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# **Trade Unions**

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# **Soviet Russia**

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A Collection of Russian Trade Union Documents compiled by the I.L.P. Information Committee and the International Section of the Labour Research Department.

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The Labour Research Department, 34, Eccleston Square, London, S.W. 1.  
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*Independent Labour Party*

# Trade Unions

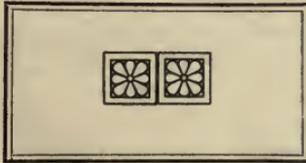
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**T**HIS collection of documents should be of exceptional interest to the British Trade Union Movement. It traces the growth and development of the Trade Unions in Russia, and shows the responsibilities which have been thrown upon them as a consequence of the revolution. Their ideas and policy and their hopes of the future are expressed in their own words.

The documents are taken exclusively from first hand Russian sources in the translations issued by the All Russia Council of Trade Unions. The collection has been compiled by the Independent Labour Party Information Committee and the International Section of the Labour Research Department.

*November, 1920.*

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# Trade Unions in Soviet Russia :

## Their development and present position.

By **A. LOZOVSKY**

(Member of the Executive Committee of the  
All-Russia Central Council of Trade Unions).

### I. The Early Period.

Trade Unions as fighting organs of the working class against the capitalists arose in Russia only after 1905. But the first hints at labour organisation could be traced to periods considerably before the first revolutionary mass conflicts between the workers and the autocracy. Among these early forms of working class organisations must be included all kinds of benefit societies, mutual aid societies, burial societies and other organisations aiming at elementary mutual aid. These forms of mutual aid societies were particularly widespread in Poland and the Baltic Provinces. In 1898 there were in the Baltic Provinces 98 workingmen's benefit societies and 113 burial societies including members of all classes. Several of these societies date back to the beginning of the nineteenth century (1821). Similar societies also existed in the Ural region. Reference must also be made to the benefit societies among printers, compositors and lithographers founded in 1838 in Petrograd and to the printers' benefit societies in Moscow. In the eighties and nineties eleven printers' mutual aid societies existed in a number of towns in Russia.

Side by side with this there arose craftsmen societies and in 1898 there were 15 of these in Russia, besides 54 burial societies including all classes. The most widespread organisations previous to the first revolution were shop assistants' societies, and very often the employers were honorary members of these. Mutual aid societies among factory workers did not develop before the middle of the nineties. All these organisations were founded for the purpose of granting financial benefits to the sick, supplying medical assistance and funeral benefit, assistance to invalids, to widows and orphans, and loans and assistance to the needy. These organisations had no relation whatever to the economic struggle. The tsarist policy jealously took care of that. The rules of the factory benefit funds were confirmed by the Minister of Finance, the rules of other mutual aid societies had to be confirmed by the Minister of the Interior and permission for the establishment of such societies in Poland had to be obtained from the Tsar on the representations of the Cabinet of Ministers.

All these societies, benefit funds and burial societies could only serve an insignificant section of the workers and in no case could they satisfy the need of the workers in a fighting organisation. As the whole machinery of the State was directed to crush the slightest attempt at organising a union in Russia, illegal trade unions began to arise which were part of illegal social-democratic organisations.

### **Illegal Strikes.**

Strikes in Russia were prohibited and were regarded as crimes. As clause 318 of the Criminal Code of 1874 declares: "Persons accused of belonging to societies having the aim of rousing hostility between employers and workers as well as provoking strikes are liable to imprisonment for 8 months with deprivation of rights and property and exile to Siberia." This law did not remain a mere dead letter; tsarism undeviatingly put it into force and severely persecuted every organised action of the workers and every attempt at improving their position. But repressions never could abolish the class struggle and since the seventies the strike movement in Russia has developed side by side with the development of capitalism. The sharp elemental strikes of the seventies compelled the government to pass the law of the 1st of June, 1882, prohibiting the employment of children below 12 years of age and limiting the employment of children between 12 and 15 to 8 hours a day. In the eighties the central industrial districts were overwhelmed by a wave of strikes which took a particularly sharp form in Orechov-Zouev due to the imposition of fines. As a consequence of this a law was passed on June 3rd, 1886, referring to the hiring of workers in factories and one in 1885 prohibiting nightwork for women in several industries.

In spite of imprisonment, exile and savage persecution of strikers the strikes broke out in one centre after another. In 1896 a strike of 35 thousand textile workers broke out in Petrograd, which made a tremendous impression not only upon the Government but upon the working classes themselves. The Government, after a series of repressions, issued the law of 1897 which, for the first time in Russia, limited the working day for adult factory workers to 11½ hours for day work and 10 hours for night work. We see therefore that all our factory legislation is closely connected with the large strikes and that in order to avoid discontent, as Professor Tugan-Baranovsky points out, the Ministry of the Interior and the Police Department undertook the task of factory legislation.

### **Socialists and Trade Unions.**

The economic strikes were so obviously connected with politics that the first illegal socialist groups that arose in Russia after the defeat of the Narodniki devoted particular attention to the organisation of the economic struggle. The first strike funds were established as far back as 1888 in Vilna among stocking knitters, tailors and the workers in the paper and boot trades. In 1894 the Jewish workers' federation of Warsaw organised such funds in several trades. In Minsk 4 illegal

trade unions were organised with 220 members. In Vilna 12 funds were established. Altogether in Vilna there were 850 organised workers belonging to 27 trades and in Minsk 870 workers belonging to 15 trades. These strike funds played such an important part in the development of the Labour movement that when in 1897 the Jewish Labour League of Lithuania, Poland and Russia (the Bund) was established, these strike funds were its foundation stone. The part played by these organisations can be seen from the following figures: in 1900 of the total number of local Jewish workers in Bielostock 20 per cent. were organised in these societies, in Vilna, 24 per cent., in Gomel nearly 40 per cent and in Minsk 35—40 per cent.

In the nineties unions for fighting for the emancipation of the working class arose in Central Russia and illegally conducted strikes and assisted strikers. In several Petrograd factories illegal fighting funds were established of which one fourth of the members' contributions were devoted to strikes, a half for mutual aid and the rest for books. In 1895 a Labour Union was established in Ivanovo-Voznesensk which established funds and a library. In 1897 a Central Fund was set up in Nikolaeff, half of the income of which was devoted for strike purposes. All these strike funds and labour unions were created by the Social-Democrats who, in this manner, stood, so to speak, at the cradle of the trade union movement in Russia. These illegal fighting funds and strike funds undoubtedly were embryonic forms of trade unions. In 1898 all unions for the emancipation of the working class united into a single Social-Democratic Labour Party which in Central Russia relied upon illegal groups and organisations and in Poland and the Western provinces on the illegal purely party trade unions. The Russian trade union movement from the moment of its birth bound itself up with the political labour movement. This particular feature of the Russian labour movement manifests itself up to the present moment.

### **Unions Organised by the Police.**

The accentuation of the economic struggle which took the form of political demonstrations against the autocracy suggested the idea in police circles of creating legal labour organisations for the purpose of combatting the harmful influence of the Social-Democrats. The Chief of the Moscow Police, Trepoff, and the Chief of the Moscow "Okrana" Zubatoff were engaged on this question. Trepoff, in one of his reports, states that "success in the struggle rouses a confidence in their strength, teaches them to adopt practical methods of fighting, trains and brings to the front able leaders, convinces the workers of the possibility and the utility of collective action and develops a consciousness for the necessity of the class struggle" and urges the necessity for creating an antidote to the political influence of the Social-Democrats. In Moscow, in 1902, a mechanic society was organised under the direct leadership and protection of the Okrana. In Minsk the Chief of the Police, Vassilev, and in Odessa, Shaevitch, set up similar well intentioned organisations. All the efforts of the Okrana were directed towards concentrating the attention of the working class upon mutual

assistance and diverting them from political questions; but they had quite an unpleasant experience. As long as these were small closed organisations they were quite harmless but as soon as the broad labour masses began to join, they became centres of the economic struggle. The historian of this police device, Professor Oseroff, declares that as soon as the weavers, for instance, on the initiative of the Okrana, organised a mutual aid society they sent delegates to the factories with a demand for an increase of wages. The union created in Odessa was the initiator of large strikes in which tens of thousands of workers participated. The attempt of the Okrana to protect the economic organisations roused protests on the part of the manufacturers who regarded this as an attempt of the feudal government to save itself by stirring up the workers against the bourgeoisie. Complaints flowed from Moscow to Petrograd, the Minister of Finance took the side of the employers and Zubatoff was transferred to Vologda.

But as the labour movement was growing unrestrainedly a fresh attempt was made by the Police in 1904 to create support among the workers. A meeting of the Russian factory workers under the protection of the Minister of the Interior, Plehve, and the Metropolitan Antonius, formed a society for the purpose, as the rules state, of "arousing and strengthening national consciousness of the workers." At the head of this society stood Father Gapon who organised 11 branches. These branches in spite of their police origin became the centre of the labour movement in Petrograd. A series of strikes and demonstrations took place which ended in the bloody shambles of the 9th January (old style). This tampering of the police with the workers resulted in the defeat of the autocracy.

## **The Revolution of 1905.**

Bloody Sunday served as a starting point for a tremendous revolutionary impetus. In the course of several months more than 500,000 workers struck. Strikes broke out one after another. Economic strikes took the shape of political strikes. The pressure was so great that tsarism had to look through its fingers at the "illegal" activity of the workers. Simultaneously with the bloody January days and the strike wave roused by these events the work of organising the trade unions was proceeding. The first union to be formed was that of the printers. Immediately after a union of clerks and book-keepers was formed. At the same time a semi-legal union of shop assistants and a union of druggist assistants began to organise. At a secret meeting held in May, 1905, unions of watch makers, tailors, tanners and boot and shoe makers were formed.

A number of unions were formed in Moscow in the spring of 1905. The illegal printers' union which existed in Moscow since 1903 for improving the conditions of labour and which accepted the programme of the Social-Democratic Party, carried on since 1905 an economic struggle. But in September, 1905, a printers' strike broke out in Moscow and advantage was taken of the occasion to create a council of printers' delegates for Moscow which, in fact, became a trade union. In the spring of 1905 the Bolsheviks organised a party union of bakers, the founders of which practically became the leaders of

the then trade union movement. Similar attempts at forming unions in this improvised manner were made all over Russia and became more frequent as the end of 1905 drew near. In September a new strike wave broke out over the whole of Russia which led to the great strike and famous demonstration of October, 1905. The labour movement in Russia broke through the barriers erected by the autocracy.

### **First Trade Union Conference, 1905.**

The sporadic and spontaneous manner in which the trade unions developed resulted in their composition and organisation being very diverse, but the demand for a common centre was so great that as far back as 1905 at a meeting of representatives of local trade union organisations in Kharkoff, it was decided to call a national conference. On September 24th and October 1st, 6th and 7th was held the first conference of trade union representatives. At this conference 26 Moscow unions and labour groups, and ten unions from other towns were represented, and the fundamental question which concerned the conference was the organisation of preparatory work in connection with the convening of a national conference. The question arose as to who could participate in the conference in view of the fact that there were no definitely formed unions. The conference decided that "the right to participate in the conference belongs to such mutual aid societies and trade unions as are composed of wage workers of all trades of a proletarian character and are directly or indirectly aiming at fighting capital." With regard to mixed societies it was decided that only the proletarian section of such organisations could have the right of representation. No access to the conference was to be given to the Zubatov organisations. Thus, from the very birth of the unions just emerging from the mutual aid society stage, the struggle assumed a purely class character. In undertaking the struggle against capitalism these unions immediately reached a higher level than many western European and American unions, who, even to-day still regard as their only function the improvement of the conditions of labour. The October days in 1905 gave a tremendous impetus to the trade union movement. At the end of that year there was not a single large town in Russia where a trade union had not been formed. The October political strike gave rise to a number of economic conflicts which, in their turn again, were converted into political conflicts. Everywhere, initiative groups, commissions, strike committees, trade unions, workers' delegate councils were formed and all these organisations, taking advantage of the period of liberty, extended their influence over ever newer sections of the workers. In spite of the series of defeats suffered by the workers in November and December, 1905, the trade unions continued to grow and increase in numbers and when, at the end of February, 1906, the second conference of trade unions was convened, Russia could count 200,000 organised workers.

### **Second Trade Union Conference, 1906.**

The second conference decided in favour of the sporadic formation of trade unions independently of the permission of

the authorities. The conference carried a number of resolutions in connection with the pressing questions of that day and again decided that the practical task of the moment was a convocation of a national conference of trade unions. It worked out the standing orders of such a conference, the agenda, and elected an organisation committee for convening a national conference. The organisation bureau was elected to serve as a national centre until the meeting of the conference and it was the function of this bureau not only to maintain connection with trade unions in Russia, but also to establish connection with the European trade unions. In defining the character of organisations which would be eligible for representation at the national conference, the conference declared that only those societies would be permitted which stood on the tactics of the "modern labour movement." One can hardly regard this formula as sufficiently clear, nor yet the statement of the conference that the "trade unions are the most perfect form of organisation for conducting the struggle of the wage workers organised by trades against the capitalists for the improvement of the conditions of labour," as complete. This caution and vagueness in the formulæ are the consequence, on the one hand, of the police conditions and the impossibility of speaking out, and, on the other hand, the undoubtedly great influence of the moderate wing of the Russian social democracy, an influence which was inversely proportional to the progress of the revolution.

### **The Period of Repression.**

From the defeat of the first revolution to the revolution of 1917 the trade union movement, as a mass labour movement, did not exist in Russia. The tsarist government conducted a policy of ruthless extermination of the trade unions. The unions were prohibited from assisting strikers; they were closed down for attempting to intervene in the great strike movement, members of the executives were arrested and exiled to Siberia, funds were confiscated and books taken to the police stations; police were present at all meetings which were closed down on the slightest pretext, and, very often, without any reason at all. The trade unions were considered dangerous enough for the department of police to issue special circulars and instructions on the way to fight sedition. The iron fist of the victorious reaction ruthlessly crushed the labour organisations at their birth.

According to the statistics of the Police Department, 104 trade unions were closed down in 1907. The reasons for closing down these unions, as formulated by the Police Department, were: violation of rules, participation of non-members of the union in the management of the union, participation in strikes, attacking employers in the press for dismissing a union member, a boycott by a union branch against a firm and an employee taken on by that firm to replace a dismissed member of the union, a boycott by means of the press against a shop-keeper who refused to employ union men, threatening to boycott an employer and his non-union employees, advocating strikes, activity likely to become a public danger, political unreliability of certain members of the society, participation of members of

the executive in political propaganda, organisation of strikes and distribution of revolutionary manifestoes, carrying resolutions criticising the law of November 15th, 1906, on trade unions, making anti-government speeches at meetings, discovery in dining-room of society of socialist manifestoes, telegram to the second Duma promising to rise in its defence, agitation for the purpose of securing the election of a certain candidate to the State Duma, socialist propaganda, discovery of bombs on the premises of the society, opening of libraries without previously obtaining permission, relations with strike committees led by the Bund, relations with the social-democratic organisations, passing resolutions for celebrating the 1st of May, greeting the social-democratic fraction in the State Duma, convening general meetings without previously obtaining permission, political unreliability of members of the trade union, collecting money by sale of tickets without previous notification, for unknown reasons, etc.

In spite of the police persecution and repression, the reaction could not destroy the trade unions; the dispersed unions would again re-form, maintain connection illegally, and the workers would take advantage of every opportunity to emerge from underground life and conduct their work openly. The first few years after the suppression of the 1905 revolution the trade unions were crushed to such an extent that they almost ceased to show signs of life. But, in 1912 and 1913 there was a boom in the labour movement, the trade unions again revived and the work once again went on feverishly until the beginning of the war. The war for "liberty" began in Russia with the annihilation of the still weak trade unions. Russia entered her second revolution without any trade union organisations.

## II. The Revolution of 1917.

The overthrow of tsarism by the workers in revolt was the beginning of the feverish development and growth of the trade unions. While the armed struggle was proceeding in the streets of the capitals and the provincial towns, while the workers were organising their councils of workers' and soldiers' deputies, as pillars of support in their struggle, trade unions were being organised at the same time. On March 15th, 1917, twenty-two trade union boards met in Moscow and created their Council of Trade Unions. At the same time a Council of Trade Unions arose in Petrograd. Simultaneously with the organisations of trade unions according to trade and industry, inter-union organisations were being established which, in the first period of the Russian revolution, bore the name of "Central Bureaux."

### The Councils of Workers' Delegates.

The need among the masses for organs to guide them in the economic struggle was so great and the unions were as yet so young and unorganised that the Councils of Workers' Delegates acted side by side with the unions, and often in substitution of them. The overthrow of the autocracy served also as the starting point of a grand economic offensive against the

employers. There was not a single industry, not a single factory or large works where the workers from the first days of the revolution did not put forward a number of economic demands such as: increase of wages, reduction of the working day, payment for period of strike, etc. The Councils of Workers' Delegates organised Conciliation Boards, Dispute Committees, Labour Exchanges, established an 8-hour day and adopted repressive measures against employers. In a word, they played a very energetic part in the economic struggle of the working class.

The Councils of Workers' Delegates, while often taking the initiative in the settlement of economic conflicts, also took the initiative in convening a national conference for the purpose of establishing an All-Russian centre. The first conference of 82 Councils of Workers' and Soldiers' Delegates, which was held at the beginning of April in 1917, in Petrograd, passed a number of resolutions on the question of economic policy. The Conference carried resolutions on general labour policy, an 8-hour day, a minimum wage, freedom of organisation, conciliation boards, labour exchanges, factory inspection, control and organisation of industry, compulsory military service, importation of labour, social insurance and unemployment. All these resolutions bore the imprint of the moderate socialists, who at that time had the overwhelming majority in the Soviets. As the resolution on general labour policy says—"the struggle between labour and capital must conform with the conditions of an as yet incomplete revolution and the menace of war from without which must define its form." The Conference advocated labour exchanges with equal representation of capital and labour, and declared for government pressure on the employers, thus striving, as far as possible, to smooth over the class antagonism of the first period of the Russian Revolution. In connection with industrial organisation the Conference accepted a resolution in which it called upon the workers energetically to build trade unions, recommended the organisation of local, regional and national organisations and considered it the immediate duty of the trade union movement to convene a national conference of trade unions. The Conference instructed the Department of Labour of the Petrograd Council of Workers' Delegates, together with the central bureaux of Petrograd and Moscow, to convene a national congress of trade unions. On April 17th an organising commission was set up which sent out representatives to the largest centres of Russia, and, on June 20th, towards the end of the fourth month of the Russian Revolution, the third national trade union conference met in Petrograd and laid the foundations for the All-Russian Trade Union movement.

### **Third Trade Union Conference, 1917.**

The Third Trade Union Conference, for the first time in the history of Russia, drew together representatives from various parts of this enormous country. At this Conference there were present 220 delegates with power to vote and 27 in a consultative capacity; these represented 967 unions and 51 central bureaux with a total membership of 1,475,249. The business of the Conference was to lay the foundation of an All-Russian

centre, to work out a uniform type of organisation, to indicate the general plan of work and to determine a uniform economic policy. The Conference only partly carried out its task, not only because the Russian trade union movement was still too young, but chiefly because the right wing of the socialist parties had the preponderance at the conference. This section led the trade union movement along the same path into which they were directing the general policy of the Russian Republic. Two blocks were competing at the Conference, the left—the Bolsheviks and Internationalists), and the right—the Mensheviks, Socialist Revolutionaries and the Bund. The right block had 15 to 20 more votes than the left. Three questions particularly agitated the working class of Russia—the war, coalition with the bourgeoisie and the control of industry. None of these radical questions of the Russian Revolution were decided at this Conference and in so far as it gave any reply at all to them, that reply was anti-revolutionary. The left block proposed “to condemn every attempt to narrow down and subject the trade union movement to the interest of the ruling classes,” to proclaim that the unions “remain foreign to every idea of class conciliation, of any possibility of co-operation with the bourgeoisie of its country,” and to declare, in the name of the Conference, that the trade unions will only support that socialist party which will take action for the speediest liquidation of the war by means of a mass revolutionary struggle against the ruling class of its country. All these resolutions of the left block were rejected by the Conference as well as a resolution proposing to commence an energetic campaign for workers’ control. Workers’ control was understood as a strict subordination of the employers to organs of state regulation in which the majority is guaranteed to the labour organisations, and the granting to the factory committees the right of appointing controlling commissions to check and stop decisions and measures of the factory administration. Why did the Conference reject the proposals of the left block? Because the majority of the Conference held the view that it was the duty of the working class to seek agreement with the advanced sections of the bourgeoisie and, in order to secure this agreement, the greatest caution was necessary in handling questions affecting fundamental capitalist relations. The Conference declared for increased taxation of the profit-making class, for the standardisation of prices of important articles, for control of industry, for direct State control in the most important branches of industry, for the strict control of banks, for compulsory State centralisation of industry, for the reorganisation of government regulating bodies and for securing in these a predominance of representatives of revolutionary democracy. But the Conference found it necessary to emphasise the fact that “the process of this control is too difficult and complicated for the proletariat to undertake the entire or even the greater part of this control.” From this it follows that “the proletariat must not take upon itself alone the responsibility for the progress and outcome of the struggle with the economic disorganisation of the country, and that it is necessary to do everything possible to attract all the productive classes of the population to the solution of the economic problems confronting the country.” These vague formulæ sufficiently show the desire of the majority

of the Conference to continue the coalition with the bourgeoisie so "happily" commenced from the first days of the February revolution.

In spite of the theoretically incorrect light thrown by the third Conference on these questions and the bias towards coalition, this Conference played an important role in the unification of the trade unions of the whole of Russia. The Conference advocated the industrial principle of organisation, decided on the subordination of the factory committees to the union, passed a number of resolutions on female labour, unemployment, conciliation boards, industrial courts, labour secretariats, factory inspection, municipal policy of the trade unions, national sections, educational activity, proletarian co-operative societies, trade union press, 8-hour day, and, finally, established an All-Russian centre of the Trade Union movement: the All-Russia Central Council of Trade Unions. Much in these resolutions is incorrect; as, for instance, when the Conference advocated joint labour exchanges, participation of the unions in the establishment of an unemployment fund instead of State insurance against unemployment; but, nevertheless, these resolutions were of tremendous importance for the Russian Trade Union movement, because whether good or bad, they gave a certain summing up of the economic struggle and because they were the first resolutions of a real All-Russian Conference.

