



DOCUMENTS OF THE
INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNIST
MOVEMENT

A. Losovsky

**Program of Action
of the
Red International
of Labour Unions**

red flag publications

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Introduction

This book was written in 1921 by A. Losovsky, member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolshevik), one of the heads of the Communist International and Secretary-General of the Red International of Labour Unions.

The Program of Action presents the concrete orientation put forward by the revolutionary unions of the time in their work and in their daily battles in order to prepare the overthrow of capitalism.

It is the creative application of Marxist-Leninist principles to work in the workers' and union movement, synthesizing the experience gained by the working class in its struggle against Capital during those revolutionary years following the 1914-1918 imperialist war and the Russian socialist revolution of October 1917.

The Program of Action was written during a period which saw an offensive by Capital against the revolutionary upsurge of the working class. The capitalist class counted on the reformist leaders of the political parties and the unions to disarm this movement and stifle it, to turn it away from the revolutionary road onto the peaceful road by fooling workers with electoral promises and class collaboration schemes.

It was against this background that the Communist International sent out a call to communist parties throughout the world to take up the defence of the interests of the working class more firmly. This called for unmasking the reformist and social-democratic traitors as having abandoned not only the struggle for socialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat but also the struggle for the most immediate demands of the working class.

Communists have always demarcated themselves from reformist and anarchist positions on all practical questions. The confrontation between the bourgeois line and the proletarian line is clearly laid out in the text, whether it concerns direct action in the fight against unemployment or the link between the fight for reforms and the fight for socialism.

Losovsky shows the importance of linking the unions and the party

and of undertaking joint action. He shows the leading role the party plays in this revolutionary front.

Discussing the need for the unity of the working class in its daily battles against the capitalists' attacks, Losovsky clearly states that there can be no working class unity on the basis of class collaboration but only on the basis of class struggle. Even though the actual circumstances have changed, and the labour movement looks different, these principles and lessons retain all their value and their truth.

Today, an economic and political crisis is shaking our country. In these conditions, the working class urgently needs revolutionary leadership and organization. The workers, in their struggles against the bourgeoisie and its crisis measures, are inevitably confronted with the bureaucrats who now control the unions in Canada. These reformists and revisionist traitors practise class collaboration and preach that it's possible to "civilize" capitalism.

But what the working class needs to defend its interests are real fighting organizations, class struggle unions and especially its Marxist-Leninist party.

The fight to develop the proletarian current in the unions — against class collaboration and for class against class struggle — must be taken up. This fight is an essential part of the struggle in our country to build a new Marxist-Leninist communist party.

Only under the leadership of the party can the proletarian line win out and the working class throw the revisionist and reformist union bureaucrats out of its ranks.

This is why this book, rich with lessons, should become a sharp weapon in our revolutionary struggle against the Canadian bourgeoisie and for socialism.

May 1978.

Preface

The purpose of this pamphlet is to develop the program of action adopted by the First Congress of the Red International of Labour Unions and the Third Congress of the Communist International. The program we are calling to the readers' attention has been adopted by two international congresses. Each of the points of the program should be the object of in-depth discussion in the light of the experience of the workers' movement in the different countries represented at these two congresses.

At the present time, what should be the practical work of revolutionary unions? This was the question asked at the two congresses and in particular the Congress of the RILU. The program of action is the concrete answer to this question. Our pamphlet is an attempt to develop the essential points of the program, an attempt to show the essential stages in the struggle of the working class in the present period and under prevailing conditions. This pamphlet is far from the last word on the subject, it merely sketches the general outlines. Its purpose is to explain briefly how the two congresses see practical work in the present situation. We are not concerned with abstract propaganda or abstract agitation, but with how, in the daily struggle, each revolutionary worker should understand all questions, in order to win over the mass of workers around concrete and practical slogans. Workers think in concrete terms, they have great difficulty in assimilating abstract formulations. But with their class instinct and flair, they grasp the forms and methods of struggle that follow from their social situation.

The struggle of the working class is becoming more and more difficult. The bourgeoisie's demands on the workers are not at all abstract, they are very real. Within the working class itself there are diverse currents, various groups. The working class is splintered and heterogeneous and, as a result, weak. It is absolutely necessary to organize the mass of workers around practical actions, to explain to them, using the past experience of different countries, the various forms and methods of struggle, to focus the attention of the revolutionary labour unions on the essential questions of the present workers' movement, and to relate our practical and concrete activity to our general class tasks.

The strategy of class struggle is no less complicated than modern military strategy. And if this pamphlet can clarify a few points or accurately answer some of the complex questions concerning the economic strategy of the working class, the author's purpose will have been served.

A. Losovsky

Moscow, November 1, 1921.

PROGRAM OF ACTION of the Red International of Labour Unions

I. The deepening of the class struggle

Today, the capitalist world has entered into a new phase in its development. Not only is the legacy of the war still with us, but its effects are felt more strongly every day. The contradictions that were already tearing apart contemporary society during the war have sharpened, and are developing along two different lines: on the one hand national imperialism, on the other, proletarian internationalism.

The major contradictions are expressed in the continuing struggle between the victors, first for the greatest exploitation of the vanquished, and then for the subjugation of the world: the Americans arm themselves against Japan, the Japanese against America, and the struggle centres on the Pacific Ocean. Who will be master of the Pacific, who will control the shores of this vast ocean? This is the bone of contention between the ruling classes of these two countries. On the European continent, the rivalry between France and England grows daily. France is equipping itself with vassals in order to maintain its rapacious control of the German people without the aid of England. Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Yugoslavia and the Baltic states are forced to act as the watch dogs of the French financiers, heightening the fears of the English bourgeoisie. England, having taken control of almost all of Turkey, as well as the sea lanes to India, has at the same time lost its stable control of India. While the revolutionary movement is developing in that country, England's close neighbour, Ireland, continues its struggle for freedom. If we add to this the desire of Australia, Canada and South Africa for real independence from the metropolitan power, we have an understanding of all the contradictions presently expressing themselves in a concentrated form within the British Empire.

Russia, which used to be the world market's biggest client, made an impact on the whole world when it tore away from the international system of trade. The surge in industrial expansion, foreseen just after the war, ended rapidly. Commercial markets were blocked, wholesale prices declined, and retail prices stagnated. The economy came to a

standstill, numerous financial and industrial firms collapsed, and a prolonged crisis occurred, revealing with stark clarity the essential characteristics of the social struggle. The economic quagmire has resulted in reduced production and a general, united offensive by Capital against Labour. Throughout the world, the employers are trying hard to recover by throwing workers into the street, reducing wages and lengthening the work day, etc. The majority of workers have followed their reformist leaders, counting on peaceful evolution, on the slow but gradual increase in wages, on the gradual improvement in the conditions of work and on the social legislation elaborated by the League of Nations. This mass of workers, diverted from violent action by their hope for socialization and faith in the effectiveness of class collaboration, now find themselves facing the offensive tactics of the capitalist class and the systematic desertion of those who had raised their hopes for the fertile valleys of the promised land.

This development in the social struggle is provoking a muffled rumble of discontent in the working class, disturbances, and an explosion of protests. It is obvious that the old forms and methods of struggle are useless. Life is the best teacher, and life has shown that reformism springs not from concern for the interests of the working class, but rather for those of bourgeois society. Two years of discussions about socialization did not hurt the bourgeoisie at all, but they did serve to confuse the workers. Today even the most stupid of German reformists understands that two years of chit-chat about socializing the means of production and exchange have produced nothing. The bourgeoisie feels stronger than it did just after the war; from being on the defensive and gradually building up its forces, it has gone on the offensive.

In these conditions, it is natural that the foremost questions on the agenda concern methods of struggle; how to push back the capitalists' attack and organize the proletarian counter-attack. We must adapt our methods of struggle to the conditions of our time and create both offensive and defensive forms, keeping in mind the experience gained over the last few years. We must systematize the lessons of the revolutionary and the workers' movement during the last decade. After serious study of this experience, and weighing all that we have learned from the past and present, we must introduce new forms and methods of combat. That new forms and methods of struggle are vitally needed is a fact not likely to be disputed by anyone. The complete bankruptcy of the old labour unions, their inability to carry on the forward march, as well as their total failure even to maintain previously

gained positions, is glaring proof of the ineffectiveness of their methods of struggle. As a matter of fact, we cannot really talk of struggle, since all we have seen for the last few years is the leaders hobnobbing with the employers. All important strikes with reformists at their head broke out against the wishes of those gentlemen. Any revolutionary action was taken against their will. And each time the mass of workers were sure that negotiations were simply meant to stall things, and that the employers were using bipartite committees or similar bodies to try to divert the workers from gaining their main demands, they had to drag their leaders along in their wake. The new period, new conditions of struggle, and the unprecedented sharpness of social conflicts, call for new methods of struggle and a new way of approaching all the critical questions of the workers' movement.

II. Direct action

What then is reformism's essential weakness and error? Why is it a bankrupt line? Why have all the laborious discussions by the French CGT, the German Union Federation or the Amsterdam International, undertaken nationally and internationally, produced nothing? At present, even the German labour leaders are forced to remark on the unprecedented effrontery of the bourgeoisie's offensive. Messrs. Jouhaux and Merrheim are lamenting the disloyalty of the French capitalists, who are lowering wages and sabotaging the law that guarantees the 8-hour day. The English trade-unionists as well now admit that the bourgeoisie thinks only of its own interests and laughs at those of the working class. These champions of collaboration are now forced to admit that their line has failed. Why? Because they based their tactics on discussions by the leadership in the name of the masses and not on direct action by the masses against the employers. The employers were not faced with a revolutionary organization overflowing with class hatred, but with a peaceful group seeking reforms through opportunist politics. They understood that this kind of organization did not threaten their interests, and that if under certain circumstances it was necessary to make some concessions, it would be easy later to take them back. Reformists try to lead the masses away from direct action. Our task is to make the action of the masses the cornerstone of our activity. This is only possible if we build our tactics on direct action by the masses.

What is direct action? By direct action we mean all revolutionary actions of the workers or their organizations, when they stand up as a

class to the bourgeoisie, whether it be against one of its isolated detachments or the whole of the bourgeois state. Strikes, demonstrations, occupations of mills and factories, boycotts, the organization of strike squads and fighting detachments, hunting strikebreakers, the defacto imposition of workers' control, armed insurrection; these are all forms of direct action. However, we should not insist, as the anarchists do, that immediate action is the only form of revolutionary action open to unions and parties. This is not so. The dominant viewpoint among the anarchists is still that only immediate action is worthy of attention, that parliamentary struggle is essentially opportunistic and bourgeois, that it is necessary every day to incite the working class to repeated strikes because strikes are useful regardless of their results. This point of view is profoundly erroneous and harmful. Direct action does not exclude parliamentary struggle, it is the basis for it. Of course, we are not talking about parliamentary struggle as understood and practised by the reformists and social-patriots, whose goal is to be equal to other political parties. This is no longer parliamentary struggle but an orgy of parliamentary verbiage; revolutionary workers must oppose this charlatanism violently and categorically. The task of the representatives of revolutionary organizations wherever they are, including in the bourgeois parliament, is to watch every step of their class enemies, to constantly expose them, to advance the consciousness of the masses by showing them the facts in their true light, to not let a single political act that exposes the dominant classes and the governments escape criticism. It is to brand each one of their acts and make parliament a rostrum for revolutionary speeches, not for the bleating of the reformists heard throughout the war and that we still hear today. Liebknecht's parliamentary speeches, his revelations, are direct action on the same level as other revolutionary acts. It is also direct action to publish a revolutionary newspaper that attentively follows the life of the masses, generalizes their struggle and concentrates the attention of the lowly not on collaboration with the dominant classes, but on the overthrow of the capitalist system.

Revolutionary direct action is defined less by its form than by its content. A demonstration is in itself a direct action, but whether or not it is a revolutionary class action depends on its goals. As everyone knows, there are workers' demonstrations that are nationalist in nature. During the last war, the workers of France, England, Germany, Austria, etc. organized demonstrations in honour of military victories on numerous occasions. Can we call these demonstrations direct actions? Yes, in the sense that they constituted direct actions against

international proletarian solidarity, for the duping of the working class, and in support of the bourgeoisie. There can be demonstrations that do not contain a single speck of revolutionary spirit, that are simply manifestations of the conservatism of certain strata of the proletariat. Furthermore, there are other forms of public action that serve to dampen rather than sharpen class conflict. Thus reformism also has its forms of "direct action". When we talk of direct actions, we mean those that oppose one class to another, that educate the working class by transforming it from a dependent class into a class having its own goals.

It is impossible to list all the forms of direct action, because in each country, in each important struggle, direct action can take on a variety of forms; but what is always characteristic about it, and what every union must keep in mind, is that only mass action can produce the desired results. It is only by organizing the masses in these kinds of movements that we can effectively bring the workers together and prepare them to win the final victory. The importance of direct action lies not only in the immediate results, but mainly in the fact that it unites the mass of workers. The working class is not uniform; it includes numerous intermediary strata with bourgeois conceptions. By involving different groups and isolated strata in a common struggle, direct action brings them closer together, like the links of a chain, and in this way the working class becomes more united. Unity can only be forged in the heat of the struggle and is the most important condition for proletarian victory and for safeguarding the achievements of the revolution. Just by looking around we can see the various forms of direct action: the British miners' strike, the Italian workers' factory occupations, the March insurrection of the German workers, the October Revolution in Russia — these are various forms of direct action by the working class. The extent to which these actions are successful depends on the objective conditions in each country and on the extent of revolutionary awareness and solidarity of the masses.

We should always keep in mind that the capitalists have always resorted to direct action; unlike many theoreticians of the working class, they do not fly off into dialectical intricacies nor do they construct philosophical structures against revolutionary acts. In the past, when the bourgeoisie represented progress and fought feudalism, it was a revolutionary class, and did not hesitate to use direct action to consolidate its domination. Similarly, the bourgeoisie does not hesitate now to use any direct action in its struggle with the working class. The present armed suppression of all strike movements and the sacking of all the workers' organizations, in Yugoslavia, Romania, etc., the

arrests and massacres of the leaders of mass movements (Spain), the trials and convictions of revolutionary workers by the bourgeois courts, the shooting of workers, the use of troops, as recently occurred in England, lock-outs, reductions in wages without prior notice, the lengthening of the work day, all these constitute direct action by the bourgeoisie against the proletariat.

It is clear that all this in no way stops the bourgeoisie from carrying on negotiations with working class organizations, or signing contracts, etc. The dominant classes do not hesitate to use any method in their struggle to consolidate their class power. They will simultaneously deploy their apparatus of moral and intellectual perversion (the yellow press, bourgeois schools, the church, elections, etc.) and that of physical oppression, in the form of the police, the army, the courts and all the other trappings of bourgeois dictatorship. Therefore, because the capitalist class has many different methods of fighting, we must not lock ourselves into just one form. Taking into account the concrete conditions at a given time and place, we must always apply those forms and methods of struggle that will give the maximum results in terms of winning new positions from the bourgeoisie and the greatest unity of the masses. This is the perspective from which we must view the means of struggle, whether it be signing contracts, parliamentary action, participation in arbitration or participation in any of the other institutions created by the bourgeoisie. Discussions and parliamentary speeches will have a positive result to the extent that the representatives of the working class rely on strongly united organizations capable of backing their demands and defending conquered positions through forcible action. Thus direct action is not in contradiction with other methods. It must be the basis of all the activity of working class organizations. Only in this way can each step forward made by the workers' organizations or their representatives give the maximum results for the whole working class.

III. Trade unions and industrial unions

The organization of unions by industry is one of the essential points of our program of revolutionary action. The trade unions founded over the years were formed as self-defence groups within the working class and the original core of these unions were credit unions and associations that had as their purpose mutual aid rather than class struggle. Above all, these associations grouped individuals who practised the same trade and hence narrow corporatism marked the start of workers' unions. However, the development of capitalism, the growth

of employers' organizations, the continual concentration of capital, the creation of joint stock companies, the grouping of capitalists by industry, the formation of cartels and trusts, all these factors together forced the trade union to group in larger organizations. It was the logic of class struggle that raised this question with the unions. Even before the war the oldest of the English trade unions, which were permeated with corporatism more than the other professional organizations, undertook the gradual merging of the isolated unions into more powerful federations to fight against the employers' federations.

Thus the logic of the development of capitalism, and above all that of the higher stage of capitalism, forced the mass of workers into creating new forms of union organization. For example, the small professional organizations of the mechanics or the moulders could not effectively struggle against the metal employers' federations. The employers' organizations developed more rapidly, along the line of unification by industry, and it was during the difficult struggle against them that the workers learned to unite. The statistics for the post-war period show us that the broad working class masses are being won over more and more to the idea of creating industrial unions. In connection with this, the information published by Sidney Webb about England in the **International Labour Review** is most interesting. S. Webb gives a long list of unions that in the last few years have absorbed hundreds of small union groupings in related industries, always developing along the lines of industrial groupings. We have similar figures for other countries. However, the creation of industrial unions is being realized very slowly. In Germany at the present time there are 54 centralized unions; in France the number is even higher; in America there are more than one hundred: in other words the phenomenon that we are witnessing is that of the transformation into industrial unions, rather than the creation of such unions. Now the struggle is so complicated in all countries that the rapid fusion of similar unions is a life and death question for the working class. In opposition to the centralized industrial union of the employers we must have the centralized industrial union of the workers. Here as everywhere else, the employers are much further advanced than the workers.

What then are the fundamental principles of an industrial union? They are very simple: **all the workers and all the employees of a given company should be members of a single union.** This very simple idea implies a major revolution in present union structures. Our slogan is "one company, one union". If we apply this principle in a consistent manner, we would see that the entire contemporary economy

could be divided into 15 to 18 basic branches. The IWW divides the economy into 14 groups. In Germany immediately following the November revolution, when both bipartite working groups composed of the bosses and the reformist union leaders, and revolutionary workers' councils were created, both elaborated rational forms of organization. The German Union Central divided the entire national economy into 15 groups. The federal Council of Factory and Mill Committees of Berlin proposed 13 or 14 groups, basically the same thing.

The Russian unions have gone much further than the unions of all other countries on the question of structure, not in terms of abstract principles but their application to real life. The Russian unions group all the workers and employees in Russia in 20 national industrial unions. To go further, the merger of several similar unions and the reduction of the total number to 17 or 18 is being worked on at the present time. It goes without saying that the number of unions cannot be identical in every country. This depends on the technological development of each country, of its industries, the particularities of its economy and a whole series of purely national conditions. It is pointless to fix the same number of industrial unions for all countries; the question is to work in all countries for the creation of industrial unions and it matters little if one country has two or three industrial unions more or less. While the reformist leaders advance towards the creation of industrial unions at a snail's pace, only when forced by absolute necessity, we must advance with revolutionary speed; we must struggle against craft-union mentality and corporatism in every factory and mill for it is a totally abstract and lifeless point of view. We must adapt the organic structure of the unions to the struggles the working class must undertake in the present period.

There is one more extremely important consideration that pushes us along the road to reconstruct our unions on industrial lines. The task of the working class is not only to make the social revolution, but to put the results of its victory over the bourgeoisie to use. Both in the course of this revolution and following it, the workers will have to face the questions of production in all their immensity. To maintain production at its pre-revolutionary levels and then increase it on the basis of collective work and the suppression of the private profits of the capitalists — this is the enormous task that will fall with all its weight on the unions. For the unions constitute the basis of the industrial structure of the new society, they are the backbone of the new apparatus of production. The systematic construction of the industrial apparatus of the socialist society is only possible if the unions are ready

to undertake it. Thus the rebuilding of the unions by industry is not only the prerequisite for success in the struggle against the employers, it is also the prerequisite for the organization of production following the victory of the working class.

