresh massacres of the people, and the most unheard-of pillage and enslavement of the working masses in addition.

The coming economic conference at Genoa will just as its predecessors only add to the ministries' pile of documents, and the social pedants' delusions. It is to lead world capitalism to its recovery and to keep it on its feet by delivering over to it Soviet Russia for exploitation. The German capitalists are to be entrusted with that exploitation as bailiffs to the Entente Imperialists. But this plan will be frustrated by the political power of the workmen and peasants of Soviet Russia. The only proletarian state will know how to defend itself against diplomacy and the rule of capital, as it has maintained itself victorious in the face of the armies of the White Guards.

Working men and women of Germany and France!

Reconstruction of the world's economic life on the basis of capitalism or of socialism and communism, that is the great historical problem which we have to face. The decision will determine the fate of the working people, the fate of humanity the world over! In that supreme struggle, just begun, the exploited and the disinherited in Germany and in France have to stand together in fraternal solidarity, linked with the heroic proletarians of Soviet Russia, linked to the working people of all lands.

Forward into the strife with the banner of the Third International floating before you!

On to the conquest of political power, to the victory over capitalism, and on to the world revolution! The world revolution will be the world's condemnation of capitalism, and the surety for world peace!

The Communist Party of Germany.

The Communist Party of France.

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In conformity with the tenor of this joint manifesto and an agreement of their representatives the Communist Parties of France and of Germany call on the men and women of the working-class to fight for the following demands:

#### I. In Germany:

Abolition of all taxes and duties on articles of consumption and traffic-rates.

The ten demands of the ADGB, and especially the principal demand: Seizure of capital.

Control of production and prices, control of revenues and expenditures through the freely elected representatives of the workers, clerks and small peasants.

Annulment of war debts with the exception of small holdings.

Confiscation of the fortunes of the dynasties ruling previously to 1918, as well as of the war-criminals.

Against the handing-over of public works to private enterprises.

Against the Stinnes coalition.

For the disarmament of all the so-called "Selbstschutz" organizations.

For the Socialist workers' government.

#### II. In France:

Abolition of indirect taxation and duties.

Seizure of capital.

Cancelling of internal war-debts with provisions protecting petty bourgeois and small peasant owners.

Against all direct or indirect interference of the French government in support of the designs of the governing classes in Germany to shift the loads of reparation from themselves on the working-class.

Dissolution of all foreign military missions sustained by France.

Abolition of subsidies to local vassal states.

Demobilization of colonial troops.

Naval, military and air disarmament. Removal of armies quartered in the occupied German districts.

Abandonment of war provocation against Soviet Russia. Amendment or annulment of the Peace Treaty of Versailles.

## The German Government and the Trusts.

by Paul Froelich (Berlin).

\*\*The Lord wills it so! The German Government cries it, the Social Democrats and the Centre Party repeat it, and the Independent Socialists echo it—the Lord wills it so. And the Lord in this case is the Right Honourable David Lloyd George. He wills it and lo! it is done. Within the limits of human strength and endurance, of course, yet with a humble and hopeful mind withal.

Everything the Lord could possibly take exception to is being carefully avoided, for great is the fear of sinning. So great, in fact, that Herr Wirth, Chancellor of the German "Republic", so-called, felt himself moved to protest that "we shall not go to Genoa with a dagger tucked away in our sleeves". This lamb assures the world at large that he is no roaring and bloodthirsty lion, far from it! And nobody doubts it, for the poor soul has not even draped about him a lion's skin.

And yet there would have been ways and means for the German bourgeoisie to defy the Allies, even if the power with which to do so and which was at its disposal was not its own. There is strength even in Germany's desperate situation. Not only because its clearance sale endangers the vital nerves of the great industrial powers, but also because it can have a natural ally for the mere asking.

How best to exploit *two victims* is the subject of the forthcoming discussions of the capitalist buccaneers at Genoa. If Germany alone were the pivot of the deliberations, the great powers would agree among themselves as they did in London, in Cannes and in Versailles when Germany was merely admitted to sign its own sentence. But Russia is after all a power with which it is necessary to negotiate on the price it is to pay for a few years' quiet and sustenance. With the conflicts among the Allies being what they are, Germany could undoubtedly cut a figure at Genoa if—it would unite itself politically with Russia. Instead of adopting this course, however, Germany is to continue in the role of lacky and pariah which is after all but what the petty bourgeois in power (Social Democrats and Centre Party) deserve.

The impotence of the German Government in foreign politics is the result of its weakness within its own frontiers, a weakness that is reacting very dangerously upon domestic politics. The great bourgeoisie is busily and stubbornly exploiting this state of affairs for its own ends, attacking not merely the government, but the state itself.

The utter collapse of Germany's economic system has, apart from agriculture, which, though it is earning usurers' profits, has not strengthened its position from the viewpoint of political economy, only benefited the trust industries (coal, iron, chemicals, and electricity) whose mushroom-like growth overshadows the sorry ruins. Their powerful position on the economic field will make itself felt in politics, at least as long as the other social factor of power, the working-class, remains crippled.