### **The Economic Struggle Reopens.**

The Third Conference, while stating a number of economic problems, failed to indicate a most vital thing, viz., how to put these resolutions into practice and, at the same time, maintain a cautious attitude towards the other "productive classes" of Russia. In the meantime the Russian bourgeoisie, thrown into confusion in the first weeks of the February revolution, and retreating before the sudden pressure of the working masses, rapidly began to organise and seized the most important strategic points in the class struggle—the government institutions and the State machinery. Before the Revolution the Russian bourgeoisie was excellently organised, the manufacturers' Societies, the Chambers of Commerce, Manufacturers' Councils, Bankers' Councils, Syndicates, trusts, etc., all these were created long before the Revolution and all these were put into use against the workers from the very first days of the February Revolution. The economic battle surged round questions like those of taking on and dismissal of workers, 8-hour day, sickness insurance funds, increase in wages, rights of the factory committees and their control over factory administrations. Making concessions in politics, agreeing to the most democratic electoral rights and the proclamation of all liberties, the bourgeoisie, with all the greater energy, fought every inch of the ground for their economic rights and privileges. Not being able to defeat the proletariat in open battle, the bourgeoisie commenced a policy which, in Russia, acquired the name of sabotage, the essence of which consisted in deliberately disorganising factories and other undertakings for the purpose of driving the workers to starvation. The revolutionary introduction of an 8-hour day roused the mad hatred of the employers, but, nevertheless, they were compelled to reconcile

themselves to this. But under no circumstances could they reconcile themselves to the appointment and dismissal of workers by the factory committees and the control of factories. On the outcome of the struggle they staked their all. This was a violation of the most fundamental right of the employers and the sharpest conflicts during the course of the first period of the Russian Revolution revolved round the question as to who was the master of the factory. The employers were led by the metal works owners. In vain did the Provisional Government, in the sharpest period of the social conflict, attempt to reconcile the hostile sides. When the Minister for Trade and Industry asked the representatives of the management of the Bogolovsky Mining region (Ural) where a conflict was proceeding between the workers and the administration, whether the management were willing to dismiss employees and workers through the conciliation boards, the representative of the employers, Zeidler, declared that "the management does not and will not recognise any committee or board; it is the master of the works and therefore will do as it desires. As to the State Public Control the industrialists do not and will not recognise any such thing." The metal works owners were not alone in this aggressive attitude towards the workers. The union of Baku petroleum owners declared that the masters would never agree to the hiring and dismissing of workers through the factory committees. The same declaration was made by the union of the united industries of the central industrial regions, who would not even permit the thought that the textile workers could control the uncrowned cloth kings. The attitude of the mine owners' union of the South of Russia and other employers' organisation was no less stern against the "criminal claims" of the workers.

### **The Employers take the Offensive.**

In August, 1917, an All-Russia conference of employers' organisations took place in Petrograd on the initiative of the Petrograd manufacturers' association, at which the largest employers' associations representing 2,000 businesses and 1,500,000 employees were represented. At this conference an All Russia League of Manufacturers' Associations was formed. The object of this new League, as Mikhin, the chairman of the council of the metal industry conference, explained, was to "unite the employers in defence of their interests," and to establish "guarantees for the execution of the orders of the League by its branches." Bimanoff, the chairman of the conference, declared that the league will work out "guiding rules for the abolition of interference of the factory committees in factory management."

The employers and their organisations raised their heads particularly high after the defeat of the Petrograd workers in July, 1917. This defeat gave birth to the conviction in the employers' circles that the most dangerous period of the Russian Revolution was over and that it was possible to pass from the defensive to the offensive. July, August, September and October were months of colossal economic conflicts, when hundreds of thousands of workers (the leather workers of the Moscow Government, the miners of the Don Basin, the textile

workers of Ivanovo-Vosnessensk, etc.) put forward their social demands. The attempts of the Provisional Coalition Government to find some middle course of conciliation only served to rouse greater feeling on both sides.

### **Disillusionment with Coalition Government.**

The sharpening of the economic conflict long before the October revolution confronted the trade unions with the necessity for a violent overthrow of the Coalition Government. The largest unions—the metal workers, textile workers—the chief centres of the labour movement—Petrograd, Moscow, and Ivanovo-Vosnessensk—had already at the third conference spoken out for a determined revolutionary struggle against the coalition. When in August, 1917, the Kerensky Government called the State Convention where an attempt was made at fraternisation between the Social Democrats, Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries on one side and the Liberals on the other, the Moscow Trade Union Council was the initiator of the strike of protest against the continuation of the comedy. 500,000 Moscow workers struck and hurled their battle-cry at the Provisional Government "All power to the Soviets." The Ural conference of Trade Unions, embracing 145,000 workers, passed a strong resolution of protest against "the displacement of the Revolutionary Government of Russia by the Moscow convention of the counter-revolutionary forces of the country." In connection with the Korniloff revolt, a series of demonstrations of the largest trade unions took place demanding the immediate break-up of the coalition, workers' control and all power to the Soviets. The Petrograd Council of trade unions asserting that the provisional government "are sacrificing the interests of peace and of the masses to the Allied and Russian imperialists" demanded at the end of August the establishment of a special committee for the defence of Petrograd against counter revolution. The Moscow metal workers declared that "there are no separate conflicts of metal workers, textile workers and leather workers, there is only one great national conflict between labour and capital," and the All-Russia conference of textile workers which took place in September promised "the fullest support to the Soviets in their struggle for power, for only such power can save the country from economic and political ruin and improve the position of the working class."

### **Trade Unions Moving Left.**

The extent to which the accentuation of the economic struggle forced the trade unions to the left, is seen from the fact that at the Democratic Convention which took place in Petrograd in September nine-tenths of the trade union delegates representing 1,893,100 workers, were against the coalition and that 70 of the 117 delegates belonged to the Bolshevist party. The trade unions, their local organs, the factory committees, played an important part in the sharpening of the class struggle. The whole of September and October, 1917, passed amidst sharp conflicts between the unions and the employers during which the workers put their resolution into force by means of

their own red guards. Thus when the conflict between the Leather Workers' Union and the Leather Manufacturers' Association dragged on in many factories, the employers were driven away and the factories seized by the factory committees. On the 5th of October, 1917, the Moscow Regional Metal Workers' Conference, at which 138,000 workers were represented demanded "an energetic campaign for a radical change in the basis of economic policy, the nationalisation of the larger syndicated petroleum, coal, sugar and metal industries, also of the Banks and of the means of transport." The Conference further recommended to carry out and to "encourage the initiative in the localities for the speediest realisation of workers' control of industry." Everyone can understand what to "encourage initiative for workers' control" meant in this sharp class struggle. Affairs reached the stage of violent and immediate introduction of workers' control. On the 9th of October 1,000 delegates, representing 200,000 textile workers in the Moscow region, promised support to the Soviets and called them to determined action in fighting against the sabotage of the employers and the treacherous conduct of the provisional government. The situation became more complicated. Here and there local strikes broke out which led to nothing. The excellently organised employers deliberately provoked the workers to local strikes in order to defeat them separately.

In the factories a fight was proceeding for the right to control the economic resources of the country. The working class of Russia, by the logic of the class struggle, had come right up to the conquest of government power. The social tangle could not be unravelled, it could only be cut, and this was done by the October revolution.

## **The October Revolution.**

The furious contest between the trade unions and the employers, as we saw, proceeded in every factory and works long before the October revolution. The trade unions and their organs, the factory committees, convinced themselves by practice and experience of the necessity of a violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie. It was for that reason that they were in the front ranks of the battle in the October revolution against the provisional government and the coalition.

The unions and the factory committees formed a red guard. They posted armed detachments for fighting against the government as well as for the protection of the factories. The unions and the Councils of Trade Unions had their representatives in the military revolutionary committees, their premises were used by the staffs of revolutionary troops, (the staff of the Moscow revolutionary troops were for some time situated on the premises of the Moscow Metal Workers' Union); they formed red cross detachments and were the first to place their technical staff and machinery at the disposal of the new Soviet government for the management of the State.

In those great days of severe and sharp fighting the trade unions had to fight not only against cossacks, junkers and the bourgeoisie, but even against several trade unions which at that decisive moment stood on the side of the Provisional Govern-

ment. The overwhelming majority of the trade unions were for the October revolution, only an insignificant section being against it. All the unions uniting factory workers like the metal workers, textile workers and leather workers were for the October revolution, while the commercial and bank employees' unions were against it. In those unions which united higher and lower employees like railwaymen and post and telegraph workers, the lower grade employees were for the October revolution, while the office staff and the higher officials were against it. The only exception of a purely proletarian union being against the October revolution were the printers, who came out actively in defence of the Provisional Government and the "freedom of the Press," understanding by that the freedom of the bourgeoisie and government press to continue at the most acute moment of armed conflict to pervert the consciousness of the masses.

### **The Fight Against Sabotage.**

The struggle between the workers and the employees assumed an extremely sharp form particularly when the notorious sabotage of the officials began which expressed itself in stopping work in all government institutions and the deliberate disorganisation of the State and administrative technical machinery. Here the struggle went on not merely between unions, but within the government and commercial employees' unions, where the workers and the lower staff concentrated all their efforts to restart work in the departments. The word sabotage became the most shameful word among the Russian proletariat, because the strike of the officials was practically directed against the working class and its frantic efforts to extricate itself from the political and economic cul-de-sac. The unions were confronted with the question whether strikes were permissible in a period when power was passing into the hands of the working class, and the unions through their largest organisations answered—no. The Moscow Council of Trade Unions at the beginning of November, 1917, carried a resolution which says "the unions consider that while a proletarian government is in power a political strike is to be considered as sabotage against which the most determined measures must be taken. To take the place of workers refusing to work, for that reason is not blacklegging, but a means of fighting sabotage and counter revolution." The trade union movement as a whole adopted the same point of view that no strike directed against the socialist revolution and its upholders, the working class, could be permitted. A strike of employees and officials usually began when a commissary of the new Soviet government appeared. The strikes, morally and materially supported by the partisans of the overthrown Kerensky government, rendered the relations between the technical intellectuals or employees and the workers so strained that even at the present moment there are traces of estrangement between the workers and the employees, the latter being distrusted. Thus, from the first days of the October revolution, the trade unions had to submit the question of the right to strike for reconsideration. The experience of the struggle led the Russian trade unions to the following practical conclusion:—to strike against the bourgeoisie is the sacred

right of the proletariat in its fight against the exploiters. To strike against the workers' revolution is an act of hostility against the working class and is therefore a crime against Russian and international socialism. The strikes of the bourgeoisie and the backward sections of the workers against the proletariat and its authority will never be permitted by the trade unions. This was the first lesson of the October revolution.

### **Back to Work.**

As for the strike wave roused by the October revolution itself and directed against the bourgeoisie as a means of destroying the bourgeois apparatus, immediately the victory of the workers became apparent the leading organs of the trade unions called upon the workers to set the factories and works going immediately. In its manifesto of the 28th October, the Petrograd Council of Trade Unions declared that "strikes and demonstrations of workers in Petrograd only do harm to the working class," and proposed "that all economic and political strikes immediately cease and that everybody commence work and carry it on in complete order." The same happened in other towns and particularly in Moscow, where the Council of Trade Unions on October 28th called upon the workers to strike and to armed battle; but on November 4th, as soon as the struggle ended, it proposed to the workers immediately to end the strike called out by the active participation of the workers in the armed conflict, and to return to the factories and commence work.

### **III. Trade Unions in the New Social Order.**

The October revolution was victorious under the battle-cries of "peace," "land" and "workers' control." The demand for peace and land we can understand, but what is this "workers' control," which was one of the most popular demands on the eve of the October revolution? The idea of workers' control arose in the first days of the February revolution. It aimed at subjecting the whole private, commercial, industrial and financial apparatus to the control and influence of the labour organisations. It meant that the factory committees and the responsible union would keep under observation the state of the factories, the supply of raw material and the financial side of the businesses, and would control the quantity of materials that came in and went out of the factories. This was the first attempt in history to limit the independent authority of the employer in his undertaking.

### **The Demand for Control.**

The idea of workers' control arose directly out of the struggle of the workers with the bourgeoisie as a weapon against the deliberate attempts to bring the factories to a standstill and disorganise production for the purpose of defeating the proletariat by starvation, and thus retard the revolution. In practice, workers' control meant that the factory committee in

every factory elected a special control commission which would vigilantly watch the management of the employers, and, in the event of the employers declaring that there was no raw material, no money, etc., the workers would check the correctness of the statement by the books and by reference to the banking accounts. The workers would veto any suspicious operation, and if the employers continued their scheming the workers would compel them to submit to their will by force of arms. In many places the employers fled from their factories and deliberately concealed themselves, hoping by this means to bring industry to a standstill, but, in such cases, the workers took the factories into their own hands and continued working.

This form of attack on capital acquired the definition of "workers' control." On the eve of the revolution the introduction of control was carried out without any plan and was quite spontaneous. For that reason on the morrow after the October revolution the Trade Unions were confronted with the difficult task of introducing a uniform system of labour control and of working out a practical programme of action.

The question was complicated by the severity of the struggle in the factories, and, in several places the tendency was observed for the workers to drive the owners from the factories and take the latter in their own hands. In place of a single owner there was a collective ownership represented by the workers employed in that factory. From the first days of the revolution the trade unions put up a determined resistance against this disintegration of the national industries. "The factories and works," we said, "are the property of the working class as a whole and not the property of the workers of a given factory, and for that reason workers should under no circumstances assume ownership of any factory." Labour control is only a part of State regulation of industry and therefore all local control committees must become the agents for carrying out the general economic plan and uniform economic policy.

### **The Decree of Workers' Control.**

Workers' control in the form that it developed directly after the October revolution was not yet the abolition of private ownership of the means of production, but merely a considerable limitation of the rights of the owners over the means of production and exchange. This is evident from the following paragraphs of the decree on workers' control which was drawn up in conjunction with the trade unions and issued on November 27th, 1917.

The Workers' Control organs have the right to supervise production, establish the minimum output of the undertaking and take measures to ascertain the cost of production of articles.

The Workers' Control organs have the right to control all the business correspondence of the undertaking; owners of undertakings concealing correspondence are liable to prosecution. Commercial secrets are abolished. Owners are obliged to submit their books and accounts for the current year as well as for previous years to the control committees. The decisions of the Workers' Control organs are binding upon the owners, and can only be altered by an order of the higher Workers' Control organs.

From this decree, issued directly after the October Revolution, it is evident that the task of control, as it was formu-

lated in the resolution on "Workers' Control" at the first Trade Union Congress, was to "put an end to autocracy in the sphere of economics in the same way as it had been abolished in politics," from which it follows that "Workers' control is not tantamount to the socialisation of the means of production and exchange but a preliminary step towards it."

This cautious approach and estimation of workers' control, the greatest act in the history of the world, arises from the practical estimation of economic possibilities by the trade unions, and the consciousness that socialism cannot be constructed in a week or a month, but is the work of long years and decades. A wedge had been driven into the capitalist system of production: the working class had approached right up to production and its secrets and it was proved that "constitutional monarchy" was impossible and that however complicated a modern factory may be the owner is a useless cog in the mechanism. This is the second logical conclusion which arises from the October Revolution.

## **New Problems of the Trade Unions.**

The October Revolution converted the working class into the dominant class and the bourgeoisie into the subject class—this completely overturned the former relations between the workers and the employers and confronted the trade unions with new problems. Directly after the October Revolution the economic strikes came to an end. The workers formulated their demands and submitted them to the trade unions and, upon the trade unions sanctioning them, these were put into force by the State. If the employer refused to submit, then prisons and other means of compulsion, prepared by the bourgeoisie itself, were brought into use. For the first time in the history of humanity a government intervened in strikes in favour of the workers, imprisoned employers for failing to satisfy the demands of the trade unions and by means of decrees introduced wage rates worked out by the trade unions, and confiscated businesses of obstinate factory owners. The October Revolution did not merely imply a transfer of political power to the proletariat but also the transfer of economic power into the hands of the working class. All former relations were destroyed. The trade unions developing on the basis of capitalist relations and as fighting organs were converted into part of the machinery of the labour government (resolutions of the 9th Congress of the Russian Communist Party), and this compelled the trade unions to reorganise their ranks, to change their tactics and to put forward questions which have never before confronted trade unions of other countries.

## **First All Russia Trade Union Congress.**

These new problems, arising out of the commencing social revolution were formulated by the first All Russia Trade Union Congress which met in the beginning of January, 1918, in Petrograd. In the first place the trade unions had to define: (1) their attitude towards the October revolution, (2) whether the organised proletariat could preserve neutrality in the acute

class war, (3) what should the workers support—bourgeois democracy or labour democracy, i.e., the Constituent Assembly or the Soviets and, finally, what were the practical problems confronting the labour unions in the period of proletarian dictatorship.

The First Trade Union Congress held the view that the victory of the workers and the poorest peasants in October “leads us simultaneously towards the beginning of international socialist revolution and to the victory over the capitalist system of production.” Everything else follows from this fundamental view of the character of the October Revolution.

### **Resolution Supporting Soviet Government.**

“The idea of ‘neutrality’ of the trade unions”—says this resolution—“was and remains a bourgeois idea. There is and there can be no neutrality in the great historical fight between revolutionary socialism and its opponents. Support of bourgeois policy and betrayal of the interests of the working class was always concealed beneath the mask of neutrality. Least of all in Russia, a country going through a great revolution and which has overthrown the bourgeoisie, could the trade unions be ‘neutral.’ All the questions arising in the process of the revolution (Constituent Assembly, nationalisation of Banks, the fight against the bourgeois press, the repudiation of loans, etc.), directly affects the interests of the trade union movement. In all these questions the trade unions must give their entire support to the policy of the Socialist Soviet Government, as conducted by the Council of Peoples Commissaries.”

By this resolution the Congress, in the name of two and a half million workers, firmly and undeviatingly stood for the soviet system, for labour democracy as against bourgeois democracy, and thus linked the fate of the trade union movement in Russia with the fate of the soviet government and the socialist revolution. Expressing itself in favour of the dictatorship of the proletariat and for “the close co-operation and inseparable connection between the trade unions and the proletarian political organisations and, chiefly with the Soviet of Workers’ Delegates” the first conference resolved that “the centre of gravity of the trade union movement at the present moment must be transferred to the sphere of national administration and organisation. The Trade Unions must undertake the work of organising production and restoring the undermined forces of the country.” How did the Unions carry out this resolution? By the creation of special economic organs in conjunction with the Soviet, organisation of workers’ control, estimation and distribution of labour power, participation in the transference of war industry to peace production, by fighting against sabotage, by the introduction of obligatory labour, etc. The problems submitted by the Congress to the Trade Unions of Russia were—organisation of labour and organisation of production.

### **Resolution on Workers’ Control.**

The First Congress paid particular and detailed attention to the question of workers’ control and the regulation of

industry. In this sphere the Russian proletariat had to cut a new path, for history knows no example of the organisation of national economy being approached from the point of view of society as a whole and not in the interests of individuals or groups of exploiters. The First Congress understood perfectly well that the economic problem could not be solved at a single blow and it definitely indicated the road which the trade unions should follow. The Congress emphasised the fact that "workers' control is inseparably connected with the general system of regulation of national economy, that it is the basis of State regulation, that the unions must carry out the idea of centralised workers' control and the merging of the small controlling units into larger organs which correspond to the modern methods of production as well as to the actual structure of labour organisations." In the resolution on the regulation of industry the Congress advocated the syndication and the trustification of the most important branches of industry like coal, petroleum, iron, chemicals and also transport, as a preparatory stage to the nationalisation of industry. The regulation of national economy in the interests of the whole country can only be carried out under the guidance of a class whom history has chosen for this responsible task, i.e., the proletariat. The part to be played by the trade unions in this great work of the reconstruction of society consists not only in the defence of the interests of the working class but in preparing it for the role of industrial organisers during the transition from private monopoly to State monopoly, from the latter to nationalisation and from that last to socialism.

### **The Development of Factory Committees.**

In defining the role and the functions of the trade unions in the organisation of production it was necessary to pay very serious attention to the factory committees and their role in the general system of our economic organisation. The factory committees arose in Russia in the first days of the February revolution and were the first organisations created in the struggle of the workers against their employers. These organisations embraced all the workers in a given factory, whether they were members of the union or not, and from their very rise, played a double role. On the one hand they served as a support to the Soviet of Workers' Delegates, carrying out the soviet's political instructions in the factories and, on the other hand, they settled conflicts and conducted strikes, etc., thus taking the place of the trade union in the first period of the revolution and, later, becoming the nuclei of the Russian Trade Union movement.

The factory committees chiefly performed the functions of political and economic control and, at the time of the October Revolution, had to bear the responsibility for the great organising and administrative work. For that reason in the first period of the October Revolution the question of the factory committees became very acute. Among certain sections of the factory committees the opinion began to grow that the trade unions had outlived their time and that they could be supplanted by the factory committees. In several towns like Petrograd, Odessa, Samara, Kiev, etc., central councils of factory

committees arose which began to act as parallel bodies to the responsible trade union council. New economic organisations were thus formed the growth of which would inevitably lead to a fratricidal war between the trade unions and the factory committees. On the other hand, as the trade unions grew and embraced an ever larger number of factories, the factory committees became elected organs of the organised members of the particular union. This eased the way to the subordination of the factory committees to the unions, as decided at the third conference of Trade Unions in June, 1917, and finally confirmed at the First All-Russian Congress which decided that "the factory committees must become the local organs of the union."

After the first Trade Union Congress the Central Councils of Factory Committees were abolished and the factory committees became units of the union, carrying out the instructions and resolutions of the centre.