IV. Factory and mill committees

The experience of the last few years of revolutionary struggle has shown that the working class can triumphantly if it is organized in every factory and in every mill. What are the forms of communication that presently exist among the workers? Take the example of a large metalworks complex, Armstrong in England, Krupp in Germany or Schneider in France. In each of these companies there are many unions: the metalworkers belong to one, the woodworkers belong to another, the drivers to a third, the electricians to a fourth, the smelter workers (in England, for example) to a fifth and the transport workers to a sixth. Each of these unions maintains its own means of communications between its members and the leadership. In some places there are special collectors, in others the shop stewards collect, etc.

When conflicts break out in the factories, the workers are usually insufficiently organized and are not grouped in a single body, and of course only part of the workers are unionized. We know that most of the workers at Creusot are not unionized, that a very large percentage of the workers in the Krupp factories were, until very recently, members of Catholic unions, etc. So, not only are the workers disorganized by the fact that they belong to different organizations, but in addition, a large percentage of workers do not belong to any organization at all. Now, to triumph over the employers and above all over the bourgeois state, we must have the concerted strength of a maximum of the working masses. This triumph will not be possible until every mill and every factory has become a fortress of the revolution, until in the heart of every company we have created resistance groups, groups capable of both offensive and defensive action, groups capable of mobilizing the mass of workers at each installation of every company. Experience has shown that the best form for such an organization is the factory and mill committee or council, elected by the mass of workers regardless of their political or religious opinions.

An extremely interesting struggle has characterized the creation of mill and factory committees in Germany and other countries. These committees, which appeared in Germany at the beginning of the

revolution, have scared the opportunist leaders of the German union movement, who have had to use all their skill and experience in organization to protect themselves. In Germany, there is an on-going discussion between the communists and the right wing over who should be allowed to participate in these committees: all the workers without exception, or just those workers belonging to free unions? The supporters of the German Union Central, reformists to a man, were and still are of the opinion that only those workers that belong to free unions should have the right to vote for the factory and mill committees, and that all other workers should not have the right to vote. On the other hand, members of the left have insisted on the necessity of letting all workers, regardless of their political opinions, participate in the elections.

It is curious to see how the reformists rationalized their intransigence concerning the "non-aligned" workers. They would say: "You ask us to take part in committee elections alongside Catholic workers and those that are not conscious, but this is the most unacceptable type of collaboration with workers who are backward or sympathetic to the Catholics. We oppose such compromises." It is striking how these people who are specialists in compromising with the bourgeoisie and who find nothing wrong with creating organizations in co-operation with the employers, do not in any way want to participate in organizations along with either Catholic workers or those who are not that conscious. Communists object to this false intransigence, "If we want to draw the broad masses into our common political struggle, if we want the Catholic worker, by the logic of the struggle, to be swept up by the general current of the workers' movement, we must let them participate in the elections for the factory and mill committees. It is an excellent thing to be intransigent with the ruling classes and the bourgeoisie. But when we are talking about the backward strata of workers, when we are talking about workers who, because they are lacking in political consciousness, find themselves in Catholic organizations, we must act with the maximum of flexibility, the maximum spirit of conciliation in order to involve them in the general work of the organization where they can rid themselves of their prejudices."

This struggle is not yet finished in Germany. While the reformists want to create factory and mill committees made up exclusively of the members of the free unions, the members of the Workers' Communist Party of Germany are setting up their own factory organizations (Betriebsorganisationen) made up exclusively of their followers and then giving to these groups the high sounding name of Factory and Mill

Committees. We must also reject this conception which perverts the very essence of factory and mill committees. Factory and mill committees that include all the employees of every factory are the most natural basis for industrial unions. The factory and mill committees grow organically into industrial unions. In this manner the development of an industrial union is closely related to the creation of factory and mill committees, which represent the most important weapon in the revolutionary struggle.

Obviously factory and mill committees can be built initially in different ways according to the country; but on the whole the structure of these committees stays the same. This structure is the following: the factory and mill committee is elected by all the workers in the plant. On the one hand it is a union body and oversees the application of all union decisions; on the other it is the organ that assures the workers' control of production.

How must these factory and mill committees be created? They must be created in a revolutionary way. But what should we do about those committees whose creation is the result of a law (Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia)? Should we participate in them or, because of their obviously bourgeois origins and the fact that they parallel our own committees, should we turn our backs on them?

For the revolutionary unions, not to take advantage of the factory and mill committees created by the bourgeois governments would be to act in a manner that is detrimental to our ends and injurious to the interests of the working class. The bourgeois governments do not create these committees out of meekness or because this organizational form pleases them more than any other, but because they've been forced to retreat under the pressure of the masses. They want to protect themselves against this organizational form, which they consider to be the most dangerous. The bourgeoisie of Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia in co-operation with the socialists have created factory and mill committees in order to make the workers collaborate with the bourgeoisie in rebuilding the capitalist economy. A brief examination of the legislation of these countries on such committees is enough to see that the bourgeoisie's desire is to use the energy of the working class and its evident interest in production to increase the profits of the capitalists and consolidate social peace in the factories.

All these laws hold the danger of diverting the workers from the road of struggle to the road of collaboration with the bourgeoisie, but we cannot fight against these laws by deliberately staying on the outside. If the revolutionary elements withdraw, they will abandon millions

of workers to the mercy of the bourgeoisie and its pseudo-socialist henchmen. Boycotting the legal factory committees is the worst way of abandoning the struggle. Hence the tactic of the German Communist Worker's Party of calling for a boycott is extremely injurious and inadmissible from a revolutionary point of view. We should not forget that more than 17 million German workers participate in legal factory committees. The task of revolutionary unions and of sympathizers of the RILU is to bring their ideas and principles into these committees by taking part in elections and organizing active nuclei within the committees. So we can see that a boycott would serve only to separate the revolutionary groups from the mass of workers and would only give negative results.

Thus the creation of factory and mill committees on the one hand and utilisation of the legal factory committees on the other is the fundamental task of revolutionary workers sympathetic to the RILU.

V. The fight against unemployment

Unemployment has always gone hand in hand with "normal" exploitation. Capitalist society has never known a period completely free of "normal" unemployment. There is always a certain number of workers in reserve. This is one of the employers' principal weapons in their struggle to establish a system of "normal" wages. In this manner unemployment is characteristic of the capitalist method of production, making its elimination inconceivable without the elimination of capitalism. But the unemployment that the capitalist world is now experiencing goes beyond the normal limits. It is now on such a scale that it has caused even the most backward workers to question the general running of contemporary society. If we examine the unemployment statistics of certain countries we will see that we are dealing with an exceptional phenomenon.

Only twice between 1879 and 1906 did unemployment in **England** exceed 10%: this was in 1879 (11.4%) and in 1886 (10.2%); in other years the figure varied between 2.1 and 9.3%.

During the World War the number of unemployed declined sharply. It dropped to just 0.4% in 1916. Unemployment took off in the period following the war, as can be seen in these statistics from the first two quarters of the last two years:

	1920	1921
January	2.9%	6.9%
February	1.5%	8.5%
March	1.1%	10.5%
April	0.9%	17.6%
May	1.1%	22.2%
June	1.2%	23.1%

The percentage of unemployment in July varied between 6.8% (construction) and 93.2% (potters).

In **Belgium** the unemployment rate in 1903 was 3.0%; in 1904 2.8%; in 1913 2.97%; in 1914 3.9%.

In 1920	September	October	November	December
	5.8%	6.4	8.3	17.4
In 1921	January	February	March	April
	19.3%	22.7	31.5	31.2

In the **United States of America** unemployment has taken on unbelievable proportions: according to the Washington Labour Exchange, in September 1921 there were more than 6 million unemployed, including 700,000 demobilized soldiers.

In Norway:

1903	5.5%	1920 January . . .	2.4%
1914	2.4%	1920 December . .	6.5%
1916	0.9%	1921 January . . .	10.5%
1919	1.6%	1921 April	14.7%

In Denmark:

1912	7.5%	1920 December . .	5.1%
1916	4.9%	1921 January . . .	13.7%
1919	10.7%	1921 May	18.6%

At the Congress of Unemployed, held in Copenhagen August 5, 1921, some cities were named where 80% of the workers were without work.

In France, where the unemployment statistics are consciously miskept, though unemployment may well be less evident than in England and America, it is nonetheless much higher than the norm. The same is true for Italy and Czechoslovakia.

In Germany before the war, unemployment did not rise above 3.5%; at the beginning of the war it reached 22.4% but then rapidly dropped to below pre-war levels. From 1915 to 1920 the rates for the month of January were as follows: 6.5%; 2.6%; 1.7%; 0.9%; 6.3%; 3.4%; and 4.5%. In May of 1921 unemployment varied between 1.5% (painters) and 9.4% (harness-makers). In comparison with England and America, the rate in Germany is low. Why? Because it is a country with a weak rate of exchange and cheap labour.

Alongside full unemployment exists partial unemployment. There are whole companies in which there are only three or four days work a week and because the workers can't work full weeks, naturally they don't receive full pay.

By its scale, present unemployment is an exceptional phenomenon and therefore requires us to take up exceptional means of struggle. What are the governments now doing to fight unemployment? In some countries they grant aid to the unemployed, start public works, adopt measures to facilitate emigration; this is the furthest even the most liberal of the governments is willing to go. It should be stated that the reformist trade unions look at unemployment from the same point of view. The Italian CGT has formulated the following demands: 1. A public loan to help the unemployed; 2. This loan should be covered by the employers; 3. Immediate organization of public works.

The Special Conference of the Unemployed, held in Rome at the beginning of September, in addition to the aforementioned demands, formulated ones concerning the colonization of the interior of the country and the direct participation of the mass of workers in the management of the large industrial concerns. (*) This is the program of the left-wing of the reformist union movement; as for the right-wing trade unionists, they do not go any further than state subsidies, public works and reduction of the female work-force. In revolutionary unions the slogan of re-establishing trade relations with Soviet Russia is very widespread. Russian orders would no doubt do something to diminish unemployment, but it would not be all that significant. Unemployment would continue to threaten the working class. What is to be done?

(*) *While maintaining capitalist social relations — A. Losovsky.*

The only remedy to unemployment is socialism. But as long as the social revolution has not occurred, as long as the socialist system is not established, it is essential that the unions adopt a series of practical measures to involve the broad working masses in the struggle against unemployment. What practical means and which slogans should the unions formulate in order to reduce unemployment and fight against it? First of all, and this should be the fundamental slogan of the entire struggle, **the unemployed must be paid by their employers, either singly or collectively, and by the state, or by committees of the respective industrial branches.** The unemployed must not be left off the companies' books. The company must be forced to support them until it can provide them with work. Because unemployment has reached such enormous proportions that it is affecting millions of workers, the **slogan of participation of the unemployed in the production process** is sure to meet with energetic and genuine co-operation from the broad masses.

On the question of unemployment selfish interests and class interests collide with each other. There are a certain number of workers who are not attacked by unemployment. Skilled workers are generally in a better position, hence it is difficult to bring them into the struggle for the participation of the unemployed in the production process. Furthermore, some workers fear that such a participation would result in a reduction of their own wages. Revolutionary unions must thrust aside these conservative tendencies. Including the unemployed in the productive process, sustaining them at the expense of the company or of the entire branch of industry, must be the central point of agitation and propaganda. The fate of the unemployed is entirely dependent on the fate of those that have work, and the great danger lies in a rupture between the movement of the unemployed and the workers' movement in general. In this sense the creation of special organizations for the unemployed do not always provide the desired results. It is true that ordinarily these organizations are most revolutionary. They are more determined and more energetic than the organizations of workers who are employed, because they concern themselves exclusively with the problem of unemployment. However, all too often the creation of separate organizations opposes employed workers to those without work, and rather than enabling the workers to assist in the struggle to improve the lot of the unemployed, it awakens antagonism between workers and the unemployed. The creation of such separate organizations outside the framework of the unions should therefore be considered with great caution. This does not in any way mean that we should limit ourselves to the restricted actions of the conservative and reformist unions. The unemployed must constantly

work with the unions in their branch of industry.

Along with demonstrations against bourgeois municipalities or the bourgeois state — demonstrations demanding the handing over of closed factories to the workers, the institution of workers' control, unemployment insurance, free food for children, the lowering of rents, public works, etc. — there should be actions organized by the unemployed and the revolutionary minority aimed at the heads of the union bureaucracies and at socialist municipalities. If the latter are really socialist, they can, under certain circumstances, saddle the rich with a local income tax, allow the unemployed the use of state premises, house the unemployed in the homes of the wealthy, refuse to pay the state municipal income tax, etc.

During their campaign against unemployment, the unemployed and the revolutionary unions must keep in mind that no matter what measures they succeed in having applied within the framework of capitalist society, these measures cannot resolve the unemployment question. The point is to wage a struggle against unemployment, as the resolution adopted by the RILU's First Congress emphasizes, not with the employers but against them, not just by peaceful measures under a capitalist regime but by open class struggle; the question of unemployment will not be resolved through co-operation with the bourgeois state, but through its destruction and the setting up of a proletarian dictatorship. Repudiating the identity of interests between workers and employers, the First Congress of the RILU considered the question of the struggle against unemployment from the general class point of view. Convinced that unemployment will only be eliminated by a social revolution, the First Congress of the RILU concludes its resolution on unemployment with the following call to the unemployed:

“You were the first victims of the struggle — be the advance guard in the attack. But don't forget, that you can win only by attacking in close ranks with the rest of the workers, defending the interests of the entire working class. The workers at the bench must not hope to escape the lot of the unemployed. The fight of their unemployed brothers must be the fight of all workers, and the red unions must resort to all measures to ensure that the fight of the unemployed be waged under the banner of the unions, that fighting detachments consist both of the unemployed and of their comrades who are still employed.”

VI. Factory closings and reductions in work hours

The employers have been using the quagmire in the world market

and the economic crisis to squeeze the working class in a vise-like grip. During the war and the period of “Sacred Unity”, the bourgeoisie had hoped to see the workers become more respectful, but their hopes have been smashed. While it is true that the “Sacred Unity” created profound confusion in the minds of the workers, the period since the war has been characterized by a great growth in unions and an unquestionable increase in the workers' demands. In the first year after the war, the bourgeoisie was forced into a retreat, a so-called voluntary retreat that was credited to the particularly liberal opinions of the League of Nations. But everyone knew that the law establishing the eight-hour day resulted from the fear of a mass movement and the desire to reduce the internal social struggle by making a few concessions. This period of retreat is already over. The reformist unions took on the responsibility of supporting and consolidating capitalism and raised the hopes of the ruling classes, which, as soon as a favourable economic situation presented itself, launched a full-scale offensive against all the concessions they had been forced to grant following the war.

One of the most effective measures in the fight against the workers is the closing of factories and reductions in the number of work days. When the workers are solidly united, when they form a tightly-knit group, the only way to break their solidarity is to close the factory. Reducing the number of work days halves the workers' standard of living forcing them to quieten down and worry about their material interests rather than general political questions. This is the old policy of lockout under new conditions. In the old days lockouts were declared in order to reduce wages and production costs. While still resolving the questions of wages and the work day, lockouts now serve much larger ends. Lockouts are a form of the bourgeoisie's political offensive. They are now an attempt to cow the workers, weaken the cohesion of the working class and save the bourgeoisie from the nightmare of imminent revolution. Growing daily more revolutionary, the millions of workers organized in unions constitute a constant threat to the stability of exploitation. Aside from the economic advantages, the bourgeoisie receives very important political advantages from reductions in the number of work days and the closing of factories.

How can we fight against this epidemic of reduced work weeks, against this epidemic of factory closings? Of course factory shutdowns create one type of unemployment and so all the forms of struggle against unemployment are equally valid in this case. But beyond this, there are a whole series of measures that should be under-

taken in order to effectively block the closing of a factory. In this regard, all of the means have not yet been tried. First of all, while protesting in the most vigorous fashion against the closing, the union must demand the right to carry out all necessary investigations in order to establish whether the factory can truly no longer continue to operate. How to prepare for this? How to wage the campaign? The workers of every factory must **elect a special commission of inquiry into the real causes of the closing** as soon as it appears that the owners have the intention of closing it down. This commission must be elected by all the workers in the factory, both men and women. Its task is to discover the true motives for the closing, without regard to the opinions of the employers. It is not difficult for full time workers in a mill or factory to determine these causes. They know the supplies of raw materials, they are aware if there are orders or not, etc. In order to establish if the closure is necessary, there must be a series of control commissions established; one for the raw materials, one for energy supplies, one for orders, one for receipts, etc. We cannot let the employers or joint stock companies close down a factory whenever they feel like it, because in fact, companies are nothing more than the result of the workers' collective labour.

Obviously we must keep in mind that this type of action will be met with the most frenzied resistance on the part of the employers and the bourgeois state. Attempts by the workers to verify whether a factory closing is legitimate will be considered an attack on the rights of private property, out-and-out anarchism, etc. But if the workers were frightened of having their actions condemned by the employers, they would never do anything. Can the workers really establish the motives for the closing of a factory? We should not forget that this is an extremely difficult question, that the worker is placed in extremely unfavourable conditions vis-à-vis the employer, that the verification itself will arouse the opposition of the entire bourgeois state, police, courts, etc., that the employers' organizations will undertake a series of measures against such sacrilege. Under no circumstances should we close our eyes to the difficulties, but neither should we exaggerate them. We must not think that it will be impossible for the workers to establish the motives behind the closing of their factory. The workers will not be able to determine all the financial connections between such and such an employer and the banks, because naturally the employers do not make the mistake of giving the workers access to such sacred information. But even considering the incomplete nature of the information that can be gathered and the dogged resistance that will certainly be encountered,

the attempt must nonetheless be made in an energetic manner. Because this is the only way that all the workers, independent of their political convictions, can be forged into a single block that will oppose the employers' political offensive.

Aside from the normal difficulties, these control commissions will have to deal with the theory of commercial secrets; it is absolutely essential in all of these investigations to adopt as a practical slogan **the abolition of commercial secrets**. Under the circumstances the most important thing to do is to create **authoritative control commissions** the moment the first information is received concerning the eventual closing of a factory, and to unite all of these control commissions by industrial branch into a single controlling body covering all workers in each branch of industry. Isolated control commissions can be easily destroyed. But if the idea of unity all these bodies into a single organization is put forward at the same time that control commissions are created in a series of factories, the workers' strength will grow considerably. Factory closings should be the starting point for a movement to create control commissions in the particular factories and in whole branches of industry.

VII. Mill and factory occupations

Today, factory closures are often used as a way of fighting, or rather repressing workers. The most effective way for workers to fight this form of repression exerted by the bourgeoisie is to **occupy the factory**. But we must point out that this action is among the most drastic possible. If factory and mill occupations are to be advantageous to the workers they must be extremely well-organized, and a series of special conditions must be in place. The workers used and are still using occupations in the struggle presently developing in all countries. This was the case in the Russian Revolution, where this type of action was used against the bosses even before the October Revolution. A recent case in point is the great movement of Italian workers to take over the factories in the last months of 1920.