The overlords of the trusts, the Stinnes, Thyssen, Rathenau, Deutsch, etc., are more determinedly than ever professing that "l'état c'est moi!" This course is contrary to the interests of the state. Trust capital is autocratic and a bitter antagonist of Democracy. But for historical reasons and for fear of the revolution at least a semblance of democracy must be retained. Hence trust capital aims at the destruction of the state, limiting its functions and undermining its power.

Both its personal interests and those of its class are the driving force behind trust capital whose onward march towards power was facilitated considerably by the nearly uninterrupted traditions handed down from the times of the last of the Hohenzollerns, and the confusion and weakness of a republican government. The campaign was launched by withholding taxes from the government which feat was achieved by fraud and sabotage. The National Emergency Levy, so widely heralded as a means by which the trusts would be deprived of 60 per cent of their accumulated capital, remained a phantom. Even the duties on income and capital for 1919 remain unpaid today. The financial status of the federal government, the various states and the communities is nearing a catastrophe.

In its embarrassment the Government appealed for help to "Big Business". And this Shylock asked as its pound of flesh a part of the state, the railroads. The Social Democrats, as is their habit, cried "Never!" and—declared their willingness for a coalition with Shylock's party, the German People's Party. The ministers, too, cried "Never!" and—entered upon negotiations with the captains of industry.

The result? The railroads are still under state control it is true, but it is equally true that trust capital with its battering rams has torn a gap in the economic fortifications of the state. These fortifications comprise among other things the great number of municipal works (electricity, gas, water, etc., etc.). Even

previous to the war trust capital paralleled these municipal works with gigantic enterprises of its own. Today bad finances and political weakness compel many communities to surrender their economic possessions to private ownership. Berlin, for instance, is, for want of capital, selling its coal mines for a song. The Social Democratic President of the Prussian Diet and Burgomaster of Hannover disposed of the jetties, piers, cranes, etc., of that city for a sum far below their real value. By getting rid of their last belongings the communities hope to avoid bankruptcy, and become beggars, while the trusts cheaply secure both economic and political power.

It is becoming apparent that the endeavors to get possession of the jetties, etc., of Hannover was but the forerunner of an organized attempt on the part of the coal and iron industry to gain control of the German waterways, which scheme is secretly supported by the Prussian government. While this government denied to the members of the Diet all knowledge on the matter, it negotiated with the industry on the sale of the harbor facilities of Duisburg-Ruhrort, the greatest inland port in the world and the centre of the German waterways. He who controls this port, controls the river and canal system of the Elbe, the Rhine and the Danube. Its passing into private ownership has already affected the state-owned railways. In the course of the negotiations, now carried on quite openly, between the Prussian government and trust capital, the captain of industry Kloeckner chided the government representatives and mockingly advised them to get accustomed to the thought "that before long government ownership will have been abolished everywhere". That suffices to indicate the course they are steering.

The compromise regarding taxes arrived at between the parties in power and the German People's Party, representing trust capital, appears to be a contradiction of that party's policy. Under this agreement the capitalist are to subscribe towards a compulsory loan on which no interest is to be paid for the next three years. A searching inquiry reveals, however, that this compromise constitutes but added proof of the correctness of our argument. For that compulsory loan relieves the capitalists of the obligation to pay up the taxes on the National Emergency Levy not called in; it also exempts them from the duty to pay the large arrears of taxes on accumulated capital. It cannot be stated definitely which of the two alternatives is more favourable to the capitalists from a purely financial point of view. Nor is it to be expected that the compulsory loan will be realised before the end of this year when the political situation in Germany might not be what it is now. Whether the compulsory loan will be still on the books at that time, is a very great question indeed. The third and decisive point in favour of our argument is the fact that in reaching the compromise on taxes the government and with it the Social Democrats have unconditionally surrendered to the representatives of industry, who, not content with what they have, demand both personal and financial guarantees. They claim the more important ministries and already today present the future minister of finance; they furthermore demand that the railroads be surrendered to the control of the Stinnes group, that the eight-hour day be abolished, and anti-strike laws be passed, etc., etc.

And the meaning of all this? Limitation of the authority of the state, return to the theories of Manchester Liberalism, the principle that the state should not concern itself with things economic and should have no voice in commerce and industry. It is even worse than what Lassalle termed the "idea of a state of night watchmen". The trust magnates are little by little relieving the state of the duty of protecting their property, having already instituted in their factories an elaborate police and spy system of their own.

And why not! They have power to apply what they term "justice" notwithstanding all the beautifully phrased clauses in the Factory Councils Act.

The capitalists are in every respect emancipating themselves from the guardianship of the state; they take over most of its functions and are the most powerful factor in the camouflaged ruin that remains.