### Regulations on Factory Committees.

In the period immediately prior to the October Revolution, when the central organs of national economy were just being established, the factory committees, in many cases, undertook the management of the factories. But that only lasted as long as the corresponding central industrial management organ had not yet been established. After this the factory committees had their representatives in the factory management boards which were usually composed of the representatives of the trade unions, the Council of National Economy and the factory committees. In the middle of 1918 the All-Russia Central Council of Trade Unions drafted special "Regulations on Factory Committees." According to these regulations the factory committees:

- (a) Undertake, on the instruction of the Union, all measures necessary to unite all workers and employees of a given factory into one industrial organisation;
- (b) Carry out strict proletarian discipline among the workers and employees, as set forth by the Industrial Union;
- (c) See that all measures and regulations of the Labour Commissariat, directed towards the defence and protection of labour are carried out, and devise means of improving labour conditions;
- (d) See to the execution by the factory of all instructions and measures of the Council of National Economy and the Industrial Union directed towards raising the productivity as well as maintaining the normal progress of labour;
- (e) Keep a strict watch on the exact and mutual carrying out of wages agreements and standards of productivity;
- (f) Carry out workers' control to the fullest extent;
- (g) Undertake the supply of articles of primary necessity to the workers within the limits of the Food Department's regulations and, for this purpose, enter into relations with the necessary organisations for establishing public restaurants, shops, etc.;
- (h) Establish in connection with the factories and under the guidance of the Union, schools, libraries, reading-rooms, people's palaces, children's homes, playgrounds and kindergartens, etc.;
- (i) carry out the decisions of the courts of honour and the punishments imposed by them in accordance with the regulations and wages agreements;
- (j) Participate in the acceptance and discharge of workers and employees in accordance with the decree on labour exchanges and the instructions of the Trade Union.

## Factory Committee as Local Unit.

As industry became nationalised and chief committees for managing the nationalised factories were established we passed over from workers' control to workers' management and with this transition, the functions of the factory committees in the sphere of control of production ceased because the union as a whole and not separate sections of it took part in the administration. As a result of 2½ years' development of the trade union movement, the Third Trade Union Congress, summing up the experience of the dual functions of the factory committee resolved that "the factory committee must definitely be fixed as the local nucleus of the trade union with analogous trade union functions in so far as it concerns the responsibility it has to bear towards the higher organs of the union and completely abstain from interfering in the work of administering the factory; in order to abolish parallelism in administrative and trade union organs in the factory all industrial committees in connection with the factory committees are to be dissolved."

This resolution, establishing the factory management board as the sole authority in the factory, finally subordinated the factory committee to the union and, in this manner, rounded off a complete period of development of the Russian trade union movement which commenced with the factory committees being independent of the unions, went through a process of administration of the factories by the factory committees, participation of the factory committee in the management—and consequently their subordination to the councils of national economy; and finally binding the factory committee to the union and converting it into a purely trade union organ.

## Trade Unionism and Dictatorship.

The First All-Russia Congress of Trade Unions, laying down the general line of revolutionary policy and the necessity for the closest co-operation and inseparable connection with the Soviets of Workers' Delegates, came up against one of the most difficult questions in the theory and practice of the trade union movement, i.e., the role of trade unions in the period of proletarian dictatorship. What is the dictatorship of the proletariat? It is a definite labour system of government, having for its object to destroy the bourgeois capitalist relations and the state machinery created by them, to crush the resistance of the exploiters and to prepare the conditions and foundations for socialist construction. Between capitalism and socialism there is a distinct historical period during which the oppressed class, taking advantage of the new government machinery which it has created, forcibly establishes new social industrial relations, and, to the extent that these new relations are strengthened, the State power of the transition period gradually dies out; for socialist society is a non-class society and where there are no classes there is no State. Consequently, to the extent that we depart from capitalism and approach to socialism the state as such will disappear and, as Engels wrote, it will be placed in the museum of history. The state will remain a mere apparatus for the registration of distribution and production, serving the economic needs of socialist society.

The soviet is an organ of proletarian dictatorship, and as a definite form of state, will disappear with the complete victory of socialism.

## The "Nationalisation" of Trade Unions.

But what will be the fate of the trade unions? The trade unions have become converted from fighting organisations against capital into organs of socialist construction, and to the extent that we advance from capitalism to communism the centre of gravity of the work of the union will be transferred to the sphere of organisation and administration. The main task of organising labour and production lies upon the trade unions and the more the trade unions are able to cope with this task, the more it will become merged in national economy and become part and parcel of it. In a completely developed socialist society the trade unions as fighting organisations in the class war will disappear and their place will be taken by an apparatus for registration, distribution and public production.

But where will this apparatus for registering, distributing and producing in socialist society come from? What organisation will create it? Evidently it will be created in the transitional periods by the trade unions and the soviets. And its importance will grow in proportion to the victory of the social revolution and the strengthening of the new industrial relations. Thus, the soviets of workers' delegates and the trade unions jointly create in the transitional period an organ for managing production (Councils of National Economy and the chief Committees for the management of nationalised undertakings). These organs, however, lose their specific character as fast as we advance to socialism: the whole work of the Soviets and the trade unions becomes concentrated upon the organisation of labour and production, but their industrial functions disappear. The trade unions and the Soviet economic organs merge into one another; a single economic machinery grows out of it swallowing both unions and soviets, thus being the synthesis of all the organisations created by the proletariat. Socialism emerges in its perfect form of organisation. This perspective of the development and the rebirth of the existing proletarian organisations gives rise to the idea of "nationalising" the trade unions\* and many comrades regarded this possibility as meaning the immediate subordination of the trade unions to the soviets and their formal inclusion in the machinery of the soviet government. The first All-Russia Congress of Trade Unions which advocated "the closest co-operation and inseparable connection between the trade unions and the Soviets of workers' delegates" declared in its fundamental resolution that "in the process of development which has been outlined, the trade unions will inevitably be converted into organs of socialist government, participation in which will be obligatory for all persons engaged in any given industry."

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\* Rendering Trade Unions organs of the State.

## Resolutions on Trade Unions and Soviets.

This resolution was taken by some comrades to mean immediate subordination of the unions to the State; and the second All-Russia Congress of Trade Unions, held in January, 1919, on the question of the character of the relations between the soviet organs and the trade unions and their gradual merging declared:

"The task of socialising all means of production and the organisation of society on a new socialist basis demands stubborn, prolonged work on the reconstruction of the whole government machine, the creation of new organs of control and regulation of production and consumption resting upon the organised initiative of the masses of the workers themselves.

"This compels the trade unions to take a more active and energetic part in the soviets, by direct participation in all the state organs, by organising mass proletarian control over their activities, by carrying out separate tasks which might confront the soviet government through their organisations, by cooperating in the reconstruction of various state departments and by the gradual substitution of them by their own organisations by means of fusing the organs of the union with those of the state.

"It would be a mistake, however, in the present stage of development of trade unions with the, as yet, imperfect state organisation, immediately to convert the unions into state organs and to merge the former into the latter or for the unions arbitrarily to usurp the functions of the state. The whole process of complete fusion of the trade unions with the state organs (the process which we call nationalisation of trade unions) must take place as the inevitable result of their joint close and harmonious working and the preparation by the trade unions of the broad masses of the workers for the task of managing the state machine and all the administrative organs."

The perspective outlined by the second congress was subjected to a new test: a year and three months of stern civil war passed and whatever the trials of the trade unions, with the exception of an insignificant minority they fought shoulder to shoulder with the soviet government against the Russian and world counter-revolution. It was this organic connection with the soviet government which the third All-Russia Congress advanced in the first instance: "The trade unions in Soviet Russia"—says the first resolution—"practically became an inseparable part of the soviet system, a necessary supplement and support of the proletarian dictatorship of the soviets." The second important resolution of the congress with reference to organisation lays it down that "the trade unions are the fundamental basis of the proletarian state, the sole organisers of labour in the process of production and the chief tool in economic construction." These two definitions give an exhaustive description of the trade unions in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism. The trade unions are the foundation and support of the soviet state—a necessary supplement to the organs of proletarian dictatorship—the soviets; the chief tool of economic construction; and the only organisers of labour in the process of production. These are the functions and the place of the trade unions in the proletarian state based on thirty months experience of joint work and struggle and this experience was registered by the resolutions of the third All-Russia Congress.

## **The Opposition in the Trade Unions.**

The point of view outlined above is not shared by the whole of the Russian trade union movement: from the beginning of the October Revolution, a tendency existed inside the Russian trade union movement which put forward the demand for the independence of the trade union movement. The theory of independence was specially urged at trade union congresses by the mensheviks. What is the essence of this theory? What is the meaning of independence and of whom should the unions remain independent? The theory of independence is based on the denial of the socialist character of our revolution. The supporters of independence argue that a bourgeois democratic revolution is taking place in Russia. The government, whatever the individual intentions of its representatives may be, is a government of the bourgeoisie; the state and the whole state apparatus reflects the bourgeois origin of the revolution, is in fact a bourgeois apparatus and for that reason the labour organisations must be made independent of the state. The same relations must exist between the trade unions in Russia and the Soviet government as now exist between the labour organisations and present day bourgeois democratic governments; autonomy, independence, collective agreements, freedom of class struggle, right to strike, maintainance of strike funds for that purpose, etc., etc. Such is the theory of independence as it was elucidated at the first All-Russian Congress of trade unions and was further developed by the supporters of this point of view.

## **Trade Union Independence or Class Struggle.**

Which unions in Russia adopted this theory? First of all, all the employees unions (commercial clerks, bank clerks and civil servants) then a section of the printers whose work was always so closely associated with the bourgeois press, that the abolition of the bourgeois press aroused in them a prolonged and strong opposition. For all that, the proletarian unions were against that theory. Thus the very character of the unions putting forward this theory compels us to devote particular attention to this "independence" and to decipher its class meaning. First of all, is the premise of this argument correct? What is revolution in general and a socialist revolution in particular? Revolution is the violent seizure of power in the interests of a new class. A revolution is "great," "brought to a successful end," when a new class comes to power which in its own interests reconstructs economic relations and turns all the powers of the state to the service of the interests of the new class. A revolution is regarded as a minor or incomplete revolution when power is transferred to the hands of a new social section of the same class. Is it the bourgeoisie that is in power after the October Revolution? Obviously not, for, at the present moment, it is the oppressed class. But, perhaps, it is the peasantry that is in power in Russia? Even this is refuted by facts for if the peasants were in power, they would never have abolished private property or established State monopoly of articles of primary consumption in general and of corn in particular. Consequently, there remains only one class,

the proletariat, whose interests coincide with the development of the social revolution—the only class that can bring about the socialisation of the means of production and exchange. If that is so, what revolution have we in Russia, a bourgeois or a socialist revolution? If it is a socialist revolution then, how can there be room for strike funds, strikes and other weapons and methods of the class struggle which the proletariat employed against its class enemies? Against whom will the proletarian trade union conduct the class struggle? Against their own proletarian government, against themselves?

We see, therefore, that the theory of independence is based wholly upon the old capitalist relations and that it arose out of a failure to understand the epoch through which we are at present living, and reflects in the minds of certain categories of workers the contradictions of the present epoch in which the new social relations are still surrounded by capitalist forms. The expiring capitalism still clings to certain categories of workers who more than any others were intellectually subjected to its influence.

The theory of independence is not a narrow trade union theory; but a complete political philosophy. If this is a bourgeois revolution, consequently, one must adopt a different economic policy towards the bourgeoisie and the peasantry, it is necessary to establish all bourgeois "liberties," the Constituent Assembly, in a word, all the "democratic" forms for the maximum development of bourgeois democratic society and a "healthy regulated" capitalism. As the revolution developed, the theory of independence lost its pure and consistent form and at the Third Congress of Trade Unions appeared in a new form; the mensheviks, recognising that a socialist revolution was proceeding, supported the argument for independence in view of the slow development of the world and, particularly, the Russian revolution. They said that the socialist revolution is developing very slowly, particularly in Russia, where there is a numerous peasantry and it is therefore necessary that the proletarian trade unions should be independent of the Soviet State which, while socialistic, is nevertheless giving way to the influence of the middle classes.

## **Decline of the Opposition.**

What is the role and the strength of this tendency in Russia? First of all it is necessary to point out that even the Clerks' Union, which at one time supported the independents, is gradually freeing itself from their influence. At the last congress of this union the independents numbered only 32 per cent. of the delegates. Their position is just as deplorable even among the printers. At the last National Congress of Printers, which took place in July, 1919, the majority of delegates were communists.

The general decline of the influence of the mensheviks and therefore of the independents in the Russian trade union movement can be seen from the following table:

|  | Total Delegates. | Mensheviks, right soc.-rev. and sympathisers. | Per cent. |
|--|------------------|---|-----------|
| 3rd Conference (June 1917) ... ..            | 220              | 120   | 55.5      |
| Democratic Convention (Sept. 1917) ... ..    | 117              | 45  | 38.4      |
| 1st Trade Union Congress (Jan. 1918) ... ..  | 416              | 66  | 21.3      |
| 2nd Trade Union Congress (Jan. 1919) ... ..  | 748              | 29  | 9.4       |
| 3rd Trade Union Congress (April 1920) ... .. | 1229             | 48  | 6.8       |

Thus the influence of the independents fell from year to year and it is necessary to point out that at the second congress 37 delegates voted for their resolutions and at the Third Congress only 31. This means that the few non-party representatives deserted them while the Congress proceeded. The powerful party that in the first period of the revolution had a majority in the Soviets and Trade Unions was reduced to nothing. The organised proletariat of Russia marched past the anti-socialist theories and practice of "independence."

### The Control of Industry.

One of the most important points in the theory of independence was the relations of the unions to the controlling organs of national economy. The question was: should the trade unions participate in the organisation of industry? To this the independents replied that it was necessary to participate but to refuse all responsibility, that the functions of the unions in entering these organs was chiefly to protect labour. As we have seen, however, the Russian trade union movement, from the first days of the October Revolution, took quite a different road. It not only did not avoid responsibility but sought it, taking upon itself the responsibility for the organisation of all the controlling and administrative organs of industry. As soon as the decree on workers' control was issued, the trade unions, on the basis of representation of the All-Russian Industrial Unions, created a National Council of Workers' Control, whose business it was to unite all the work of organisation and control in the localities, but, from the very beginning the unions and the organs which they created arrived at the necessity of creating wider organisations in which control would only form a part of the work, and the National Council of Workers' Control thus became converted into a supreme Council of National Economy which daily widened the sphere of its activities. The Supreme Council of National Economy was created by the Trade Unions together with the Soviet authorities and its separate branches as well as the newly created organs, arising because of the machinery becoming more and more complicated, are being constructed on the basis of representation of trade unions.

### The Machinery of Control.

The Supreme Council of National Economy is composed of dozens of central organs which manage the nationalised industry, and there is not one of them which has been set up without an agreement between the Executive of the Supreme Council of National Economy and the Executive of the respective trade union being arrived at.

Thus, the Committee for State Building and Construction is formed by agreement with the Builders' Union. The Chief Administration of the nationalised textile undertakings is formed by agreement with the All-Russian Textile Workers' Union, the Chief Administration of the nationalised leather undertakings by agreement with the Leather Workers' Union, the United State Engineering Department, a section of the Supreme Council of National Economy, is formed by agreement with the Metal Workers' Union. Two and a half years' experience of revolution convinced the trade unions that it was necessary to (1) construct a uniform plan of industrial administration, (2) send their representatives to these organs without interfering in the administrative and technical work of the undertaking, (3) give the elected factory board the necessary authority and ask its local organs to support the board's work; (4) send, through responsible officials of the administrative organs, periodical reports to the respective trade unions, (5) call periodical joint meetings of the All-Russia Central Council of Trade Unions and the Supreme Council of National Economy for the consideration of fundamental questions affecting economic policy, (6) centralise the administration of industry with a view to a rational utilisation of all forces of production, (7) strive towards the simplification and the abolition of parallelism in administration, (8) combat parallelism arising from attempts of economic organs to assume the functions of a trade union, (9) reduce the number of members in the collegiate boards, and to hold every member individually responsible, (10) resort to individual management of factories wherever this is considered useful, (11) define the exact functions of the various trade union organs and their relations to the Soviet Government organs, and finally, (12) subordinate the narrow trade union interests to the interests of national economic construction.

These fundamental rules, the result of great experience, lay at the bottom of the whole economic policy of the trade unions. The trade unions do not assume the management of industry, they are not the sole organisers of production: the whole nationalised industry is managed by the state organs based on the representation of the trade unions which "by entering into the Soviet organisation become converted more and more into the fundamental basis of the Soviet Economic system." (Resolution of 9th Congress of Russian Communist Party).

## **The Organisation of Labour.**

Production taken as a whole included the organisation of labour, for labour is the most important factor in production. It may be said that all that the Russian Trade Unions did in organising production was to create organs in conjunction with the Soviets, but this cannot be said with regard to the organisation of labour. In this connection the trade unions exclusively undertake the state regulation of wages and the standardisation of labour while the government departments concerned with this, the Commissariat of Labour and its local Departments, serve as purely auxiliary organs.

Directly after the February Revolution a Ministry of Labour which endeavoured to act as the intermediary between Labour and Capital was established, but it strove to maintain a strictly "governmental" neutrality and by this means turned both the workers and the employers against itself. Things are quite different with the Commissariat of Labour. Created by the trade unions it acted as a class organ, not seeking compromise but putting into force all the compulsory powers of the Government to carry out all the demands of the workers. There was some parallelism in the work after the first months of the Revolution. The Commissariat, as an organ elected by the trade unions, often carried out the functions of the latter and sometimes acted without consulting the trade unions. This duplication of work arose as the result of the absence of any delimitation of functions between the trade unions and the Commissariat of Labour. The 4th Congress of Trade Unions, which took place in April, 1918, in order to clear up the relations between the two departments, resolved that "all resolutions on principle passed by the higher organs of the trade unions (Congresses and Conferences, etc.) are obligatory for the Labour Commissariats. All legislative proposals and special obligatory regulations affecting the conditions of labour and production must be previously approved by the responsible organ of the trade unions (i.e. the National and Local Trade Union Councils). As a first step towards the practical realisation of this the National and Local Trade Union Councils organise collegiate boards at the head of the Labour Commissariats as their responsible organs for carrying out general class policy and for harmonising practical measures."

### **Labour Commissariat Subordinate to Trade Unions**

The 2nd Trade Union Congress again confirmed the obligation for the Labour Commissariat to put into force the resolutions of the higher organs of the trade unions (i.e., conferences, congresses and the All-Russia Central Council of Trade Unions). The Congress also resolved that "all compulsory regulations issued by the Commissariat of Labour affecting labour conditions must be previously approved of by the general meeting of the All-Russia Council of Trade Unions."

Two and a half years of the work proved that the limitation of functions was a rather complicated thing and that the work of the Commissariat and its local Departments wholly depends upon the degree of influence which the responsible trade union organisations have upon it. On the whole the following division of labour was observed. The whole wages policy, i.e., the state regulation of wages, standardisation of labour, questions of labour discipline, etc., is exclusively conducted by the trade unions while the commissariats merely confirm the decisions arrived at by the trade unions. Protection of labour and the distribution of labour power are carried out by the Commissariat of Labour while the trade unions control these departments through their representatives.

The 3rd Trade Union Congress expressed itself for "the necessity of a closer contact between the trade unions and the

local Departments of Labour and for increasing the influence of trade union control on the current activity of the Department of Labour in the centre as well as on the periphery. All the responsible workers of the Labour Commissariat must be elected at the congresses or conferences of Trade Unions. A preliminary consideration of all questions of principle affecting labour must take place at joint meetings of the Executive (or general meeting) of the trade unions and the head (or the board) of the Department of Labour before any decision can be arrived at."

### **What of the Future ?**

These relations between the trade unions and a Department of the Soviet Government show that: (1) the state regulation of wages and the standardisation of labour is the exclusive function of the trade union, (2) in defining the conditions of labour the organs of the Soviet Government—the Commissariats of Labour—carry out in their entirety the instructions of the trade unions. In this connection one must observe the following: as the fixing of wages and the standardisation of labour is entirely the function of the trade unions, it is irrational to have another special organ to sanction its decisions; we get a parallelism in the work, and as we abolished organs created by the trade unions which were doing similar work to that done by Soviet organs so it is necessary to abolish Soviet organs which are doing work similar to that of the trade unions. The increased control and the further subordination of the Commissariat of Labour to the trade unions must lead to the practical abolition of the Commissariat of Labour, and to the transfer of its functions to the respective trade unions. After the practical abolition of this Department there must follow its formal abolition; and the trade unions will remain the sole organs responsible to the proletarian state for the organisation of labour and their decisions in this sphere will be subject to the sanction of their national central organs only. In this manner the whole work of organisation, protection and standardisation of labour is concentrated in the All-Russia Central Council of Trade Unions and its local organs. There will, therefore, be but two central national organs: one the All-Russia Central Council of Trade Unions, which concentrates its work on the organisation of labour, and the other, the Supreme Council of National Economy, which occupies itself exclusively with the organisation of production. But as labour is the fundamental factor in production, the next stage will lead to the simplification of the whole economic apparatus by the fusion of the All-Russia Central Council of Trade Unions with the Supreme Council of National Economy, and the industrial unions with the respective Chief and Central Committees for the administration of the nationalised undertakings. When this will take place is as yet not known, but this is the developing tendency, this is the iron logic of socialist economic construction.

## The Regulation of Wages.

Russia is the only country in the world where wages for all categories of labour are regulated on a national scale and where this regulation is carried out by the trade unions. In this work the Russian trade unions had to start right from the very beginning. Previous to the February Revolution, 1917, there was no such thing as collective bargaining for the reason that there were no mass trade unions. In the large majority of cases individual workers entered into agreements with individual employers. Strikes were of a spontaneous character; neither the working class as a whole nor separate trades had any organised influence on the rate of wages. There were no labour statistics. The unions that were in existence had very little material, information was gathered chiefly by factory inspectors and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, while the figures concerning wages, minimum standard of living, number of workers and the length of the labour day, were the only information upon which one could operate, and when the revolution broke out the unions had to start literally from the very beginning, having to carry out in a very short time a task which the British, German and American trade unions carried out during a period of many decades. The first difficulty met with in the regulation of wages on a national scale was the absence of any apparatus, material, and experienced people who could raise this work to its proper level.

The second serious obstacle which prevented the regulation of wages on a national scale was the disorganisation of national economic organisations resulting from the war, the jumpy rise in the cost of articles of primary necessity, the instability of the monetary unit and the extreme scarcity of food and general scarcity of commodities. All these, in conjunction with the acuteness of the civil war, prevented the establishment of stable standards and the convulsive efforts of the working class to shake off the Russian and world counter-revolution deprived the trade unions of all possibilities of converting the regulation of wages into an actual regulation of national economy.

