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ILLEGIB

THE ORIGIN OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED AID.

In August 1922 there appeared in the "Communist Tribune" the organ of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Poland, an appeal dated 23rd August, calling upon the Polish communists and non-party sympathisers to collect money in aid of the victims of the relentless Terror being practised by the Polish bourgeoisie. This appeal was signed by 42 well known Polish Communists, including Comrades Dzierzinsky, Dolecki, Ganecki, Cohn, Marchlevsky, Pestkovsky, Unschlicht, Hibner (executed later in Poland), and others. It described the horrors of the prisons, and proposed the establishment of a fund in aid of the political prisoners in Poland, Shortly afterwards a committee was formed for the collection of contributions, with Comrade Marchlevsky as chairman.

Contributions and gifts flowed in an unceasing stream from every part of the country. The growth of the fund could be followed in the columns of the "Tribune". The movement shot far beyond its original goal, and was soon much more than a relief action confined to the one country. It became evident that the need of help for the proletariat fighting against capitalism was not restricted to communist and non-Party Poles, and that the desire to help the fighters was awakening among the broadest strata of the working people in Russia, White Russia, and the Ukraine.

Comrade Marchlevsky resolved to call upon the Society of old Bolsheviki for assistance. On 13th September 1922, he gave a report at a session of the Presidium of this Society. Basing his proposals on the experiences gained by the committee organised in Poland for the relief of political prisoners, and upon the fact that contributions were being received not only from Poland, but from the workers of Russia, Ukraine, White  
Russia

- 2 -

Russia, and other countries, Comrade Marchlevsky proposed the founding of a special organisation in aid of political prisoners in all the countries of the capitalist world. The Presidium of the Society of old Bolsheviki took up the proposition energetically, and resolved at once upon a campaign for the establishment of such an organisation. Marchlevsky, Lepeschinsky, etc., were among the comrades forming the commission.

Meanwhile the relief organisation aiding the political prisoners in Poland continued its work. By November, 1922, it had reached not only Moscow and Minsk, but the Ukraine and other Soviet Republics.

In this same month the organisation was given its final form, that of the "International Association for the Support of the Champions of Revolution." This took place at the IV Congress of the Comintern, on 30th November 1922. The resolution passed by this Congress called upon all Communist Parties to form organisations in support of the I.R.A.

The organisatory work now began. About 2 months later, on 28th January 1923, the "PRAVDA" published the first circular in which the C.C. of the C.P.R. dealt with the question of the I.R.A. The Party organisations were called upon to take all necessary and possible measures in support of the I.R.A. This circular was issued simultaneously with the first appeal of the I.R.A. to the workers of the Soviet Union.

In March 1923, the I.R.A. set to work. On 2nd March the C.C. of the I.R.A. was formed. Chairman Comrade Marchlevsky; Vice chairman Comrade Lepeschinsky; members: Comrades Kolarov, Fischer, Mitzkevitch, Kapsukas, Kramarov, Budich; Secretary Comrade Tyomkin.

In February 1924 the I.R.A. underwent certain organisatory changes. It was found necessary to found a special section for the Soviet Union. At the same time it was resolved to  
carry

- 3 -

carry the appeal of the I.R.A. to countries in which there are comparatively few victims of the revolutionary struggle, for instance America, Australia, and Scandinavia, in order to induce these to assist the victims of the White Terror in other countries

From these beginnings the I.R.A. has developed into one of the greatest organisations of the international proletariat. The slogan under whose auspices the I.R.A. commenced its activities: "Workers of the world, unite", is advancing to realisation in our revolutionary times, and this longed for goal, the unification of the world proletariat, is being served by the International Red Aid.

November 22-23, 1922

NOTE

Comrade Munzenberg delivered a report on Famine Relief before the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, November - December, 1922 (Fourth Congress of the Communist International: Abridged Report of Meetings held at Petrograd and Moscow, November 7 - December 3, 1922: Published for the Communist International by the Communist Party of Great Britain, 16 King Street, Covent Garden, W. C. 2, p. 224).

In International Press Correspondence, Vol. II, No. 116, December 23, 1922, there appears a lengthy "Report on Workers Relief by Munzenberg" which presumably sets forth the report above referred to. From the report as printed in International Press Correspondence, this paragraph is quoted:

"In America there is the Friends of Soviet Russia, which is closely connected with the Communist International, . . . ."