The ultimate aim of all these activities is the intensification of exploitation. The other half of the compromise on taxes was the capitalists' permission to legislate a fresh series of gigantic taxes under which half of the proletariat's meagre earnings will admittedly go to make up the budget. Meanwhile the financial status of the government has not improved, there still being a gigantic deficit in the state budget, not to speak of the reparations burden. The floating debt of the state continues to increase, a process accelerated by the activities of the paper money printing press, and the prices for foodstuffs are still soaring, while any resistance offered by the workers to this hunger policy is to be brutally suppressed. Thus German trust capital hopes to gain a new position of power in the world.

The responsibility for this state of affairs must be attributed to the petty-bourgeois cowardice and weakness of both Socialist

parties who, having cleared the path for Stinnes and Co., are still working on their behalf by sabotaging every great wage dispute of the workers. It is the fate of the German proletariat that German labor has a petty-bourgeois leadership.

But in spite of this, however, the capitalists, Social Democrats and Independent Socialists alike are reckoning without their host—German labor, which though it appears today as a weak victim, is nevertheless the most powerful factor in Germany's social life. The policy aimed at by the Stinnes group will compel the German workers to assert themselves and to fight desperately for Germany's bare existence. And in this struggle German labor will become conscious of its power, a knowledge that will lead to victory.

## A United Front

by Charles Rappoport (Paris).

\*\* René Descartes, the greatest French philosopher, considered clarity the chief criterion of truth. And logic is the way thereto. Every Frenchman who reasons is Cartesian often without knowing it. They are terrible logicians. The premises once established the conclusions inevitably follow. They are the *jusqu'aboutistes* of reason. Poincaré says, "Germany has signed. Hence Germany must pay." It is in vain that Germany shows him its empty pockets. Shylock Poincaré demands Germany to draw all the *logical conclusions* from the ratification of the treaty. I could cite numberless instances of policy dominated by this *formal logic*. It is the logic of money lenders and their lawyers. The logic of a signature on a contract. The contract is the premise—the payment the conclusion.

In France formal logic has dominated until now the formation of an united front. The opponents of the united front reason as follows. "At Tours we separated from the opportunists, the reformists, and the social patriots. We have broken the existent unity. The united front will reestablish it. Unity of action will bring unity of organization. You cannot be both united and divided at the same time. Hence no united front. Our force lies in clarity, frankness, and the continuance of our attitude. The united front with the Internationals 2 and 2½ will bring dissension and confusion among the militants guided by the clarity of logic".

Thus spoke Frossard and his friends in the name of the comrades of the Left.

The comrades of the Right (to which I do not belong) carry their logic still further. "To speak of an united front is to imply absolute unity with all those who do not think like us. Now, the Bloc of Left Parties presents perfect unity. For the sake of an united front let us recreate the Bloc of Left Parties".

Thus speak Henri Fabre, Gottenoire de Joury, etc. Even my friend Loriot in a way contributes his share to formal logic. He says: "If the united front is absolutely necessary *let us be logical* and let us swallow, with a grimace on our faces, the dissident leaders even though we detest them".

Well, the secretaries of almost all the Federations who met on Sunday, Jan. 22, took fright of this logic. They uttered an unanimous cry: "We will never agree to go hand in hand with the dissidents!" Every Federation has its local terror, its federal monster. The Finisterre is afraid of Goude. The Puy de Dome leaps up in anger at the name of the dissident Varenne. The Nord abhors Lebas. The Lower Rhône, the Upper Rhône, the Moselle, all Alsace Lorraine shout: "Better death than Grumbach!", etc.

For four solid hours the Federations of Communist France protested their disgust with unity of the old style. That is comforting. It is the best proof that the split at Tours was not the result of "Zinoviev's pistol shot", but the natural product of the evolution of Socialist ideas in France. The split has been made, and made well.

But has one the right to limit the problem of an united front to one indecent act: a kiss on the mouths of Renaudel, Varenne, and Grumbach? Evidently no. The problem is more serious and more complicated.

Engels' definition of metaphysics is well known, "it says Yes, yes, no, no. Outside of that all is diabolic". Well the method of metaphysics is also the method of *formal logic*. Marxian dialectics are more than formal logic: they are not formal at all; they are *concrete* and not *abstract*. They draw conclusion not from syllogisms, from logical reasoning, but from life itself. Life is all movement. Its contents which according to Heraclitus "flow" do not easily fit into a frame fixed for them in advance. Life is too fluid to rest comfortably on the Procrustean bed of formal logic.

The Marxian dialectics of the Executive Committee correspond to life. They admit our answering our opponents "Yes"

and "No" at the same time. "No", when it is a question of working in the same party with men whose aims are different and whose conceptions are fundamentally the opposite of ours. A revolutionary cannot live and act in the same party with a reformist, an internationalist with a patriot, representative of the class struggle with a representative of class harmony, a destroyer of capitalist society with a lifesaver of this same society, a Liebknecht with a Noske, a Loriot with a Renaudel. For all these things Tour said *conclusively*, "No"!

