

## Sixteenth Session.

# Report on the Work of the Trade Union Commission.

Reporter: Comrade Lozovsky.

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The principal questions that I want to touch upon in my report have already been dealt with in a general way in the theses distributed to all the delegates: trustification, rationalisation and the tasks of the Communists in the trade unions.

The first question which the Communist International and each Party must decide, is the question of **which new forms, which new methods of the class struggle are now being applied by capitalism against the workers.** We see a series of new phenomena, such as the gigantic trustification within national boundaries, also a series of international trusts, and the rationalisation which is now being carried out in the European countries under various forms and methods. All these new phenomena: concentration within national boundaries, international trusts and combinations, new rationalisation methods — all these are new offensive methods against the working class, and only if we look upon these new phenomena from this viewpoint shall we be able to work out a proper policy and correct tactics. If we take up these various phenomena we will see that the first task of all these new methods of power combination is directed against the workers, and intended to increase the competitive power of the bourgeoisie at the expense of the working class.

It is necessary that we view all these phenomena connectedly. All these various methods and forms have but one purpose, on the one hand to further increase production and bring about monopolisation and higher prices, and on the other hand to depress the standard of living of the working class.

The Social Democratic press reacts upon these new phenomena with tremendous enthusiasm for trustification, etc. When the first reports on the formation of this continental iron trust were received, the Amsterdam International formed a special commission composed of Dissmann, Mertens, and several other bosses, which worked out a policy according to which this new international iron trust was to be combatted. In the programme of this commission it is stated that industrial unions, industrial federations must be formed, that the powers of the factory councils must be enlarged, that a control over the business management of the employers must be introduced, that price limits must be fixed, that the co-operatives must be supported, that all raw materials must be socialised, that the distribution of the most important articles of consumption be organised, the banks socialised, and an international control of trusts introduced — all this through the International Labour Bureau, i. e. through an organ of the bourgeois State. The Social Democracy advocates the view that these new trusts are organs which bring progress to humanity. All these programme demands are of course only formulated for demagogic purposes, they have only the purpose of misleading the working masses and of shifting all questions to a different basis.

It is very interesting to note how the German Social Democratic press discusses these new trusts, its standpoint is always in favour of the trusts. In September of this year a meeting of factory councillors took place in Berlin at which one of the A. D. G. B. leaders, Eggert, made a speech, the basic line of which had nothing to do with the so-called socialisation proposed in the Amsterdam programme. He said literally:

"There is nothing else for the trade unions to do than to help along, to help build up economic development." He said further:

"We must get into harness on this thing, there is nothing to be gained here by class struggle."

We see from these statements that the programme of the Amsterdam International is only a fake programme, for the whole activity of the Amsterdam International now consists in solving all these questions within the limits of the League of Nations and the International Labour Office.

If we go over to the question of rationalisation we see the same enthusiasm in the international Social Democratic circles.

In Leipart's organ "Die Arbeit" there was an article in which it was stated that unemployment was a pre-condition for the cleaning up of international economy. Obviously if one considers it as a pre-condition for an economic sanitation, one cannot apply any sort of measures in order to fight unemployment. The Social Democratic reformist leaders of the A. D. G. B. have also already put through various resolutions on rationalisation. Interesting in this connection is a very lengthy resolution of the Berlin factory councillors. The chief thought in this resolution is that the purpose of rationalisation is to increase the well-being of the whole people. But there are some employers who carry out an entirely different line and policy... The government, the Minister of Labour, the arbitration organs are in the end called upon to crystallise this rationalisation in a deep socio-political sense with the aim of extending the markets — this is one of the weightiest points in Social Democratic theory and philosophy.

Secondly, rationalisation has the purpose of increasing the consuming power of the masses.

The French reformists, and leading elements in the French trade union movement generally, are somewhat more careful. They do the same as is done in Germany, but they talk less. Thus, e. g. two or three weeks ago the central organ of the French reformist trade unions sent a special questionnaire to various prominent political persons. This questionnaire actually asks:

"Do you believe that the principles which Ford has put into effect in America and which have the purpose of raising the consuming power of the workers, can also be initiated in French industry?"

The clever French bourgeois paper "Le Temps" says on this point: "Asking questions is sometimes an attempt to have others say what you are afraid to utter yourself". This paper very ably brought out the chief idea behind the questionnaire. The whole policy of the international Social Democracy and reformists towards rationalisation is only an economic consequence of the new orientation.

