

The Trade Union Question at the Plenary Session of the Executive Committee of the Communist International.

** At the session of the Executive of the Communist International held on the 1st of March, Comrade Lozovsky and Brandler as representatives of the Red Trade Union International delivered a report on the trade-union movement. Comrade Lozovsky gave by way of introduction a short summary of the origin and development of the Red Trade Union International up to the time of its Congress. All decisions and resolutions of the Congress bear according to his words the evidence of that alliance which was consummated at the Congress between the Syndicalists and the Communists. Thereupon the General Secretary of the Red Trade Union International described the recent progress of our movement throughout the world.

In France the Syndicalists refused to recognize the revolutionary alliance which had been formed at the First Congress. The French Communists at times took up a neutral attitude towards these problems and offered no opposition to the Syndicalists who thereby had a free hand. Towards the end of 1921 a change took place. The situation became clearer and more favorable for us.

Developments in Italy resemble somewhat those in France, nevertheless the Syndicalist-Communist Alliance on the whole is working for the capturing of the trade-unions. In Italy the Red Trade Union International is supported by one-third of the organized proletariat; the same may be said of Spain.

In America the fight continues, showing various tendencies. The Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.) have retained their revolutionary phraseology, but practically they are carrying on reformist tactics. The formation of the Workers Party is of symptomatic significance.

In Germany, a diminutive Syndicalist organization recently made an attempt to form a Syndicalist International. This attempt is of no significance. The Red Trade Union International has under its influence from 2 to 2½ million organized workers.

In Russia and in Bulgaria, the whole of the organized proletariat belongs to the Red Trade Union International. In Poland, the majority of the organized workers in some individual industries are ranged on its side and in others a considerable minority.

In general the influence of the Red Trade Union International in all countries is remarkable. It is true that this influence does not always find expression in figures; moreover the statistics of the Amsterdam International are just as defective as ours. Comrade Lozovsky denied that Amsterdam had considerable power and influence.

With regard to the international trade federations, a successful struggle for their revolutionizing is being carried on. The Amsterdam Union have begun to expel the trade-unions whose central organizations had pronounced in favor of the Red Trade Union International. The R.T.U.I. on the other hand is carrying on a successful struggle against these expulsions.

At the conclusion of this report the General Secretary of the R.T.U.I. dealt with the uncertainty which some comrades feel on the question of the R.T.U.I. It is true we are against a split. But we could in no circumstances draw the conclusion from that that we must not make use in an organizational way of a majority gained in a trade-union federation. Comrade Lozovsky condemned the tactics of remaining affiliated to the Amsterdam Trade Union International even when the majority in the trade-union concerned had ranged themselves on our side. In particular Comrade Lozovsky pointed out that neither the Czecho-Slovakian nor the Norwegian Party (the last named has the support of 75% of the organized workers) had understood how to make use of their influence.

In his supplementary report Comrade Brandler pointed out that the special task of the trade-union movement at the present moment was defined by the unprecedented and flagrant attack which is being made by Capital against Labor. The groups of the bourgeoisie warring among each other become united when they desire to attack the proletariat! The proletariat must likewise in united front take up the resolute struggle against the bourgeoisie. The example of France demonstrates how tremendously important a close union of the trade-unions with the working masses is. The chief task of the R.T.U.I. consists in linking together in every country all those elements which are agreed in their opposition to Amsterdam. The practical task of the R.T.U.I. is sustaining the fight of the workers

against the reduction of wages and they must use every opportunity to explain to the workers that every economic struggle is also a political struggle.

In conclusion Comrade Brandler drew attention to the growth of Communist influence in the trade-union movement and insisted on the necessity of making use of all the influence gained in order to form a firmly united organization of the R.T.U.I. for the fight for the emancipation of the proletariat.

The Task of the Communists in the Trade Unions.

** The Conference of the enlarged Executive just held in Moscow adopted the following resolution on the trade-unions.

1—The enlarged Executive affirms that the resolutions of the Third Congress of the Communist International with regard to the trade-union question need not be materially altered. The six months' experience of the period reported on has again proved the principles agreed on for the work in the trade-unions to be appropriate and correct. The present Conference resumes the topic for the sole purpose of reminding the Communists, that, according to their growing influence in the trade-unions, it has become necessary to render their work more and more concrete, adapting it to the respective conditions prevalent in divers countries and different industries.