To counter the capitalists' threats of lockout, the vanguard of the Italian proletariat — the Milan metalworkers — occupied the factories threatened with closure. The example of the Milan workers was followed by workers from other cities, not just by metalworkers, but by some workers from the chemical, textile, and other industries. Soon

the movement had spread to all of northern Italy, and most of the big industrial factories were in the hands of the workers. Things proceeded in complete order. The mill and factory committees which were immediately set up and the factory commissioners who were appointed showed great organizational capability and business sense. Protected by workers' guards, the factories operated at full capacity. At the same time, the rural proletariat in Polesino and other agricultural regions took over landed property, without interrupting the work underway.

But, at the most decisive moment, the CGT leaders agreed to begin talks with the government. At the conference called by government minister Giolitti, they accepted a miserable plan for workers' control and held out a conciliatory hand to their class enemy, who grabbed it like a drowning man clutching at a straw.

The movement had been sabotaged. The offensive was repulsed, the workers were defeated. After the defeat, all the counterrevolutionary forces were organized. Fascism grew out of this movement.

Specific cases of workers taking over the factories occurred in France, Germany and England. In September, 1921 at Browne, in England, flour mill and bakery workers took over their plant after the bosses refused to give in to their demands. The work went on as usual. Bread was sold for a lot less; production picked up because unemployed workers were rehired. At the door of the plant a notice was put up saying: "Mill and factory of the Browne Workers' Soviet. We make bread, not profits." The history of post-war workers' struggles is full of such examples. But only in Italy did factory occupations take on a character of mass action, sweeping all the workers into the struggle.

The bourgeois state responds to factory occupations with savage hatred and armed resistance. For this reason the operation must be very well organized; the majority of the workers must play an active role. The idea of occupying the factories is extremely popular among the working masses, and the task of revolutionary unions is to show in practice that production can continue without the employers. When the control commission discussed earlier becomes convinced that the boss is closing the plant for repressive reasons and that production can certainly be carried on, it must give a detailed report on the question to all the workers. It proposes continuing production, though this, of course, is only possible if raw materials and certain material conditions are present.

In large enterprises there is usually a big enough reserve of raw materials to last a fairly long period of time. The biggest problem is the lack of working capital. Even if the bourgeoisie doesn't immediately

attack a factory occupation with armed repression — and if the workers' movement takes on large dimensions this will certainly occur — financial difficulties can break the workers' action. Therefore, the revolutionary unions and the leading group in charge of the takeover must first and foremost make sure it has sufficient financial resources and working capital, if only initially. Here we can use the methods adopted by the Italian workers, which were in part also used by the Russian workers: the sale of goods stored in the company's warehouses, loans from sympathetic cooperatives using the same goods as a guarantee, etc.

But the simple act of occupying the workplace can only be effective if it serves as the starting point for widespread agitation among the masses and for open struggle. We must always remember that **it is easier to take over a workplace than to hold it** because the workers' economic offensive can only be consolidated after a political victory, in other words, after the destruction of the bourgeois state and the seizure of power. The basic error trade unionists make is that they present revolution as the occupation of the workplaces, factories and mills while completely ignoring the bourgeois state apparatus. When the Italian workers took over the workplaces in late 1920, they took only a single step forward. And in fact what happened? In a whole series of regions the workers took over the workplaces and set out to produce. But at the same time the bourgeois government continued to function with all its apparatus, its army, its police, and its justice. The bourgeois parties and the bourgeois press also continued to exist and operate, carrying on their anti-socialist propaganda and preparing all the enemies of socialism to march against the workers. As for the workers, after having taken over the workplaces, they stopped half way. They believed that almost everything had been accomplished, whereas in fact, the occupation of the workplaces was nothing but a single step in the struggle. Control of a workplace cannot be maintained unless the working class seizes political power at the same time it seizes economic power, unless it destroys the old bourgeois institutions and replaces them with new revolutionary structures.

The link between politics and economics has never been shown so clearly as at the end of last year in Italy. If the anarchists weren't metaphysicians they would be forced to accept our point of view on the unbreakable link between politics and economics and reject their childish idea of revolution.

Of all the working class's methods of struggle, the occupation of the workplaces is the most serious. This is why it must be used with the

greatest precautions, only after the relative strength of both sides has been most carefully analyzed and local conditions examined. In a situation of generalized revolutionary enthusiasm a factory occupation can have good results. In a situation where the atmosphere is one of dull calm, where the working class shows passivity and reaction, where the employer acts unchecked and where there is neither latent protest nor desire to struggle among the wide masses, a factory takeover can soon lead to defeat. In such a case the workers would be isolated from the rest of the working class, not just physically and materially but morally. It is also possible that they would remain isolated strategically.

The occupation of the factories should not be undertaken unless it can be picked up and supported by workers from other enterprises. This support should be shown in different ways, beginning with monetary and material aid and going as far as **resolutely preventing the transport of troops** and disorganizing the anti-worker forces. If the idea of occupying the factories is not surrounded with this kind of sympathetic atmosphere, if the working masses are not moved with sufficient revolutionary fervour, the occupation can be quickly liquidated. What's more, this can leave the workers extremely bitter and destroy their self-confidence. Thus this method, which is of such great importance for the revolutionary struggle, should be used only if the most minute study of all conditions of the struggle shows the possibility, perhaps not of complete victory, but at least of holding the workplace for a relatively long period. To gain the sympathy of the masses, the price of the manufactured products must be reduced: this is the best propaganda for the expropriation of the factories.

Factory occupations not only bring on purely external difficulties, but above all difficulties of an internal nature. The workers must resolve the problem of managing the workplaces, the problem of the division and payment of labour. They must deal with a whole series of questions which were previously posed only in theory but which must be answered in practice from the very first day of the occupation.

It is best that the factory committee take over the management of the plant and that a representative of the corresponding union participate in the committee. For other questions of internal organization, such as the distribution of wages and so on, the participation of the unions is indispensable if common interests are to triumph over local ones. We must remember that takeovers of factories, insofar as they take on a mass character, can quickly disorganize the bourgeois regime because this is the ruling classes' most vulnerable point. As long as the struggle occurs outside the workplaces, as long as it is aimed solely at changing

the forms of administration, the boss does not feel threatened, property remains sacred and untouchable, and changes occur only on the upper political level, without affecting the basis of the economic system. The Russian October and the impending revolutions in Western Europe differ from the great French Revolution; the slogan "property is sacred and inviolable" has been replaced by the slogan "property is neither sacred nor inviolable". Factory occupations are the most explosive concrete example showing that private property can be violated: they destroy the masses' religious belief in private property. As they become a mass movement they express the greatest possible threat to the bourgeois regime, and under no circumstances can the working class renounce this means of struggle.

The masses themselves must occupy the workplaces; the greatest possible number of workers must take part in this movement; every single factory occupation must become the cause of the entire working class; the conflicts between workers and bosses resulting from recent occupations must be sharpened; finally, one single goal must constantly be in our sights: the destruction of private property once and for all. The factory occupation can be an excellent way of struggling against the bosses' repression, but it goes far beyond any local protest. It is the most explosive manifestation of the coming social revolution.

VIII. The standard of living of the masses

The struggle presently sharpening in all countries is developing in reaction to wage reductions and deteriorating working conditions. The workers may well be backward, and reformist illusions may well be widespread among the working masses, but the constant deterioration in working conditions is provoking a muffled feeling of protest in them. Threatened with a decline in their standard of living, not only the reformist organizations but even the Catholic unions and the state employees unions, which have always been further to the right than reformist socialism, are in opposition to the ruling classes and the state. The struggle of the working class pivots around the questions of wages and working conditions. We would be committing a serious error if we ignored this great mass movement under the pseudo-revolutionary pretext that it is merely over a question of money. This anarchist contempt for the basic needs of the mass of workers uses revolutionary packaging to cover a reactionary content. We are not revolutionary if

we are not with the masses in their struggle. It is characteristic of our time that the struggle for the preservation of established conditions goes beyond the limited framework of unionism, in that the workers face the organized employers and the bourgeois state.

Only those raising the masses to the level of communist awareness in the daily struggle are worthy of being called revolutionary. It follows from this that the revolutionary unions must focus their attention on the capitalists' attempts to reduce wages and worsen working conditions. But we must not limit ourselves to just demanding the re-establishment of the former working conditions. In all countries, these former conditions were below the needs of the workers. We must not only defend the former conditions but continually aspire to better ones. This is why raising the standard of living of the masses must now be one of our practical tasks. The working class was weakened tremendously during the war; the percentage of sickness has increased greatly in all countries and infant mortality has gone up considerably. The results of the war will be felt for years to come and this is why we must restore the standard of living of the masses and never accept its reduction as has happened in almost all countries.

As they reduce wages and worsen working conditions, the employers and their ideologues argue that this is necessary because of the growing intensity of competition in the world market and in the interests of industry and the national economy. The workers of the Allied countries have fallen into a trap of their own making. At present, destitute Germany is, if not the supplier of cheap labour, the supplier at least of cheap merchandise. The collapse of the value of money and the impoverishment of the mass of workers of Germany and Austria has made the transfer of orders to these countries very profitable for the capitalists of Britain, France and the USA. Many Americans are closing their factories and transferring their orders to German companies. Profiting from the reduction in cost of manpower, certain British entrepreneurs are even ordering machinery and other goods from Germany. Naturally the world market determines wholesale prices and this in turn influences working conditions. But the unions that base all their policies on competition are very wrong. They are making the working conditions of the workers depend on forces which are beyond their control. The French, English and American workers who reached agreements with their own bourgeoisies are at present the victims of their own "victories", since the lowering of the standard of living of the German workers automatically brings about a lowering of that of the English, French and American workers.

A big difference between the wages in the various industrialized countries cannot last long. A leveling-out results according to the average of the lowest wages. Capital looks for manpower at the cheapest price. If they do not find any in their own country, they order the items and commodities from outside the country. This shows that the theory of economic patriotism created during the war, and still cultivated, is nothing more than a dish especially cooked up for the people. As for the ruling classes, they are patriotic only when it is to their advantage and brings them definite profits. Even if these profits increase to the detriment of national production, no employer would be disturbed by the fact. Capital is international. Its country is where there are great profits to be pocketed.

All these questions about competition in the world market, though they are important, cannot play a decisive role in the workers' determining their own standard of living. Revolutionary workers cannot base themselves on the question of which exploiter, their own or the foreign, receives the most profits. They must always take as their starting point the fact that the competition between national capitalisms has always existed and will always exist and can only be eliminated by social revolution. The lowering of the working masses' standard of living so that national capitalism does better in the world market is a capitalist tactic supported by leaders of the reformist unions. The connection between the reformist unions and national capitalism is so strong that as soon as there is a crisis in the world market, the leaders of the reformist unions take it on themselves to look for ways of reducing expenses in order to meet competition, either by increasing productivity or by some other means. It is true that this aid, given to the bourgeoisie to assure it high dividends **at all times and under all conditions**, is accompanied by verbal protests against reductions in wages. After these verbal protests the negotiations start and the leaders of the unions consent to wage reductions of 10, 15% and more. These wage reductions and the absence of even the slightest desire to struggle are the characteristic of the tactics of most of the present leaders of reformist unions. If this tactic continues to be applied, collaboration between the bourgeoisie and unions can only grow, obviously at the expense of the mass of workers.

Up until now, collaboration has meant that the workers have received only minute crumbs of the billions pocketed by the employers. Now that the profits have gone down slightly, the employers are attempting not only to take away those crumbs, but also to make the full weight of the crisis bear down on the backs of the workers. To resist this

tactic the revolutionary unions must bring the broad masses into the struggle. In all unions, regardless of the composition of their leadership, the questions of the standard of living must be raised. We must unite the broad masses of workers, including the most backward, into a single front in the practical struggle for an increase in wages and improvements in working conditions. On these purely economic and practical grounds, revolutionary unions and supporters of the Red International of Labor Unions must prove that they are the firmest and most perseverant defenders of the interests of the whole working class; in every country we must draw up and popularize a series of measures for the improvement of working conditions. We must create a program of practical demands around which all workers can be united. We must apply this program using revolutionary methods and unmask the present union leaders who neither want to, nor know how to concretely defend the basic vital interests of the mass of workers.

It is certainly possible that in organizing resistance to worsening working conditions revolutionary unions will suffer defeats, but these will be only temporary defeats, suffered during the struggle and not because we gave up. Every concession given out of good will towards the employer, any giving up of the resistance must be denounced in a most determined and energetic manner. Raising the standard of living must not remain an abstract slogan, but must be the practical slogan of the sharpest struggle. And when revolutionary unions have brought the largest number of workers into the struggle to raise their standard of living, when they have succeeded in influencing the workers that are in the reformist unions and in tearing them away from the control of their leaders, then the struggle to raise the standard of living can play a great role in preparing for social revolution.

Social conflicts have reached such a sharp point in all countries that it will not be difficult to show the workers the link between the raising of their standard of living and the struggle for workers' power. A concrete economic program, elaborated in a specific social and political context, if applied with revolutionary methods, will necessarily unify the broad masses in the struggle against the ruling classes and will prepare the workers to take economic and political power in their respective countries. This implies that the workers' struggle to raise their standard of living should serve as the starting point of the larger struggle to destroy exploitation itself.

IX. The capitalist tactic of cutting wages

The offensive that the bourgeoisie is presently waging on all fronts has one objective: to throw the burden of the economic crisis onto the shoulders of the proletariat. When they propose wage cuts not only do the reformist unions agree to these reductions of 15, 20, 30% or more, but they consider this quite normal despite the fact that the cost of living is not going down.

The bourgeoisie will not wait for a reduction in the cost of living before starting to reduce wages. **Le Temps** (The Time), the unofficial organ of the French bourgeoisie, even invented a special theory according to which wages had to be lowered first, so that the cost of living would drop automatically. This brazen theory is not being sufficiently fought, and when resistance does develop, it is only among those workers directly affected by this tactic of our class enemies. We see cases where the working class does not protest at all, others where it agrees to wage reductions, and others still where it protests, organizes demonstrations, and goes on strike; but, because all these movements are only partial, the bourgeoisie breaks the working class bit by bit, and continues to apply its policies. We saw examples in England, where the miners stayed out on strike for over three months in an attempt to break the bourgeoisie's attacks. The most tragic point of the strike was when the railway and the transport workers, who had been allies, refused to support them. The day of their refusal has gone down in the history of the English working class movement as "Black Friday". This day must serve as a terrible example of how not to struggle against the bourgeoisie's systematic attempts to lower wages.

In an era of economic crisis, where the employers have molded their united front, partial movements are doomed to defeat from the start. The fact that strikes in England, Germany, France, and in America are breaking out in isolation, immediately dooms this movement to failure. Right now (September 1921), 60,000 workers are striking in northern France. This strike was provoked by wage reductions; but as we can see, while the textile workers are on strike, other workers — railway, gas and streetcar workers, in other words, all the categories of workers on whom the contemporary state depends for its existence — continue working. Under these conditions, the textile workers will inevitably be crushed. We saw this during the latest conflicts in Germany; and we have seen the same thing in other countries. Workers fighting in isolation, in detachments, in little groups, are defeated; for in an economic crisis, the bosses

can wait, they can allow themselves the luxury of prolonged strikes. In order to resist them, we must organize the involvement of those workers who are most necessary to social activity. It is not a question of organizing general strikes frequently, nor is it a question of pushing frequent actions; what is essential is that workers of each country, through a long unyielding struggle, prepare detachments of the exploited for these actions. We must not wait until working conditions in this or that category worsen, because in periods of economic crisis a strike by the workers of a particular region or branch of industry or company cannot have a decisive importance. Under these conditions there are certain workers that we must bring into a protest strike; public utilities workers, electrical, gas, streetcar, railway, port, navigation workers, etc. They are the ones who must be in the front ranks of the fight against the bourgeois tactic of lowering wages, in order to consolidate acquired gains.

Reformist unions cannot see the problem in this light. They are used to going into a struggle alone. They have been stripped of all class sentiment. English workers are, first and foremost, miners, textile workers, woodworkers, and only afterwards just simply workers. The same corporatist feelings are being developed by the German workers and can also be seen in French and American workers, etc. Reformists divide up the working class vertically into isolated groupings. Their corporatist sentiment is stronger than their class affiliation. This is why in the most critical hours, only certain categories of workers fight, while others remain inactive spectators of the duel, and often do not understand their error until their brothers' resistance is already broken and aid is possible only with enormous difficulty.

The task of revolutionary unions is to always give conflicts a general character. Without always calling for a general strike, we must understand that under certain conditions, it becomes an absolute necessity that a detachment of workers from the public utilities enter into the struggle and this is justified by the class interests of the proletariat. It follows that we must pay great attention to workers from these branches of the national economy. We must undertake the transformation of these groups into the principal instruments in the struggle, not only for basic improvements in our standard of living, but to carry out the tasks that are specific to the proletariat as a class.

The isolation between different categories of workers on the national level also exists on the international level. Present conflicts go beyond national boundaries. The bloody encounters between Labour and Capital have an international importance; this is why we must wage the

struggle on an international scale. In this realm, the situation is worse than within the national framework. The link between workers of the same branch of industry in different countries is even weaker than that between the workers of different branches in the same country. We saw this clearly during the last miners' strike: the German, French and Belgian miners didn't lift a finger to help their English comrades. Without exception, we can see the same thing happening in all conflicts. The international secretariats that now exist for different branches of industry do not play any role during these conflicts. From time to time, they bring together delegates from each country; the delegates exchange a few official speeches, and once this is done, return to their countries to continue doing what they did before, that is, taking care of national policies without even thinking of international working-class solidarity.

It is impossible to wage the international struggle against the capitalist offensive in any one branch of industry without creating revolutionary international industrial federations. These federations must take the leadership of the workers' offensive and defensive movements in all branches of industry in all countries. Yes, this problem poses great difficulties; but the question of social struggle cannot be resolved from a strictly national point of view. It must be dealt with from an international perspective. As for the international industrial federations, like all other international revolutionary organizations, they are one of the most important tools in the defensive and offensive battles of the working masses in their struggle for final emancipation.

X. Women in industry

In the struggle against the growing crisis certain union organizations follow the path of least resistance by driving women out of the places they hold in industry. During the war, hundreds of thousands, millions of women were drawn into industrial activity. The number of women involved in production grew considerably in almost all the capitalist countries. At the end of the war, when industrial production slowed down, when the unions should have shouldered the task of women's interests in the same manner as they should defend men's interests, there were unions in certain countries that took it upon themselves to throw women out of work. In England alone hundreds of thousands of women workers were thrown out of work in this way.

This division of the exploited according to sex is obviously a left-

over of the conservatism that still persists among the masses of the workers. It was not that long ago that many union organizations refused to admit women, probably considering that they were unworthy of membership. Women's struggles for the right to join unions were very painful, and in certain countries provoked the formation of separate women's organizations whose aim was to gain recognition from the men in the same industry.

The revolutionary unions, for whom all workers are part of the same family of the exploited, must firmly and unreservedly oppose this extremely reactionary viewpoint on women workers. Even on this question, elementary as it may seem, there are serious divergences between revolutionary and reformist unions. It is not sufficient to oppose the policy of laying off women first; it is necessary to look at women's work in the same light as men's work. In many unions there still exists a double policy for wages, one for men and one for women. Men with the same qualifications as women earn higher wages, not because they produce a greater number of products, not because they are more qualified, not because they have a higher productivity rate, but simply because they are men. And women earn lower wages simply because they are women, that is to say, the most backward of the exploited.