## Wage Fixing by Trade Unions.

If in establishment of wage rates the British trade unions had to take into consideration the state of the market, the general economic position and the potentialities of the country, then so much more had this to be taken into consideration in Russia, where the workers have no one to whom to put forward their demands unless it be to themselves. The Russian trade unions do not "negotiate" with anybody, they do not demand "increase" in wages or the introduction of new forms of payment, but establish all these things themselves. All wage rates, etc., worked out by the trade unions are handed to the Wages Department of the All-Russia Central Council of Trade Unions for the purpose of establishing a uniform wage policy and there the wage rates are finally worked out, systematised and signed and then confirmed by the Commissariat of Labour. Not one institution in Soviet Russia may establish or change wage rates without or apart from the corresponding trade union. Under those circumstances the trade unions cannot but approach the

question of wage policy from the class point of view. The State regulation of wages must not only raise badly paid categories of labour and make wages conform to the changing economic conditions of the country but in the first place, must connect the wage policy with the supply of the workers with articles of primary necessity, i.e., must strive towards the naturalisation of wages; in the second place, to fix wages according to results obtained, i.e., to introduce a strict standardisation of labour and, thirdly, to serve as a powerful instrument for the raising of labour productivity in the factories.

The trade unions did tremendous work in the sphere of fixing wages during the period leading up to the October Revolution; they studied and classified all categories of labour in all the branches of national industry and State administration. Every union studied the peculiar condition of its branch of trade, its degree of harmfulness, etc., created central and local wage standardisation departments, established grading of skill in labour, included in the general wages scheme not only physical workers but all the clerical elements and all categories of mental labour, worked out systems of payment for encouraging output and established definite relations of various groups and various grades of skill. But, in spite of the tremendous work which has been done, the Russian trade unions stand yet before the very beginning of the solution of these questions, for the solution of the problem of rating and standardising labour on a national scale means to organise social labour, i.e., to organise socialist production.

The immediate and most complicated problem is to do away with the money remuneration which the worker now needs for the purpose of buying articles of primary consumption for himself and his family. In view of the insufficiency of products the issue of articles in kind over and above the standard was carried out up till now as a form of encouragement for extra labour. This is why at all our congresses the question of wages is associated with the question of food. At the 3rd Congress the Material Supply Section worked simultaneously with the Wages Section and indicated a practical plan by which the unions could supply the workers with articles of primary necessity. We know very well that material supply to the workers is the best means of increasing the productivity of the factories and for that reason the trade unions, in complete agreement with the Soviet Government, give the most important place to the consideration of supplying the workers, as one of the most important factors in the economic revival of the country. It is self evident that the economic revival of the country is not an end in itself but the means to an end. That end is socialism which can only be constructed upon a firm economic foundation.

#### IV. Structure and Policy.

The youthfulness of the trade unions, apart from its negative sides, as we saw in the sphere of regulating and standardising labour, has a number of positive sides clearly evident in our trade union movement, which is quite free from historical strata, conservatism, prejudices and old traditions

connected with the peaceful and organic development of capitalism. Our unions are not only free from the dead-weight of tradition because they are young but principally because they are the children of the Revolution. They grew and developed with the Revolution and they withered and fell during the period of victory of the counter-revolution. These peculiar features of the Russian Trade Unions are reflected in all their activities, but this is particularly clear and evident in their constructive work and in their political orientation. In constructing their organisation the Russian trade unions took advantage of the negative and positive experiences of Western Europe, and, in the first days of their birth in 1905, they began to organise, not according to trades but according to industry. In the first period of the Revolution this was only observed to the extent that the growth of the unions was limited by tsarism. But after the February Revolution all the work of organisation was conducted on the principle of building the union according to industry. The 3rd Conference already advocated the "unification within the frame of a common organisation and a common leadership of as large a mass of workers as possible engaged in similar factories and allied trades."

### **Industrial Unionism Defined.**

The 1st Congress confirmed the necessity for creating unions according to industry, but did not further explain what an industrial union meant. This was done by the 2nd Congress which laid it down that "an industrial union is a union having the following characteristics:

(1) uniting all workers and employees of a given industry, independently of the particular functions they perform; (2) having a central fund; (3) having an administration based on democratic centralism; (4) working out wage rates and conditions for all categories of labour through a single central body; (5) a uniform construction from top to bottom; (6) sections within the union having a technical auxiliary function only; (7) representation through a single body of the interests of the organised workers and employees of a given industry before the outside world; (8) persons not producing, but assisting the producers, as well as all temporary and casual workers, remain members of their industrial union."

It is evident from this definition that the fundamental principle of the Russian trade union movement is: in "one factory, one union; and this means that all workers from unskilled labourers to hired engineers working in a metal factory including also the wood workers are members of the metal workers' union. Wood workers, mechanics, etc., working in a textile factory, join the Textile Workers' Union and electricians and stokers working in a soap factory join the Chemical Workers' Union. Thus, the peculiarity of our Trade Union movement lies in its concentration. In England there are 200 national unions, in France about 60 and in Germany 48, in Russia, in January, 1920, there were 32 national centralised unions and after the 3rd Congress there remained only 23 unions embracing all categories of workers and employees, all

categories of labour from the simplest unskilled labour to the highly skilled engineer, doctor and professors of all educational establishments. At a first glance it would seem impossible to unite all the varieties of modern industry in such a small number of unions, but it only seems so. If one starts out, not from the point of view of the interests of a group or a craft, but from the interests of the whole, from the interests of production—and production is the means of constructing our socialist society on a sound foundation—then the number of unions can be reduced to the minimum we have established.

### **The New Scheme: 23 Unions.**

Thus as a result of the decision of the third congress the following trade unions will henceforth exist in Russia:

1. Employees and workers in medical and sanitary services (doctors, nurses, hospital nurses, hospital porters, hospital attendants, pharmacists).
2. Transport workers (railwaymen, sailors, stevedores, chauffeurs, etc.).
3. Miners.
4. Woodworkers.
5. Land and forest workers.
6. Art workers (actors, choristers, musicians, artists, theatrical, circus and cinema employees).
7. Workers on public feeding and housing.
8. Leather workers.
9. Metal workers.
10. Workers and employees in communal service (drains, water supply, militia, fire brigade, bath employees, laundry employees, hairdressers, street lighting employees).
11. Workers in Education and socialist culture (public teachers, professors, high school and university staff, porters, etc.).
12. Employees in public communications (post, telegraph, telephone and radio).
13. Printers.
14. Workers in the paper industry.
15. Workers in the food industry (bakers, confectioners, sausage makers, flour millers, etc.).
16. Builders.
17. Workers in the sugar industry.
18. Soviet employees (in co-operatives, shops, commissariats, etc.).
19. Tobacco workers.
20. Textile workers.
21. Chemical workers (Soap, perfume, explosives and match factories).
22. Workers in the clothing industry (outer and under garments, hats, etc.).
23. Employees in taxation, finance and control departments.

## Structure.

All these unions are constructed on the same principle.

The nucleus of the union is the factory committee. All factory committees of a given district (or uyesd) form a branch of the union: all branches in the territory of a province or definite county form a provincial (gubernia) department, and all factory committees, branches and departments are the organs of the corresponding All-Russian trade union. The union is centralised: fifty per cent. of the contribution goes to the funds of the central committee of the union (from the first of May of this year the membership contribution will be 2 per cent. of their wages).

The connection between the industrial unions and their organs and the co-ordination of their work is established by transverse organs of the trade union movement. In small localities, secretariats, uniting all the workers and employees; in uyesds, bureaux of the trade unions are set up on the basis of representation from the branches; in provinces, councils of trade unions based on the representation of provincial departments, and in the centre the All-Russia Council of Trade Unions the executive of which is elected by the All-Russia Congress and the members from the national trade unions in the proportion of one for every fifty thousand members.

## Statistics of Membership.

The concentration and growth of the trade union movement will be seen by the following figures, presented at the congresses by trade union councils, departments and branches:

|                                | T. U.<br>Councils. | Dep. and<br>Branches. | Nat.<br>Organis. |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| 3rd Conference (June 1917) ... | 1,120,819          | 1,475,429             | —                |
| 1st Congress (Jan. 1918) ...   | 1,888,353          | 2,532,000             | 19               |
| 2nd Congress (Jan. 1919) ...   | 2,037,700          | 3,638,812             | 30               |
| 3rd Congress (April 1920) ...  | 3,980,435          | 4,326,000             | 32               |

It will be seen from this small table that the number of organised workers rose unceasingly (the difference in the figures between the data supplied by the councils and by the branches is explained by the fact that several categories do not enter into the trade union councils) and that the number of national organisations have increased very little. More than that, according to the decision of the third congress, a regrouping and fusion will take place as a result of which all the organised workers in Russia will be grouped into twenty-three centralised unions each of which will have its department in every province and branch in every district.

Such a small number of unions having such a large number of organised workers became possible because auxiliary workers joined the unions of the main industry and only in connection with commissariats and state institutions did we depart from our principle of "one undertaking, one union." By undertaking is meant a complete administrative, technical and economic entity.

## No Craft Unions.

In order to understand the Russian trade union movement it is necessary to bear in mind: (1) that there are no yellow unions in Russia, (2) that there are no unions standing outside of the general trade union centre. All unions in Russia enter into the All-Russia Central Trade Union Council and only those organisations who are in the All-Russia centre have the right to call themselves a trade or industrial union, (3) there are no separate unions for intellectuals, doctors, engineers, etc., all enter the respective trade union, mechanical engineers in the metal workers' union, engineers working in textile factories into the textile workers' union. All these categories of labour may, if it is so desired, form scientific and technical associations, but these associations do not enjoy the rights and privileges of a union, and, (4) there are no craft guilds in Russia.

The creation of such wide industrial unions each of which embraces hundreds of categories of mental and physical workers certainly met with some opposition with the craft traditions and particularly owing to the pride and narrowmindedness of the intellectuals—engineers, doctors and artists. But many fetishes and traditions were consumed in the fire of the revolution among which are those of the guild and narrow corporation.

## Political Neutrality Condemned.

The trade union includes masses of workers and employees without distinction of their political and religious convictions. The trade unions are not party organisations, but in no case are they "neutral" or non-political: a trade union which behaves equally to a socialist or to a bourgeois party, who would advocate voting for bourgeois candidates at elections, as has often happened in England and America, has never existed in Russia. The labour unions have always been socialistic. The social democratic party was always the midwife at the birth of a trade union. The party stood at its cradle and reared it and therefore there can be with us no question of any liberal labour unions; the trade unions in Russia never had to choose between liberalism and socialism—such a problem never confronted us\*—but between opportunistic socialism and revolutionary socialism, i.e., between menshevism and bolshevism.

The choice, as we saw above, was made even before the October revolution; the Russian trade unions united their fate with that of the October revolution, with the Soviet government; this meant that the Russian trade union movement as a whole marched under the banner and acted according to the directions of the Russian communist party. This seems to be rather contradictory: a non-party trade union movement which nevertheless acts under the directions of a definite

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\* There is a group of higher state and bank employees and intellectuals who defended and now defend the view of the "non-party" character of trade unions. But this "non-partyism" was a clearly demonstrated struggle of all these intellectual and semi-intellectual unions against the October revolution, and is therefore not distinguished from vulgar opportunism or even liberalism.

political party. But really there is no contradiction, for non-party does not mean non-political and to the extent that a trade union participates in a political struggle—and it cannot do anything else but participate—it must march under the banner and accept the platform of some political party, and as the political struggle is a class struggle, and the trade unions embracing millions of the proletariat cannot remain outside of the class struggle, particularly in the period of social revolution and the direct struggle of the working class for power—the Russian trade unions not only took part in the political struggle, but repeatedly declared their solidarity with that party which more than any expressed the interests of the working class—the bolshevik party.

### **Relations with the Communist Party.**

Neither the congresses nor conferences demanded, of course, that the trade unions should accept the programme of the Russian communist party, but they worked out a definite programme of revolutionary action which every union as a member of the social family was obliged to carry out if it desired to remain within the trade union movement. Non-party organisation does not mean indefiniteness, still less indifference to passing events. For that reason the second congress in one of its resolutions declares: "uniting workers and employees in unions independently of their political or religious convictions, the Russian trade union movement while standing on the ground of international class struggle resolutely condemns the idea of 'neutrality' and considers it is a necessary condition for every union joining an All-Russian organisation to 'recognise the revolutionary class struggle for the realisation of socialism by means of the dictatorship of the proletariat.'"

The second Congress formally confirmed what was already a fact that in the period of acute class struggle there cannot but be organic connection between the trade unions and the dictatorship of the proletariat whose main support they are. This decision was attached to the rules of trade union discipline which are the normal obligations for all the unions. The first item in these rules states: "Organising and attracting the labour masses in the work of socialist construction the trade union. . . . has for its aim the realisation of socialism by means of the dictatorship of the proletariat." The intellectual hegemony of the programme and the tactics of the Russian communist party could not be more clearly expressed.

### **Unity of the Political and Industrial Movement.**

We saw that the first two congresses adopted the point of view of the Bolsheviks, but the organised connection between the trade unions and the communist party made it particularly self-evident at the third trade union congress. The third congress began with the recognition of the hegemony of the Russian communist party and in its first resolution asserted that "the trade unions as a whole, standing on the platform of the realisation of communism through the dictatorship of the proletariat, are indivertibly guided in their activity in the proletarian revolution by the Russian Communist Party."

On the report presented by Lenin the congress resolved: "to increase efforts to attract the labour masses to the work of communist construction through the trade unions under the guidance of the communist party, the only party which expresses the true interests of the working class and all workers in Soviet Russia."

The resolution on organisation states:

"Organisation is not an end, but a means to an end; the aim of the industrially organised proletariat is communism and the road leading to this aim is the social revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat."

The third trade union congress went even further; it not only formally proclaimed its organised connection with the communist party, but in a special resolution approved the economic policy of the ninth congress of the Russian Communist Party, assuming that the realisation of the resolutions of the party congress will "finally consolidate the victory of the proletariat over capitalism." To this must be added the greetings sent by the congress to the fighters for communism, to the German Spartacists and Left Independents, and the invitation to the Russian Young Communist League to conduct political education among the youth, and to the women's department of the Russian Communist Party for political work among women. This gives us a picture of unity of the political and trade union movement in Russia.

The resolutions of the third trade union congress as well as the resolutions of previous congresses will become intelligible to us if we observe the uninterrupted growth of Bolshevik influence in the trade union movement. Here are some figures in this connection:

|   | Delegates. | Bolshev. and<br>Sympathisers. | per cent. |
|---|------------|-------------------------------|-----------|
| The 3rd Conference (1917) ... ..          | 220        | 80                            | 36.4      |
| Democratic Convention (Sept. 1917) ... .. | 117        | 70                            | 59'       |
| 1st Congress (Jan. 1918) ... ..           | 416        | 273                           | 65.6      |
| 2nd Congress (Jan. 1919) ... ..           | 748        | 449*                          | 60        |
| 3rd Congress (April 1920) ... ..          | 1229       | 949                           | 78.1      |

- In order that the growth of revolutionary marxism within the labour movement may be made more clear it is necessary to mention that in December, 1919, the Socialist Internationalist Labour Party affiliated to the Communist Party. The former had a rather considerable influence in the trade union movement. At the second Congress it had 50 delegates. The party had particular influence in the leather workers' and railwaymen's unions.

This overwhelming influence of the Russian Communist Party in the trade union movement explains our revolutionary theory and practice. This comes from the fact that the Russian proletariat never separated economics from politics and has never suffered from that childish disease "neutrality" and that we, the leaders of the Russian trade union movement are in perfect

\* This figure is much below the actual number present; from the registers of the fraction meetings it is evident that the number of communists and sympathisers including delegates with consultative votes was 500.

agreement with the postulate laid down at the end of March, 1920, by the 9th Congress of the Russian Communist Party: "Politics are the most concentrated expression of economics, being its generalisation and final accomplishment. . . . Only to the extent that a trade union while formally remaining non-party becomes communistic in reality and carries out the policy of the Communist Party is the dictatorship of the proletariat and socialist construction assured."

## V. International Policy.

The problems confronting the Russian trade union movement extend beyond national limits. Socialism cannot be victorious while capitalism and old capitalist relations exist. The victory of socialism can only be international; this presupposes, therefore, a militant international proletarian organisation.

The necessity for international solidarity was doubted in the trade unions of some countries (America), but for the majority of organised workers in all countries, this question had been decided long before the war. The following three forms of international connection existed on the eve of the war: (1) trade unions entered the international socialist bureau and participated in the Congresses of the Second International. (2) International labour organisations by trades and industries (commencing from 1900), (3) in 1905 an international trade union secretariat was established whose functions were rather statistical and informatory than political. All these three forms of connection were broken by the war. All the trade unions of all countries with a few exceptions became supporters of the war. The labour organisations of the whole world broke up into two hostile coalitions and with the collapse of the Second International the international trade union organisations broke down also. The executive committees of these organisations occupied a position dependent on the particular territory and particular coalition they were in. In 1916 the general trade union centre of the Allied countries in the persons of Jouhaux, Appleton and Gompers attempted to set up their Allied international trade union, but nothing came of it and only after the conclusion of the war were attempts made to establish the broken connections. First at Berne, and later in Amsterdam representatives of trade unions of Allied countries gathered and created an international federation of trade unions and this apparently was to act as the guide of the international trade union movement. Simultaneously with this international federation of trade unions, on the initiative of these same trade unionists, a Labour Bureau in connection with the League of Nations, on which official representatives of the general trade union centres of the largest countries were represented, was set up whose object it was to draw up international labour legislation. It would seem, therefore, that there is yet another international centre to supplement the efforts of the trade unions. The Second International to which the majority of the trade unions were affiliated prior to the war ceased to exist from the day on which it threw all the moral authority of the Second International in defence of Allied imperialism. The Second International is dead and those trade unions which feel an

Intellectual affinity with it, are absolutely powerless to do anything to call it back to life.

## The International Labour Office.

What is the attitude of the Russian trade unions towards all these international organisations? First of all, with regard to the Labour Bureau of the League of Nations, it turns out that this "purely labour" institution, which should have been the laboratory for international labour legislation, has been converted into the sort of pocket labour-capitalist international, the constitution and composition of which excludes the possibility of any surprises. In fact, at the first meeting, on January 25th, in Paris, the Labour Bureau was composed of the following persons:

Of the employers: Guerin (France), Marjoribanks (England), Hodacz (Czecho-Slovakia), Schindler (Switzerland), Carlier (Belgium), and Pirelli (Italy)—all large employers and leaders of economic organisations.

Of the workers: Jouhaux (France) Oudegeest (Holland), Stuart Bunning (England), Torberg (Sweden), Legien (Germany) and one Australian—all hardened social patriots.

Of the "neutral" governments: Baron Major des Planches (Italy), Sir Malcolm Delevingne (England), Count de Eza (Spain), Nagaloka (Japan), Rufenacht (Switzerland), Sokol (Poland), Professor Maheim (Belgium), de Alvear (Argentina), Doctor Lehmann (Germany) and Vedel (Denmark).

At the head of this remarkable institution was elected the worthy betrayer of the working class, Albert Thomas. This is the bouquet which was cultivated in the hothouse of the League of Nations.

Can there be any doubt for a moment that the Russian trade unions can look with anything else but contempt upon these organisations which play the part of lackeys to the international trust, otherwise called the League of Nations? Is it not clear that these gentlemen formerly of the working class who hang round the door of the League of Nations and run their errands for it, can at best be utter fools? We have nothing in common with these gentlemen. The League of Nations and all those who are associated with it are dangerous enemies of socialism and ruthless war to the finish must be declared against them.

## The International Federation of Trade Unions.

What is the international federation of trade unions? It is a conglomeration of unions of which some are for the social evolution, others against it, some assist in crushing Soviet Russia, others are fighting against the policy of its suppression; organisations without programmes, without platforms, without a definite point of view on the fundamental questions of the day. What is the attitude of the international federation towards the social revolution, towards the dictatorship of the proletariat, towards direct action and mass revolutionary struggle? It is

not known. What has the international federation done to fight against international reaction? Nothing. What is the attitude of the international federation to the League of Nations and the Labour Bureau. Evidently, friendly, because the Vice-president of the International Federation of Trade Unions, Jouhaux, and the Secretary of the Federation, Oudegeest, are members of the notorious bureau. That is sufficient to show that the International Federation of Trade Unions is a corpse which will become decomposed with the decomposing League of Nations. This is why the Trade Unions of Russia frankly declare to the international proletariat that "our way and the way of the corpses of the International Federation of Trade Unions are not the same."

### **Unity with the Third International.**

We see, therefore, that both centres created by the agile hands of the social patriots are everything else in the world but militant proletarian organisations. Meanwhile the co-ordination of the activities of all the labour organisations on an international scale is a premise to, and a condition of the victory, of the social revolution. The Russian trade unions have long ago taken this into consideration and for that reason have been in favour of the Third International long before the foundation of this organisation. Standing on the platform of the social revolution and dictatorship of the proletariat, and marching under the banner of the Russian Communist Party, the Russian trade unions have long since been an inseparable part of the Third International. The 3rd Congress merely formulated and strengthened the connection which sprang up as the result of outlook and unity of revolutionary action. "The fight of the international proletariat"—says the resolution of the 3rd Congress of Trade Unions—"is conducted, not for the reform of capitalism, but for its abolition. In this revolutionary struggle all the class conscious revolutionary elements of the working class more and more determinedly rally to the Third International as the organisation which is the incarnation of the world proletarian revolution."

The Third International is not as some think an organisation composed merely of political parties. The Third International is a fighting revolutionary class centre, which is accessible to all proletarian, political, trade union and co-operative organisations, which, not in words, but in deeds, fight for socialism. It would be a great crime on our part if we attempted to create a special trade union international. It would at best result in the dispersal of forces and at worst, would be a bad edition of the Second International in the form of an International Federation of Trade Unions. All the revolutionary class trade unions must enter the Third International in which they must organise trade union sections or secretariats. For that reason the 3rd Congress decided to join the Third International and to call upon the revolutionary class unions of all other countries to follow its example.

## CONCLUSION.

It is three years since the rise of the Russian trade unions (on the eve of the March Revolution there were three trade unions with a general membership of 1,385). The youthfulness of our unions is reflected in the inadequate connection of the centre with the localities, in the absence of exact information and statistics, in the weakness of the apparatus, in the slowness in assuming command of the tremendous mechanism of production, the small successes in the standardisation of labour, in the impossibility of carrying out completely the intended system of the State regulation of wages and finally, in the temporary increase of unions of small undertakings which are difficult to control. All of us see this dark side of our trade union movement. We are far from thinking that the Russian trade union movement can in all respects serve as an example for the trade unions of other countries; but we would be sinning against historic truth if we did not lay stress on the fact that the Russian Trade Unions, in spite of a number of deficiencies, are yet in many respects exemplary; for they have one very great virtue; they are the child and the creature of the Revolution. The victory of the Revolution was the victory of the trade unions; the defeat of the Revolution was a defeat for trade unions. This organic connection of the unions with the Revolution gives us the key to the understanding of the reason of the weakness of the trade unions and the difficulties of the problems that confront us.