The reformists are always up to something new. I would like to direct your attention to a couple of very interesting facts, which are characteristic of the new attitude of international reformism. Thus a number of leading periodicals of the German reformists, such as "Die Arbeit", "Das Gewerkschaftsarchiv", raised the colonial question in a very sharp form. The workers can have nothing against the possession of colonies — at least so says one of the writers, Dr. Müller. I could cite a number of other interesting articles here, in which the German trade unionists not only raise the question of the old colonies lost by Germany under the Versailles Treaty, but also the question of the colonies generally and in principle, and they state that the white race is justified in leading the coloured peoples, of course without violence and of course with democratic means! This demand for colonies by the trade union press in the present situation is a very interesting proof of how deeply the Social Democratic leadership is steeped in imperialist ideology. What the German Social Democracy and the leading elements of the German trade unions now write and preach, the bourgeois and radical parties in Germany have always been practising. Thus we see a fully developed bourgeois ideology. It is supported by broad strata of the workers and it is therefore the peculiarity of the development of the trade unions, of the German labour movement, that this whole apparatus, historically crystallised on the foundation of the working class, is completely bourgeois, completely integrated with the bourgeois States. In the countries in which the trade union movement is split we see the evolution of the proletarian and petty-bourgeois programmes still more crassly, which changes also the social content of the Parties.

We have a very interesting testimonial in the organ of the heavy industrialists of France, "Bulletin Quotidienne", which

writes in an article on the French Trade Union Federation, that the reformist trade union federation is undergoing an evolution, that it has already deserted its old positions, that it is entirely opposed to politics, and that its leaders have changed, probably under the influence of advancing years. And if nevertheless they still retain a part of the old ideology, they have nevertheless become much more moderate. One must take into consideration that the reformist trade union federation contains in its ranks from day to day fewer and fewer workers, but more and more State employees, postal workers, teachers, etc. Thus one sees that the social content of this trade union federation is changing. Perhaps the leaders are unaware of it, but we see it quite clearly. The conclusion of this article is that this new development in France is proceeding favourably to the Communists. These political and social changes now taking place in the reformist trade unions explain their attitude towards trustification, rationalisation, etc. The standpoint of the reformists can be taken only in connection with this question, in connection with their political attitude, their programme and their tactics.

What shall be our position, the attitude of the Comintern and of the Communist Parties to these new methods and forms of capitalist combination for its offensive against the working class?

But what concrete practical programme, what programme of action, must be proposed on the trade union field in order to enlighten the toiling masses, in order to mobilise them? What practical means must we apply in order to parry this offensive against the working class?

Efforts are now being made to carry the split of the working class into every single factory, by means of reducing the number of skilled workers and introducing new workers into the process of production. Within each factory efforts are being made to introduce new methods of collaboration, and in a number of German factories this has already happened through the so-called "company unions". Efforts are now being made to split the workers in the factories, to play one section against the other, and thereby weaken the strength of the working class in order to be better able to carry out the new offensive, the so-called sanitation of economy. The task of all Communist Parties must therefore be to establish the united front inside of the factories. The Social Democracy demands, seeks and desires collaboration with the employers, and if the factory councils are drawn into this collaboration, thanks to the demagogy of the Social Democracy, this will mean a terrible demoralisation of the workers in the factory. Our first slogan must therefore be: **No collaboration in the rationalisation process!** Not participation of representatives of factory councils and trade unions in carrying out the rationalisation as is proposed by the Social Democracy! Establishment of the united front in the factories!

The second task which confronts us is the amalgamation of the workers, not only in the factories but also in the industrial unions. We must formulate a programme that strengthens the forces of the working class in order to enable it to fight the new concentrated power of the employers.

Another very concrete slogan is the question of the work-day; this slogan we can raise within national boundaries, and adapt to every industry. In our coming sessions we will find out the extent to which it is possible to formulate this slogan also internationally.

An additional problem that confronts us is the organising of all workers employed in one trust. This must be done on a national as well as an international basis. Here we must find new forms of organisation, new forms of amalgamation. We already have such international bodies as, e. g. the craft internationals, which are under the leadership of Amsterdam, which have thus far done absolutely nothing, so that we must take the initiative in hand. In this connection the question of unemployment maintenance and a number of other concrete questions which we raise in our general theses, is important.

Can it be said that these proposals exhaust all the concrete questions and slogans for the various countries? Of course not. These slogans are only chief slogans for the struggle against the consequences of the rationalisation, they are only directives which enable us later to formulate concrete demands for every country.

I should like to direct attention to a series of new phenomena within the the labour movement. I think that the most important consists in that in a number of countries, e. g. Germany, Great Britain etc., we have a chronic unemployment. Here we may say that in Germany and Great Britain there are 10—15% of superfluous workers. This is not a normal unemployment, it is something new, and our struggle in defence of these unemployed must proceed jointly with the presentation of a programme for the ending of this unemployment, for the readmission of the unemployed in the productive process.

Another very important new phenomenon within the labour movement is the fact that the rationalisation process reduces the number and also the role of the skilled workers in the process of production, and thereby reduces the resistance of the working class in its first stage. Only in the further effect of these new methods do new sentiments arise within the working class, do the masses of workers develop leftward, etc. But this is already the second stage in this process. The first stage — and this is very important — cripples the workers' power of resistance.