The division of the proletariat according to sex should not exist, as far as the revolutionary unions are concerned. As for wage policy, workers should be categorized according to their degree of qualification. The slogan "Equal wages for equal work" should be proclaimed and put into practice. In some places, the struggle to reduce production costs, particularly in times of crisis, takes the form of reducing the wages of the most backward categories of workers, especially of women. In certain cases, especially when women are badly organized, they are the first to fall victim to the developing crisis. Unions must take all these facts into consideration in their daily work, not only when the crisis begins, but constantly. In a special resolution, the Red International of Labour Unions emphasized that winning over the broad masses of working women is critically important for the social revolution. Social revolution cannot be achieved until women workers in great numbers have become active comrades in struggle. For without the millions of women now working in industry, it is very difficult to win power and to maintain it.

In addition to the tasks already mentioned, unions have several special tasks in relation to female and child labour. Among these are: protection of women's and children's working conditions, protection of pregnant women, of mothers, etc. The tasks of red unions regarding this question are set out in the resolution on organization adopted by the

First International Congress, as well as in a special resolution. The following point from the Congress's resolution should be used as the basis for union work with women workers:

"The followers of the Red International of Labour Unions must pay special attention to the organization of women workers into the revolutionary trade union movement. No separate organizations for women shall be created. The proletariat is a single entity, and as a class must build its organizations according to industries, disregarding the sex of the toilers.

"Women workers, being the most backward category of toilers, are more exploited than the men, and the reformist unions, following the course of least resistance, are establishing their wages not according to qualification or productivity, but according to the sex of the workers. When a crisis breaks out, the conservative unions take the initiative of firing the women first. This harmful anti-working class policy must be met with stubborn resistance. The working woman is our fellow in exploitation and our aim is to make her an active fighter for the social revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. The only unions worthy of being members of the Red International of Labour Unions are those which have freed themselves from the old prejudices concerning female labour, as well as all other questions, and have taken up the fight to safeguard and defend it, with the sole aim of increasing the army of social revolution with new and tireless fighters recruited from the exploited and oppressed women workers."

XI. Collective contracts

The old leaders of the labour organizations often say and write that the bourgeoisie will stop its offensive before breaking contracts. In general, the reformist leaders consider contracts to be the greatest conquest of the working class. Many leaders cannot even conceive of labour organizations having any other aim. John Mitchel, a well-known American labour leader, stated openly in his pamphlet, **Organized Labour**, that the principal task of labour organizations is to move forward from individual contracts to collective contracts. Obviously, collective contracts are an advance over individual contracts.

Previously, the employer dealt directly with one isolated, and accordingly powerless, seller of labour power. He determined the wage and the working conditions he wished. Labour organizations have the task of defending the interests of the working class. They act as the collective sellers of the workers' labour power, as interested parties in the buying and selling of workers' energy and knowledge. It took a very

long struggle, spread over several decades, for unions to gain recognition and the right to sign contracts not only for their members but also for all workers in their industry. And this is still far from being the case everywhere. The long, sharp struggle to replace individual contracts by collective contracts resulted in the development of the following conception among the union leaders: contracts have an absolute value, a universal significance, they are the key to bringing order to the anarchy of production and establishing social peace, thanks to the approval of the state.

In short, for reformist unions the contract is the goal. They aim to sign contracts for long periods of time, because they believe the act of signing a contract adequately guarantees its fulfillment. But in truth, we must consider contracts as **temporary truces**. We must struggle firmly against the overestimation of contracts. We must see them as a **short armistice** in the struggle between Labour and Capital. Never in the social struggle have the employers been stopped by the necessity of respecting formal obligations. Now that the offensive is developing everywhere, we can see how the employers manage to break contracts. Only those without any understanding of class struggle can lull themselves into thinking that a signed contract can oblige the employers to carry out all its provisions. Workers must see the contract in the same way as the employers do. The contract is essentially a provisional agreement between two enemies, and the two sides openly state that when the situation is favourable they are prepared to make a new, more advantageous agreement. Each side respects the contract to the extent that it has no other choice. Did contracts help the English miners or textile workers? No. Whenever the bourgeoisie has seen the possibility of doing something to better its own interests, it has done it, leaving the jurists and the bought-off writers the task of coming up with legal justifications for its acts. We can see the same thing in America, in France, Italy, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Sweden, etc. Employers have the same nature everywhere. They are not metaphysicians; they are real politicians, and are not inclined to make fetishes out of contracts. However, there are a great number of metaphysicians among the workers, especially among their leaders. In seeking to avoid struggle under all circumstances, they tend to exaggerate the value of contracts. For reformists, contracts lessen class contradictions and **replace** class struggle. In reality this is both theoretically and practically false. Labour contracts are a product, a result of class struggle. They cannot replace it, any more than a house razed by an earthquake can be considered to be the same thing as the earthquake itself.

There are indeed contracts that are narrowly corporatist and contrary to the class spirit. We can find clearly reactionary tendencies in these contracts: refusing work to newly-qualified or foreign workers, refusing work to women workers and limiting or reducing their wages, etc. There are even contracts between workers and employers (they are called "alliances") that are aimed against consumers. These kinds of contracts are the result of social peace, not class struggle.

On the one hand there is the position that idealizes contracts, that transforms them into an end in themselves or a fetish, but on the other hand, there is the position that contracts are useless or even harmful. The anarchists propagate this idea, supporting it with all their revolutionary extremism. "Revolutionary workers must not discuss with the bosses." That is the basis of this tactic. This conception of contracts is just as absurd and harmful as the preceding one. We don't discuss with the enemy during a war as long as we have hopes of definitively defeating it. When we cannot defeat it, we must sign a truce with it. The same applies to class struggle: the danger lies not in the fact that the workers' representatives talk with the employers, but in the way they talk to them, in the nature of the truce agreed upon, and in their behavior after the signing of the contract. If we consider the contract as an end in itself, the working masses will not prepare themselves for the coming war; they will lull themselves with illusions about the stability and the durability of the contract. But, if the unions see the contract as a temporary armed truce, and tirelessly continue to struggle, the agreement can be beneficial (of relative benefit, we admit) to the working class. Thus, the danger does not lie in discussions with the employers nor in contracts: the question is in whose name these discussions are undertaken, and how the unions use the armed peace to prepare for the coming class war.

XII. Employers' White Guards

While the bourgeoisie speaks so frequently about peaceful development and about the criminal nature of all violence in economic conflicts, they themselves are now setting up special organizations, composed of representatives of the bourgeoisie and mercenaries, to directly confront revolutionary workers on strike. In the pre-war period, economic conflicts usually ended more or less peacefully. There were often confrontations with scabs, certain groups of workers used violence against strike-breakers, but in general, these big strikes ran their course peacefully, under the protection of police bayonets. The workers' greatest victory on the question of the right to strike was

winning the right to organize their own detachments to try to convince strike-breakers not to go back to work, and generally to exert moral influence on them.

In the present post-war period, the bourgeoisie is not respecting its old legal framework. In every bourgeois country, special strike-breaking organizations, made up of spoiled sons of the bourgeoisie and mercenaries, have been set up to sabotage strikes and disorganize the working class masses. In some countries these organizations are active both during and after strikes. In Italy, small groups (fasci) were created to defend "special and national interests". These groups, made up of small landowners, bourgeois intellectuals, rich peasants and of all sorts of declassed elements, quickly attracted all the enemies of the working class, and with the state's kindly aid, succeeded in unleashing a regime of white terror, commonly known as "fascism".

The fundamental task of fascism is to destroy the revolutionary leaders of the working class and demoralize the working class masses. The assassination of hundreds of workers and their leaders, the destruction of workers' organizations, setting fire to their buildings, the creation of parallel scab federations — these are the concrete results of fascist activity. Fascism is international. . . In Spain, the "somaten", with the help of the police, systematically assassinate revolutionary workers. These mercenary gangs break into houses and cafés, ruthlessly killing "dangerous militants". With government aid, assassinations are carried out in prisons or immediately after workers have been freed.

In England, the White Guards (the Volunteers) destroyed the people's kitchens set up for the striking miners. The "somaten" in Chile and in Argentina burned certain workers alive for refusing to denounce the propagandists who put forward economic or political strikes. In the United States, the bandits in the leagues' civilian, the Ku Klux Klan, are actively involved in the search for the West Virginia "rebel miners" much in the same way that their ancestors hunted down Indians in the same region. They pour tar over the most active leaders of the "Industrial Workers of the World", and then burn them alive; they bring gangs of 'agents provocateurs' into strike-bound regions, and when necessary, provoke incidents in order to turn over to the judicial system those they want to suppress.

In Germany there are two types of organizations: secret societies and officer leagues which aim to restore the monarchy. They make use of government tolerance to organize the murder of the most energetic revolutionary workers and communists. The German working class can count hundreds of victims killed by these organizations of assassins. . .

In addition, there exists a legal organization of strikebreakers, an **Organization of Technical Aid to Sabotage Strikes**. This organization has its headquarters in Berlin: at its head is a superintendent named by the government and directly under the jurisdiction of the minister of the interior. This is how the organization is structured: the country is divided into 16 regions, which in turn are subdivided into more than 80 sub-regions. More than 1000 local groups with over 170,000 members direct the actions in each of the localities. "Technical aid" was used on 521 occasions up until January 1, 1921: 88 cases were reported in electrical stations, 49 in gas works, 34 in the rail industry, etc.

Similar White Guard and strike-breaking organizations exist in all countries: in France, the "Civilian League", in Hungary, the "Hungarian Watchmen"; in Poland, the "Sokols" organization, "Boiouvki", etc. And they also exist in Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Romania. Everywhere, alongside the state repressive apparatus there exist volunteer White Guard companies to fight against the coming revolution. And there are also the yellow unions that have existed for a number of years.

By themselves, these gangs are not a great force. But their strength lies in the fact that in every country the government outfits them, arms them and gives them funds. Thanks to the state aid they receive, these groups, though insignificant in terms of force and numbers, have a large enough influence in struggles. **All organizations of strike-breakers and of assassins, now present throughout Europe and America, must at all costs be destroyed.** Their continued existence endangers the very existence of workers' organizations.

What line of conduct must the working class and revolutionary unions adopt on the question of White Guards? How to fight? Revolutionary unions must take a stand on this question. In Italy, the General Confederation of Labour (CGIL), in agreement with the Socialist Party, has gone so far as to conclude an armistice with the fascists. The fascists didn't respect the truce. Once again Socialist Party and CGIL pacifists and Tolstoians showed that they understood nothing about the basic conditions of social struggle that provoked the creation of these organizations of assassins. The Socialist Party and the CGIL leaders have taken up the Tolstoian point of view: we must temporize, the violence of the employers' organizations of thugs will provoke a strong reaction in society, democratic government will be obliged to intervene to re-establish order, etc. This point of view is marked by hopeless pessimism. It's the philosophy of suicide. The working class cannot and must not ever have a passive, Tolstoian attitude towards this highly

important social phenomenon. Today, these assassins' organizations play the role of strikebreakers and murderers. Today, the White Guard is taking form and is getting organized.

The world bourgeoisie was more capable than the workers of weighing the lessons of the Russian revolution. The capitalists, with the help of the whole state apparatus, are organizing their White Guards. They know very well that in the final battle that will take place in all countries, he who is better organized and can act rapidly and energetically will emerge victorious. They are training their white organizations right now. Through their early massacres they are learning how to break the workers' insurrection. It is a mark of pure imbecility in these conditions to do what the reformist union leaders are doing — to limit the unions to the old methods of struggle during strikes, being satisfied with pleading for a truce and calling for calm. During great social conflicts, workers must immediately **create local fighting units, their own detachments, their local strike guards** who must fight energetically the organized employers and their strikebreakers. The White Guards will continue to destroy workers' organizations and disrupt the revolutionary movement until the workers' organizations have created these kinds of fighting units, which oppose the strength of the workers to that of the sons of the bourgeoisie. This is the answer that the workers' organizations must give: the creation of strikers' fighting units, of special teams to fight against the sabotage of strikes, of detachments to wage war against bourgeois assassins.

The facts reported daily in the press show that the workers are far behind the employers in this area, as in many others. The employers have their fighting organizations in every country, and not one strike of any importance goes by without their active intervention. But we see only a small number of conflicts where the workers fight back adequately against the employers' attacks by creating special strikers' fighting units to combat the employers' organizations. The slow development of such organizations is due entirely to reformist ideology, which, up to the present, has dominated the union movement in many countries. According to a trade unionist, a German reformist, or a "reasonable" French syndicalist, workers must not use means of struggle that are forbidden by bourgeois law. Observing the law during struggles is the foundation of their tactics. Calm, for the love of God! That's the slogan constantly repeated in the reformist press.

Obviously, calm is a good thing, but only if it's a disciplined calm

in the course of revolutionary actions. Discipline and calm aren't an obstacle to the revolutionary struggle, but are in fact its very basis. In this light, every revolutionary worker, every revolutionary unionist, will always call on the workers to be disciplined and calm. But what kind of calm do the reformists preach to the workers? As far as they are concerned, ideal calm means a strike where the workers stay passive. Even if the strike involves a large number of workers — and reformists are often forced to lead large strikes — observing the law is still the be all and end all of the Amsterdam leaders' tactics. But we don't make a fetish out of legality. The fascists and the other White Guard organizations aren't covered by any bourgeois law. But nonetheless today these illegal organizations are having a very great effect on economic struggles. We must quite frankly follow the example of the bosses and create workers' fighting units that are outside of the law to carry out the decisions of competent union organizations. The workers' movement can only protect itself from constant pogroms, encouraged not only by the bourgeoisie but also by the reformist unions, by organizing strikers' fighting units, and by having an extremely serious and attentive attitude towards the developing bourgeois White Guards. The First Congress of the Red International of Labour Unions was right a thousand times over when, in considering the changing conditions of the social struggle, it passed a resolution saying that "**the organization of special strike units, special self-defence units**" is a question of life and death for the working class.

XIII. Workers' self-defence organizations

During social conflicts, a series of practical and concrete tasks face the strikers' fighting detachments that must be created by the labour organizations to defend themselves against all attacks by White Guards and strikebreakers. It is not sufficient to post lookouts and set up picket lines to carry out agitation and propaganda work among the strikebreakers as is already done in many countries. These tasks must be carried through to the end; during the strike, the strikers' detachments must block both the delivery of raw materials and finished goods to the factory, and the shipping out of manufactured goods. The employers will try to launch an offensive against the workers once they have accumulated a certain reserve of manufactured products, and once they have ensured the production of these goods in other factories. At these times, complete unity exists among the employers. They consider it their class duty to help each other in the struggle, and in this way they have often brought about the defeat of the workers.

Immediately after the February revolution in Russia, the workers devised new methods of action against the employers. Whenever a conflict arose, whenever the workers downed tools, the strikers' fighting guards — or Red Guards, as they were called in Russia — were immediately organized. Their tasks were, on the one hand, to see that the strikebreakers could not enter the factory and, on the other hand, to ensure that the factories could neither deliver their merchandise, nor serve their customers from already existing reserves. This method of disorganizing commerce, of preventing the filling of orders and of setting up obstacles to prevent the delivery of ordered merchandise quickly made a strong impression on the employers. If the workers hesitate before the many laws that protect the rights of the employers, their struggle becomes increasingly difficult. Obviously we must take advantage of all legal possibilities, we must exert the greatest possible effort to ensure that no paragraph of the law, no matter how weakly it defends the workers' rights, remains unused. But it would be a great mistake on the part of the workers to think that the law cannot be broken.

All contemporary legislation in bourgeois countries is based on private property and the protection of the interests of the employers. But the social legislation of recent decades has resulted in a partial limitation of these rights, insomuch as it gives certain rights to the workers. This social legislation is the result of a long and relentless struggle on the part of the working class, and it would be pure folly to ignore existing rights or to consider the gains that have been won as negligible or unimportant. No, this is not the point of view from which to approach the question of the short term struggle for working class demands. The workers must hold on firmly to the territory they have already conquered and must always look to extending that territory, to gaining new positions.

Obviously, no law foresees the organization of fighting detachments of strikers, and it is probable that in stopping the delivery of orders, the workers will come face to face with the ferocious resistance of the whole state apparatus. But if the working class wages its struggle only according to what is permitted, it will never rise out of its state of serfdom; workers have never been given anything but what they themselves have conquered, often in harsh and bloody battles. This is why it is necessary to approach these new forms of struggle realistically. Naturally, such a method carries with it great difficulties: it can be used as an excuse for provocations. Under these conditions, the White Guards and strikebreakers may try to draw the workers into a trap. The

bourgeois state apparatus may be directed against the workers who dare to strike a blow at the sacred interests of private property. But there are no means of struggle that our enemies will not try to turn against us. Whoever fears the risks must take up the reformists' point of view and sit, arms crossed, doing nothing; then, obviously the danger will be minimized. Yet even if we take up the reformists' point of view and use no illegal actions, always staying within the boundaries of the law, the working class still has no guarantee against illegal actions by the employers and the bourgeois state.

We need only look at the situation in "democratic" America in order to realize that the reactionaries are not full of empty words, but are men of action; they do not hesitate to use any violent measure if they consider it the least bit useful. The social struggles of the last year in America reveal many horrible incidences of violence practised against revolutionary workers. Strike leaders are shot down in the streets. They are tarred and feathered and burnt alive. They are driven naked hundreds of kilometres into the forests and flogged. All this is done by the employers' organizations with the support of the federal powers. Clearly, the bourgeois jurists will never say that these crimes are legal; nevertheless, each time such cases are revealed, it is always the workers and never their torturers who are found guilty for one reason or another. We are led to believe that workers like to be tarred and feathered and burnt alive. This is how bourgeois justice reacts each time it is called to examine cases where the interests of the workers clash with those of the employers. The theory of legality at all costs as preached by the leading organs of the contemporary union movement can only be explained by the reformists' weak hearts and soft heads.

Revolutionary workers must scorn this tendency to make a principle out of fear; they must follow their own road, using all the means at their disposal to fight the bourgeoisie. For this method to succeed, we must hit the employer where he is most vulnerable, in his pocketbook. And to achieve this, the active participation of transportation workers is essential. No matter how well-organized a given group of workers may be, they will never succeed in isolating the factory or region concerned if the transport workers continue to carry the goods. The factory must be isolated in such a way that no transport worker will deliver goods to the factory or site of conflict. Labourers should refuse to unload cars, etc. It is only with this kind of close solidarity between revolutionary unions of different trades that different factories and regions where strikers are fighting can be economically isolated. With the united action of the unions concerned,

the strikers' fighting detachments can play an extremely important role. We must, however, remember that these units of strikers are organizations of **self defence**, and that it would be extremely harmful if they began to destroy machines and generally engage in sabotage. For the anarchists sabotage plays a decisive role in the struggle. But workers are the heirs of the bourgeoisie and to destroy machines means to destroy their own wealth. The idea of machine smashing arises when sufficient solidarity has not been built among the workers; in such a situation certain comrades think that individual heroes can replace the heroism and creative spirit of the masses. For example, the pamphlet entitled "How We Will Make the Social Revolution" written by two former anarcho-syndicalists, Pataud and Pouget, is based on the disruption of production by purely mechanical means, with the aim of bringing about the sudden outbreak of a social revolution. Revolutionary unions allow for the heroism of advanced elements of the working class, but they formulate their tactics according to the enthusiasm of the masses, their solidarity and their persistence in the struggle. This is why the strikers' fighting detachments can only play their role inasmuch as they are linked to the mass organizations and function under their direct control. This is not possible with individual actions.