The long years of the civil war in which the proletariat played the leading part, the blockade and the economic disorganisation arising therefrom, the repeated mobilisation of trade unionists reaching 50 per cent. of the membership in some towns and despatching to the front in moments of danger—and these moments occurred often—of hundreds of active workers in the trade union movement, could not but reflect itself on our trade union organisation. The trade unions accurately reflect the degrees of organisation of national economy. The ill-health of the national economic organism is also the ill-health of the trade unions and vice versa. And so, in the period of collapse, the old productive relations of the trade unions in Russia play a large organising role. There is not a branch of State activity (military, food, sanitary, economic, technical, cultural, etc.) in which the Russian trade unions are not engaged. There is not an important act of legislation in the discussion of which the Russian trade unions have not taken part. Revolutionary activity, whole-hearted loyalty to the cause of the social revolution, the clear and firm position in the struggle with the bourgeoisie, the stern and ruthless hostility to the very idea of the co-operation of classes, the fearless destruction of old relations and fetishes are things which the Russian trade unions may teach the workers of other countries.

That the Russian trade unions have shown that they are revolutionary not only in the struggle with the bourgeoisie but also in the struggle against the prejudices in labour organisation was proved by the radical revision of the question of strikes after the October Revolution. Now we have another

example in compulsory labour. The economic life of Russia is disorganised and the greatest concentration of labour power and the highest concentration of effort is necessary in order to emerge from the economic cul-de-sac. The Russian trade unions have advanced the battle cry: "Workers to the Lathe!" "Workers raise the standard of production of labour in the factories, improve production, act with all the energy and enthusiasm and self-sacrifice with which you fought against the counter-revolution, for the economic weakness of Russia means the death of the Social Revolution." The Russian trade unions could raise the cry of "increase productivity of labour" because we are working for ourselves. The Russian trade unions are playing the part of drivers and are doing this with all the determination of their inherent revolutionary character because they are working for themselves; but, in order that not a single ounce of energy be lost we advocate obligatory labour—the militarisation of labour, i.e., the subordination of separate categories of the workers to the interest of the whole. If the proletarian State may send hundreds of thousands and millions of the workers to the front—to death, then that State and the trade unions may, in complete conformity with this, demand from the members of its class devoted and intensive labour on the industrial front.

The welfare of the social revolution is the highest law, and if any individual or group of workers shirk the obligations of revolutionary labour the trade unions declare: "the industrial front is the most important front of the Russian Revolution, every citizen is a soldier in the labour army, and no mercy will be shown to deserters." This is the meaning of compulsory labour and the militarisation of labour. Who can deny this right to the proletarian State in the period of the abolition of private property and the means of production and exchange? Who would blame the socialist government for demanding from every citizen the duty of performing a definite amount of labour in the interests of society? No one but miserable philistines, utter fools or dishonest demagogues.

The Russian trade unions are in the thick of the Revolution; that is why the proposal emanating from certain Western European comrades to turn from the trade union movement because the Western European social patriots still stand at their head is humourous and petty. We do not advise comrades to throw themselves into the water in order to protect themselves from the rain, or to throw the baby out with the bath water. To think that revolution is possible in Western Europe without, apart from, or in opposition to the trade unions is a harmful and dangerous illusion and deserves the severest condemnation. The policy of abandoning the trade unions advocated by certain "left" and very revolutionary comrades is a most harmful and reactionary policy of self-isolation of the revolutionary elements from the mass labour movement and must be categorically refuted. On the experience of the Russian trade union movement, we say to you, the sincere friends of the Russian Revolution and dictatorship of the proletariat: "Go into the trade unions; conquer them, and you will secure millions of organisers of labour and production for socialism." You should construct



# Third General Congress of Russian Trade Unions

## SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS.

*[This report is taken from the May 7th, 1920, number of the Bulletin, issued by the Petrograd Bureau of the Communist International. Lenin's speech to the Congress is given in the following pages. The resolutions are reproduced in the form given in the Bulletin].*

The Third General Congress of the Russian Trade Unions was opened at Moscow on April 6, 1920, under the chairmanship of Tomsky, President of the Central Executive of the Russian Trade Unions. There were present 1,226 delegates with full voting rights and 362 special delegates for consultative purposes. The total number of Trade Unionists represented at the Congress was 4,300,000.

The following table shows the political adhesion of the delegates present at the Conference:—

|  | Delegates with<br>Full Voting Rights. | Consultative<br>Delegates. |
|--|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Communists and Sympathisers with<br>the Communist Party ... .. | 940                                   | 240                        |
| Mensheviks ... ..  | 45                                    | 12                         |
| Other political groups ... ..                                  | 50                                    | 19                         |
| No political adhesion ... ..                                   | 191                                   | 91                         |
|  | 1,226                                 | 362                        |

### FRATERNAL GREETINGS.

The following fraternal delegates conveyed greetings to the Congress on behalf of their respective organisations:—Kalinin, on behalf of the Central Executive of the All-Russian Soviet; Bukharin, on behalf of the Central Executive of the Communist Party; Radek, on behalf of the Third International. A letter of greeting was also read from Zinoviev, President of the Third International.

## ADOPTION OF CENTRAL BUREAU'S REPORT.

A report on the activity of the Central Bureau of the Russian Trade Unions was presented by Tomsky. He pointed out that after its appointment in February, 1919, the Central Bureau had to face the extraordinarily difficult problems of re-organising the Trade Union movement in the Ukraine which had been crushed by Denikin. He then traced the further work of the Bureau dealing particularly with the efforts made by the Bureau to rouse the Trade Unions of other countries to action in defence of the Russian revolution, and the attempts made to get in touch with the various sections of the European Trade Union movement.

After Tomsky's report the Congress voted the following resolution: "Having heard the report presented by Comrade Tomsky on the activities of the Central Bureau in the course of the year the Congress declares:—

- (1) The Central Bureau has faithfully worked to carry out the desires of the Working Class for the consolidation of its dictatorship, which is absolutely necessary in the difficult conditions created by the internal and external political struggle.
- (2) The active part taken by the Central Bureau in the military defence of the Soviet Russia has naturally affected its fundamental tasks and having considerably complicated and extended its work has endangered the balance which previously existed between the Executive organs of the Central Bureau on the one hand and the Trade Union movement on the other.
- (3) The Central Bureau must now concentrate on re-establishing this balance which is absolutely necessary for the peaceful reorganisation of the country, that must be carried out by means of a determined struggle against economic disorganisation and famine.
- (4) In order to carry out this aim as rapidly as possible the Trade Unions and their Central organisations must help in every way the Central Bureau of the Russian Trade Unions, and in particular help it to develop regular contact with all their local organisations.
- (5) The Central Bureau must also work in close contact with all the economic organs of the Soviet system.
- (6) The Central Bureau must ensure that all its organisations as well as the regional trade organisations observe strict labour discipline.
- (7) In its future work the Central Bureau must develop in practice all the main principles of the Dictatorship of the workers, and must adapt the Trade Union movement for the carrying out of this Dictatorship by helping in its consolidation and by thus preparing the way for the full establishment of Communism."

## REPORTS ON ECONOMIC ORGANISATION.

Reports were presented on the work done by the Economic Organs of Soviet Russia; by Rykoff, on the general internal work, and by Trotsky, on the military position and the organisation of labour.

The following resolution was then passed by the Congress:—

“Having heard the reports of Comrades Rykoff and Trotsky the Third Congress of Russian Trade Unions approves the proposals in regard to economic policy, adopted by the 9th General Congress of the Russian Communist Party, and asks the Central Bureau of the Russian Trade Unions to apply these proposals throughout its work as being the only line of action along which Russia could be helped to recover from her present disastrous economic situation, and which could help her towards an intensive development of her productive forces, thus consolidating the final victory of the working class and the defeat of the Bourgeoisie.”

## RESOLUTIONS.

### *Compulsory Labour.*

The resolution on this subject pledged the Trade Unions to fight systematically and with energy against the disorganisation of work, to recall from the villages the specialised workers who had gone from the towns, to prevent as far as possible workers from passing from one workshop to another without authority from their Trade Unions, etc.

### *Professional and Technical Education.*

The resolution on this subject declares that technical education must be developed to the greatest possible extent. All the schools in Russia should be brought into relation with the industrial life of the country and the centre of gravity in the education given by them should be transferred to professional and technical instruction. The schools of higher technical studies should cease to be purely academic and should form one of the most powerful sources for the regeneration of Russian economic conditions. The Congress asks all Trade Unions to concentrate their attention on this question of professional and technical instruction and to mobilise all workers with specialised qualifications.

### *Appeal to the Workers of Russia.*

An appeal was issued by the Congress to all Workers urging that now that the working class had assumed the government of the country it should proceed to take over the mass of technical knowledge which had formerly been the monopoly of the Bourgeoisie. Technical instruction should be democratised, and should become public property by being on the programme of every school. A merciless war must be waged

on the lack of technical knowledge. Soviet Russia can only solve the colossal problems of her national economy, and be victorious on the peaceful front of labour, if she creates strong armies of workers with special technical knowledge.

### *Appeal to the Workers of All Countries.*

The text of the Appeal issued by the Congress is as follows:—

“ COMRADES!—

Cables, wireless and press (the powerful weapons of Capitalist deceit) have told you over and over again that labour in Soviet Russia has been militarised. The servants of Imperialism are making use of this statement for two purposes—to discredit Socialist Russia, and also to justify the methods which they employ towards the workers in other countries. The 1,000 delegates of the Third Russian Congress of Trade Unions representing more than three million organised industrial workers ask you to be on your guard against both the praise and the abuse which Bourgeois opinion bestows on the methods employed by the Soviet for the organisation of labour. The imperialist war, the cruel and inhuman blockade, and the ceaseless attacks of the mercenary bands employed by Clemenceau and Churchill have ruined our economic organisation. It is only by superhuman efforts and the use of all our resources that we can save the country from the disasters and misery of the present situation. Every honest and class conscious worker must do all he can for the safety of the Socialist Republic. What is called the militarisation of labour is the discipline laid down for labour, and thorough organisation in carrying out our economic plans. We have no kings surrounded by Ministers, no landowners and capitalists with their agents. We workers have put on ourselves the heavy and difficult tasks which we feel it to be our duty to assume for the revolution and for the sake of future generations. Workers of all countries, in the midst of our struggle and the feverish efforts of our tremendous task, we send you our fraternal greetings! We await with firm assurance the time when the workers throughout the whole of the Capitalist world will have driven out their oppressors and made all the world a public property belonging to the human race. Long live the world wide alliance of Labour!

### *Third International.*

The Congress voted for adhesion to the Third International in the following resolution:—

“ The International Working class movement is fighting, not for an improvement in the Capitalist system but for its complete destruction. In this revolutionary struggle all the conscious revolutionary elements are joining the Third International, which embodies the world movement of the Workers' revolution. The Russian Trade Unions which, by the side of the Communist Party, have fought the Capitalist system, cannot remain outside the Third International, and their Congress declares for adhesion to the Third International, and invites the revolutionary Trade Unions of the whole world to follow the example of the organised workers of Russia.”

*Resolutions on Organisation.*

A series of proposals on organisation were put forward, and adopted by the Congress in the following resolution:—

“The Trade Unions which form the foundation of the Workers' State and are the only means of organising industrial labour and the economic life of the country, have been much weakened. This weakening has been due to the lack of contact between the superior organs of the Trade Unions and their local organisations, to insufficient co-ordination between the different parts of the Trade Union organisation, and finally to the lack of authority which the Trade Unions exercise over the rank and file of their members.

Now that the establishment of the workers' dictatorship has created new and important economic problems, the work of the Trade Unions has become more responsible and important. In these circumstances the most urgent task—that is to say the strengthening of the whole Trade Union apparatus—can only be achieved by completely modifying the character, methods and extent of Trade Union activities. The main function is to put in force definite principles relating to the organisation of production; the Unions must regenerate the productive resources of the country within the various local organisations and industrial regions; they must work out, and afterwards carry out, special tasks which will improve the material well being and the intellectual outlook of the members towards the Trade Unions.

The most important questions for the Trade Union movement must be carefully examined by the basic units of the Trade Unions at the workshops and the factories. The whole work of the Trade Unions should be so organised that the workshop units of the Trade Unions will be able to obtain answers on all the points that they may raise, and to follow closely the work that is being done by their controlling organs. In order to attain this aim it is necessary for the Trade Unions to work along their own special lines and to tackle their own problems.

The Trade Unions must exercise an effective and constant control over all their delegates and representatives in the various public and governmental institutions. The executives of the Trade Unions must be furnished with all that they need to carry out their work. Each central committee should have a complete list of all its active workers who are engaged on any public trade union work. They must have reliable reports as to the activities of all delegates and representatives in the various branches of production. The central organs of the Trade Union movement must regard it as their main duty to secure a regular and carefully thought out distribution of labour. The higher organs must constantly supervise the activity of the lower organs, and must resolutely oppose any sign of negligence or carelessness on the part of its members. No conferences or assemblies should be held during the regular hours of work.

As for the development of the Trade Union mechanism, the Trade Union movement generally should be based first, on a continuous democratisation of the central organs, with regard to eligibility, responsibility, and the whole running of their

work; and secondly, on the prompt and loyal execution of the decisions and instructions of the central organs.

In order to bring the Trade Union elements in isolated districts into regular contact with the whole of the Trade Union organisation, small towns and districts in which there are only a few workers and in which there are no Trade Union Branches should nevertheless establish local secretariats whose object would be to bring together and organise the small groups of workers at present detached from the centre, and to bring them into contact with the nearest branch and encourage their trade union activities. These secretariats will be organs of the District executives which in turn will depend on the provincial Trade Unions.

The Trade Union mechanism cannot work smoothly unless the economic organs abstain from taking over purely Trade Union functions, and from intervening in the special work of Trade Unions. In spite of this, however, there are certain technical administrative bodies and central committees which are setting up sections for the special purpose of carrying out Trade Union work.

From May 1, 1920, the regular contribution to be made by each worker to the Central Trade Union Fund is two per cent. of his wages. The Trade Unions must make every effort to bring into trade union work the workers who desert their work and enter into the employment of the small manufacturers and employers in the small towns and villages. In the case of craftsmen who are working at their own risk and do not employ others for wages they can only be allowed within their Trade Unions if they are working in their own homes for the State or for the Public Offices which distribute their products at prices fixed by the Trade Unions and which are controlled by the economic and Trade Union organs.

Independent craftsmen who work only for the open market cannot in any case be admitted to membership of the Trade Unions. Similarly the Trade Union movement cannot admit within its organisation the workers' associations, communes and industrial co-operatives. The members of these organisations can only come into their appropriate Trade Unions if their organisations do not employ workers for wages, and are working solely for the Committees of National Economy or for public departments; besides which they must enforce the regulations concerning the protection of labour, and any profits resulting from the enterprise must be for its development and not for distribution among the members.

With a view to re-establishing the effective production of the country and to making use of all scientific and technical knowledge and professional experience that may serve the socialist organisation of society, the Congress decides to admit specialists to the various Trade Unions.

The Congress notes that the women who were working at present formed the most backward class within the Trade Unions and decides that the Trade Unions should devote their attention to the organisation of all institutions which would help women

to avoid unnecessary home tasks. Further, the Trade Unions without attempting to create special organisations for women should encourage the participation of women in the fixing of wages, protection of labour, social insurance, public education, etc.

In order to hasten the further development of the Trade Union movement, and with a view to creating stable and powerful industrial organisations by the fusion of allied Trade Unions, the Congress decided that the Trade Unions of railwaymen and transport workers should thenceforward form one single union of transport workers; the trade unions of fire-brigade workers and hairdressers should merge into the Municipal Workers' Union; the domestic employees union should merge in the unions of the Municipal Workers and of public food supply; and the unions of brushmakers, wood cutters, pharmacists, glass workers and cement workers should merge respectively in the unions of tanners, agricultural workers, workers in public health services, chemists and building workers.

# LENIN'S SPEECH

AT THE

## Third All-Russia Trade Union Congress.

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[Published by the All-Russia Central  
Council of Trade Unions, Moscow, 1920].

COMRADES,—First of all permit me to greet the Third All-Russian Trade Union Congress on behalf of the Council of People's Commissaries. Comrades! The Soviet Government is at the present moment passing through a period of the utmost gravity in many respects; a period which places before us interesting and complex problems, and which lays particular tasks and particular responsibility upon the Trade Unions in the work of constructive socialism. For this reason I would much rather deal, not with particular decisions of the recent party congress but with those changes in the conditions of Soviet policy which link together the problems of social construction with the activity of the Trade Unions.

### Peaceful Economic Construction.

Comrades, the distinguishing feature of the present moment is the transition from problems of a military nature to those of peaceful economic construction, the former of which had up to the present time absorbed all the attention and activity of the Soviet Government. It must be pointed out here that this is not the first time that the Soviet Government and the Soviet Republic are passing through such an important phase. It is the second time that we are returning to conditions which render the task of peaceful construction one of first importance. The first time in the history of the Soviet Republic was in the beginning of 1918; at that time, after a short but powerful attack by German imperialism, when the old capitalist army had completely collapsed and when the conditions were such that we neither had nor were able in a short time to create an army, the Brest peace was forced upon us by German imperialist rapacity. Then in the beginning of 1918 it seemed as if military problems had become a thing of secondary importance and we were in a position to devote ourselves to problems of peaceful construction.

## Comparison with 1918 Situation.

I read a paper in the All-Russian Central Executive Committee on the 29th of April, 1918, almost two years ago; the Central Committee accepted a number of proposals in connection with my report, including proposals in connection with labour discipline; and the whole thing therefore bears a similarity to the present moment. It is most erroneous to assert that the decisions of the Communist Party and of the Soviet Government have been arrived at as a result of our present disputes. Such a statement would misrepresent the whole trend of the activity, regulations and attitude of the Communist Party and of the Soviet Government to this problem. In order to gain a proper understanding of the question and to make a proper attempt at its solution, it is extremely advisable to draw a comparison between the state of things prevailing in the beginning of 1918 and that of the present time. At that time, after a short period of war with German Imperialism, we were first faced with problems of peaceful construction. There were prospects of a lengthy period of such construction. The civil war had not yet begun. Krasnoff, making use of the German assistance he obtained in the Ukraine, had just appeared at the Don; the North was clear from attacks and the Soviet Republic held a vast territory, excluding that part of Russia which had been taken away by the Brest peace. The general conditions were such that it was justifiable to count upon a considerable period of peaceful construction. It was under these conditions that the first thing put forward by the Communist Party and emphasised by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee in the form of a resolution passed on the 29th of April, 1918, was the necessity for an agitation to explain the insistent need for labour discipline. It is necessary to realise in this connection that dictatorial power and single man management are not inconsistent with socialist democracy. This must be brought to mind now so that both the decisions arrived at by the Party congress as well as the general problems with which we are faced may be fully understood. This is not merely a solution of the questions which now arise, but is inseparably connected with the conditions of the present phase. Whoever has any doubt upon this subject has only to compare the state of things prevalent two years ago, and it will become obvious to him that all attention must now of necessity be transferred to labour discipline and to questions connected with the labour army, although at that time, two years ago, this army was not yet in existence. By drawing a comparison between the past and the present aspect of the question we can arrive at a correct conclusion if we disregard details and consider only that which is of general and vital importance.

The whole attention of the communists and of the Soviet Government should be concentrated on the question of peaceful economic construction, on the question of dictatorship and on that of single man management. The experience of the two years of civil war makes the solution of these questions imperative; but they were raised as far back as 1918 when there was no civil war and experience was out of the question.

## The Essence of the Class Struggle.

Consequently it is not merely the experience of the Red Army and of the victorious civil war, but something far deeper than that, something connected with the problems of proletarian dictatorship, that is compelling us now, just as it did two years ago, to concentrate all our attention on questions of labour discipline, which is the essence of socialist economic construction and which helps us to understand the nature of proletarian dictatorship. With the overthrow of capitalism, every day of our revolution removed us further from former ideas so much in vogue with the old internationalists who are thoroughly imbued with a petty bourgeois spirit; the belief that, while private property in land, in the means of production and in capital were retained, the decisions of a majority in a democratic institution of bourgeois parliamentarism can really be an effective solution of questions which can in fact only be solved by an acute class struggle. The full significance and actual conditions of proletarian dictatorship became fully apparent to us when governmental power had been acquired and proletarian dictatorship was approached from a practical standpoint. We then learned that the class struggle had not ceased and that the victory over the capitalists and landlords had only defeated these classes but had failed to destroy them completely.

It is sufficient to mention the international relationship of capital, which is much closer and firmer than the relationship which exists between the working classes of the various countries. Capital, considered on an international scale, is both in a military and economic sense stronger than the Soviet Government and the Soviet system. This is the basic principle which has to be laid down. The form of the struggle against Capital constantly changes; at one time it is of an international character, whilst at another it is concentrated in one country. But though the form changes, the struggle continues, and the basic law of class struggle as formulated by preceding revolutions is confirmed by our revolution. The greater the unity of the proletariat which leads to the overthrow of the bourgeois classes, the more practical knowledge is gained by the working class, and the wider is the progress of the revolution in the course of the struggle itself. With the overthrow of capitalism the struggle does not cease, and the fact itself of the overthrow of the capitalist class in one country only becomes of a practical world importance when such overthrow is made absolutely definite. It will be remembered that at the beginning of the October revolution our revolution was looked upon in the light of a curiosity—many a strange happening of no importance occurs in this world.

To make this manifestation one of universal importance an actual *coup d'état* was required to take place in some country. It was only then that the capitalists of all countries, who at first hesitated to help the Russian capitalists, became aware that what had happened was of grave universal significance. And it was only then that the resistance of the capitalists on an international scale attained the power which it was able to wield. It was only then that the civil war fully developed in Russia,

only then that the victorious countries resolved to render united assistance in this civil war to the Russian landlords and capitalists.