It is another thing when it is a question of bread and peace which the *entire* working-class demands. On this basis of immediate demands one may collaborate even with the devil. All proletarians must be forced out of their torpor, their inertia, their mortal indifference, and be led, to the common battle, on an *united proletarian front*, opposed to an *united capitalist front*.

*Logically* our friend Loriot is right. He said, in fact, at the conference of the secretaries: "a temporary agreement with the odious dissident leaders matters little to us provided we succeed in reaching the masses". The Conference pronounced itself *unanimously* against Loriot and for the motion of Frossard who skillfully managed to make the problem of an united front appear as a rendezvous with Dame Dissidence. This was also the view of the Central Committee (with the exception of Rappoport). The united front, *under this particular form*, was beaten.

There is still another viewpoint which I defended at the Conference together with a number of Federations. Taking account of *formal logic* which still dominates most men, I refused to confound the problem of an united front with the tactics of its application. With points 8 and 10 of the theses of the E.C. as my basis, I demanded for France a special application of these tactics, "*the united front with the masses over the head of the chiefs*". For the present it is impossible to speak with the dissident chiefs. Let us first group the masses. The masses once grouped the chiefs will be forced to follow according to the well known rule, "I am their leader, hence I must follow them." It is not the strict logic of my friend Loriot, but this point of view seems to me to conform with *Marxian dialectics* which are based on life itself and which take account of all circumstances, of conditions of time and place and even of the infantile disease that characterizes the formal logic of the compatriots of René Descartes who had but one fault: to have been born two centuries before Karl Marx.

## Norwegian Politics and the Working Class

by Alfred Aakermann.

Christiania, January 29th.

\*\* Great interest is shown in the efforts being made by the Communist Party to enforce far-reaching measures on the vital economic issues of the day. The plan, which includes demands for immediate aid to the country's unemployed, now numbering 40,000 to 50,000, further aims at promoting permanent provisions for material betterment of the social and labor conditions by means of a reorganization of production on a national scale, and similar projects in the interests of the toiling masses. The formulation of the program, built on the principles of the united labor front, has been the central object of the Party discussions since New Year and attracted special attention in connection with the opening of the *Storting* which took place this week.

Following the launching of the "relief" plan, an extraordinary public conference, arranged by the National Federation of Trade Unions, is expected to be held here in order to give the most widespread and effective support to the movement. Manifesting the great need of the oppressed classes, the conference, comprising delegates representing the productive forces in all fields of economic life, will symbolize the united front of city and rural workers lining up in a common fight for work, for bread, and for freedom.

As to the chances for carrying through a constructive plan in this matter at present they appear to be rather small, as far as the parliament is concerned. The *Storting*, now in session, is dominated by a vast bourgeois majority. They are possibly no worse than capitalist politicians elsewhere; on the other hand, they are surely no better. The extreme reactionaries, consisting of a group of 57 Rights and 17 Agrarians, control about half of the house, the rest being divided among the Liberals and Democrats (39), Communists (29) and Right Socialists (8). Since last July the administration has been in the hands of the Blehr cabinet, belonging to the Liberal party whose strength was considerably reduced in the October elections.

The election resulted in the Communists having the balance of power.

It remains to be seen whether the government, in making concessions of value to the workers, will try to make its future existence dependent on mutual support, or whether it will choose to retire in favor of the largest group — the Rights — and reinstate the typical labor foe, Halvorsen, who has placed himself completely under the dictatorship of the National Employers' Association. As to our party group it certainly will demonstrate its absolute lack of confidence in either of the capitalist parties and maintain its opposition.

When the *Storting* convened a few days ago the different bourgeois groups agreed to keep all Communist candidates out of the "presidential college" which forms the leadership of the body. It was a direct violation of the proportional system which was used for the first time at the general election to the *Storting* in 1921. The trick played shows the sentiment on their part towards the workers' revolutionary party which now ranks second among the parties in the country.

Under the conditions prevailing it would be foolish to expect the politicians to help the workers and the unemployed in their propaganda and fight for a new state of things. The workers must depend on *themselves*, now as always. They have to get together and organize — now more than ever. In no other way they will be able to put with the capitalist organizations and their political tools. This, too, is generally accepted by the workers. The present crisis makes them understand what to do and it tends to advance the coming of the day when an actual change will be in sight.

## THE LABOR MOVEMENT

### The National Trade Union Congress of Czecho-Slovakia.

by Alois Neurath (Prague).

\*\* The National Trade Union Congress of Czecho-Slovakia met in Prague from Sunday, January 22nd to Thursday January 26th 1922. Before its opening, articles on the significance of this Congress had been published by the Communist press both at home and abroad expressing the hope that the majority of the trade-union representatives would vote in favor of the Red Trade Union International. The prospects were very favourable indeed. Several unions had some time ago elected Communist leaders. The following unions were already permeated with Communist spirit before the Congress: rural and forest workers, chemical workers, workers of the building trade and lumbermen. These organisations comprise 344,000 members.