XIV. Control of production

The entire economic struggle of the working class in the present period must concentrate on the control of production. Without control over the factories, none of the problems facing the working class today can be solved. Unemployment, factory closings, etc. — all these are linked to the question of controlling production. There can be no compromise on this question, no middle road, nor a kind of control that is easily acceptable to both employers and workers.

What does it mean to control production? It is not a question of formal financial control, nor of setting up some kind of review board that once or twice a year examines the accounts or the various memoranda of the company. This is not control over production, it is not even a substitute for control; it is merely a caricature of the concept of workers' control. Control over production means putting all the different operations of the factory under the control of the workers: industrial, technical, financial, and commercial operations. In a word, the many and diverse forms of contemporary productive activity must be closely controlled by the workers.

But isn't this kind of control, organized by the workers, a violation of the rights of private property? It constitutes an interference by the workers in a domain which, from time immemorial, has belonged to the employers, a holy place closed to the workers. Yes, control over production does mean that workers meddle in the relations of private right. But this meddling has become an historical necessity, and it must occur in the interest of preserving the working class. The tremendous waste of productive forces and assets that occurred during the war, and which continues to this very day, will cease only when the working class is in direct contact with production, when it is not just another element in the economy but a direct sharer in it, when it is not just another part of the machine, but the conscious director of the industrial machine. The transformation of the working class from **a class in itself** to **a class for itself**, as Marx describes it, will obviously occur only after the socialist revolution, after the establishment of a socialist regime. But the very existence of this regime will depend on the direction taken in the near future by the workers, in their attempt to establish control over production, control over the capitalist economy.

The idea of control over production was born long ago, well before the war. It gained credibility in all countries during the war when the bourgeois state, serving the interest of the capitalist class, controlled different branches of the national economy in order to protect and maintain the rule of the bourgeoisie as a class. The government subordinated the different elements of the ruling class to the overall interests of the class. State control became the dominant economic ideology during the whole war period. The end of the war was marked by the end of state control, by the dismantling of the coercive economy and by the free play of all the capitalist forces. But this free play given to the forces of capitalism now runs counter to the specific interests of the working class. From this the idea emerged during the war period, and especially during the Russian revolution, of establishing real and not fictive workers' control. At the present time the idea of control over production is so widespread that even the bourgeois governments are forced to take up the question. When, at the end of 1920, the Italian workers occupied a number of factories for a period of several weeks, Giolitti made a statement on workers' control and even submitted a bill to Parliament on the subject.

There has been much talk of workers' control in England, where all sorts of government commissions have taken up the question with the participation of the unions. Workers' control has been discussed in France, where the Metalworkers Federation has put together

a pitiful project that exposes the poverty of the ideas of the Federation's leadership; their project does not contain an atom of understanding of the meaning of workers' control. In Germany especially, the question of workers' control and control over production has been discussed. But it is strange that the more said about workers control, the more this control takes on a vague and ambiguous character. All the republican governments of Germany, in which both the social-democrats and the union leaders have played an active and important role, have solemnly promised to institute this control over production. Yet not a single German worker can say precisely what this control represents. Workers' control does not exist in any bourgeois country; it can exist only as a direct weapon of the masses in their revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie, as a counterweight to the bourgeoisie. No control is possible on the basis of agreements, for what agreement can there be between the workers and the bourgeoisie? Could there be such an agreement that gives workers control over the company's industrial development and commercial operations? The employer would never consent to this; it would mean interference in the most sacred domain of private property.

Thus, as long as we are talking about control reached by agreements, we are talking only about control **in form** that will give nothing to the workers because it will be harmless to the bourgeoisie. This is why the slogans of control over production or workers' control must be applied directly in a revolutionary way. We must understand that on this question the workers will be faced with the bourgeoisie's most determined and most violent resistance. It's fine to ask for concessions concerning female and child labour, even concerning unemployment insurance. But to ask the bourgeoisie to give real control to the workers goes, for them, beyond the realm of possibility. We would have to be very naïve to hope that workers' control could be established without violent resistance on the part of the ruling classes. Should this fact stop the workers from struggling? Obviously not. The working class is not so naïve as to expect voluntary concessions from the bourgeoisie. The working class never has and never will gain easy victories in any aspect of its struggle. It is clear that in the struggle to control production, victories will be even more costly than those won in other areas, for if in politics there exist many different forms of government (republic, constitutional monarchy, absolute monarchy, etc.), in economics it is autocracy that up to now has ruled the day. Autocracy reigns in the factories of all countries: in constitutional England, in democratic America, in republican France and in social-democratic Germany.

The reformists like to talk about economic democracy, or the

establishment of a republican form of government within the mills and factories. In his book "Industrial Democracy" the well-known English reformist Sydney Webb long ago put forward the idea of democratic relations in production. But what does this democracy in production, this republic in the factory, mean? How should we understand it? If we take these words literally, the true republic will exist when the workers take over control of production and transform the employer into a technician. The limits of democracy in this field were reached in Germany where bipartite labour organizations were established, composed of equal numbers of workers' and employers' representatives. The German unions even developed a whole theory on the legal equality of employers and workers, called the theory of bipartite rights; workers and employers are equal, their organizations are of equal value, hence they participate in everything in equal numbers. Of course, representatives of government are still included, but, as we know, these representatives are above classes, they guarantee the interests of society as a whole. This theory of bipartite rights, based as it is on the protection of private property and on the management of the country's resources by a clique of industrial tycoons, can only result in complete failure. What equality can exist between the workers, who have nothing, and the bosses, who have hundreds of millions? We could talk of equality only if the workers had the same rights over the management of the country's wealth as have the employers' organizations and their state. If the German Union Central, which gave birth to this idea of parity, could, as the representative of the entire German union movement, have the same control over coal mines and metallurgical factories of the province of Westphalia-Rhine as have the Stinnes, the Krupps and others, if it had control over the whole German textile industry, if not a single mark could be issued by any German bank without its consent, then we could talk of bipartite rights. But to speak of parity and equality, of workers' democracy and workers' control today, when one side has in its hands all the existing resources of the country while the other side views these operations as a passive spectator, is nothing but a mockery of the most basic demands of the working class.

The working class is not interested in the idea of bipartite rights nor is it looking for some kind of vague workers' democracy. And this is how it regards the whole industrial process. Workers' control must be established by the workers themselves and the organization of control boards must be accomplished without any kind of authorization. The control board will supervise everything that occurs in the factory as well as all its external relations. Thus, while establishing control over

production, the workers must also undertake the more difficult aspect of workers' control, that is control over finances. The First Congress of the Red International of Labour Unions adopted a detailed resolution the gist of which is expressed in the following brief propositions:

"1. Workers' control is an essential and important school for preparing the broad masses of workers for socialist revolution.

"2. In all capitalist countries, workers' control must be the war cry of the union movement; it should be used energetically as a means of exposing commercial and financial secrets.

"3. Workers' control should be widely used in order to transform the unions into fighting organizations of the working class.

"4. Workers' control should be used to rebuild unions on the basis of industry as opposed to according to craft, which is an antiquated system harmful to the revolutionary workers' movement.

"5. Workers' control is incompatible with the principle of bipartism put forward by the bourgeoisie, with nationalization, etc. It opposes the dictatorship of the proletariat to that of the bourgeoisie.

"6. In establishing technical, financial or joint control and during factory occupations, it is essential to attempt to draw the most backward elements of the proletarian masses into the discussion of issues concerning control. At the same time, in the process of achieving control, it is necessary to identify the most active and able workers and to prepare them to play a leading role in organizing production.

"7. In the organization of the day to day aspects of workers' control, the unions must give leadership to the factory committees; they must link and combine the work of the factory committees of plants in the same industry, and thus prevent the inevitable attempts to encourage factory patriotism that occur when control is local.

"8. Right from the outset the unions must help the factory committees, elaborate special conditions, discuss the question in the daily press, and carry out broad agitation explaining the necessity of workers' control in the factories. They must not only explain the committees' tasks, but also report to factory meetings, local conferences, etc. the results of control of both individual plants and group of plants.

"9. In order to carry out these tasks within unions that have not adopted the platform of the Red International of Labour Unions a single revolutionary centre must be created. This centre must pay particular attention to the work of transforming craft unions into industrial unions, and to maintaining the revolutionary character of the

struggle for workers' control.

Whoever wants to establish real and not imaginary control over production must take the road indicated by the Red International of Labour Unions. Otherwise, we will not have workers' control over production, but rather a strengthening of the bourgeoisie's control over the workers.

XV. Workers' participation in profit-sharing

This antiquated idea has once again been put forward as a way of resolving all the ills of society. In France, England and Germany there are workers' profit-sharing programs, and philosophers and social reformers think they will be able to use this to reconcile the irreconcilable, that is, satisfy the working class without hurting the employers.

The idea also carries some weight in certain labour circles, among those who avoid and fear struggle, those who consider that the bourgeoisie will be eternally indispensable to society, those who see no further than an agreement with the bourgeoisie for the sharing of surplus value, for all of these backward elements of the working class (and there are many backward elements, even in the most advanced capitalist countries) profit-sharing is a solution that enables them to escape the present impasse. It is the favourite notion of the Catholic unions.

It is hardly necessary to show that this idea does nothing but deceive the working class. The numerous experiences of workers' participation in profit-sharing in different countries have shown that the only result of such a system is the increased exploitation of the workers, who work at maximum intensity in the hope of increasing their share of profits. Usually this profit-sharing means that the workers are offered an insignificant percentage of the profits. In every case, such agreements do no more to resolve social problems than do the endless discussions about socialization which are so fashionable these days. Workers' participation in profit-sharing presupposes the existence of profits, in other words the preservation of the capitalist system, whereas the task of the working class consists in suppressing capitalist relations and abolishing capitalist society itself.

According to the social-reformists, the bourgeois liberals and the workers who listen to them, surplus value produced by the working class must remain the basis of class relations; therefore, it must be given an eternal character by having the worker share in the surplus

value he has himself produced. How can such a charitable reform be achieved? This question was the subject of debate at the seventh session of the International Parliamentary Trade Conference held in Lisbon from May 25 to May 28, 1921 and presided over by the Portuguese Minister of Foreign Affairs Nillo Barette. Commission Secretary Paul Delombre, former French trade minister, insisted that industrialists of good faith introduce profit-sharing for workers, without state interference and without giving workers the right to control the companies' operations. Delombre declared, "**Profit-sharing is one of the most efficient means of achieving social progress, because it assures harmony between Capital and Labour, and assures the workers' interests in the smooth running of the concern.**"

During the debates, the deputy Malla (Salonica) stated that, "**one of the principal objectives of profit-sharing is a rise in productivity.**" Malla considered the system to be primarily of commercial and not social interest.

Sir Douthier Randles, an English Member of Parliament, said that English unions are opposed to profit-sharing and there is little likelihood that it will become widespread in England. "**Profit-sharing,**" he said, "**may be considered a practical method for assuring that Labour will collaborate with Capital, but it should not be compulsory.**"

Oulir, head of the Czechoslovak delegation, called attention to his country's mining legislation and said that workers took part in profit-sharing and played an important role in managing production due to the institution of factory councils, arbitration boards and joint commissions.

Ministers Bertrand (of Belgium), and Sorel (of France), and Portuguese Member of Parliament Quimernas warned the conference against placing too much hope in profit-sharing.

In conclusion the following resolution was adopted:

"1. The Conference considers that profit-sharing can be recommended as having the same value as other measures which lead to collaboration between Labour and Capital.

"2. Participation in profit-sharing should not be considered an act of generosity on the part of the employer towards the workers, nor should it be obligatory for anyone.

"3. The Conference considers that participation in profit-sharing is desirable only when it is freely accepted by the workers."

There is no need to comment on all of this speech-making on

profit-sharing to which the social-reformists, jurists and professors of France, Belgium, England and Germany are now devoting themselves; the sole aim — consolidating social peace for the self-interests of these bourgeois social-reformers — is all too obvious. The revolutionary trade unions' position with regard to this theory is clear and simple. The issue is not in any way the quantitative reduction of surplus value, but its abolition. And it is essential to declare an uncompromising war against such shameful deception of the working masses. The workers' attention must be concentrated, not on how surplus value can be shared between workers and employers, but on how they will rid themselves of a class that lives entirely from surplus value.

In fighting against this bourgeois invention, the conduct of labour leaders in particular must be watched. It is quite natural and does not surprise us that the bourgeoisie should wish to trick the working class with illusory charity; but that some union leaders should seize upon this theory like a lifeline is unparalleled shamelessness and duplicity. For example, Clines, one of the leaders of the British Labour Party, in his June 28 speech in Parliament, took up the defence of his idea, declaring that "the increasing popularity of the principle of workers' participation in profit-sharing can only serve to ensure the peaceful development of industry, improve production and develop a feeling of fairness". This single example is enough to expose how deeply rooted bourgeois ideas are in the minds of a great number of workers, how great the influence of bourgeois ideology is over the proletariat. Luckily for the proletariat, the bourgeoisie itself opens the eyes of those who are blind. With this question as with all others, the logic of the situation obliges bourgeois reformists, and the liberal labour politicians who support them, to expose the emptiness of their principles and practice. They can wax eloquent about profit-sharing, but the concrete results will never be more than downright miserable; therefore even the most backward worker, however deeply rooted might be his desire to see bourgeois society prosper, will soon discover in practice that participation in profit-sharing for him can only be a mirage and nothing more.

In order that this "great reform" might produce even minimal tangible results, all surplus value would have to be distributed among the workers. But the bourgeoisie is neither able nor willing to attempt such reforms. This idea is mouldy with age, having been dragged up out of the archives, and is doomed to total and utter failure. The charlatan and demagogic character of this improvised sharing of profits is altogether too evident; it too clearly reveals the desire to dupe the workers. The workers may indeed be very backward, very ignorant and

deeply impregnated with bourgeois prejudices, but war and revolution have furnished the working class as a whole with important lessons; and among the numerous truths which the broad masses have learned in the course of recent years is the elementary truth that the working class has absolutely nothing to gain from this kind of sharing. This is why the First Congress of the Red International of Labour Unions categorically declared that any such devices for deluding the workers must be subject to pitiless and severe criticism. The watchword of revolutionary class unions must be, "Not profit-sharing, but the abolition of capitalist profits."

XVI. The militarization of factories

At the same time that the ruling classes promise the workers some greater well-being in the guise of profit-sharing, they also apply coercive measures whenever a serious conflict erupts, whenever a strike breaks out among workers in sectors affecting the public interests. One of the weapons most commonly used against working class action is the militarization of entire branches of industry. Bourgeois governments use militarization, that is, the declaration of a state of war in various branches of industry, in order to break the solidarity of the working masses. Making use of this state of war, the government makes arrests, imprisons strikers and speedily deals with work stoppages in sectors that are key to the national economy.

Militarization is the ultimate measure the bourgeoisie will take in the struggle. It habitually places all its hopes in militarization, whose role is to safeguard order during disturbances and restore everything to its normal course. The great hopes the bourgeoisie puts on militarization stem mainly from the fact that workers in militarized factories do not fight off the assault of the troops with sufficient force. The declaration of a state of war usually has a great psychological impact on the workers; arrests intimidate the backward masses, moderate leaders appear on the scene and begin talks with the government in back rooms, and the strike is usually broken.

The only way to fight militarization is for the workers to respond to the declaration of a state of war, and declare for their part a **workers' mobilization**; that is, consolidate their organization, create their own defence corps, prevent arrests, bring new sectors of workers into the strike movement, and transform each workplace, each factory into a revolutionary fortress. Militarization can have an impact only if the workers themselves fear it. In general, militarization still makes a

strong impression on the workers, even though many have been through the school of war. This is true despite the fact that they suffered much greater hardships at the front during the war than under militarization of their factory.

In all great social conflicts the whole force of the state is always aimed against the workers. Not a single strike has developed without the full coercive powers of the modern state being directed against the strikers. In democratic America, in liberal England, in republican France, everywhere, as soon as a conflict breaks out the police apparatus is immediately set up, supposedly to see to law and order, but actually with the aim of breaking up the workers' struggle. If we recall the recent strike of English miners, the famous strike in the American steel mills and foundries, the revolutionary strike movement in Canada in 1920, and the present conflicts in England, Germany and Italy, we can see that the state is concerned only with the repression of the workers' movements.

Capitalism's peaceful period of development has ended; it will soon be three years since the war ended, but in reality Europe has not ceased to be at war. Despite the allies' solemn promises, militarization has taken on monstrous proportions. The Great Powers continue to arm themselves to the teeth, and above all this is directed against internal enemies. The internal enemy is anyone who wants to extend his rights, who won't accept the reduction of wages; it is the proletarian who does not believe in the efficacy of class collaboration; it is the exploited and the oppressed who dream of emancipation. In a word, it is the worker who, because of his social condition, is the source of disorder in the bourgeois organization of society. That is why states of war and militarization continue to function uninterrupted, and if, during a serious conflict, the bourgeoisie deems it necessary to declare a state of war in different branches of industry, it has only to intensify the military regime and legalize the established violence that it already exercises.

Militarization demands that the unions, presently engaged in a bitter struggle to defend the basic economic rights of the labouring masses, constantly intensify their fighting spirit and devote more and more effort to carrying out their decisions. Unions must be aware that the bourgeoisie will never hesitate to use all the forces at its disposal — the police, the courts and Parliament — to crush the movement that is threatening it. In the present conjuncture, every economic movement of any significance whatsoever constitutes the greatest political danger for the ruling classes; therefore it is indispensable to

prepare, both organizationally and ideologically, to confront this militarization. Organizational preparation means that the structures created during a strike must be able to act even when the government arrests the leaders; that the liaison network between the leading centre and the masses cannot be destroyed by the assault of the police; that during great social conflicts the strike committees must be able to publish a daily bulletin; that secret parleys and transactions cannot take place behind the backs of the masses, as has happened more than once; finally, that any breach of discipline by leaders must result in their immediate exclusion from the ranks of the working class; it is also essential that workers in the other branches of the national economy can at the required moment move into the battle and put pressure on the ruling classes and the bourgeois state.

Even more order and more discipline are needed on the strike front than on the military front. On the military front, discipline is maintained by military tribunals, while on the revolutionary front there must be a high level of consciousness and working class discipline. The ideological preparation of the working class for battle consists of developing its spirit of solidarity, its consciousness of the necessity for iron discipline and its caution and nerve when the employers and the state unleash their offensive.

Another task of the greatest importance at such times is attacking the morale of the armed forces that are usually sent in during great conflicts. It is true that the ruling classes, learning from experience, now use armed forces which are extremely difficult to break down: in France they use Senegalese, in America they have taken to training special detachments for poisonous gas attacks on rebelling workers; in many places there are White Guards and gangs of strikebreakers, and so on. But these divergent elements ordinarily play a role of shock troops in the offensive against the workers; if we cannot break down the morale of these hostile forces, disorganize them, through propaganda, we must disorganize them by other means, and aim our propaganda at the masses of troops that the government is obliged to bring into play in contemporary social conflict.

The breaking down of the armed forces, and their passage to the side of the workers, are indispensable conditions for the victory of the working class. We must put great efforts into this kind of action against the bourgeois state during great social conflicts and during the bourgeois state's attempts to militarize one branch or another of industry.