### **The attitude of the Peasants.**

In addition to the natural development of the resistance of the overthrown class, it drew a new source of power from the attitude of the proletariat and the peasantry. All those who have made a study of Marxism, all those whose views of socialism are connected with its relation to the international movement of the working class as the only scientific basis of Marxism, all these know that socialism means the abolition of classes. But what does this mean? It does not stop at overthrowing the capitalists; its next step is to remove the difference between the social position of the workers and the peasants. The peasants who as a class are toilers, who have for scores and hundreds of years been oppressed by the landlord and capitalist class, cannot forget for long that their emancipation from this oppression has been effected by the working class. The endless disputes on this question and the mountains of paper used in dealing with it, as well as the numerous political groupings to which this led, have ended in the fact that all these differences have paled into insignificance before the actual facts of life.

But on the other hand under the conditions of commodity production the peasants remain owners, property holders; every instance of the sale of bread in the open market, every sack of flour or other food carried from place to place by private traders, every speculative deal means the restitution of commodity production and therefore the restitution of capitalism. The overthrow of capitalism involved and brought about the emancipation of the peasantry, but against this overthrow there was the petty bourgeoisie—in old Russia undoubtedly a large class. The peasantry remain private owners as far as their production is concerned, and are establishing new capitalistic relations. These are the principal features of our economic position, and it is this that gives rise to those absurd speeches emanating from men who fail to understand the real position: speeches on liberty, equality and democracy. We are conducting a class struggle and our aim is to abolish classes; so long as there still exists two classes, those of peasants and workers, socialism cannot be realised, and an irreconcilable struggle goes on incessantly. The chief problem now is how under the conditions when one class is carrying on the struggle, to attract the labouring peasantry, to defeat or to neutralise it or crush its resistance with the aid of a strong government apparatus involving all the measures of compulsion.

### **Education and Organisation must solve the problem**

The class struggle is being continued and the significance of proletarian dictatorship appears before us in a new light. Here it appears not only as an application of the means of compulsion through the whole State apparatus, though this of course remains the principal idea of proletarian dictatorship. It is to some extent true that so far we have achieved little on this

basis; but it should be kept in mind that there is one more task with which the proletarian dictatorship has to deal, and in which the part played by the proletariat is that of an organiser who has been trained by capitalist discipline. We must now organise production on a new higher base and make ourselves masters of all the fruits and conquests of capitalism. This is the condition without which no socialism or communism can be built up. Methods of state compulsion alone will not enable us to attract to our side the labouring peasantry as against the peasant owners. We are faced here with problems of an educational and organising nature, and we must clearly understand why this is a far more difficult problem than the military problem, which was easier of solution. That question lent itself to solution by raising the energy and inspiring the peasantry with a spirit of self-sacrifice. The military problem was an easy one for the peasantry who were out to fight their old enemy—the land owner. There was no need to understand the connection between working class government and the necessity of abolishing free traffic in goods. It was easier to deal with the Russian white guards, landlords and capitalists and all their assistants in the shape of the Mensheviks; but this new victory is harder to achieve. It is not possible to make victories in the sphere of economic production in the same way as on the war arena. Free traffic in goods will not be defeated by enthusiasm and self-sacrifice. What is needed is steady and continuous work, progressing inch by inch; we must use the organising power of the proletariat; victory can be gained on the field only if the proletariat will put its dictatorship into practice as the greatest organising and moral power of all workers, including even those of the non-proletarian masses. To the extent to which we have successfully solved and will continue successfully to solve the first simpler question—the suppression of the exploiters whose direct attempt is to drive out the Soviet Government—to an equal extent are we faced with the second and more complex problem of how to bring the cause of the proletariat to final victory by establishing it as an organising power.

### **A task that will take Years.**

Labour is to be organised upon a new basis, new forms are to be established to attract to labour discipline all the working elements. This is a problem that capitalism also was attempting to solve for tens of years. Our antagonists include a number of people who show an utter failure to comprehend this question. They called us utopians when we declared that it was possible to acquire power; whilst on the other hand they demand that we carry out our project of organisation of labour within a few months. That is an absurdity. It is possible to maintain power under conditions of a favourable political period by the enthusiasm of the workers even against the whole world, as we have proved; but to create new forms of social discipline is a different matter—one requiring tens of years. Even capitalism required thirty years to change the old organisation into a new organisation of labour. Therefore when it is expected of us and when it is suggested to the workers and peasants that we

are capable of changing the entire organisation of labour in a short time—theoretically it is sheer nonsense, whilst in practice it does the greatest possible harm, preventing the workers from clearly understanding the distinction between the new and the old problems. This new problem is in the first place one of organisation, and in organisation we are weak, far weaker than any other country. Organising ability develops under conditions of big machine industry. There is no other material historical basis.

### **The Special problem of the peasants.**

The interests of the workers and the peasants do not coincide. We are faced with a difficult period. We are also confronted with a moral problem—to prove to the peasantry that there is no alternative—they are either definitely with the workers, assisting the proletariat, or they return to their old condition. There is no middle course; no middle course exists except for the Mensheviks, but their method is in decay, falling to pieces wherever it is used, falling to pieces in Germany. This the peasant masses will not understand from theory and by observing the 2nd and 3rd Internationals. The peasant masses and tens of millions of people can understand it in the practice of every day life. A matter of principle which the peasantry could understand was victory over Kolchak and Denikin. They easily drew a comparison between the power of Denikin and Kolchak and the power used by proletarian dictatorship—although the latter phrase was used to frighten the peasantry and is still being used to that end. The Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries are still trying to frighten the peasantry with proletarian dictatorship. But in fact the peasantry is not and was not able to deal with matters theoretically. The peasant masses witness the facts of their own condition and of our struggle against speculation. It must be recognised that both the white guards as well as the Mensheviks have learned a lesson in propaganda from our Army Political Departments. The peasantry have seen banners upon which was written not proletarian dictatorship but “All power to the Constituent Assembly” and “All power to the government of the people” and so forth, but what they actually learned was that the Soviet Government was best. At the present moment we are confronted with the second problem of proletarian dictatorship—moral persuasion; there are no means of forcible persuasion of the peasantry, there can be no question of such means. The solution of the question here is taking place through rupture in the ranks of the peasantry. In the struggle following the overthrow of the capitalists, in the two years' civil war, the workers formed a single body welded into a unity; the very opposite is observed amidst the peasantry; they are undergoing gradual internal disintegration. The peasants cannot possibly forget the landlords and the capitalists—they remember but too well what they, the peasants, were at that time. On the other hand, the present peasantry is such that the interests of the various classes of the peasantry diverge widely, with the result that the peasantry is not united. (It is a fact that the state of the food question is not equally satisfactory for every peasant. There is no truth in the talk of freedom and equality). The truth is that the peasants are half workers, half owners.

## Unity of will necessary. ✓

The execution of our task requires a unity of will, it requires that in every practical question we act as one man. Unity of will should not only remain a phrase, a symbol; we demand that unity shall become a matter of actual practice. In the war unity of will was expressed by the fact that whenever personal interests, the interests of villages or groups were placed before the common interests, the guilty man was branded for a coward and an egoist and was finally shot; and this execution was morally justified by the conscience of the working class that it must strive for victory. We spoke openly of these executions, we never denied this violence because we were fully aware that we can never free ourselves from the relics of old society without using force against the backward layers of the proletarian masses. And in this was expressed our unity of will. In practice this uniformity was realised in the repression directed against deserters, in every battle and in every crusade when the Communist Party formed the vanguard, setting an example of courage and self-sacrifice. Now we can make an attempt to apply this unity of will to industrial labour and to agriculture when we are in possession of a territory of thousands of miles and of a huge number of factories. You will clearly see that mere force of violence will not do here, you will understand the gigantic task with which we are confronted, you will grasp what unity of will really means. It is not a mere watchword, a fit subject for a pamphlet endorsed with the words "to be voted for." It is necessary to think and to ponder what this word demands from us in our every-day work. As an example take the year 1918; at that time there were no disputes in connection with this question, and I pointed out the necessity for single man management, the necessity of recognising the dictatorial authority of single individuals for the purpose of carrying out the Soviet idea; that therefore all these phrases regarding equality are sheer nonsense. The class struggle is not carried on on a basis of equality of rights. The possibility of the proletariat being victorious is based on the fact that they represent hundreds of disciplined men, expressing one single will; they are in a position to conquer the peasantry which is economically completely disorganised, a peasantry which has no common basis such as leads the proletariat to unite the closer at its factories and works.

## Peasant owners and peasant workers.

The peasantry is completely disorganised; and in addition to this it represents partly owners, partly workers. Private ownership draws it to capitalism. "The higher the price the better. Should starvation appear—the better still; this will ensure the best possible prices." On the other hand the labouring peasant knows that he has been freed from the yoke of the landlord by the working class. There is a struggle here of two aspects of the soul, a struggle resulting from the economic position of the peasants. This has to be considered; our victory is possible only upon the condition: that we pursue a firm policy. Workers always remain workers in our eyes, and as to

the peasant owners, with these we must continue our struggle. Now that we have beaten such enlightened people as the leaders of international politics—that experienced and rich body possessing a hundred times more guns and dreadnoughts than we—it is ludicrous to think that we shall not be able to solve the questions regarding the relationship between the workers and the peasants. What we will win with here is discipline and loyalty to the common will. The will of hundreds and of tens of thousands can be personified in one individual. This complex will is elaborated by the Soviet system. The number of congresses of workers and peasants that have taken place in Russia is greater than in any other State in the world. In this way we develop class consciousness; not a single State has given for the last 300 years what the Soviet constitution thus gives.

### **The growth of class consciousness.**

The whole of our Soviet structure, of our Soviet Government is to be considered from this wide basis. The decisions of the Soviet Government have the power of unprecedented universal authority; it has at its back the whole force of the workers and of the peasants. But we do not remain satisfied with this; we are materialists and the power of authority is not enough for us. This authority must be realised in life. But what we see is that the spirit of the old bourgeoisie is gaining on us; we are bound openly to recognise that it is stronger than we are. The old petty bourgeois habits of playing the master, of each man working on his own, and of free speculative trading—all this is stronger than we are. Trade unions arose out of capitalism as a means of developing a new class. The conception of class is one that is formed in struggle and in the course of development. A high wall separates class from class. But there is no kind of Chinese wall separating the workers from the peasants. When the proletariat became a class it became so strong that it took the whole machinery of State government into its hands, declared war on the whole world and was victorious. At this point guilds and trade unions become obsolete, out of date. There was a time under capitalism also when unification of the proletariat went on by guilds and trade unions. This represented a progressive manifestation, as the proletariat could unite in no other way; it is absurd to assert that the proletariat could unite as a class in a body immediately. This kind of amalgamation may go on for years. No one fought such myopic sectarian views as did Marx. Class grows under capitalist conditions and when the appropriate moment for revolution arrives it takes the government power into its hands. Then all guilds and trade unions become out of date; they become conservative and have a tendency to go back, and that is not due to the fact that they harbour bad men, but because bad men and enemies to communism find a good soil here for their propaganda. We are at the present time surrounded with a petty bourgeoisie which is reviving free trade and the capitalism of petty owners and the small business man. Karl Marx fought this old utopian socialism, demanding a scientific point of view which holds that we should learn from the struggle of the classes how the class grows and that we should help this class to ripen. He also fought against those

leaders of the working class who fell into these errors. I have recently read once more about the movement in England in 1872. At the Federal Council a resolution was passed reprimanding Marx for asserting that the English leaders had been bribed by the bourgeoisie. Marx of course did not mean it in the sense that such and such men are traitors. This is nonsense. He had in view the alliance of the bourgeoisie with a certain section of the workers, with a certain union, asserting that the bourgeoisie supports this section of the workers directly and indirectly, gives it every opportunity to work as a legal body, supplies it with a press organ, and establishes it in parliament. In this regard the English bourgeoisie performed miracles; it went ahead of all the others. For forty years—from 1852-1892—Marx and Engels exposed this bourgeoisie.

### **The transition to power.**

All the world over the transition of the trade unions from the part of slaves to that of constructive workers means a crisis. The workers raised a cry to the effect that to increase productivity of labour means to oppress the masses, to skin them so to speak; they not only said so, but they also thought and felt so. We have now existed for two years; what has it meant? At the present time it means extreme starvation of the working class. This has been proved by statistics. In 1918 and 1919 the industrial workers of the State have received only 7 poods of bread per head, while the peasants of the fertile provinces received 17 poods per head. The proletariat has gained its victory, but thanks to this victory it fell into a period of starvation, whilst the peasant (who under the Soviet Government has far more than he ever had under the Tsarist regime) as a matter of fact has more than he requires. At the very best the peasant under the Tsarist regime had 16 poods, whilst under the Soviet Government he has 17 poods. We all know this, as we have statistical data to prove it. Everybody knows what hunger of the workers means. Proletarian dictatorship has doomed the proletariat to two years of starvation; but this starvation testifies to the fact that the proletariat is capable of sacrificing not only its craft interests, but also its life. That for a period of two years the proletariat proved able to withstand hunger is due to the fact that it had the moral support of all the working classes and that it made all these sacrifices in the name of victory for the Workers' and Peasants' Government. True enough, the division of the workers into trades and professions still exists; but of these professions there are some which may be useful to the capitalist but are undesirable for us. We also know that the workers in these trades are starving more than other workers; but this could not be otherwise. Capitalism has been crushed, but socialism has not yet been built up, nor is likely to be for some time to come; the misunderstandings with which we are faced are not at all accidental—they are the result of the historical split in the trade unions, which are an instrument of craft unification under capitalism and of class unity of the workers when they have taken governmental power into their own hands. Such workers are ready for every kind of sacrifice which may be demanded by discipline, sacrifices which force

them to say and dimly to feel that class interests stand higher than craft interests. Those workers who are not capable of making such sacrifices we regard as selfish men and cowards, and exile them from the proletariat.

### **The difficulties of administration.**

This is the principal question regarding labour discipline and single man management with which the Party congress had to deal. This is the decision of the Party congress, as you have learned by now, and which will be explained at greater length by the other speakers. The gist of the matter is that the working class has grown up and matured, it has taken governmental power into its own hands and is fighting the whole world, and that this battle is growing more and more difficult. It was easier to fight in the actual war; at present what is demanded from us is organisation and steady education, whilst, as it happens, numerically our industrial working class is not large. To some extent it has been decreased by the war. Administration has become a difficult matter thanks to our victories. It should be understood by everyone that, when we speak of dictatorship, it is not the whim of the people at the centre.

We must confess that we find administration a difficult matter. The proletariat has decreased in number as we have already said, while the territories gained by us increased in extent. We have taken Siberia, the Don and Kuban. The percentage of the proletariat in these regions is a negligible quantity. We must approach the working class in a spirit of straightforwardness and tell it so openly. What we require is more discipline and more single man responsibility and more dictatorship. Without these it is idle to think of victory. We have an army of three millions, but the 600,000 Communists must serve as the vanguard of these three millions. These three millions must go to war with perfect confidence. We must test these labour armies and the trade unions. We will learn by every step of practical experience.

But it is also necessary to understand that we have no other army with which to gain victories. We have 600,000 vanguard men and an army of three millions in which there are many peasant profiteers and no proletarians. This makes it clear that we must have a new co-relationship between the proletarian and non-proletarian masses; whilst the new conditions tell us that we can achieve little by violence, but that only organisation and moral authority can win the day. This gives rise to our absolute conviction which we have formulated at the congress and which I consider it my duty to emphasise. Our principal watch-word now is: nearer to single man management, more labour discipline, and a decision to work with war time resoluteness, firmness and self-sacrifice; abandoning all group and craft and private interests. Victory is not possible otherwise. But if we carry out these resolutions of the party through the three million workers as one man, and later on through tens of millions of peasants, who will feel the moral authority and the power of men who have sacrificed themselves for the victory of socialism—then this will make us absolutely and finally invincible.

# The All-Russia Metal Workers' Union.

By **ALEXANDER GUREVITCH,**

Secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Russia Metal Workers' Union

## I.

### THE FORMATION OF THE UNION.

The formation of the first metal workers' union is connected with the period of the first Russian Revolution of 1905—1906. All attempts to create a Metal Workers' Trade Union previous to that time failed, every time falling foul of the Tsarist police regime. Only here and there in isolated towns embryos of trade union organisations existed in the form of mutual aid societies with very limited militant tasks. Such societies existed in Kharkoff, Moscow and Petrograd.

The "Mechanical Workers' Society" in Moscow and the "Russian Factory Workers' Association" in Petrograd proved to be places where agents of the Tsarist government attempted to degrade the class consciousness of the metal workers by concentrating their attention on questions of mutual aid and diverting them from the political struggle. The development of the labour movement, however, soon led to different results. The firing on the labour demonstrators marching to the Winter Palace on January 9th, 1905, gave a strong impetus to the labour movement.

The revolutionary struggle in 1905 of course embraced wide masses of the metal workers, and the most active elements of them were engaged in the political struggle. For that reason the metal workers' union arose later than the unions in other industries. Only in the spring of 1906 did the first Metal Workers' Union arise in Petrograd and Moscow.

In February, 1907, the first conference of metal workers' unions in the Moscow industrial area took place, in which representatives of the Petersburg, Baku, Lougansk' and Vitebsk metal workers' unions participated. This conference elected an organisation committee to convene an All-Russian conference of metal workers. The organisation committee succeeded in convening in September, 1907, the second conference which also took place in Moscow. But the wave of reaction put an end not only to all attempts to create an All-Russian metal workers' union, but also to the existence of separate

unions in industrial centres. At the beginning of 1907 there were in the whole of Russia 81 unions of workers working in metals and machine construction, with a total membership of 54,173. These unions were not constructed on a strictly industrial principle. In many localities the unions were narrow craft organisations of moulders, turners, smiths, etc.

New growths of the trade union movement among metal workers became evident in Petersburg during 1912 and 1914. This period, in which the metal workers marched hand in hand with the left wing of the social democrats, is important for the fact that it witnessed the development of groups of active workers in our movement who played an important part in the creation of our union after the revolution of February, 1917.

The war involved the practical dissolution of the scattered metal workers' organisations, so that the metal workers entered the epoch of our great revolution with hardly any trade union organisation. The most powerful weapon of their organisation was that highly developed class consciousness which they were able to forge in the process of the revolutionary struggle.

The Revolution of February, 1917, gave a tremendous impetus to the development of trade union organisations among the metal workers. At the third All-Russian Conference of Trade Unions which took place 20th-28th June, 1917, 400,000 workers organised in metal workers' unions were represented. At that time also a conference of metal workers' delegates was held at which a Provisional Executive Committee of the All-Russian Metal Workers' Union was elected and in this manner the foundation of our national organisation was laid down.

The first inaugural conference of the union took place in Petrograd in January, 1918, at which more than 600,000 workers were represented. This Conference laid down the rules of the All-Russian Union and elected a Central Committee. The organisation was constructed on a democratic centralism in the sphere of management of all the unions' activities, responsibility to constituents, and subordination to the higher organs of the unions. This same conference outlined the functions of the union in the period when the proletariat has taken power; of this we shall speak later.

The ensuing year was not favourable for organising work. The German imperialist offensive and the counter-revolution which took place with the assistance of the latter in the Ukraine and the Don Basin, as well as the Russian counter-revolutionary offensive from Siberia backed by the Czecho-Slovak troops and the Entente, drew all the attention of our union to the defence of the fundamental gains of the revolution. The Ural and the Don Basin were cut off from Central Russia, the metal industry in Petrograd was reduced to a considerable extent, as a consequence of its being dismantled and evacuated to other districts.

All this explains the fact that at our second conference which took place in January, 1919, only 400,000 organised members of the union were represented.

The third conference which took place recently (April 6th, 1920) again had the possibility of gathering representatives from all parts of Russia, and at this conference more than 550,000 were represented.

## II.

## THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE UNION AND THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE VARIOUS ORGANS.

The Metal Workers' Union at the present moment is a national organisation which embraces all those engaged in the metal and metal working industry. All workers, engaged in obtaining metal from the mines and working this metal in any form, from smelting to the making of machines and metal implements, are included in our Union. Besides this it includes all occupations in a metallurgical or metal working undertaking irrespective of category or trade. Thus, our members include skilled and unskilled workers, the office staff, technicians and engineers; workers engaged on different crafts in the metal works, as the wood mould makers for instance, are all included in our union.

This principle of industrial organisation was accepted by the union in 1917, and to a considerable degree constituted our strength in the revolutionary class struggle. At the present moment it is an essential condition of the work of the union in organising the metal industry on socialist foundations.

The extraordinary growth of interest of the workers in the industrial organisation even in the middle of 1917 resulted in more than 50 per cent. of all the metal workers becoming members of the union. This gave the opportunity for many local organisations on their own initiative to raise the question, at general labour meetings, of compulsory membership in the unions for all metal workers. The result of this movement, which was supported by the second All-Russian Conference, is that now practically all workers and employees in the metal industry are members of the Union. This to a considerable degree lightens our task in working out rates of wages.

The scheme of organisation of the metal workers' union is based on the following: the primary organisation is the factory committee. This is elected every six months at a general meeting of workers and employees and generally consists of from 5 to 11 members. The main task of the Committee is to carry out all the trade union regulations in the factory; it deals with the protection of labour, trade union agitation and propaganda, supplies the workers with necessaries, clothes as well as articles of general consumption, and maintains the fundamental basis of trade union and industrial discipline among the members of the union. The Conference of Factory Committees of a given industrial area, usually a territorial area a little smaller than a "government" (gubernia), is the higher directing organ within that area. This conference elects the regional committee which manages these regional branches of the All-Russia Union of Metal Workers.

Usually these committees are in the industrial centres of the regions. As subsidiary machinery the regional Committee may have its agents in the various towns embraced by it, but these are not obligatory; such agents are usually elected at local meetings of the members and carry out the instructions of the higher organ.

The congress of the union is held once a year; the representatives at this conference are elected at regional conferences on the basis of strict proportion of one delegate to every 2,000 members. The Conference elects the central committee of the union. The regulations of the Congress and, in the intervals between congresses, the regulations of the Central Committee, are obligatory upon all the organs of the union and upon all the members.

The union also allows the organisation of sections for those categories of labour the working conditions of which are to some extent peculiar, or to those who have comparatively recently entered into the organisation. These sections are organised in the form of elected subsidiary organs attached to the general trade union but they have not the right to carry out any independent resolutions without the sanction of the union, nor can they have separate funds. In the whole national union there is only one engineers' section; in some local organisations there are sections of workers working in gold, silver and platinum, or there are also sections of workers working in electrical undertakings. There are no other sections at the present moment. The metal workers' union is in this manner one complete organisation, strongly welded by the common interests of the metal working industry.