According to the figures of the Prague Trade Union Commission 832,000 workers are organised in Czech unions. The Moravian Trade Union Conference took place at Brünn, September 28th, the overwhelming majority of which voted in favor of the Red Trade Union International. At this conference 207,000 workers were represented. In October a Trade Union Conference at Rosenberg, representing 143,000 organised workers, demanded secession from the Amsterdam International. It was the task of the Communist Party, i. e., the National Communist Trade Union Committee, to do their best in enlightening the workers and influencing the election of the delegates to the National Trade Union Congress. Have these bodies thoroughly fulfilled their task? This question must be answered in the negative. It is true that our Party was unable to begin preparations in time as it was only founded on October 31st, 1921. After its formation, however, the Communist Party could have done more than has been done in making the organized proletariat of all unions recognise the immense importance of the National Trade Union Congress. Only some days before the beginning of the Congress the Party Executive examined the preparations of the Communist Trade Union Committee. For a considerable time the Agricultural Workers' Union had paid no dues to the National Trade Union Commission. The Party Executive and the Communist Trade Union Committee side with the view of the Red Trade Union International that unity of the trade union movement must be kept intact. They reject the opinion that unions with a Communist majority should leave the National Trade Union Federation. For this very reason the Communist Trade Union Committee advised the Agricultural Workers' Union to pay their dues to the National Trade Union Commission, thus preserving their right of representation at the National Congress. The same advice was given by the Executive of the Communist Party. The Congress being over now, it is not only our right but our duty to say that the Agri-

cultural Workers' Union has not considered this advice. They did not pay their dues and thus lost their right of sending a delegation to the National Congress. This was a fundamental problem. The decision of the Red Trade Union International to do everything possible to maintain the unity of the trade-union movement must be followed by Communist trade-union representatives. This principle has been violated by the leaders of the Agricultural Workers' Union, who in spite of all decisions did not pay their dues, thus placing themselves outside the National Trade Union Congress, and considerably weakening the Communist representation in this Congress.

According to the report of the Credentials Committee the following 602 delegates attended the Congress: 37 editors of trade organs, 126 delegates of Divisional and Local Trade Union Councils and 439 delegates of union branches. Before the Congress the Social Democrats who control the entire union apparatus spoke and wrote very little but worked all the more actively. With all the tricks of experienced politicians the Amsterdam trade-union bureaucrats were "preparing" the elections. The conferences in Moravia, Silesia, Slovakia and the unions which already before the Congress were under Communist leadership are ample proof of the fact that the majority of the workers in Czecho-Slovakia supported the campaign against the Amsterdam International. In the first session of the Congress the strength of both fractions was tested in a trial vote. The motion being of small importance, however, the result was not quite clear. 316 delegates voted in favour of Tayerle, secretary of the Trade Union Commission, and 270 against him. Two days later, however, when the new rules of the Trade Union Federation were decided upon, Tayerle received 343 votes, while 226 delegates voted against him. The day before the Congress was closed the following proposal of the building trades workers was voted upon by roll-call:

"Dealing with the problem of international affiliation the Seventh National Trade Union Congress approves of the withdrawal of the Czecho-Slovakian Trade Union Federation from the Amsterdam Trade Union International and its affiliation to the Moscow Trade Union International."

Representatives of 222,027 workers voted in favor of this proposal and of 338,477 against it, i. e., the Congress decided with a majority of 116,405 to remain affiliated to the Amsterdam International.

From their point of view the Amsterdam trade-union officials excellently prepared for the Congress. They succeeded in bringing their influence to bear upon the delegates of the Congress. Tayerle welcomed the guests, thereby casually mentioning that a representative of the Third International was present. Mertens, representative of the Amsterdam International and Jouhaux, delegate of the French Amsterdam Labor Federation were given the floor to greet the Congress. The representative of the Third International, however, was not allowed to speak. Yet the letter of Comrade Lozovsky to the Congress could not well be suppressed. As for the rest, the Amsterdam supporters in the Czecho-Slovakian Trade Union Federation are shrewd wirepullers. The talk very much about the unity of the movement and the neutrality of the trade-unions. They say that so-called political differences should not be allowed to influence economic organisations of the workers.

It would be a great mistake, however, to consider the machinations and tactical tricks of the Amsterdam bureaucrats the only reason for the result of the Congress. The tricks of the Amsterdamers and the mistakes of the Communist Party and the Communist trade-unions could influence the Congress but to a certain extent. What is more, we must not overlook or deny the fact that large numbers of workers who do not agree with the Amsterdam officials, are not yet sufficiently informed on the principles of the Red Trade Union International. With the support of the Communist Party the Communist Trade Union Committee must carry on more intensive agitation and propaganda activities among the organized workers than has been the case heretofore. We will have favorable opportunities for this work. If the Communist Trade Union Committee and the Communist trade-union representatives fulfil their duty in the large economic struggles, the Amsterdam bureaucrats will in spite of their intrigues be left hanging in the air.