XVII. Conciliation boards and binding arbitration

The ideal of all social-reformers is the creation of bodies that can protect contemporary society from strikes. Without a shadow of a doubt, strikes cause great harm to the national economy. Work stoppages by hundreds of thousands and sometimes millions of workers affect the workers' budgets on the one hand, and disrupt production and reduce the entrepreneurs' profits on the other. The struggles of the miners in England are sufficient proof of the fact that strikes are a costly form of struggle. Under the circumstances these are telling figures:

	Number of strikers	Number of lost work days
1916	62,000	311,000
1917	280,000	1,097,000
1918	371,000	1,183,000
1919	906,000	7,441,000
1920	1,414,000	17,424,000
1921 (6 months)	1,154,000	68,000,000

As we can see, if we examine the question from the point of view of production alone, strikes are quite irrational. In this regard, the evaluation of the social-reformers concerning the disadvantages of strike movements is entirely correct. How can contemporary society be protected from these upheavals? What legal means would be given to the institutions that could save the national economy from these losses? How to develop or find people sufficiently uninvolved that, while remaining outside of the class struggle, they can deliver completely objective judgements that will satisfy both parties in a dispute? This is the difficult problem that for decades has puzzled the social-reformist big-wigs of western Europe and America. Up until now they have found nothing better than conciliation boards and binding arbitration, for the simple reason that it is impossible to come up with anything objective.

Throughout the nineteenth century, conciliatory bodies developed in a variety of forms, depending on the level of democracy in each country: conciliation boards, bipartite committees, boards of arbitration, etc. All of these legal institutions formed over the last few decades have one and the same end — to peacefully resolve conflicts over wages and working conditions. The ideal of all the social-reformers was

boards of arbitration with equal representation from both parties and a "neutral" representative of the state. These boards of binding arbitration could prohibit strikes and bring the full weight of law to bear on those who did not comply. This type of board was created in New Zealand and at the time was hailed as the greatest achievement of the democratic state. This was also hoped for in England and it figured prominently among the demands of the labour unions before the war in Germany, Austria and other countries. And Millerand, starting in 1900, that is to say starting from when he had tasted the fruits of power, began praising binding arbitration to the sky and boldly declaring its effectiveness.

Obviously, the responsibility of bipartite committees and binding arbitration is to bring the two parties together or, where conciliation is impossible, to take a decision. But how is this to be achieved if the workers and the employers cannot agree? It is precisely this essential question that, until now, has gone unanswered. Repression of those who ignore the decisions of the arbitration boards, the leveling of charges, the holding of organizations and their members responsible, and fines, these are the means of applying the decisions of the various boards of arbitration. But the unions, even the most reformist among them, can agree only with the greatest difficulty to submit to the coercive force of the arbitration boards chaired by supposedly "neutral" state representatives. This is because experience has shown that when the workers are well organized, united and imbued with a revolutionary spirit, the so-called "neutral" representative looks for a compromise that will minimize the losses of the entrepreneurs and, in most cases, will side with the employers against the workers.

Extensive experience with such institutions has shown the absolute impossibility of creating ideal arbitration boards. The explanation for this is not the bad faith of the people involved, but is the fact that no one is absolutely independent of the ideology of some social class. And this is why the conciliation boards, whose duty it is to create a justice "above classes", are doomed to failure. We can see a typical example of these boards in Germany at the present time. Germany, according to the leaders of the German unions, is not only the most democratic country, but the most social-democratic in the world. There the unions have wide-spread influence; their representatives form part of the government. Not only do they see themselves as pillars of the present German republic, but they are so seen by others, which means that here these boards should be almost perfect. In fact, the existing boards are far from satisfactory; at the present time they are in the midst of ela-

borating a new law pertaining to arbitration boards. This proposed law is formulated in such a manner that Umbricht, the arch-moderate himself, was obliged to admit in the official, and altogether moderate, organ of the German Union Central, the **Korrespondenzblatt**, that the workers' representatives on the Economic Council of the Reich had, by adopting this proposal, taken a position that is contrary to the interests of the unions. The most important thing here is the fact that the proven reformists delegated as official union representatives subscribe to proposals that the reformist organization that sent them itself finds unacceptable. Nothing can show more clearly the effect present-day unions have on the bourgeois state, the manner in which they fight for the interests of the workers when they join bipartite committees established by the bourgeoisie. All the union press, even the **Mittelungsblatt des allgemeinen freien Angestelltenbundes** (the organ of the employees federation) are unanimously and energetically protesting against the bill, because they find faults in it that go beyond legal questions. The government's proposal would base the passing of rulings solely on the law and no longer on custom. The employees' extreme-right organ is correct when it points out that this effectively means pushing into the background all the rate contracts, which are presently a vast area of right by custom, because the arbitration boards' rulings will have to abide only by the existing laws.

There are many such legal nuances in the proposed German law concerning boards of arbitration and they all have their social basis. No one can create an ideal law establishing a sort of ideal balance between classes. The matter gets particularly complicated when it comes to compulsory arbitration for workers and employees in sectors affecting the public interest, such as transportation, gas, electricity, etc. But since the definition of "sectors affecting the public interest" is extremely vague, it can be applied as the occasion warrants to any of the essential branches: transport, telegraph, telephone, gas, electricity, mining operations, the food industry, all sorts of public and municipal services, etc.

We do not deny that strikes affecting the public interest are even more onerous for the two parties involved than strikes affecting private enterprise. But the working class has no other recourse, they have no other means of struggle to defend their basic rights and improve their situation, and each victorious strike compensates the workers for their spent efforts, as well as for their lost wages. During the recent miners' strike in England, the president of the Amsterdam International, Thomas, who is also head of the English railway workers, stated, "No

matter who wins the dispute, the nation will be the loser." As we know, the nation is made up of workers and employers; if the workers had won the strike how could the whole nation have lost? Since the tools and the means of production are not the property of all the people, but belong only to a tiny fraction of the people, what would the miners have lost if they had succeeded in maintaining their former working conditions? Thomas bases his analysis on the metaphysical concept of the interests of the "nation" rather than those of the working class, and in so doing declares himself against the interests of the workers.

What position should the revolutionary unions adopt towards the arbitration boards, compulsory arbitration, bipartite committees and all other various institutions that are supposed to peacefully resolve disputes of all types? Above all, we must categorically and forcefully oppose any attempt to make these decisions binding. Without boycotting the institutions created by the bourgeois state, we must know how to use each incident that arises in one of these bodies to show the workers in practice what the principle of parity and the neutrality of the government representatives mean. Bipartite committees, boards of arbitration and conciliation boards can be important only when the working class acts in solidarity, only when it can support its revolutionary demands by mass action and force its representatives on these bodies to apply its revolutionary policies. The unions must lead a most determined struggle against the illusion that perfect boards of arbitration or conciliation can be created; they must fight the idea that we can achieve social harmony and resolve the fundamental contradictions of contemporary society simply through idle legal twaddle.

XVIII. Fiscal policy

Nothing characterizes contemporary society better than its fiscal policy. A study of the relationship between direct and indirect taxes and the taxes imposed on agriculture, industry and financial operations can precisely establish the nature of the existing regime and the degrees of influence the various strata of the bourgeoisie have on the state. In the past the fiscal policy of the state consisted in burdening the working class with all expense. Since the war this policy has not changed, but has taken on new forms in accordance with the new conditions in which destitute humanity now lives.

Europe has come out of the cataclysm drained; the hundreds of billions spent on the war are now concentrated in the hands of a small

group of industrialists and financial sharks. Indebtedness has multiplied ten-fold, one hundred-fold, and all the financial wizards want is to reestablish financial stability. In order to resolve all of these difficulties a special conference was convened in Brussels at the end of last year, with the purpose of finding some way to cover the enormous spending of each nation. Two hundred and fifty scholars and statesmen racked their brains in a vain attempt to find the solution. The financial malaise is affecting the Amsterdam International as well, since at its London Congress in November 1920, following a report from Jouhaux, it adopted a special resolution concerning the stabilization of international exchange rates and financial reforms. But neither London resolutions nor Amsterdam resolutions have done anything to diminish the general indebtedness; each state has been obliged to search for its own means to regulate its budget and balance its finances.

If we carefully analyse the financial measures that have been taken recently by Germany, England and France, we see that the new taxes strike foremost at the bare essentials: to save their finance system they must always ask for new sacrifices from the largest strata of the population. And here, as elsewhere, that "beneficial" division of labor that is peculiar to contemporary society is established; a few tens of thousands of tycoons have profited from the billions that were spent, while it is up to the exploited people to cover the deficit. Some hoard the real resources, the rest pay the debts. To each his own!

While England has in recent years established a special income tax by taxing certain war profits up to 50%, France has refrained from interfering with war profits; after all, wasn't the war intended to enrich a clique of capitalists? France, the watch-dog of the traditions of the Great Revolution, of democracy, etc., could not interfere with the holy principles of property; as a result, it has not burdened the ruling classes with the weight of military spending. It has, instead, decided to put more pressure on the masses of the population in order to cover the budget. Indirect taxes are increasing and with them the cost of living. Not wanting to violate the sanctity of those temples of contemporary France — the bank and the stock exchange — and leaving intact the soul of France — unearned income — the Chamber voted a tax on wages in 1919. In cities with a population of about 10,000 people, the workers are taxed on wages exceeding 2,000 francs, while the capitalists (with three children) are only taxed on income exceeding 8,000 francs. In cities with a population of over 10,000 people, the workers pay a tax of 20 francs on a wage of 3,300 francs; capitalists with incomes of 10,000 francs are taxed the same amount. A tax is also levied upon payment of pensions

for invalids and families of soldiers killed in the war and workers' wages. Under pressure from the Entente, the German bourgeoisie has imposed unparalleled burdens on the workers. In order to cover its increased spending and to pay its contribution to the French and English usurers, Germany is taxing not only vital necessities but wages as well.

Thus, in order to re-establish financial stability in France and England, German workers are in turn being forced to pay taxes to the state, going as high as 10% of their wages. To ensure that the German worker cannot avoid paying this contribution, the deduction is made by the capitalist upon payment of the workers' wages. Every German who is not a capitalist possesses a special card on which the capitalist agent attaches a stamp for each deduction.

In Czechoslovakia, a direct income tax has been established on wages exceeding 6,000 crowns a year, indirect taxes on the vital necessities have been increased, and they have even gone so far as introducing a special tax on all sales and purchases of commodities, which has considerably raised the cost of the products, etc. Thus, the attack on wages is being carried out from two sides simultaneously: from the capitalists on the one hand and from the "neutral" state on the other.

The masses of workers are being forced to pay, out of their extremely reduced resources, for a war they have already paid for with their suffering and their blood. This fiscal policy, which is being practised by the capitalist countries with unbelievable cynicism, has not been met with sufficient resistance on the part of the unions. It is true that there have been certain protests, in Germany for example. But when the Stuttgart metalworkers went on strike to demand the end of income taxes, the other workers did not support them and the unions remained silent. By acting in such a manner, the German unions have implicitly approved the introduction of the income tax law, and contributed to stealing the last pennies from the workers' pockets.

At the end of September, the French CGT launched an appeal concerning the "unfortunate" incidents that took place when the income tax law was applied. The appeal protested against "the inventory taken of the personal possessions of those refusing to pay the tax," demanded a radical change in fiscal policy, protested against the illegal instructions, demanded a halt to all pending legal proceedings against the workers and proposed that all the unions begin widespread agitation, with meetings, appeals, posters, etc. In other words, nothing other than verbal protests and written resolutions. The CGT did not have the courage to call on the workers to not pay the income tax, as was done by the city councillors of "Poplar" in London, who wanted to

pressure the government directly on the unemployment problem. It was hard to believe that the unions had fallen so low that they could not even take the lead in the protests against income tax. In this specific case we can see that the present leaders of the unions, who have absolutely refused to defend the basic rights of the workers, are guilty of a monstrous betrayal. On this question, as on all the others, the reformist unions are renouncing the struggle for the basic rights of the working class. They do not even examine these questions in terms of their total impact. If we take into consideration all of the actions of the French CGT, the German Union Central and the other union centrals, we realize that they are indifferent to the questions of fiscal policy. Citizens must pay and the workers, as we know, are citizens! This is how they resolve the problem of taxation policy. At best they offer us nothing but protest resolutions. Certainly the union "leaders" are interested in stabilizing the rates of exchange, in increasing the value of the franc or mark, but they would hardly think of making the ruling classes take on the burden of income tax. And this fact clearly shows the degree of bourgeois influence exercised by contemporary states over the working class and its leaders.

The position of the revolutionary unions is very clear on the question of fiscal policy. First of all, down with indirect taxes! The whole gamut of indirect taxes, from taxes on matches, gasoline, etc. to taxes on sugar and other products, must be met with the revolutionary and decisive resistance of the workers. Indirect taxes constitute the basis, the very foundation of the whole financial policy of the big as well as the small states. Taxes on food and on the vital necessities of life are **in fact** a reduction of wages, since they deprive the workers of a part of the money they use to buy the most essential products. It is up to the bourgeoisie to pay for the upkeep of the bourgeois state! The ruling classes themselves should cover the cost of maintaining the apparatus that carries out its orders. The taxation of commerce, industry, the banks and of all varieties of income squeezed out from the workers should be made the basis of fiscal policy. And this is not an abstract slogan; it is a practical question that must be resolved in the daily struggle of the working masses. The less the workers are interested in the question of taxes, the less attention they pay to the taxation system, the more their wages will be reduced through indirect taxes without their being aware of it. The capitalist must pay! This is the slogan around which we must unite the masses.

Obviously the capitalist class is not at all inclined to accept this policy. To burden the ruling classes with the full weight of the taxes is

Bolshevism in action. And the entire democratic and bourgeois press would not miss the opportunity to howl about this fiscal inquisition, about this violation of democratic principles, etc. However, fiscal policy can be either bourgeois or proletarian. The present fiscal policy of all states is a bourgeois policy. The unions do not have any fiscal policy and as a result passively submit to the direct consequences of that imposed by the bourgeoisie. This is once again evident with the introduction of income taxes. The protests of some of the revolutionary workers were smothered by the reformist unions. Encouraged by this tacit agreement and by this passivity, the bourgeoisie continues to pressure the masses not only with the income tax, but by yet more indirect taxes on the vital necessities. The fiscal screws are getting tighter, making the workers' daily reality harder and harder.

We must not have any illusions about the possibilities of a proletarian policy in a bourgeois society. As long as the bourgeoisie is in power, as long as it has at its disposal the entire state apparatus (courts, police, etc.) it will continue the fiscal policy favourable to it. We are not therefore talking about the immediate introduction of a proletarian taxation policy in all countries; the point, above all, is to unite the whole of the working class on the basis of this policy, to strip away the positions of the bourgeoisie one by one, to force it to tax particular groups in the ruling class, to clarify the role of taxation policy in the general system of social relations, to oblige each worker to deepen his understanding of the link that exists between the various fiscal policies and the class structure of the contemporary state. We can and we must carry out this education of workers on the question of refusing to pay taxes, principally in the struggle against income tax. It may occur that the great masses of the workers do not at first grasp the mechanism of indirect taxes and do not completely understand the relationship that exists between their wages and taxes on vital necessities. However, it is certain that when it comes to acting on income tax, when each week or every fortnight the state profits from deduction of their wages, all backward, reformist, and even patriotic workers will realize the absolute necessity of struggling against such a fiscal policy.

Thus the general fiscal policy and in particular its new forms must be met with organized and decisive resistance on the part of the revolutionary workers. These workers must unite the maximum number of workers around this issue, regardless of their political opinions, all the while recalling that a proletarian fiscal policy will only be realized after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie.

XIX. Reforms and revolution

The working class has always fought. During revolutionary periods this struggle takes the form of civil war and direct clashes between capital and labour; during periods of more regular development the struggle continues, but it takes on different forms. The working class and its organizations are constantly influenced and pressured by the ruling classes and the bourgeois state. The bourgeoisie must ideologically conquer the working class, because its domination rests not only on brute force but above all on the ideology it inculcates in the working class. All the material and moral forces of contemporary capitalist society converge in a single purpose: to transform the working class into a machine to produce surplus value. Social reforms depend on the relative strengths of the existing classes. In every country social legislation has a direct relation to the strength of the working class, to the pressure it can exert and its capacity to hold positions it won in the past. The strength of workers' organizations is measured not so much by the formal adoption of certain social legislation, but more by the extent to which social reforms passed by legislatures are effectively applied; reforms constitute a secondary product of revolutionary struggle.

What is the relationship between these isolated victories and the general struggle of the working class? What is the relationship between winning social reforms and ending the whole system of exploitation? Within the workers' movement there are two radically different answers to these questions. On the one hand, the majority of union leaders consider that the goal of workers' organizations is to win social reforms; they think that socialist society can result through the gradual development of social reforms and the slow transition towards superior forms of social life. Applying these isolated victories extensively can completely transform the structure of society itself. According to them, the development of social reforms makes the capitalist system disappear and establishes harmony between the various classes. And social reforms will spare society of all the problems caused by class struggle. This is the counter-revolutionary theory underlying the actions of all the rightist groups in the workers' movement. They limit the workers' struggle to daily questions of immediate interest. General class questions, like the replacement of one class by another and the suppression of the capitalist system, are of little interest to them.

They are only interested in practical everyday questions — the length of the working day, wages, and social insurance — and nothing

more. They think social revolution is extremely harmful and impossible to realize in any case. They dream of a gradual transition from bourgeois "democracy" to socialism.

Both the theorists and practitioners of reformism consider themselves to be the true realists, because they only struggle for concrete issues; they do not propose any "unrealisable or illusory" demands. But in fact, theirs is the most utopian theory that has ever existed. Every day, life itself relentlessly contradicts the theory of class harmony and peaceful transformation. A brief look at the worldwide capitalist offensive presently underway is sufficient to drive on the bitter irony that the theory of the absolute value of social reforms represents for the working class.

Apart from the above position that says that reforms are everything, there stands the other extremist position that says that social reforms are harmful to the interests of the working class. This point of view is put forward by the anarchists. They say: "The broader and more extensive the social reforms, the more moderate the working class becomes and the more likely the bourgeoisie will be able to sweep the working class along in its wake. Neither the reductions in the work day, nor insurance nor the other reforms can resolve the principal question. Furthermore, reforms are definitely not of any interest to the working class. The working class must think exclusively of radical change, of social revolution, and leave aside social reforms that can in no way, regardless of their number, solve the fundamental problem." This sums up the negative theory of the anarchists and certain anarcho-syndicalists.

It is true that social reforms cannot resolve the main contradictions of contemporary society. But this absolute negation of social reforms does not stand up to criticism. In fact, we have only to consider the development of the contemporary workers' movement in various countries to be easily convinced of the enormous role the successive gains played in the working class' sharp struggles. Yet, the anarchists think that these victories are merely crumbs, the result of a long-standing hoax dreamt up by the ruling classes. However, there has never been a social reform or bill, defending workers rights in the least bit, that was willingly adopted by Parliament, for purely altruistic reasons; all were adopted under strong pressure from the working class. Thus, each social reform obtained represents the conquest of a position by the working class in its daily struggle against the bourgeoisie. To say that the occupation of a trench does not play any role in the later plan of attack would be absolutely false and in flagrant contradiction with the experience gained in struggle around the world. For example, consider the reduction in the

work day, factory inspections, job security; all of these were introduced through the force of necessity, under the influence of the revolutionary actions of the masses or out of the threat of these actions. But this does not change the role of these reforms in any way. The anarchists' rejection of partial victories can no more serve as the guiding line for the revolutionary unions than the reformist bombast, touting reforms as the be-all and end-all. Both formulations, "social reforms are everything" and "social reforms are nothing" are unacceptable. They are abstract metaphysics and do not correspond to reality. In its struggle the working class must work towards the realisation of ever broader social reforms, without, for a moment, forgetting the final greater aim.