This structure of the metal workers' union was developed in the process of prolonged organisation work, and found its expression in the rules of the union organs accepted at the second Congress of the Union.

There are three questions which are of the greatest interest in the development of the organisation; these are: (1) the relations between the factory committees and the union, (2) the regional organisations, (3) the inclusion of engineers in the unions. (Note: the engineers referred to here are the higher engineers and not the mechanics).

The first question stood out very sharply in the period directly after the October Revolution when the factory committees and the unions were faced with the same problem in the sphere of organising production, namely, to replace the overthrown governing authority of capital by a new directing order.

The conditions were too new; there had been no previous experience; therefore hesitation and experimenting were inevitable. But the new problems before the trade unions—problems compelling them to shift the centre of gravity of their labours to the sphere of economic construction—made it essential for all the economic institutions of the proletariat to fuse into a single organisation; a form of organisation was found which fused all the organising forces into one; the factory committees were converted into the embryo of the union, the unit of its organisation. The experience of more than two years' work has sufficiently justified this form.

The second question in the sphere of organisation had both a practical and theoretical significance. Its practical significance lay in the fact that in such a tremendous territory as Russia it was difficult to construct rapidly a centralised union.

The regional organisations were necessary in the transitional stages toward a centralised union, but they became an obstacle in the path of the creation of such a union after the preliminary organising work had been carried out. The second All-Russian Conference of the Metal Workers' Union therefore dissolved all the regional organisations.

This question was a question of principle in those regions where national peculiarities created special conditions of work. Thus the question of the Ukrainian regional organisations was bound up with the Ukrainian national question. But the long years of joint struggle and identity of economic interests established such unbreakable ties between the Ukrainian metal workers and those of Central Russia, that the inclusion of the Ukrainian metal workers in the All-Russian Union, after their liberation from Skoropadsky, and later from Denikin, was absolutely painless. There was never any tendency among the metal workers in the Ukraine or in the Don basin which necessitated the establishment of the federal principle in the trade union organisation. The Ukraine, like the whole of Russia is divided up into districts, all of which enter into a single centralised metal workers' union.

Finally, the third question of admittance of engineers to membership of the union was of considerable importance to our union as it was for all other unions in Russia.

Under the capitalist regime engineers in the main were outside the working class, and certain sections of them were even hostile. The engineers did not understand the constructive aims of the October Revolution; they only saw in the class which had just come to power, the ability to destroy the forces of production. The inevitable tension of relations in the factories helped to increase the estrangement, but the process of reconstructing the economic life of the country which is now going on, as well as the historical lessons in the Ural and the Ukraine, where capital assumed the most repulsive form of speculation, and plundered the productive wealth of the country, were an impetus to a change in the attitude on the part of the engineers toward the workers. The workers and the engineers first found common ground and one might say a common language in the metal workers' union.

The All-Russian Conference of Metal Engineers which took place in August, 1919, was the first conference in the world where the organised proletariat and the engineers met for the discussion of general questions of the economic revival of the country. Here we have the first step towards the co-operation between the physical and mental workers, and in this connection the Conference has an historical significance. As we have already stated, all engineers are included in the union, form separate sections and participate in the solution of all questions affecting the union.

These are the main features in the present organisation of the All-Russia Metal Workers' Union. Its main work was always determined by the more fundamental problems facing the proletariat as a class.

## III.

THE UNION, THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT AND THE  
COMMUNIST PARTY.

As in the years of Tsarism, so in the months of Kerensky and during the past years of the Soviet Government the Metal workers' union invariably and uninterruptedly associated its work with the general revolutionary struggle of the working class. Although formally independent of the Party, the Union in fact submitted itself to the directions of the left wing of the Social-Democrats—i.e., the Bolshevik Party, and subsequently the Communist Party. During the reign of the Tsar and right up to the beginning of the war, the Petrograd Metal Workers' Union carried on an inseparably connected economic and political struggle. Every economic strike was converted into a blow against the existing political system. The masses of the members of the union were brought up in a spirit of revolutionary social democracy.

After the February Revolution the Petrograd and Moscow unions, and subsequently the provisional Central Committee from the first days of its existence, took up a revolutionary position. The cry "all power to the Soviets" was the more easily acceptable to the union from the fact that the direct acquaintance with the life in the factory, the lockouts of factory workers, the rise in the cost of living after every increase in wages, all showed that the struggle for the improvement of the economic conditions of life of the proletariat must be conducted as a struggle for the conquest of the means of production. For that reason, when the sixth conference of the Bolshevik Party gathered in Petrograd at the period of the Korniloff offensive, the metal workers' union was the first to welcome it. For the same reason the Moscow metal workers' union called an extremely well-organised one-day general strike of protest on the 25th of August, 1917 (new style), when the State convention of all the bourgeois and compromising socialist parties opened in Moscow. During the October Revolution the metal workers' union took a most energetic part and handed over its machinery for the purpose of assisting the establishment of the Soviet Government.

At its inaugural conference in January, 1918, the union formulated its fundamental tasks under the new social system. The Conference decided to subordinate all the work of the Union to the task of strengthening the Soviet system and organising national economic and social life. This two-fold task remains up to the present moment the fundamental task of the union, and the subsequent conferences which have taken place since then have endeavoured to seek means of developing this work.

## THE ORGANISATION OF THE METAL WORKING INDUSTRY.

One of the greatest tasks of the union which have been carried out during the two and a half years of existence of Soviet Russia has been the creation of new economic organs in the metal industry.

All the existing organs from the highest to the lowest have been created with the closest and direct participation of the union. All factory managements, the directorates of socialist trusts as well as the collegiate of the supreme economic organisation in the metal industry of the republic—the Metal Department of the Supreme Council of Public Economy, are appointed by agreement between the respective trade union organs and State institutions, usually from candidates put forward by the union. Thus during the past year the Central Committee of the Union confirmed the appointment of 134 factory managements consisting of 64 per cent. workers, 8.5 per cent. employees and 27.5 per cent. engineers.

The union in conjunction with the Metal Department of the Supreme Council of Public Economy has carried out important work in organising the socialist trusts in the metal industry, which are constructed on purely industrial lines. Usually conferences were called of factory committees and factory managements, embracing several factories, at which questions of trustification and production programmes were discussed and at which the election of the head director of the trust took place. Thus at the present time the following large trusts exist in the metal industry.

1. The State Machine Construction Works is a trust embracing the largest locomotive and Railway Car construction works like the Sormova, Kolomensk, Bryansk and Kharkoff Works as well as a group consisting of the Koulebask, Tashinsk and Wickson Works. The number of workers employed at these works amounts to 45,000. At the head of the directorate are comrades who formerly worked in the union and who were elected to the head management by the works conference.

2. The Central Management of the Heavy Industry (which embraces the largest metal works in the Don Basin like the Dneprowsk, Bryansk and Mourievsk, altogether 27 works with 42,000 workers) is composed of comrades enjoying the complete confidence of the Union, one of whom is a former member of the Central Committee of the Union.

3. At the head of the Central Directorate of Artillery Works (which embrace all metal works producing war material) there are comrades who were elected at the conferences and confirmed by the union.

4. In the Ural, five district managements were organised embracing all the metal works in the Urals, and organised in the same manner as those above.

5. The Collegiate of the Metal Department of the Supreme Council of Public Economy is organised by the Central Committee of the Union in agreement with the Presidium of the Supreme Council of Public Economy. Of the five members of the Collegiate two are members of the Central Committee.

6. There has also been established a Collegiate of the Electrical Department of the Supreme Council of Public Economy and a Head Management of electrical undertakings which embraces all electrical works like the late "Central Electrical Company," the late Siemens, Shuckert, etc.

All other metal factories are organised on similar lines; they are united into trusts or subordinated to local government metal departments. Once a year conferences take place in every trust composed of representatives of factory committees and factory managements, to which the management of the trust reports. The union takes a very active part in guiding the work of these conferences.

## V.

### THE UNION AND COMPULSORY LABOUR.

Having accepted the organisation of industry as its fundamental task, the Metal Workers' Union was one of the first to put forward the idea of introducing general compulsory labour, of attaching the workers to the factories, and the obligatory transfer of labour power from one undertaking to another; in a word the idea of what is now called the militarisation of labour. The resolution carried at the second conference of the Union which took place in January, 1919, dealing with the participation of the unions in the organisation and management of industry among other things says:

"For the purpose of maintaining a sufficient staff of workers in the factory, and for the proper utilisation of the labour power of the staff, the conference considers it necessary to introduce general obligatory labour based on the compulsory census and distribution of labour power by the industrial unions in conformity with the requirements of national economy. It is necessary also to prevent the departure and transfer of workers from important undertakings to others without the consent of the industrial union."

In this manner the supreme organ of the union, the Conference, on its own initiative put forward a measure which in capitalist countries would lead to the practical dissolution of the labour unions. The experience of the metal workers' union on this question goes to show that this measure has had a useful effect in the organisation of industry, particularly in the armament factories, and the function and importance of the union has not only not decreased but, on the contrary, they were to a considerable degree strengthened and enlarged. The Metal Workers' Union is proud in the consciousness of the fact that, thanks to these measures, it has succeeded in increasing the defensive powers of the country and has helped in the defeat of the forces of the counter-revolution.

## VI.

## THE FIXING OF WAGE RATES.

The largest sphere of work of the union lies in the introduction of wage rates for persons employed in the metal industry. The union has worked out a uniform scale which embraces all workers, office staff, technicians, engineers employed in metal working and metallurgical undertakings.

The wage rates define the legal position of the worker in production and cover all aspects of the productivity and the valuation of labour.

The scale establishes the standard of output of separate workers, of gangs, and whole factories, and connects the standard of wages with the quantity of output.

The union was guided in its task of working out wage rates by the resolution on the regularisation of wages carried at the second conference in January, 1919. We quote this resolution almost in full as it lays down the theoretical basis and practical policy of the Union in connection with wages.

"Having heard the report on the system of wages the Second All-Russian Conference of Metal Workers recognises:

1. In the period of capitalist economy the workers' struggle with the employers for the improvement of their material conditions, which compelled the further technical development of capitalist production, inevitably expressed itself in the demand for monetary guarantee of the minimum standard of living.

2. Under such conditions, the only system of money payment for labour was daily or monthly wages, the raising of which, while improving the condition of the workers, compelled the employers in their capitalist interest to perfect the methods of management and to introduce new and more suitable means of production as well as to unite isolated economic units in large trustified undertakings.

3. In the period of socialist revolution which Russia is now experiencing, payment of labour by time loses its character as a means of protecting the interests of labour, for the reason that to the extent to which the State authorities succeed in acquiring the economic apparatus of the country, the economic apparatus is concentrated on the task of satisfying the essential requirements of the working class.

4. At the same time, as a result of the transition of the whole economic apparatus into the hands of the proletarian State, payment of wages on a time rate can no longer fulfil its former function of compelling technical developments in undertakings, leading to the industrial development of the country, for the reason that the economic class struggle between the proletariat and employers has become a historical anachronism in a period of proletarian dictatorship.

5. In the transitional period of development of national economy, in the struggle of the working class for the acquirement of the economic apparatus, the most powerful means of reviving Russian industry is the administrative-technical reconstruction of undertakings with complicated organs of

management, and the technical reorganisation of factories, on the principle of the fullest subdivision of labour of the managing staff as well as of separate workers.

6. Thus as a condition precedent to the organisation which should accustom Russian industry to the spirit, hitherto foreign to her, of modern, large, Western European industry, in the conditions which we are experiencing at the present moment, it is to a considerable degree important to standardise labour by a definite system of wages based on the principle of the responsibility of the workers for the productivity of their labour.

The Conference therefore resolves:

1. As the improvement of the condition of the working class in the period of the political dictatorship of the proletariat wholly depends on the success of its efforts to revive the productive forces of the country, the All-Russia Union of Metal Workers must construct its system of wages as a system which regulates productivity with the aim of reviving national economic life.

2. The piecework system of remuneration applied during the last six months played an important historical part in the process of reviving Russian industry, and must be practised in the future in so far as the possibilities of changing over to a more perfect method of remuneration are still technically un-realisable.

3. The Congress recognises as the fundamental principle of remuneration of labour, the collective responsibility of the working class of a given undertaking or group of undertakings (trusts) for the general output. The Congress proposes to the Central Committee to exert its efforts to widely extend this system of wages."

All the leading work as well as the work of carrying out the wage rates is done by the union, for which a special part of the union apparatus is adapted. In the factories the evaluation and standardisation of labour is carried out by a special trade union so-called "Wages Committee." This Committee is elected under the guidance of the union by the workers and employees of a given undertaking, and is guided in its work by the regulations of the regional branch of the union. Attached to this Committee there is a standardisation bureau which ascertains the standard of output of the workers, groups of workers and the factory. Persons representing the higher technical staff also participate in the work of the committee and the bureau. The absence of opposing class interests in the factory renders the work of the wages committee and the factory management to a considerable extent harmonious. All conflicts which may arise from a misinterpretation of the guiding instructions of the union or simply from insubordination are submitted for decision to the regional branch of the union. The latter organises a special wages department which supervises all the work of establishing wage rates in the metal works of the region. The highest authority in the matter of wages in the metal industry is the central committee of the union, which has a special wages-standardisation department.

The central committee examines and confirms all systems of wages operating in metal works and keeps control over the carrying out of the standards valuation. The orders and instructions, within the limits of particular wage rates decrees issued by the central State authority, are obligatory upon the directorates of the trusts, works' managements and other economic organs in the metal industry. Thus, the metal workers' union bears full responsibility for the correct regulation of wages in the metal industry.

The fundamental principle guiding the union in this work has been explained in the resolution of the second conference quoted above. This principle was confirmed at the third conference, which supplemented it with a number of instructions of a practical character. The experience of the metal workers' union during this time also to a considerable degree confirmed the fundamental wages policy. The only guiding line of the union in the sphere of wages from the time of the October revolution has been to raise the productivity of labour, to develop a rational organisation of labour, and to arouse a healthy competition among the workers to raise the productive forces of the country. The metal workers' union was the first to put forward such an understanding of the wages question under the new conditions, and it succeeded in proving the correctness of its attitude to all the other labour unions in Russia. Connected with the question of wages are the questions of supplying the workers with working clothes and the protection of labour. The union works out the form of costume necessary for a given work, defines the standard on which special articles and requirements such as mittens, soap, leather jackets should be issued, and controls the manner in which this plan is carried out by the supply department.

### *Protection of Labour.*

In the work of protection of labour the union takes it upon itself to co-operate with the authorities (factory inspectors who are elected by the union) in the working out and execution of measures connected with the improvements of technical and sanitary conditions of labour. In the factories the factory committees organise special committees for the protection of labour. Such committees are also attached to the regional branches of the union and the central committee. Unfortunately the extremely difficult material and productive conditions under which the republic has lived up to now has rendered it impossible for this great work to be properly developed.

## VII.

### EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY.

Educational work also occupies one of the foremost places in the general work of the union. The union occupies itself particularly with the questions of professional and technical education of the young and the spreading of technical knowledge among adult workers. In this sphere the union works in the closest contact with the State educational organs.

Equally close contact is established between the union and what is known as the "Proletcult," i.e., an organisation engaged in the development of the elements of proletarian art and science. Many factory committees have an educational committee attached to them working with the close co-operation of the "Proletcult." These committees organise clubs, theatres, local libraries, etc., in connection with the factories.

Concluding its work in the beginning of April of this year the third All-Russian conference of the metal workers' union worked out a plan of work covering all the spheres of the union's activity. This conference has considerable importance for the union as it formulated problems for the current year. The union decided to take up the work of reviving the metal industry with the same energy that it has hitherto shown in assisting the proletarian State on the military fronts.

### *The Struggle Against Counter-Revolution.*

The preceding years were the most difficult in the life of our union. The basic spheres of the metal industry, the Don Basin and the Ural were outside the sphere of influence of the union and lay under the brutal heel of the Russian and international counter-revolution. The blockade and the isolation from the largest sources of fuel, raw material and food created a particularly critical situation in the metal industry. More than once the difficult situation drove the pusillanimous to desperation and befogged the minds of those who had less class consciousness. At times even hunger with its vice-like grip paralysed the muscles of the warriors. But on each occasion the union appealed to proletarian discipline and rallied the workers to each struggle for the triumph of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Such was the position at the beginning of 1918 during the advance of German imperialism, when the central committee of the union placed itself and the whole apparatus of the union completely at the disposal of the Council of Peoples' Commissaries. Such was also the position in the summer of the same year during the Czecho-Slovak revolt when the central Committee mobilised new forces. The Koltchak offensive and later the advance of Denikin compelled us to throw new forces on the front. The workers of the Ural factories almost entirely left the factories for the front. The union mobilised tens of thousands of its members in Central Russia. Many responsible leaders of the union entered the ranks of the Red Army. Many of these are no more. This tremendous concentration of effort naturally reflected itself upon the state of production, but the results of it made it possible for a third conference of the union with tremendous energy to take up the work of reconstruction. Even in these difficult years the metal workers' union acquired considerable experience in organising socialist economic life, and this experience as well as the experience of comrades returning from the front is of decisive importance.

## VIII.

### INTERNATIONAL STRUGGLE FOR SOCIALISM.

The union follows with particular attention and interest the development of the Labour Movement in Western Europe and America and particularly the work of the metal workers' unions related to it.

In spite of the great obstacles separating us at the present moment from other countries and the struggle of our foreign comrades, we are pleased above all with the fact that they too are raising the same questions of production that we raised previous to the October revolution. The greatest desire of our union is to share our experiences with our comrades and to relate to them the story of our struggle.

The Central Committee of the union in January of this year sent out an invitation by radio to all the metal workers' unions in other countries to our third congress. We received a number of replies and greetings from metal workers' unions of Switzerland, Germany, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Finland, from whom we learned of the forthcoming international congress of Metal Workers. Our union pictures an international federation of metal unions based only on a revolutionary struggle for the demands of the Third International. The opportunist international bureau of metal workers' unions, headed by Alexander Schlick, sufficiently exposed during the war the rapid schemes of the old trade unionists, who were unable to throw off their craft ideas and raise themselves to the level of the great class problem of the revolutionary international.

The revolutionary struggle is unfolding in all countries, and the metal workers as the section of the proletariat with the greatest class training is everywhere at the head of the revolutionary struggle. Our union is therefore confident of the early possibility of the revolutionary international organisation of metal workers. The third conference of the union instructed the Central Committee to take steps towards the establishment of such a union.

The Russian Metal Workers' Union is awaiting with eager attention the news of the onward march of their foreign comrades. On the basis of its historical experience it is convinced that the only path to the revival of humanity is the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Russian Metal Workers' Union says to its foreign comrades—"see, we experienced the rule of the bourgeoisie, the rule of a coalition, we thought to improve our position by fighting for higher wages, but our experiences compelled us to take the path of socialist revolution. The first years were indescribably difficult, but we are winning and will conquer and with our own hands will establish the reign of labour, and we look forward with full confidence to the victory of the workers of Western Europe."

THE  
All-Russia Agricultural Workers' Union:

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF ITS FORMATION.

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ISSUED BY THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE UNION.

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The All-Russia Union of Agricultural Workers as at present constituted is of recent origin and growth. It was not until after the revolution of October, 1917, that they saw the necessity of allying themselves with the city workers; the Land workers were also carried away with the general revolutionary enthusiasm prevailing at that time. Until the revolution of 1917 the agricultural workers of Russia had no union of their own, neither during the time of the old Russian feudal system nor during the period of the growth of the capitalist regime. Some attempts to organise the Agricultural workers were made during the revolutionary movement of 1904-5; the union of the workers of Boutirsky Farm, in Moscow, can be quoted as an example, but these were of a scattered improvised character, without any general plan or aim; they had no serious influence upon the development of the Agricultural workers' organisation. But those attempts were soon given up owing to the reaction, which suppressed the revolutionary movement.

Only after the February revolution of 1917 were small unions of agricultural workers started, chiefly in the neighbourhood of the capital and near industrial centres. This fact can only be explained by the influence of the industrial proletarians of the Trade Unions who were constantly increasing in numbers, and acquiring a strong revolutionary spirit. But all these unions were of a very primitive character both in their form of organisation and in the aims they pursued. In the first place their lack of experience in organisation was very marked, and secondly there was the influence of the compromising leaders, who were mostly of the socialist revolutionary party with narrow bourgeois ideals and an agrarian programme full of contradictions and omissions.

These unions in the period of their development during the February revolution aimed mainly at protecting their craft interests, and did not realise that the problem confronting agricultural workers was the ownership and organisation of production.

Only in October, 1917, was an end put to this position; the illusions of craft unionism were thrown aside, and first place was given to the problem of securing working class ownership and organisation of the industry on communist principles. From this moment a revival took place in the various Agricultural Workers' Unions which were in existence. The organisation of new unions was soon started in districts populated by an agricultural proletariat.

The development of the unions was assisted by the organisation of Soviet Farms on the nationalised estates. The best organised of these Agricultural Labour Unions were the Luthvanian and White Russian Agricultural Labour Union, the Moscow Union of Orchard Workers, the Petrograd, Tver and Vladimir organisations. In all these organisations the need was felt for a common centre and a common directing head. In order to meet this, an attempt was made to organise a Moscow district Union, which coincided with the division of Central Russia into districts (first half of 1918); but as a consequence of the abolition of the district system, this scheme fell through too.

The All-Russia Agricultural Workers' Union was called into existence in the first half of the year 1919. It was initiated by a Conference of Land workers in Moscow, on February 20, 1919; the latter was convened mainly on the initiative of the land surveyors who had their National Union and whose aim was to unite with the mass of land workers as well as with the groups of agricultural specialists and experts in peasantry. But this first conference, owing to the lack of information, was not a success. Only 69 delegates arrived at the conference, 49 were specialists, land surveyors and agriculturalists, and only twenty represented the workers (17 from the Moscow Landowners' Union and from the Elets, Jula and Shisk Agricultural Workers' Union). The Conference worked out rules and elected an executive committee. But owing to the non-proletarian character and small number of its members present, the union was not registered in the All-Russia Central Council of Trade Unions. The conference was recognised as a preliminary conference of the executive, as the organising bureau for preparing for the convocation of a new conference.