### The Reaction and the Splitting of the Swiss Trade Unions.

by Erich Melcher.

\*\* In Switzerland the avowed and unavowed enemies of the labor movement have joined hands in order to take advantage of the extremely critical labor situation for the benefit of the ex-

plotters. At a time when 60% of all the employees in the metal and watch industries are either totally or partially out of work, and the situation in the other industries is not very much brighter, the capitalists of the so-called oldest "democratic" republic, are on the point of launching an attack all along the line. A proposed law, called the "Lex Haebelin", seeks to give to the ruling capitalist class the constitutional and legal right to do away with the eight-hour day as well as with the other rights of the workers, particularly the right to organize.

This law has already passed the Federal Council with 111 against 38 votes. Among other atrocious features, § 47 contains provisions which outlaw any and all strikes in the future, be they of an offensive or a defensive nature, since the capitalist lackeys will not find it difficult to interpret any purely economic movement of the proletariat into a political action.

Article 47 of the above mentioned law provides as follows:—

"Whoever calls for, threatens, or publicly believes in the violent overthrow of our system of government or of the public safety of the confederacy or canton, be it in spoken or written word or in picture, and be it within or without the country; whoever, within or without the country, undertakes any action which he knows, or has reason to believe will tend to assist the violent overthrow of the government system or the disturbance of the inner peace and safety of the confederacy or the canton, is to be punished with imprisonment.

"Should such aforementioned call, threat or propaganda be directed against officials, employees or workers of the confederacy or canton, the national bank or public institutions and essential industries, the term of such imprisonment is to be not less than three months."

We have intimated that the eight-hour day is to be done away with in Switzerland. In this country as everywhere else, this question occupies first place among the things agitated for by the capitalists. In spite of the fallacious conclusions drawn by Levi, Hilferding and Stampfer, it remains clear to every worker that the various governments have only one last resort, and that they consider the only way to save the capitalist system to be the shifting of any and all burdens brought about by the war and by the post-war period, upon the working-class, which is already over-burdened as it is. This is the case in Switzerland.

It was Konrad Ilg, secretary of the "Iron International" and president of the "Metal and Watch-Workers Union" of Switzerland, who during the extraordinary congress of this organization, which took place in December 1921, established the fact that there has been an unusual growth of reaction in Switzerland. Of course, we have constantly pointed out this fact since the end of the war. But we also hear that lately the Amsterdam trade-union leaders, who are the mouthpieces of the second and 2½ Internationals, are "talking big medicine" in an attempt to prevent the growth of reaction. But since the actual activity of the organs of the labor-movement is never judged by words but by deeds, and since very often, if not most of the time, the words uttered by these gentlemen flagrantly contradict their deeds, we must not lose sight of the attacks of reaction in Switzerland and at the same time of the events that are taking place in the trade-union movement.

It would be most natural to expect that in the "model democratic country" the reactionary measures would tend to stir the labor movement to take vigorous defensive measures. The Trade Union Federation of Switzerland, as the protector of the workers' interests, should have taken a definite stand against the capitalist incursions, and should, through an extraordinary congress, have taken such measures as would at least have enabled the working class in its self-defence against the profit-mad capitalists and their lackeys, parliament and government, to say loudly and threateningly in one united front: "So far and no further!" But the contrary is true in Switzerland. At the urging of the Trade Union Federation, the congress which the majority of the trade-union organizations demanded and called for the middle of January, and which was to take measures against the provisions of the above statute, has been postponed indefinitely. In other words, the Amsterdam "word"-strategists of the Federation want to do nothing that may avert the many dangers which are gathering, like a storm, over the working class of the country.

As we have already reported in detail, the Executive Committee of the Metal and Watch Workers' Union of Switzerland takes special pains to cover up the open treason of the Trade Union Federation. An article which appeared in the "Woodworkers' Journal" under the caption "Agreement or Split", gives us an idea as to what other national organizations think

of the activities of the Metal Workers' Executive Committee. The article reads:

"It is highly deplorable that at the same time that other unions are getting plenipotentiary powers from their membership in order to organize a united front against the marauding expeditions undertaken by reaction, the strongest union is likewise getting power of attorney for the purpose of breaking up the united front. To-day we are faced by the deplorable facts that in Geneva and Zurich the section committees have been expelled as a body; that the Zurich local was simply dissolved by an ukase that appeared in the newspapers, and that similar "clean-ups" are about to be perpetrated in Basel, Winterthur and other cities.

"It is a sad truth that through the dissolution of a local, three thousand strong, the Metal Workers' Union has been rendered completely helpless in the largest industrial center of Switzerland."