The basic question is as follows: can the working class, by means of certain social reforms and following the peaceful road and without violent upheavals, take control of production, or is the seizure of political and economic power tied to open and relentless class struggle, in other words, civil war? Years of experience gained in struggle shows that there is no reason to believe that peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism is possible. It shows that to effectively take control of the economic structure of the country, the working class must speak only of revolution. But social revolution is not a rejection of social reforms. Unlike the anarchists, we do not treat social reforms in a light-handed or contemptuous manner, but we do make use of them in the general struggle so that every step forward made by the working class will be consolidated and serve as the springboard in a future struggle. This tactic must serve as the starting point in the present economic struggle of the working class.

Specific conflicts that constantly arise over wage reductions, the lengthening of the work day, or the introduction of the false remedy of workers' control should not remain outside the consciousness of the working class. They must be linked. Every action, every little dispute must be explained in the light of the general interests of the working class. Every scrap of territory torn away from the bourgeoisie, every victory over capital's offensive, (unemployment insurance, etc.) every real advance must not in any way halt the march of the workers' organizations, but should incite them to continue with greater determination towards the fundamental task: the overthrow of capitalism. The idiocy and anti-worker character of the reformist theory is due to the fact that its basic principle says that it is possible to create the ideal living conditions for the working class within the framework of capitalism, and to build a new society without a revolution. The unions and organizations marked by this principle will never be able to take part in the sharp

world-wide struggle presently occurring on the economic front. A utopian belief in legality is the contemporary union movement's worst affliction.

The relationship existing between the daily struggle of the working class for improvements of its living conditions and its general class tasks is clearly explained in the last part of our **Program of Action**.

"While conducting the fight for the improvement of the conditions of labour, raising the standard of life of the masses, and establishing workers' control over industry, we should always keep in mind that it is impossible to solve all these problems within the frame of the capitalist system. For this reason the revolutionary trade unions, while gradually forcing concessions from the ruling classes, compelling them to enact social legislation, should put before the working masses a clear-cut idea, that only the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat can solve the social question. For this reason not a single case of mass action, not a single small conflict should pass, from this point of view, without leaving a deep mark. It is the duty of the revolutionary trade unions to explain these conflicts to the workers, leading the rank and file always toward the idea of the necessity and the inevitability of the social revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat."

If we approach all these conflicts, all these manifestations of the sharp struggle going on around us, from the point of view of socialism, of the social revolution, of the dictatorship of the proletariat; if we take this point of view to look on the reforms and the particular concessions wrested from capitalism, we will be able to obtain the maximum results from the energy that the working class deploys in the struggle. In their daily struggles, the revolutionary unions conquer new positions step by step and entrench themselves behind these victories in order to charge once again into the revolutionary fray. The only truly revolutionary tactic bases itself on this understanding of the relationship between reforms and revolution, since it is based both on the evaluation of the class's real strength and the utilisation of even minor means of struggle against our class enemy.

XX. Unity of the revolutionary front

The unity of the working class is necessary for its victory over the bourgeoisie. But we must not think that all unity, under all conditions and in all places, is beneficial to the working class. The working class has created different types of organizations in the course of its struggle:

political, union and co-operative. These three types of organizations represent the multiple and varying interests of our class; in addition, it should be noted that in each country these organizations have their own peculiarities. Nowhere has the working class created just one organization; on the contrary, we find that everywhere there are moderate unions, revolutionary unions and even Christian and liberal unions.

The heterogenous nature of the working class, its varying levels of development, is reflected in the various organizations which compete with each other and struggle to acquire influence over the proletariat. For example, in the United States we have the American Federation of Labour, which is so avowedly anti-socialist that it considers the Amsterdam International too revolutionary. In Germany, two million workers are organized into Catholic unions, alongside the reformist social-democratic unions. In France, the majority of the CGT is reformist and the minority is revolutionary. There is not a single country where there exists ideological unity, unity of opinions and unity in the understanding of tasks. Unity in action is not possible without unity in understanding the tasks of the working class and an identity of views on the methods of struggle to be used. Can we create a united front when some unions are in favour of using revolutionary means of struggle and the rest are in favour of reconciliation with the bourgeoisie, if some see their salvation in the League of Nations and the others in the struggle against it, if some see the basis of their activity as class collaboration and the others in revolutionary class struggle? Under these conditions it is difficult to forge the desired unity, even if the workers of all tendencies all belong to one organization. At this point principled people ask "Is the unity of the working class a means or an end?" The end is socialism, unity is just the best means to achieve this end, and we are for this unity in as far as it moves the proletariat closer to socialism.

It does not follow from this that the existing unions should be broken up or dissolved. We must win over these unions, raise the consciousness of the masses, bring the workers into the struggle and on this basis create proletarian unity. To defeat the bourgeoisie, the working class has the greatest interest in the formation of a single front. Where does the bourgeoisie's strength come from? Its unity: its political, economic and governmental bodies always act in a common front against the workers. In contrast, the working class is still facing it dispersed, without co-ordinated actions and is consequently being systematically defeated by the bourgeois class.

We may well lament this lack of unity, but our regrets will not

change anything. We must face up to reality, we must take into account the true balance of power in waging our struggles, we must understand all the causes of this division of the workers' organizations. A united front is always desired by revolutionary workers, but it cannot be created on the grounds of class collaboration. And as long as the union leaders persist in their views, unity cannot be achieved, since not a single revolutionary worker would agree to creating this type of unity. We are working towards a united front based only on class struggle, based on resistance to the bourgeoisie. Whether in offensive or defensive struggles, revolutionary workers must welcome all common action taken by workers, regardless of the tendency to which they belong. However, we must not deceive ourselves, — the unity of the working class will only be forged through hard struggle. The bourgeoisie is a good teacher for us in this respect since it forces the most politically backward workers to ponder questions they had not thought of until then.

Before creating one workers' front, before considering the fusion of all the organizations into a single fighting force, it is necessary to create a single front of all the revolutionary forces. In doing this we encounter difficulties which stem from the history of the workers' movement. Creating a single front brings up the question of reciprocal relations between the political parties and the unions, this question of politics and economics that has always been a stumblingblock for the workers, particularly in the Latin countries. Who should lead the revolutionary struggle as a whole, the political party or the unions? Those revolutionary unionists who are against political parties think that the unions alone should, and are able, practically speaking, to make the revolution. They therefore conclude that any agreement or permanent joint activities with the communist parties would be undesirable, inasmuch as it would mean the submission of the union organizations to the political organizations.

Many unionists around the world, have become specialists in this fight against politics, preaching the idea of union neutrality and independence from political parties. Interestingly enough, in France, the left-wing unionists and the majority of the CGT are unanimous on union independence and autonomy. While they all speak of independence, quote from the Charter of Amiens and refer to it, each gives his own meaning to the word "independence". The following is a typical example: at the Metalworkers Congress in Lucerne (September 1921), a lively discussion on the question of politics broke out. Merrheim took the floor and spoke against the participation of the unions in political life. He was heatedly fought by the

reformists of the other countries. Dissmann, Ilg and many others responded in strong terms to Merrheim, showing him that it was impossible to separate the union struggles from political struggle. Now, everyone knows what the politics of the Swiss, German, Austrian and other metalworkers are: clearly opportunist and intimately linked to the right-wing socialist parties; their tactical line in the union movement parallels that of these socialist parties in other areas.

But is Merrheim, this defender of union independence and autonomy, really not involved in politics? Are he and his supporters really independent? In Paris, at the end of August, the Commission of the League of Nations held a session (chaired by Viviani) to discuss questions of disarmament. This Commission, composed of government representatives, chattered about disarmament, knowing all the while that the arms race will not stop as long as bourgeois regimes exist. Jouhaux participated in the meeting and made a long speech in favour of disarmament arguing that munitions should be manufactured in state factories, rather than by private companies. Isn't this politics? Is the participation of Jouhaux, and other representatives of the Amsterdam International, in studies by the League of Nations Commission and in the International Organization of Labor another example of the independence of labour organizations? Obviously this theory of the independence of unions doesn't even warrant a criticism for the simple reason that, being workers' organizations, unions are obliged to hold certain political positions, which are reformist or revolutionary depending on the level of consciousness and the state of mind of the proletarian masses.

This prejudice against politics and political parties shows itself in that the revolutionary unions believe that temporary or permanent agreement for the common struggle is impossible with the communist parties. However, a moment's thought is enough to make one realize that this viewpoint has no basis. Who are the ones who will apply the action program outlined in this pamphlet, in every country, who will be fighting to defend it, who will defend and achieve workers' control, who will found the organizations of self-defence, who will organize the masses in the resistance to the economic offensive of capital? Who, in their daily struggles, will be working hard to raise the consciousness of the masses in order to make them understand the necessity of the social revolution and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat? Who will combat the poison of reformism? At the critical moment, who will act to overthrow the bourgeoisie? Who will unite the masses and organize the struggle of the entire working class? In short, who will take

up the defence of the action program of the RILU in every country? The answer is easy: revolutionary unions and communist parties. No one else. There is not and never will be any other force capable of doing it. Thus we can see that on both the national and international level there are only two types of organizations that will struggle to achieve the revolutionary action program: red unions and communist parties.

The question of an agreement with the communist parties would not have to be dealt with if the red unions themselves were not working to overthrow capitalism. But inasmuch as they do have this aim, which is also the aim of the communist parties, the absence of agreement on joint actions is a great crime against the working class. It was no accident that the Third Congress of the Communist International and the First Congress of the RILU adopted the same action program. It was no accident that the two world Congresses called for close liaison and collaboration between the red unions and the communist parties and it was no accident either that article 33 of the resolution on tactics adopted by the First Congress of the RILU states:

“Under present conditions, every economic struggle inevitably takes on political significance.

“The struggle itself under such conditions, whatever the numerical strength of the workers involved in a given country may be, can be really revolutionary and be carried out for the greatest benefit of the working class as a whole if the revolutionary trade unions march shoulder to shoulder in the closest co-operation and unity with the communist party of the given country.

“The theory and practice of splitting the struggle of the working class into two independent halves is extremely harmful, especially in the present revolutionary period.

“Every mass action requires the utmost concentration of forces, which is possible only when all the revolutionary energy of the working class is straining to a peak, i.e., when all its revolutionary and communist elements are brought into play. Revolutionary action led separately by the communist party and the revolutionary red unions is doomed to failure and ruin. That is why unity of action, organic links between communist parties and trade unions, is a necessary condition for the struggle against capitalism to be successful.”

All this is not simply speculation, but stems from the logic of the struggle to be led. It is the answer to the fundamental question of the hour: how can we win faster and better? Basing ourselves on this sole consideration, we must underline the necessity of permanent liaison and

close collaboration between all the revolutionary organizations in all of their actions, both offensive and defensive, against the ruling classes and their governments. But what does “organic links” mean? The merger of organizations, the submission of one to the other, the renunciation of autonomy? No, none of these. In this case, an organic link means unity in the struggle. We do not ignore the fact that the relationships between the unions and the parties vary significantly: from organizational unity (Norway) to hostile rivalry (France). We have no intention of forcing complex vital relationships into the same mould. Without a doubt, the relationship between the communist parties and the revolutionary unions will be different in France and Spain, for example, from those in Central Europe or Scandinavia, since the revolutionary unionists, although they do not want to admit it, do act basically as political parties. We are not working towards some lifeless plan. We have no intention of trying to subordinate unionists to some outside organization; and we care even less to try to stop them from making the revolution by themselves, from overthrowing the bourgeoisie and establishing the power of the unions. That is not what we are concerned with. We are concerned with achieving unity in the struggle against the bourgeoisie, and not being defeated separately. This is why all the moaning about independence, about Moscow wanting to subordinate all of the unions is foolish talk that merely confuses the issue instead of solving the problem.

In any case, a careful analysis of past and above all, present actions of the French unions is sufficient to show that at no point in their history did the CGT have a particular political line, either anarchist or reformist. They were “independent” of all principles, their shift from one tactic to another was done with such dizzying rapidity that it bears witness to the CGT leaders’ complete independence from socialism and from communism.

Thus, those who want victory must realize the unity of all the revolutionary elements in each country, by always keeping in mind that the unity of the revolutionary front is the condition for the unity of the entire workers’ front. The logic of class struggle will push the backward and reformist workers to join the revolution. And they will join all the faster as the front created through the organic links between revolutionary unions and communist parties becomes stronger, hence more powerful and more resistant.

XXI. To destroy or conquer the unions

Is it necessary to leave the old unions in order to establish a revolutionary front? As a general rule, should we detach revolutionary workers from the old unions? We will find the answer to these questions by examining the role that unions played before, during and after the war.

Labour unions were formed as self-defence organizations of the working class. As capitalist relations grew and developed and as the forms of exploitation became more complicated, labour unions became more complex organizations and the tactics used in the struggle against the exploiters also became more complex. In the past, each worker dealt with separate capitalists; later on, the isolated worker dealt with organized capitalism; the next stage of development consisted of the struggle of organized workers against organized employers; and finally, the working class, organized in its economic and political organizations, is struggling against the organized employers and the bourgeois state.

In most capitalist countries, labour unions have struggled for several decades to improve the situation of the working class, all the while keeping their action within the bourgeois framework. With striking clarity, the war showed the labour leaders' great attachment for their countries' capitalism. In short, the labour unions were the basis of the entire war policy of recent years. For the leaders of the labour unions, the well-being of the working class is linked to the situation of their country's industry in the world market. Not only are we faced with the rivalry of the ruling classes of Germany and England, but with the rivalry of the English and German unions, since each considers that their destiny depends on expansion and the conquest of new markets. We are witnessing a very curious phenomenon: in the course of its development the working class creates organizations to defend itself from the bourgeoisie and, at a certain point in their development, these very same organizations become an integral part of the bourgeois capitalist machine. The union leadership that has entered into close contact with the bourgeois state considers all questions from the viewpoint of national interest, to the point where the workers' organizations have been transformed from groups whose aim was to struggle against the bourgeois state, into the principal pillars of the entire capitalist system. This contradiction, between the working class's vital need for a separate organization and the coming together of existing organizations and bourgeois capitalist apparatus, became

particularly evident during and immediately following the war.

The labour unions had almost ten million members before the war. Immediately following the war, masses of workers joined the labour unions because the war had profoundly disturbed their previous situation. The isolated worker felt powerless and indecisive. The relative stability of bourgeois relations has disappeared, the foundations of society were shaken, and even the most backward workers joined the unions in an attempt to find answers to the questions confronting them. In the most important countries, the majority of workers are already organized. The number of unionized workers in England has passed eight million; in Germany the number exceeds twelve million (including the Christian and liberal unions). In German-speaking Austria (population six million), there are close to one million unionized workers and there are approximately the same number in Belgium. In short, we are witnessing an enormous and spontaneous movement of the mass of workers towards the unions which has suddenly widened the old framework of organization. Powerful federations with millions of members were formed. In this initial period, when the state was shaken and when the social struggle was in upheaval, when no one was certain of tomorrow and when there was an upsurge in the revolutionary movement, these organizations should have been the main weapon in the struggle of the working class for its interests.

It is true that this initial period of growth was over by the end of 1920. 1921 has been a period of decline in the membership of workers' organizations; however, the labour unions still comprise tens of millions of workers and around the world there are presently fifty million organized workers. This enormous organized army influences the whole capitalist world, which is forced to take these mass organizations of the working class into consideration.

According to the union leaders, the labour unions, which played such a considerable role during the war, should play an equally important role now that the international butchery is over. The victors underlined the importance of the labour unions in contemporary politics by allowing the union leaders to participate in the elaboration of certain articles of the Treaty of Versailles and to take part, as equal partners with the employers, in the International Bureau of Labour, part of the League of Nations. This was the most important achievement of the reformist unions in the international arena, the application on an international scale of the policy of collaboration already in force in each country. On the national level the contemporary union leaders worked towards a rapid and peaceful liquidation of the results

achieved during the war, towards and increase in production, towards the most rapid re-establishment of normal capitalist relations, by offering their collaboration and asking for no more than parity in any government conferences. Thus a whole philosophy of collaboration developed. It is developing magnificently in Germany and is best expressed in the decisions of the Amsterdam International which aim at establishing social peace. In the period since the war, the unions have served as the basis for all sorts of coalition governments; they have intervened as an enemy force against the revolutionary actions of the left-wing of the labour movement, using all the might of their powerful organizations to block the march forward of the worldwide revolutionary movement.

While blocking the revolutionary movement, the unions had to struggle at the same time to improve the economic situation of the workers and defend their livelihood through agreements or strikes. And so, since the end of the war the labour unions have been following the path of reformism, while struggling against social revolution. It is precisely this counter-revolutionary role played by the leading group in the unions that has provoked a reaction from revolutionary workers. A new theory has developed saying that the labour unions, as organizations allied to the bourgeois state, should be destroyed and new unions created to replace them. This theory was born in Germany after the revolutionary workers suffered a series of defeats. It has taken root and grown in that country where the union bureaucracy has, with the greatest cynicism, trampled on the essential principles of class struggle, where the parity system found its expression in the **Arbeitsgemeinschaft** (joint committees of workers and employers), and where the bourgeoisie, following the revolution of November 1918, recognized that the labour unions had saved the state (that is to say property) from anarchy and complete collapse. These leftist elements argued as follows: the labor unions are conservative, they support the government, practise class collaboration, fight against the revolutionary movement and are against even the idea of social revolution; we must therefore break away from them and form our own unions, perhaps not large, but revolutionary.

The majority of labor unions are conservative; at the present time they are playing a counter-revolutionary role; they have come out squarely in favour of class collaboration. Without a doubt these are the facts, but do they justify destroying the unions? In any case, what does destroying the labor unions really mean? Unions don't consist only of union offices and funds; unions are organizations built up over decades, with millions of workers as members. There are many reasons why the

mass of workers are in these conservative unions.

Without a doubt, the best, most aware and active part of the working class is to be found inside the unions. But this part is not yet active or aware enough. Nevertheless that's what we have to work with; we must take the working class as it is. Why should we destroy the labour unions and create new, small unions if we can win over the mass of the workers and through them the unions?

The theory of the destruction of the unions is based on the assumption that the reformist unions are of no use at all to the workers. This idea runs contrary to the facts. If the labour unions were of no value to the working class, then they never would have been able to attract their millions of members. They would have perished by themselves long ago. In fact, we can see that reality is diametrically opposed to this assumption: not only are the workers not turning away from the unions, but they are the only organizations that have preserved their unity despite the sharp struggle within the working class since the end of the war. There is not a country in the world where there are not two or three workers' political parties that are engaged in a fierce war; but despite political differences and the sharpening of political struggle, the labour unions remain on the whole united; workers of all tendencies continue to belong to the same unions and to struggle side by side. Is this just a question of chance? Certainly not. Even today, the old conservative unions carry out an important task for workers; the defence of their immediate interests against the frenzied onslaught of capital. The labour unions are like a common roof under which all workers can find refuge from social storms. The material interests of the workers, questions of wages, the work-day, child and women's labour, insurance, etc. bring the workers together, force them to remain united in the same union. To turn our backs on the unions would mean, under the present conditions, to turn our backs on the masses; to advocate the destruction of the unions would mean to provoke the indignation of the broad masses who see the reformist unions as defenders of their immediate interests. To be revolutionary means to go wherever the masses are to be found and outlining within mass organizations a course that clearly points out the advantages of revolutionary tactics over reformist tactics.