The first All-Russian conference of landholders, convened by this bureau, assembled in Moscow on June 16, 1919. There were present 142 delegates from 30 districts, representing 48,000 organised in the Landholders' Union.

But owing to the non-revolutionary and non-proletarian character of the organising bureau which convened the conference, and the absence of connection with the localities, this conference also proved unsatisfactory. Out of 142 delegates little more than half represented the proletariat; the rest represented agricultural experts and land surveyors, who numbered in all only 5,000 members. Nevertheless this conference was the turning point in the organisation of the Agricultural workers of Russia.

The leading part at the conference was taken by the communists and labour fractions, who in spite of the large number of non-party delegates present, succeeded in getting all their

proposals carried, and the Central Committee was elected from the list of this fraction. The Central Committee was composed of 11 members, of which nine were communists and two were non-party members, representing the experts and sympathisers; it should be pointed out that one of the members representing the experts did not attend the meetings and the other abandoned the work after two months.

## THE COMPOSITION AND STRUCTURE OF THE UNION.

The main task of the first Central Committee was to organise the working masses, to attract them into the Union and to set up a proper apparatus. According to the rules, all agricultural wage workers are eligible for membership in the union. At the present time the union is composed of workers and employees on the Soviet Farms (agricultural orchards, cattle breeding, dairies, experimental stations), labourers as well as specialists working on the Soviet estates and serving in the Central and Local agricultural institutions, as agriculturalists, land surveyors, etc.

The union is organised on industrial lines, therefore the workers and employees in auxiliary trades serving the Soviet Farms, i.e., workers in mills, blacksmith shops; also members of other trades, saddlers, carpenters, joiners, locksmiths, tylers, coopers, shoemakers, tailors, are eligible for membership.

On January 1, 1920, the number of paying members in the union was 65,000, but this is only approximate because many local sections did not give any information; many could not pay their contributions regularly, owing to the great distance and bad communications. The probable number of members is nearer 100,000; according to the data of the Commissariat of Agriculture this number of workers was employed on Soviet Farms alone. As membership is obligatory, it is quite clear that the number of members could not be less than the number of workers employed in the industry.

The Congress organised and drew up a scheme for organising several sections of the union: such as Agricultural, Horticultural, Forestry, Land Surveying, etc., but it soon became evident that such sub-division was unnecessary and it was therefore abandoned. The land surveyors particularly urged the need for their section, but even they eventually abandoned this position, and the Bureau of the section, elected by the conference of land surveyors, was dissolved.

The structure of the union is as follows: There is a Central Committee (in Moscow); in the Governments and districts there are local Departments, aided by Management Committees; on the Farms there are Committees of workers and employees.

All the organs of the union are elected by a special Conference, in which all members participate either through delegates (national, government, ouyezd\*) or Conferences of all members on the Farms.

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\*The "ouyezd" is a district whose nearest equivalent in English is "county," while "government" refers to a larger area or "province."

Conferences of representatives of the union are summoned, besides the conferences called to decide Economic and administrative questions. Up to the present time there has been one All-Russian Conference, held at the end of January and the beginning of February, 1920; it was composed of the representatives of the management Committees of the Provincial Departments, and the most important District Departments. In Provinces and Districts the Conferences of the Committees are held not less than once a month, and General Conferences twice a year.

In the Central Committee and in the Management Committee of Provincial Departments, there are the following Departments: The Secretariat with an organising Sub-department, the Standardisation of Wages, Protection of Labour and Educational Departments. The Controlling Department is not yet organised either in the centre, or in the Districts; with the exception of some Governments like Tambor, where this Department controls production on the Soviet estates in the whole government; other Management Committees of District Departments have their sections only in those districts where a large number of members are concentrated.

The following Commissions are formed in connection with the Workers' Committees: wage fixing, Educational Commissions.

The Workers' Committees have wage, labour protection, and Educational Sub-Committees, although the latter exist only on large Soviet estates which employ a large number of workmen. Soviet Farms which are of recent formation have a common Workers' Committee; the workers' committees in these cases have not been abandoned.

## THE TASKS OF THE UNION.

The chief objects of the Landworkers' Industrial Union have been:

(1) The organisation of agriculture on Communist principles, propagating that idea among the peasants. (2) The increase of efficiency by appropriate means and planned organisation, the expulsion of parasitic elements, and the establishment of strict Labour discipline. (3) The protection of Labour on the Soviet Farms. (4) Educational work among the agricultural workers, to give first place to abolishing illiteracy and to organise Agricultural schools.

The participation of the union in the organisation of agriculture took the form chiefly of organising the labour of the workers, the establishment of Control and Management, and direct participation in management by putting forward the best workers in the union for responsible posts in the management.

The greatest attention is now given to the organisation of model Soviet farms, as the union is convinced that the success of the propaganda in favour of agriculture on communist principles depends on the organisation of Farms which may serve as an example to the peasants. To carry out successfully this task an information department has been formed which collects all

the data relating to agriculture; this data is applied for working out agricultural plans, controlling, etc., and also for calculation of the technical forces (this work is just being organised), in order that the fullest and best use be made of them. The local control of production is carried out by the workers' Committees on the various undertakings, which elect a Wage and Standardisation of Labour Committee, to standardise labour and wages according to the instructions of the Central organs of the union; it controls labour discipline, and the proper execution of plans and protection of public property; but the committees do not interfere with the technical administration of the industry, which belongs exclusively to the Management.

The exception to this rule was made in the Tambov Government; in February, 1920, in accordance with the instructions of the Government Council of Public Economy, when all the Soviet estates were given over to the Workers' Committees, the former managers of the estates became only technical executors by the order of the Workers' Committees. The latter accomplish their task through the technical corporation of the Governmental Council of Public Economy.

The following figures give a general idea of the work of the union in connection with organising Soviet estates:—

According to statistics provided by the Commissariat of Agriculture, previous to the advance of Denikin there were in 33 governments in Central Russia, 2,463 Soviet estates with a total area of 1,361,490 desiatins of which 745,536 was ploughed land and 313,354 was arable. The number of permanent workers was 53,574 employees, 6,941 experts and others who with their families totalled 107,820. The number of horses was 36,727, horned cattle 56,595.

There were 13.4 desiatins per man and 19.5 per horse. In the northern Governments, Tzaritzin and Astrachan Governments and also on the far South Coast the Soviet estates are small—about 20 in each Government.

The following are the governments in which the Soviet estates occupy the largest area.

|                                | Number of Estates |     | Territory |           |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-----|-----------|-----------|
| The Government of Saratov ...  | 66                | ... | 171,455   | desiatins |
| "      "      "  Samara ...    | 100               | ... | 194,436   | "         |
| "      "      "  Voronezh ...  | 65                | ... | 116,350   | "         |
| "      "      "  Kursk ...     | 118               | ... | 70,000    | "         |
| "      "      "  Gomel ...     | 252               | ... | 163,883   | "         |
| "      "      "  Novgorod ...  | 106               | ... | 50,000    | "         |
| "      "      "  Moscow ...    | 201               | ... | 45,413    | "         |
| "      "      "  Petrograd ... | 185               | ... | 22,000    | "         |
| "      "      "  Smolensk ...  | 119               | ... | 36,350    | "         |
| "      "      "  Orel ...      | 133               | ... | 55,000    | "         |

The last two governments are remarkable for their organisation.

In the spring of 1920, in 34 governments of great Russia the estates managed by the Governmental Agricultural Departments included 2,625 Soviet estates managed by the government agricultural Department with the total area 1,399,385, with 624,899 of ploughed land.

In the interest of industrial organisation and increase of efficiency the union established a definite standard of labour which the workers are expected to maintain.

The union recognises piecework and the premium bonus system as a stimulus for raising production, but this so far has not been introduced, nor has the naturalisation of wages (payment in kind) which in the future will be the corner stone of the union wage policy. The wages of Agricultural workers and employees are defined in special scales worked out by the Central Committee of the union. This scale is to be supplemented when details are worked out.

Little has been done for the protection of labour. This is explained by the fact that the union has only existed a short time; it was therefore impossible not only to introduce radical measures for the protection of labour, but even to study this question in order to find a rational solution of the various problems. Moreover, the union was prevented from carrying out this work by the extraordinary conditions which prevailed, when the whole attention of the Republic was concentrated on the struggle with the White Guards who were supported by the Allies.

The greatest achievement of the unions was the organisation of the Institute of agricultural labour, which is functioning now in most of the Governments. The immediate tasks which the union is endeavouring to achieve in the sphere of protection of labour are: the regulation of food supplies, improvement of housing conditions, seeing to the observation of the Labour Laws in Agriculture, the introduction of a normal working day, the abolition of child labour up to the age of 14, the reduction of the working day for young persons under 18.

The carrying on of educational work was even more difficult than work in connection with the protection of labour. The lack of trained workers was severely felt, so also was the scarcity of necessary appliances and literature which would answer the demand of the moment.

Recently, however, work in this direction is being conducted more smoothly. In all the governments of Russia a three months' course has been started as well as a one year technical course for training expert agriculturalists; and these should be able to control and direct the Councils of Public Economy and carry out various measures in agriculture.

The union hopes by the end of 1920 to have started a sufficient number of such courses to enable at least the majority if not all workers on the Soviet estates to take them up.

# The All-Russia Trade Union of Civil Servants, Shop Assistants and Clerks.

ISSUED BY THE BOARD OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE UNION.

*[Note.—The first section of the document, dealing with the general development of Trade Unionism in Russia, has been omitted as it covers the same ground as Lozovsky's article.]*

At the present moment our Trade Union includes all clerks, whatever their profession, working in the distributive and supplying organs (food distribution organs, co-operatives, etc.) and in all Soviet institutions (commissariats, soviets, councils of national economy, "Centres," etc.), with the exception of the Commissariat of the Means of Communication and of Posts and Telegraphs, the employees of which form part of the corresponding industrial unions.

## THE STRUCTURE OF THE FEDERATION.

The fundamental nucleus of the union is the committee of clerks elected at the general assembly of the employees of a given institution or concern. In large combined institutions, divided into big departments, each of which has a strictly determined sphere of functions, and situated sometimes in various parts of the city, the committees are elected separately in every department or enterprise connected with the said institution. The functions of these committees include the representation of the clerks' interests before the management; the recruiting of new members for the union; the collection of members' contributions; keeping up a permanent contact with the local administration of the union; the application of the decisions and resolutions of the union among the clerks of the given institution; carrying out all the work of the union in the way of wage classification, protection of labour, culture and educational work; and raising labour productivity through the application of labour discipline in the separate institutions.

All committees of a town or district are united in the local branch of the union (district branch, branch of the city in Government towns). The chief governing body of the local

branch is the conference of committees, which form the branch; the running work of the branch is carried out by its executive, elected at the conference of Committees.

All district branches of a given Government or region form the Government branch of the union, controlled by the Government conference and the Government executive; the Government conference is composed of representatives elected at the district conferences of committees at a fixed proportion, and in the Government town at the city conference of committees; the Government executive and the revision committee are elected by the Government conference.

The number of branches of the union is 416; they are united into 41 Government departments. Thus each Government department on the average includes ten branches. At the present moment the federation unites 646,040 members on Russian territory, excluding Siberia, the Ukraina and Turkestan, where the process of organisation of the union is not yet terminated—while at the time of the Second Special Congress in May, 1919, the union counted only 350,000 members; i.e., in the course of one year the number of members increased by about 300,000 or 100 per cent. Each district branch on the average includes 800 members; and all the 375 district branches, about 300,000 members. Each city branch (in a Government town) has on the average 8,440 members, and 41 Government towns together contain 346,000 members.

To these we must add 25,000 members in Turkestan, where the branches of the unions are being united by the regional committee which only in the end of March of this year got into touch with the central committee of the union—it could not do it before, this region being cut off from Soviet Russia.

As regards the borders—Siberia, Ukraina (the Ural is included in the above figures), no exact information can be obtained up to now; neither regarding the restoration of the union organisations destroyed or more or less damaged during the domination of Denikin and Koltchak, nor regarding the number of members of the organisations which have already been called into life again, with the exception of the Kharkoff, Kieff and Ekaterinoslaff branches counting together about 35,000 members.

The chief organ of the union is the All-Russian Congress convoked once a year. This elects the central committee and its Board for the management of the activity of the union, which carries on the daily routine work and represents the union.

The plenum of the central committee is convoked every two months. The delegates to the All-Russian Conference are elected at the Government conferences according to a fixed proportion. At the 2nd Special Congress in 1919 the central committee elected was composed as follows: 21 members, of whom 12 were communists, 6 partisans of the independence of the trade union movement, 3 internationalists; the Board of the central committee was composed of 11 members—6 communists, 3 partisans of the independence of the trade union movement and 2 internationalists; after the fusion of the Inter-

nationalist with the Communist party the internationalist members of the central committee and of the Board fused with the communists, thus increasing the number of votes of the latter.

## THE CLASSIFICATION OF WAGES.

The wage classification of our union on an All-Russian scale began to be applied only in February, 1919. The entire wage fixing work of the union is concentrated in the Tariff Department of the Central Committee. At present all the branches of the union have central tariff taxation commissions, whose duty it is to apply the tariffs in the area of their branch.

Every institution or enterprise, together with the committee of employees, organises a tariff commission composed of representatives in equal number of the clerks and the administration.

These commissions divide the clerks into groups and categories of the tariff net work, classifying the work of every single person, and fixing according to the tariff system the rate of pay, after which the lists are passed on to the Central Tariff Commission of the branch of the union. After having been confirmed by the latter Commission the tariffs become obligatory for the given institution. In case conflicts arise which cannot be settled in the Tariff Department of the Central Committee, the Higher Tariff Commission must be applied to, the decisions of which are final in all questions of detail and of principle.

Recently the Central Committee drew up a project for normal terms of labour and the introduction of the premium system of wages. These questions are quite new and extremely difficult for our union, but the first steps in this direction have been taken already—the general scheme of the premium system of pay is worked out. This premium question is closely bound up with the question of raising the productivity of labour and of labour discipline; therefore when speaking of this question, several points—besides the one fundamental point, that of strict regulation of the terms of labour—have to be considered, such as: reduced staffs, individual initiative, definite tasks (the execution of a definite piece of work, within a definite period), the stage of service in an institution (this being introduced for the purpose of combating the frequent changes of service from one institution into another).

In the provinces the premium system of wages will be applied only after the schemes worked out by the Central Commission of the Union have been confirmed.

The distribution of special industrial clothing among the clerks also belongs to the sphere of activity of the tariff commission. According to the lists presented for the first receipt, 138,000 garments have been received (footwear, various upper clothing, warm clothing, overalls, gloves, half sleeves, etc.), which is about 70 per cent. of all the things required. The lists to be presented for the second receipt are not yet drawn up.

## PROTECTION OF LABOUR.

The work of protection of labour of clerks and shop assistants employed in the provinces is not yet properly established chiefly because of the lack of experienced workers, who up to now have been detained on the fronts of the civil war. Besides, his work can only be fully developed with the improvement of the economic situation of the country, because under the present conditions many measures concerning protection of labour cannot as yet be applied. Therefore, the activity of our union in this direction is limited mainly to the settlement of conflicts and also to the elaboration of various information and regulations connected with the question of labour protection. These latter are then put before the Central Council of Trade Unions and the People's Commissariat of Labour for confirmation, and among them are to be noted: (1) Reports presented to the Council of Peoples Commissaries and the Peoples Commissaries of Labour about reduction of staffs in the institutions and stores and the utilisation of available labour forces; (2) regulation about "inspection" for persons serving in small enterprises; (3) "regulation about labour discipline" for employees; (4) information on the question of the 6-hours working day for office and mental workers employed in institutions with 8 hours working day; (5) regulations about overtime work for persons above 20th tariff category; (6) instructions for application of the "Regulation on disciplinarian courts of honour."

It is further to be noted that the Union has got permission to give instruction in seven of the biggest centres (Moscow, Luga, Petrograd, Nishnij Novgorod, Saratoff and Vitebsk).

In the big centres the union also succeeded in withdrawing underaged children from work and placing them under the care of the Social Maintenance Board. The detailed examination of conditions of life of civil servants, which had been undertaken, could not be carried through because of the lack of experienced workers.

## CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL WORK.

Notwithstanding the great possibilities offered, the activity of the union in this direction has not developed very much. This fact can be partly explained by the foundation of a large number of governmental and general proletarian educational institutions, and such an activity on the part of the unions could therefore, in most of the towns, introduce a kind of parallelism in the work of the above organisations.

In a considerable measure the educational work of the union is so little developed because of general causes, i.e., the impossibility of applying a sufficient number of experienced workers on this work, these latter being needed for military purposes and for the reconstruction of the socialist state. There are as yet no complete data of all the educational institutions, training by the union clubs, libraries, scientific and professional courses. In connection with the scarcity of

skilled workers in the institutions, many departments of our federation (especially in the Ural where the skilled workers had been evacuated by Koltchak, partly by force and partly of their own free will) started the organisation of courses for special professional training. The result of these courses has up to the present proved very satisfactory, thus filling the ranks of the skilled workers.

At present steps are being taken for the centralisation of the activity of the union in the spheres of professional training and also in other spheres of educational work, following the example of other branches of the union's activity—the financial and tariff organisation—the centralisation of which has been attained already in the most essential points.

## The All-Russia Union of Art Workers.

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ISSUED BY THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE  
ALL-RUSSIA UNION OF ART WORKERS.

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After the February Revolution more than 15 art unions were created in Russia. These unions were independent and in no way connected with each other. (1) The National Union of Musical Art Workers. (2) The National Union of Actors. (3) The National Union of Scenic and Arena Artists. (4) Union of Circus Actors. (5) Union of Kino Workers. (6) Union of Actors of the private ballet. (7) Union of Stage Workers (theatrical hair-dressers, scene shifters, dress makers, etc.). (8) Union of Stage Employees (cloak-room attendants, wardrobe keepers, etc.). (9) Union of Photographic Workers. (10) Union of Painters. (11) Union of Artists of the New Art. (12) Union of Sculptors. (13) Union of Artists of Applied Arts and Art Industries. (14) Union of Engravers. (15) Union of Architects. (16) Union of Composers, etc.

All these above mentioned narrow-corporative and craft Unions were never of great importance. Actors in a theatre entered one Union, orchestra players joined another, stage workmen a third, etc. All these unions issued different instructions—and it is not to be wondered at that since the revolution the Art Workers decided to create one large Union, which was finally formed in the beginning of 1919. At the present moment the All-Russia Union of Art Workers unites workers in all branches of art and enters with equal rights into the family of proletarian unions, headed by the All-Russia Central Council of Trade Unions. All these above mentioned Unions joined hands and formed one big Union of Art workers including all actors of the drama, opera, ballet, cinematograph, circus and music hall; managers, balletmasters, music conductors, composers, dramatists and authors of cinematographic scenarios, musicians (including those in the Red Army and the fleet), chorus singers (including church and synagogogue choristers, chapel masters, organ players, etc.), cinematographic operators, acrobats, clowns, circus riders, and riding masters, trainers, athletes, wrestlers, gymnasts, couplet singers and other music-hall actors; theatre artists (scene painters, property men, etc.) as well as image painters, photographers, workers in the kino-ateliers,

theatrical hair dressers, and costumiers, dressmakers, shoe makers, carpenters, electrical engineers, house painters, theatre servants, watchmen, circus saddlers, and stable boys. The great employees (managers, cashiers, controllers, etc.) and the door keepers, Chaliapine as well as the simple ticket porter, enter with equal rights into the Union. We must add that the Union includes also tuners of musical instruments, musical instrument makers, teachers in all branches of art as well as employees in picture galleries and museums and all employees in the following departments of the Peoples Commissariat for Education: (1) The Theatre Department, (2) Music Department, (3) Photographic and Cinematographic Department, (4) Department of Fine Arts, (5) Department for the safe-keeping of museums and monuments of antiquity.

Each theatre, circus, cinematograph and workshop has a local committee which is the primary organ of the Union. The functions of the latter are the same as the functions of local factory committees in other Unions. At the present time the Union numbers nearly 150,000 members and has branch offices in more than 150 towns.

Since the annexation of Siberia, Ukraine, Crimea and Turkestan the number of members and branch offices increases every day.

The All-Russian Congress of Art Workers which was held in Moscow in May, 1919, elected a central committee composed of 5 musicians, 1 composer, 5 actors, 3 kino players, 2 music-hall actors, 1 juggler, 3 stage workmen, (1 dress maker, 1 carpenter and 1 mechanic) 1 painter and 1 sculptor.

The Union unites all the Art Workers without any consideration of their political opinions. The union has a communist fraction which exercises great influence.

The principal question dealt with by the Union is the salary question. Detailed rates are settled for every category and are strictly based on grades of skill.

Under the reign of the Tsar the artists were in a miserable position; now they are in better conditions than other workers. Before the revolution theatres played every day; theatre workers did not know what rest was. Now, according to a decree of the Soviet Government, all theatre workers have their holiday on Monday instead of Sunday because it would be unreasonable to deprive working people of theatres on Sunday. Before the revolution managers and impresarios took from theatre workers everything they could. Now, all theatres are nationalised and are administered by a collegiate board which includes representatives of the Union of Art Workers. The Union has also its representatives in the collegiate boards of the Art Section of the Commissariat of Education and in the corresponding departments of local Soviets.

Now that the blockade may soon be raised, we are ready to take the initiative for the organisation of an International Union of Art Workers.

Art is international. Artists have always been internationalists.

There is great need for the organising of a world Labour Exchange of Art Workers. We appeal to our European comrades. They must help us to organise an International Union of Art Workers.

Let the International language Esperanto be the official language of this Union.

The Russian people have awakened from their slumber. They long for theatres, music and works of Art. But the needs of several millions cannot be satisfied by our artists alone. In towns as well as in the country actors have to play several times through the evening. We appeal to our European comrades to come and help us in our work. There is a lack of material necessary to the development of Arts.

Europe must give us cinematograph films, "Eastman Kodak" apparatus, chemicals, musical instruments, strings, mouth pieces, colours, etc. The blockade must be raised.

Come to Russia, comrades, and you will see that the Russian Soviet Republic is neither a desert nor a barbarous country. You will convince yourselves that Art occupies a place of honour in our lives.

We are waiting for you. Workers, in all branches of Art.

Send your delegation to Moscow and give us the opportunity to send our comrades to confer with you.

Long Live the International Union of Art Workers!



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