2—Owing to the growing offensive of capital the trade-union movement of all countries is now passing through a serious crisis. This crisis expresses itself in the decline of the membership, and in the exhaustion of financial resources. On the other hand the increasing misery among the masses of the people produces an urgent and violent longing to fight against the offensive of Capital in one united front, thus breaking through the tactics of delay and hesitation followed by the reformist leaders, which deprive the trade-unions of their fighting spirit, and heedless of these leaders, defending their elementary rights of life by means of joint action.

3—This situation in the international trade-union movement is extremely favorable for the further development and strengthening of our activities in the conquest of the trade-unions; and for the deepening of Communist influence among the masses. This actual situation has to be the stepping-stone for the Communists working in the trade-unions, when fighting for the Red Trade Union International (R.T.U.I.).

4—In various countries the R.T.U.I. has up to now only been a current within the old organizations; in others, however, it really comprises the majority of the members, and, in others, even the trade-union organizations. This situation being given, it is the duty of the Communists in places where the R.T.U.I. is only a tendency, within every trade-union whether national or international, to rally around them as a firm nucleus all those workers who are willing to enter earnestly into the contest against the bourgeoisie and to carry on the fight with a will. Wherever we have a majority of revolutionary workers in the trade-unions the duty of the Communists will be to propagate the affiliation of the whole country to the R.T.U.I.

5—In the next instance the duty of the Communists consists in the expansion of their influence in the old reformist trade-unions, fighting against the split policy of the Amsterdam leaders, and in an exact and truly logical employment of the tactics of a united front in the trade-union movement. However large a minority within the different trade-unions or the trades council be—the Communists have to see to it that this minority remains in the various organizations, fighting therein for the carrying through of the program and for the tactics of the minority. The affiliation of the trade-union minorities that have to remain in the old organizations to the R.T.U.I. can only be an idealist one, and these minorities will have to prove their close connection with the R.T.U.I. by a strict adherence to the resolutions of the First Congress of the revolutionary trade-unions and through obedience to the tactics of the Profintern.

6—The Communists are in duty bound to see to it that the various trade-unions affiliated to the R.T.U.I. remain in the international craft and industrial secretariats. In case they should not yet have entered these they must do so. Before the international proletariat we clearly and openly state our position: We remain in the national trade-union federations and will only become affiliated with the Profintern, in the event of our winning the majority over to the principles of the R.T.U.I. The workers of every country will, at their general trade-union congress, decide which program and which tactics are in the interest of

the working-class: those of the Amsterdam International or those of the R.T.U.I. This is the only way to make the broad masses see who the "splitters" are, who prevent the formation of a center of power against the mighty exploiting class. This is the only way to make the masses see the Amsterdammers as the helpers of the bourgeoisie, who defend bourgeois democracy against the dictatorship of the proletariat, all the while treading down proletarian democracy when the Communists, using the means of proletarian democracy, try to win the majority in the trade-unions with a view of transforming the unions, from an organ of the bourgeoisie into their own fighting organ against it.

7—The ready-to-compromise tendencies extant in some parties with regard to the R.T.U.I. are caused by a series of miscomprehensions, and are based on the false hope of a wheeling to the left on the part of the Amsterdam leaders. This must be strictly and categorically condemned. The Amsterdammers will always waver, wheeling to the left at the same pace as the influence of the Communist parties increases in the various countries, and at the same pace at which the R.T.U.I. extends its organizing and ideological influence upon the trade-union movement of all countries. The Communists must by no means reckon with a wheeling to the left on the part of the trade-union leaders. The Communists base their tactics on the inevitable revolutionizing of the masses. With the development of social contrasts, with the growing influence of the Communist parties and the Communist International and the development of revolutionary ideas among the working-class, the attempts of the Amsterdam Internationalists to hide their reformist activity and repugnance of any fighting, even of fighting against the most imminent daily needs, with revolutionary phrases will increase.

8—The Communist parties and the Communist International, that have taken the initiatory measures for the formation of the R.T.U.I., have to continue their work by strengthening and developing their organization, which not only embraces Communist elements but also Syndicalist and unorganized revolutionary elements.