In another passage of the same article, the journal states a biting truth which applies to the German trade-union executives as well, and which should, as far as the question of sincerity is concerned, be given special attention by them.

"We claim that, had the Executive Committee of the Metal Workers' Union not adopted the dictatorial power-seeking viewpoint from the very start, but rather, used its power in mediation activities, as is the duty of every union executive, the matter could not have gone so far.... If the Communists at present seek influence in the trade-unions, they do the very same thing that the Social Democrats did ten years ago, and are still doing. In which union statute do we find it written that the Social Democrats have special privileges in the trade-unions? The fact that an union executive to-day cannot work together with the Communist members of its own organization, merely shows that the committee is not fit for its work."

But it is not only in newspaper articles that the other trade-unions are reacting to this matter which deeply concerns the entire labor movement. Already the various Executive Committees of the building, transportation, wood, leather, social and government workers' unions, as well as the clothing workers' union, have voiced their protest against the injurious action of the Executive Committee of the Metal Workers by issuing a public statement. Among other things, these Executive Committees put the following demands to the headquarters of the Metal Workers' Union: The annulment of the expulsions of individual members already made; and the recalling of the dissolution orders already in effect against single sections. In case the Metal Workers' Union refuses to comply with these demands, these organizations will admit the expelled members and locals into their own organizations in order thus to prevent a further split in the trade-union movement.

It is interesting to note that the Executive Committees that made this declaration, and that are determined to prevent any further losses to the Swiss trade-union movement, more or less sympathize with the Red Trade Union International.

In other words we see in Switzerland a repetition of what happened in France: the representatives of the revolutionary class struggle, the adherents of the Red Trade Union International, are always in favor of a united trade-union movement. But the reformists, the adherents of the Amsterdam International, not only do nothing to prevent a split in the trade-unions, but they even encourage it systematically. Sooner or later the working class of every country will pronounce its judgment on this behavior of the Amsterdam leaders.

But what is already established before the world is that the Amsterdam trade-union bureaucracy in the Metal Workers' Union of Switzerland is playing into the hands of the Swiss reaction; whether consciously or unconsciously is of no moment. The penitentiary law, the abolition of the eight-hour day, and the further reduction of wages are acts which the Swiss capitalists were able to perpetrate only because the Executive Committee of the Metal Workers' Union, which adheres to the Amsterdam wing, is holding the stirrups for reaction through their tactics, so prejudicial to the interests of the workers.

Such behavior on the part of the Amsterdam apostles of the split must necessarily reflect itself on an international scale. When the capitalists of one country have been successful in their offensive, their class-brothers in other countries will find it so much the easier to make similar demands, which in Switzerland were put through with the aid of the secretary of the Metal Workers' International.

## RELIEF FOR RUSSIA

### The Conference of the International Committee for the Relief of Soviet Russia

by I. S.

\*\* The conference of the International Committee for the Relief of Soviet Russia, which took place in Geneva on the 26th of January, had important problems to solve. Practically all countries, all Red Cross organizations, and many important private organizations took part in it. Only France sent neither a government representative nor a representative of its Red Cross.

Dr. Nansen rendered a report of his activities. The agreement that he had made with the Soviet government proved to be practical and suitable in every respect. He contradicted the false reports spread the capitalist press, that the food sent for the starving was being consumed by the Red Army. All food was always kept under strict control. The Quakers, who have had much experience in this line of relief work, have shown that *in Russia less has been stolen from them than in any other European country.*

Nansen thinks that 19,000,000 of the starving are doomed to death unless prompt aid is given. He said: —

"Every one of these nineteen million unfortunates could have been saved if the proposals that we made last September had been carried out, and if we had been given what we asked for. In summer we could have transported much more than in winter. Now it is too late; many millions are inexorably condemned to die of starvation. If the government give their aid immediately, however, we can still save millions of others. The situation is very serious. The Soviet government and all the private organizations are just now feeding only 3,300,000. *New conferences will not help the starving ones. Real aid must be sent immediately.*

According to Frick's report, the total amount of money that the organizations under the leadership of Dr. Nansen's committee have to work with is only 28,000,000 gold francs. The Soviet government has placed at their disposal 4,700,000 gold francs more. With this money only 2,000,000 people can be kept nourished.

Dr. Ladishevski, the representative of the Russian Red Cross of the old regime, in his speech repeated the well known accusations of the White newspapers, that the Bolsheviks are to blame of the because, instead of helping the starving, they used their money for international propaganda purposes. Frank, in the name of Dr. Nansen, refuted him sharply, his declarations being applauded by the whole assemblage.