If the viewpoint of the leftists concerning the uselessness of the unions was correct, it would mean we could forget about the social revolution, because the social revolution is impossible without the participation of the tens of millions of workers organized in the unions. It is true that we could dream of revolution; but it is impossible to

achieve it without the unions. The struggle in recent months has shown with striking clarity all the harm that could be done by destroying the unions. If our English comrades had decided to adopt this policy, they would have had to withdraw all revolutionary elements from the unions, they would have had to do the same thing with the Miners Federation, which in spite of the reformism of certain leaders was able to carry out a three-month strike. That is the danger: the theory of destroying the unions is not only pessimistic concerning the mass of workers, but it exaggerates the role of the union bureaucracy. Here we see a truly ridiculous situation: the men who plan to overthrow capitalism, who hope to level capitalism in England, in Germany, in France, in the United States, doubt they can destroy the union bureaucracies of these countries. While they think that the Gompers, the Thomases, the Grassmanns and the Oudegeests are invincible, they do not give up the idea of winning out over the full-fledged representatives of contemporary imperialism.

This tactic of pessimism and despair has nothing in common with revolutionary spirit; it bears witness to weak nerves and poor revolutionary judgment. This is why the Communist International and the Red International of Labour Unions have violently and categorically rejected the slogan "destroy the unions", replacing it with "conquer the unions". The experience of the past year has shown the correctness of this tactic. In France, Italy, Germany, around the world, the revolutionary union movement is growing and spreading. It is not yet strong enough to overthrow the old bureaucracy, but it is strong enough in every country to influence union tactics and to clearly pose the questions that the union bureaucracy tries so hard to avoid.

The task before us is to confront the union leaders with the working masses in the context of day-to-day struggle, in order to ideologically and practically win these masses away from the influence of their conservative leaders. The result of this work will be the destruction of the influence of the conservative bureaucrats within the unions, rather than the destruction of the unions themselves. We advocate working in the unions, not in order to follow reformist slogans and principles, but to win over the masses and to transform these unions into instruments of the social revolution against their reactionary leaders.

It is precisely because the slogan "destroy the unions" means breaking away from the masses, isolating revolutionary workers, shrinking the movement until it becomes no more than sectarian activity, that the Red International of Labour Unions puts forward the

slogan: "Be with the masses! Go to the heart of the unions! This is the only road to victory!"

XXII. Reformist strategy and revolutionary strategy

Class strategy is much more difficult than military strategy. No matter how numerous contemporary armies may be, no matter whether there are millions, or tens of millions of soldiers in these armies and no matter how long the war lasts, we are nevertheless dealing with a temporary conflict. The last world war, with its tens of millions of soldiers, was a very complex phenomenon, and it was even more complicated at the rear than at the front lines. Besides the purely military mobilization, the providing of equipment, the creation of combat units — infantry, cavalry, artillery, air force, etc. — the bourgeoisie achieved a moral mobilization; it mobilized the consciousness of the broad masses for the war effort. Despite all the complexities of this war, class strategy is even more complicated than military strategy. Here we do not find two neatly delineated fronts, separated by barbed wire and constantly assailing each other with toxic gases and thousands of shells. The class front is inside the country. The working class is part of contemporary society. It is nourished by bourgeois culture, its children attend state schools, it reads the bourgeois press, etc. The front between classes zig-zags and class enemies penetrate the working class, not only in a physical sense but spiritually as well; they include experts, disciples, defenders, and even troubadours. This is why revolutionary class strategy, class politics, is one of the most complex problems of contemporary social struggle.

First of all, the struggle itself has taken on enormous dimensions. In recent decades workers have no longer been isolated. They have created their own mass organizations. The social conflicts shaking the foundations of contemporary society no longer express themselves through collisions between isolated, separate and dispersed individuals, but by the clash of organized armies. They demand a deep understanding of the internal social relations, the economic situation of the country and international industrial conditions. It is indispensable to know the relative strengths of the various classes, the level of organization and resistance of the various strata of the bourgeoisie, the internal contradictions and frictions within the ruling classes and finally the level of organization of the working class, its revolutionary awareness of the goals of the various strata within the proletariat, its

ideological level and degree of self control in class warfare. It is necessary to know all of this in order to establish a clear political line, in order for the leading core of the revolutionary unions to correctly conduct class politics. Strategy, that is to say class politics, is the art of manoeuver; it is not an end in itself, but a means, a resource, a method and a form for attaining a specific end. Thus, strategy is determined by the problems that arise. This is why the same methods of struggle can be either revolutionary or reformist, according to the problems faced by the working class.

What is the fundamental difference between reformist strategy and revolutionary strategy? All the actions and manoeuvres of reformist unions are based on the principle of the peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism, a utopian, unattainable and historically impossible task. For us, the question of overthrowing the bourgeoisie arises in every form of struggle, in every intervention we make. In reply the reformists say: "You communists and revolutionary trade unionists think that the social revolution can be accomplished any time. You claim that violence alone will enable the working class, insufficiently prepared and lacking in class consciousness, to obtain goals that must be fought for over many decades."

It is completely absurd to say that revolutionary unions and communist parties think that it is possible to accomplish social revolution at any time, or that they want to transform each conflict into a social revolution. If that were true, the leaders of the red unions would be infantile in terms of revolutionary strategy, because they would not be taking into consideration the balance of power and the real possibilities of the struggle. No, such a childish conception of social relations does not exist in the revolutionary unions...we are not talking about immediately transforming every conflict into armed insurrection or a revolution, but rather about teaching the mass of workers, through the lessons drawn from every conflict, the necessity and inevitability of the social revolution and the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. The idea that any strike can bring down the bourgeoisie is obviously utopian. We certainly do not believe in such a miracle even though in the past revolutionary unions have committed this error. But it is not utopian to clarify every social conflict in the light of the revolutionary viewpoint; on the contrary, it is a real possibility and it is essential to do so.

Let's take a few examples that will show more clearly the difference between reformist and revolutionary strategies. At the present time, we are witnessing a worldwide offensive of capital: wages are being lowered at an unbelievable rate; attempts are being made to

lengthen the work-day. In short, the bourgeoisie has gone from the defensive to a frenzied offensive. In this period of sharp struggle, what are the reformists and the revolutionaries doing? We will not discuss the fact that many unions, under the influence of their reformist leaders, voluntarily lower wages. This unusual class strategy is due to the total submission of these misleaders to the bourgeois conception that a lowering of the price of essential goods must be accompanied by a lowering of wages. As if the previous wages were actually sufficient to cover all the workers' needs!

Provoked by capital's offensive, great conflicts are breaking out in which the workers of various political convictions struggle hand in hand, shoulder to shoulder against the entrepreneurs attacking them. This was the case in the miners' strike in England and is the case in the present strike in the north of France (September 1921), etc. How are the reformists reacting in the face of the workers' mass resistance to capital? "It is necessary to push back the offensive of capital;" this is what the leaders of the contemporary reformist union movement are saying and writing. Certainly, answer the revolutionary unionists, we must push back the attack. But is the aim of class strategy to merely push back a given attack? No, the task consists of making every soldier in this class war understand that this is not the final struggle and that he will always have to push back new attacks just as long as the enemy has not been destroyed. The great generals were well aware that the fundamental rule of military science is the demoralization, the disorganization, then the definitive destruction of the enemy's army. Only then is the war over. The reformist politicians never think of attacking the causes of class war, the underlying factors of these terrible conflicts. They take the conflict as a fact, act against it when the employers are totally unwilling to settle and then they lie back until there is a new, profound upheaval.

Under no circumstances can the revolutionary unions agree with such a method of action. Only one question concerns the revolutionary unions: to destroy the enemy's army with the strength of an organized offensive. Does that mean we can destroy it any day and during any strike? No, but the necessity of destroying the enemy's forces, in other words the bourgeoisie, marks all the actions — the agitation, the propaganda and the demonstrations — of every revolutionary union. It also guides the negotiations of the terms of the truce leading to peace. Class unions always examine every question from the viewpoint of overthrowing the bourgeoisie, while reformist unions always deal with everything from the viewpoint of maintaining contemporary society as it

is. Class unions aim at disarming and destroying the bourgeois class, reformist unions aim at reaching an agreement with it. Class unions consider these continual conflicts as an inevitable consequence of capitalist relations, which will only disappear with them, and therefore direct each of their actions towards destroying these relations; reformist unions see these conflicts as temporary and chance phenomena, to which they must react so that a closer collaboration can be set up with the representatives of the other classes.

In this way revolutionary and reformist strategies are in conflict, both during the struggle itself, and once the struggle is over. While revolutionary unions, using the example of the recent conflict, teach the necessity of a new hard struggle, the reformist unions are content to settle with the palliatives obtained because they consider that collaboration always attains the best results. The former consider the agreement, or contract, as a temporary truce during which it is necessary to prepare for another war; the latter see it as the establishment of normal relations that are occasionally disturbed by an outbreak of class passions.

Let's examine a second example: the representatives of the Amsterdam International helped elaborate certain articles of the Treaty of Versailles; they are members of the Bureau of Labour attached to the League of Nations and are members of commissions established by the League.

Recently (August 1921), Jouhaux, Oudegeest and Torberg participated in the Disarmament Conference convened by the League of Nations. Jouhaux gave a very long speech that was attentively listened to by the representatives of the bourgeoisie. The latter then continued, just as before with the entangled state of affairs that they had organized in order to trick the broad masses. What does Jouhaux's action represent from a class point of view? In the presence of those ministers who had organized the international massacre and still maintain a crushing military yoke, the representative of the General Confederation of France delivers a speech on the usefulness of arms reduction. They listened patiently because words are harmless. But what is the point of making a speech like that? Does Jouhaux think that speeches and appeals to abstract truths will influence the government? This is typical reformist strategy. Can you imagine what would have happened had a representative of the revolutionary unions delivered a speech on the same subject to these same bourgeois ministers? These gentlemen would not likely have let him finish. Because the revolutionary strategy would have aimed, without worrying about the reaction of the attending ministers, at show-

ing that the conference and its related projects are a deception staged by aggressors. The speech, given from within the very fortress of the bourgeois state, would have exposed the ruling classes on the basis of their past record, of not wanting disarmament and in fact, of building up arms with growing determination. In short, the representative of the truly revolutionary unions would have openly accused these bourgeois hypocrites of fooling the working masses. That would have been the revolutionary strategy. There is no doubt that such an uncouth outburst would not have been tolerated a second time in conferences of this kind, but it is not the workers' task to be friendly towards their class enemies.

It is therefore possible in such a situation to conceive of a revolutionary conduct and oppose it to the reformist attitude. Thus we can see that the revolutionary strategy cannot be reduced to calling for an insurrection and revolution at every opportunity without regard to the objective conditions and real possibilities of a given situation. That is nothing but revolutionary phrase-mongering, not revolutionary tactics; it is proof of extreme skittishness and little judgement. No, this is not what revolutionary tactics and strategy are made of. Their essence is to always maintain the clear demarcation between classes, never allowing it to be blurred; to always underline the existing principles; and to always sharpen the contradictions. Reformist tactics however, consist of smoothing over the sharp edges, plastering over the cracks, lessening and softening the class contradictions. From this viewpoint we can see that revolutionaries must not limit themselves exclusively to certain methods of struggle, as certain comrades — thinking that only strikes and armed insurrection are worth the attention of revolutionaries — would have us believe. No, everything depends on the way we act and the effect, in terms of political education, these actions have on the mass of workers. We are familiar with revolutionary parliamentary actions, reformist demonstrations and even reactionary strikes, when, for example, the strike is waged against the hiring of blacks, etc. This is why we cannot under any circumstances be in agreement with the old unionist theory that attributes miraculous significance to certain forms and methods of struggle. Everything depends on the time, the place, the circumstances and, principally, the aim of the struggle and the problems that are raised.

While leading a severe and pitiless struggle against the tendency to collaborate with the ruling classes at any price, to continuously retreat and fear decisive actions, we must also struggle resolutely against the are to lead a severe and pitiless struggle against the tendency to reach

spirit of revolutionary adventurism and the attack-at-all-costs mentality. Recently Thomas, the president of the Amsterdam International, who is also head of the English railway workers, explained why they did they did not support the miners in their struggle: "Our action would have brought about the fall of the government and a collision with the forces of the state". So rather than bring about the fall of the government, he preferred to betray the interests of the miners. This is a perfectly classic example of reformist strategy. Above all else, do not bring down the government, do not sharpen the contradictions, do not enter into a decisive struggle with the ruling classes, but always work for an agreement regardless of the conditions, regardless of the cost. In our struggle against such treason, against such an anti-worker strategy, we must be very hard and very determined. But, as we have already noted, that does not mean that everywhere we are obliged to preach the offensive, regardless of the conditions. The First Congress of the Red International of Labour Unions stated the fundamental principles of our strategy in a very clear and precise way. This is what the Resolution of Tactics says in this regard:

" 43. We shall be able to conquer the masses, and consequently the trade unions, only on condition that in the attack or resistance we will be at the head, in the first ranks, of the working class. This standpoint shall in no case be construed to mean a call to action is advisable under any and all circumstances. The supporters of the Red International of Labour Unions must not only be model revolutionaries, but also models of sustained action and coolheadedness. The whole gist of success consists in the systematic, efficient and stubborn preparation of every move, of every mass action; rapidity and sureness of action must go hand in hand with a detailed study of each situation and its conditions, as well as the organized strength of the enemy forces. In class struggles, as well as in battles at the front, we should not only know how to attack, but also how to retreat in orderly and compact formation. Both in offensive and defensive warfare it is always necessary to take into consideration whether we have the sympathy of the proletarian masses and what are the social and political forces involved."

As we can see, the Congress demands that revolutionary leaders be, above all else, revolutionary realists. We must have fiery hearts and cool heads. In this regard, we should follow the example of our class enemies. Just a brief examination of the social struggle will show the great variety of means and methods used by the ruling class in the struggle to defend their interest. They play at social reforms while at the same time setting up militias of White Guard assassins, attacking on all fronts, destroying

workers' organizations and arresting the leaders. Parliament continues to pass laws and social-reform societies, both public and private, continue to stuff the working class with falsehoods. Literature, the Church, the universities, the legal system, the police, all act towards the same end. All available weapons are used by the bourgeoisie, from the heavy artillery of the police to the poisonous gases of reformism. We must always know how to find the weak points on this enormous front, to push back the attack and go on the offensive, to maintain leadership, to never shy away from any means of struggle against the class enemy, to fight ruthlessly against bourgeois spies and accomplices within the working class, and, methodically exploiting every error of the enemy in a persistent and calm way, advancing when possible and retreating to regroup when necessary, to lead the working class to the final goal, to socialism.

XXIII. Conclusion

The working class stands alone in the struggle for its emancipation. In this sense, the situation is worse than it was for the bourgeoisie, which in its struggle to overthrow the feudal regime could count on the emerging working class. During the French Revolution artisans from the districts of Paris formed vanguard revolutionary detachments. The working class is making revolution under different conditions. In the majority of European countries it is fighting for power not only against the financial and industrial bourgeoisie, which clings to its privileges with all its strength, but also against a rich and strong peasant class. This peasant class is, on the whole, hostile to socialism, dreading its victory. The peasant class is the bulwark of European reaction.

The isolation of the proletariat in its struggle is aggravated by its heterogeneity, the lack of unity of its organizations and the bourgeois spirit that corrupts and divides them. Although it may hurt to admit it, it must be said that the workers are no strangers to imperialism. The war showed the degree of the workers' attachment to their nation's capitalism. The representatives of this unconscious attachment are the reformist union leaders and the reformist socialist parties. These conditions make it very difficult for the working class to fight. This is why the chief task of revolutionary workers is victory over the internal opposition to revolutionary work. This internal opposition is the fortress of the bourgeoisie in the present struggles; in both its organization and ideology the working class reflects the past, the present and the future. There are broad amorphous masses that take no part in the social

struggle. It is sufficient to note that of the 21 million German workers, only 12 million are unionized (free unions, Christian unions, liberal unions, communist unions, etc.).

However, we must not think that the tens of millions of unorganized workers play no role among the forces presently at work. By their very abstention, they support the existing order, they are like a ball and chain holding back the forward march of the vanguard of the proletariat. They are followed closely by the organizations in the service of the bourgeoisie (the Christian, liberal and yellow unions) that wage organized struggle against revolutionary class ideology and politics. And finally we have the powerful reformist unions, whose theory and practice is similar to that of the liberal unions. It is not by pure chance that the German reformist unions have formed a bloc with the Christian unions and the Hirsh-Dünker unions. As class struggle sharpens, the reformist leaders move closer to the Christian and liberal unions. We are therefore faced with enormous organizations that embody the conservatism of the working class. They oppose social revolution with organized resistance. In many countries, it is still only a minority of the organized workers that share our ideas about revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Under these conditions, the fundamental tasks of the revolutionary unions consist above all of winning over the masses, since without this condition no revolution will be possible. This will not be achieved by abstract agitation and propaganda, but by concrete and practical work, by a vigorous struggle for the day-to-day interests of the workers. We must show ourselves to be the ardent defenders of the proletarian united front, not the united front of class collaboration but that of class struggle. We lead the fight against the reformist leaders not for any personal motives, but because they defend an ideology and tactics that are harmful to the proletariat. We will cease this struggle when the masses organized in the reformist unions take up positions alongside us for the total emancipation of labour every time the old working class leaders place themselves at the head of the fighters. When a worker takes up the struggle against capitalism, we should not ask him what party he belongs to, which program of action he wants to carry out: he is fighting, so he is with us. We extend to him a brotherly hand, for he is our comrade in arms. The daily struggle is the best school for revolution and communism.

Tenacity, decisiveness, perseverance and unlimited devotion to the interests of the masses of workers will allow us to take our place in this daily struggle. Those who follow this path will win over the masses to the

revolution and to communism and only they will have achieved, in practice, the spirit and letter of the Program of Action of the Red International of Labour Unions.

Moscow, August-October, 1921.

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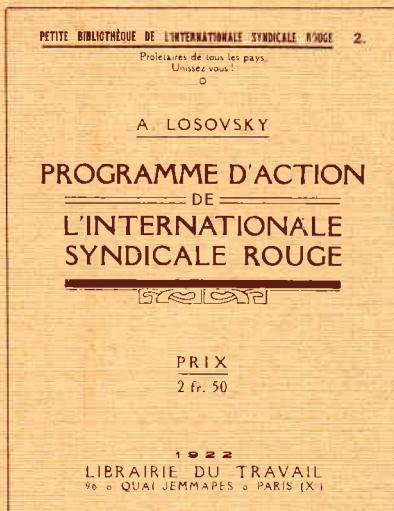
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Cover page of "Program of Action" of the Red International of Labour Unions, French edition published in 1922.

for this reason not a single case of mass action, not a single small conflict should pass, from this point of view, without leaving a deep mark. It is the duty of the revolutionary trade unions to explain these conflicts to the workers, leading the rank and file always toward the idea of the necessity and the inevitability of the social revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat."

— Excerpt from "Program of Action" of the Red International of Labour Unions at its founding congress in 1921.

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"While conducting the fight for the improvement of the conditions of labour, raising the standard of life of the masses, and establishing workers' control over industry, we should always keep in mind that it is impossible to solve all these problems within the framework of the capitalist system. For this reason the revolutionary trade unions, while gradually forcing concessions from the ruling classes, compelling them to enact social legislation, should put before the working masses a clear-cut idea, that only the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat can solve the social question. For