The representative of the present Russian Red Cross rendered a report on the aid that his organization and the Soviet government had given for the starving. The Soviets had donated the winter seed and 150,000,000 gold rubles. The Russian Red Cross had sent five medical and relief divisions into the starvation area, had organized two expeditions to combat epidemics, and numerous institutions, including a shelter for refugees and several children's homes in Samara. The representatives of the Russian Red Cross in Switzerland had sent clothing and food to the value of 25,000 Swiss francs, and they issue a bulletin on the hunger situation for the information of the relief organizations. The representatives of the organization in the United States had sent necessities to the value of \$350,000, those in Germany 500,000 marks worth of medicines and 3000 kg of fats; and those in Finland necessities to the value of 1,200,000 Finnish marks.

The conference adopted many resolutions: the international propaganda must be still further extended; it must be demanded that every government help the starving; agricultural machines and implements must be sent to Russia and the transportation facilities improved.

## IN THE CAMP OF OUR ENEMIES

### Amsterdam's Chicane and the French Labor Movement

by A. Losovsky.

\*\* The Red Trade Union International proposed to the Amsterdam Internatioanal to join forces in an attempt to prevent the threatened split within the French General Confederation of Labor (C.G.T.). This proposal was formulated as early as December, that is at a time when the R.T.U.I. was not

aware of the forthcoming extraordinary unity congress. In a wireless sent to Amsterdam we left no doubt that we disapproved of the split, which has always been our attitude. We proposed to convoke a conference of representatives of the Amsterdam International, of the Red Trade Union International and of both the majority and the minority of the C.G.T. in order to save the unity of the French trade union movement.

What was the answer to our proposal? In a letter signed by Oudegeest, the Bureau of the Amsterdam International declared that the split was a result of the activities of the Communist International, that he, Oudegeest, felt great satisfaction at our realizing that our tactics are destructive, and explaining, furthermore, that the Amsterdam International would agree to call a joint conference provided we postponed the unity congress convoked by the Revolutionary Syndicalists.

This answer is downright hypocrisy. The Amsterdam leaders know very well who caused the split of the C.G.T. Was it the Communist International or rather the R.T.U.I. that expelled the majority of the railwaymen from the C.G.T.? Who ousted 20,000 workers of Tourcoing? Was it the Red Trade Union International that ousted the revolutionary unions from the Employees' Union and from the Union of Hospital Workers? The Amsterdam leaders know very well that these expulsions were caused by their political friends. Why do they affirm the contrary? They endeavor to hide the intrigues of their colleagues and simultaneously to utilize them for their own ends.

Of a still greater interest is their proposal to postpone the forthcoming Congress of the Revolutionary Syndicalists. The latter are forced by their position to exercise a pressure upon their stubborn leaders. In accordance with the rather distinct wishes of the bourgeoisie and their spokesmen of the type of Mr. Charles Dulothin, the leaders of the C.G.T. started systematically to slander and expel the left wing of the trade-union movement. As a result of this campaign 19 Departmental Councils and 11 Federations formed a group with the object of appealing to all unions that stood for unity and of uniting them in order to make the leaders see the error of their ways.

The object of this Congress was to prevent the split and expulsions. Political friends of Jouhaux and Dumoulin participated in it. Even representatives of those unions took part in the Congress which in all problems agree with leaders of the C.G.T. but strictly opposed the fatal split of the single trade-union organization in France.

Can these activities be considered an attempt to split the C.G.T.? No. The unity congress tried its best to enforce the convocation of an extraordinary congress of the C.G.T. and to unite all Federations, thus showing to the working class the crime of a split of the trade-union movement in its full significance. Yet the C.G.T. rejected our proposals. They considered the affair from a formal point of view. They refused to negotiate with the 1500 unions gathered in Paris and did their best to increase the danger of a split — the danger of the working class of France being left to the mercy of the bourgeoisie. Instead of bringing its first vice-president back to sanity and exercising the necessary pressure upon the leaders of the CGT., the Amsterdam International proposes to postpone the unity congress — in other words, they are trying to derail it.

We do not doubt that Mr. Jouhaux and Co. would have been glad to have this congress fail. But would the French proletariat be just as glad in this case? Thus we realise that the politicians of the Amsterdam International in common with those of the C.G.T. refuse to put the question of the unity of the French trade-union movement openly before the working-class throughout the world.

After having refused our proposals and done everything in order to prevent the unity congress, they are bold enough to accuse the Communist International and the Red Trade Union International of attempting to split the trade-unions. We do not only stand against every attempt of splitting but stand for a united front of the proletariat. Our conception of the united proletarian front, however, is different from that of the Amsterdam International. We are aiming at the united front of labor, while they attempt to create a joint front of exploiters and exploited. We refuse a front such as this. We are ready to do all within our power in order to bring about unity between workers of all tendencies and parties, in order to act in common. We have not the least desire to imitate the reformist inactivity and indifference of the League of Nations and of the International Labor Bureau. We are striving for a united front, a militant front, and are ready to do our very best to create proletarian unity for this front.

Therefore we are not stirred by the accusation of desiring to split the proletarian movement. We shall answer to our opponents: "You yourselves do not believe what you say; how should your members, whom you lead, believe it?"