A further important fact is the growing rapprochement, in process already a year and a half, between the Social Democratic and reformist leaders and the employers' organisations. The rapprochement between reformist leaders and employers' organisations is paralleled by the discontent, by the new mood among the workers against this fusion.

Furthermore, we have seen during the last year that in all countries there is a growing demand for a united front among the workers, that they insist upon joint actions, etc. This can be seen in Great Britain, France, Germany and also a number of other countries. There is practically not a single country in which this will for unity, and for the concrete carrying into effect of this unity, does not prevail.

In addition, during the last year, we can note a number of phenomena which forced international actions, thus, e. g. the Chinese revolution, the growth of the Japanese working class, the activity of the workers in Indonesia, India, etc.

To sum up we may say that last years' whole development in the labour movement consists in that the movement is travelling from Right to Left. Only in places in which the counter-revolution was victorious, as in Hungary, where it defeated the workers, do we see that the heads of the labour organisations are moving towards the Right and one cannot quite exactly estimate how far the Leftward movement has progressed in these countries.

These various leftward movements now bear an entirely different character than they did a year ago. A year ago we had a situation in which the Left sentiment was still very little differentiated, and it was but very slightly crystallised politically. Now we see that we have a certain political differentiation everywhere in these various Left movements. This political differentiation was the consequence of the crisis in the Anglo-Russian Committee, the clash between the British and Soviet trade unions on the question of the British General and Miners' Strikes. If for a certain period the Anglo-Russian Committee was the crystallisation point for various Left movements, at present a crisis is to be noted. The British representatives on the committee tried to sabotage, tried to do everything possible to blow up the committee, they are doing everything possible in order to change the constitution of the committee. This crisis, which arose out of the attitude of the revolutionary and reformist trade unions towards the practical struggles of the British working class, has not yet been solved, and no one can tell how it is going to be solved.

All revolutionary elements must have a clear and definite attitude on this crisis and must crystallise a clear opinion in the trade union movement as to how the unity movement in general is to be fostered and what concrete tasks this movement shall set itself.

Already at the V. Congress we defined our principal position towards these Left elements, and there cannot be two opinions in the Comintern as to how we should act towards these various elements in the trade unions. We are speaking about Left elements which are outside of the Comintern, e. g. the Minority Movement. We must facilitate the crystallisation of

these Left elements. We support these groups, we do everything possible to help them develop, but of course we must criticise the erroneous attitude to be found in the organs of these groups. I will take an article from the organ "Einheit", of which Fimmen is the responsible editor, an article — "We and the Communists" — in which an absolutely hostile attitude was assumed against the Communists. Of course, we must criticise this. Nor can we remain silent with regard to Fimmen's attitude against the slogan of Indonesian independence. He says that if we raise this slogan and Indonesia liberates itself, other imperialists will gobble it up. This may be true or it may not, but from this analysis he draws the conclusion that the Dutch workers should not raise the question of Indonesian independence. This is a social democratic attitude, which we must combat sharply as a matter of course.

We may state quite frankly here not only that our policy with regard to the United Front proved itself correct, but we can say that we have made big progress. Of course, we must take country by country, we must see how large our progress has been, we must see what are our weaknesses. This factor must be continued, it must be adapted to the conditions of the workers in each country and in each industry. This concrete political adaptation must be worked out by each Communist Party with the help, of course, of the Comintern and Profintern.

We have made progress, but very many shortcomings are still to be noted. The Communist International was always something peculiar. The Social Democratic press says ironically: Look at the Communists, at every Congress they speak about defects and weaknesses and mistakes, and they call each other names, etc. Of course there are no such things as shortcomings and mistakes among the Social Democrats! At their congresses all is quiet — as in a graveyard. Everybody is satisfied, nobody says anything against anybody else, one just simply adopts a unanimous resolution, drinks a good glass of beer and goes home. And they call this — international. We are not Social Democrats and we are not duty bound always to pay compliments to one another. We are not hunting for weaknesses in order to offend any of the Parties or groups of comrades, but we take up these various weaknesses in order to eliminate them. I should like to state here that the self-criticism which we express here in our Congresses and all meetings of the Executive has had a very great effect upon all our Parties. It would have been impossible for our Parties to have made such political and organisational progress if we had not exercised this constant self-criticism, if we had not exposed all our weaknesses and shortcomings.

The primary shortcoming is that while we have adopted many good resolutions we did not carry them out — not only not by 100%, but on the average not even by 10%.

We have said that 75%, yes, even 99% of all our strength must be expended on trade union work. Comrades, that is very fine. One may say 75% for trade union work — but then one forgets all about it. If e. g. our Party press devotes only a column to trade union work in which, in addition, various notices appear, this certainly does not correspond altogether to the 75% that was to have been devoted to trade union work. Let us take e. g. the Rote Fahne, L'Humanité, etc. — I maintain that they and all the rest of our press do not devote the requisite space to the trade union question, the space they should according to all our decisions.

A further shortcoming consists in that the building of fractions is still in its infancy. The chief question here consists not in where we thus far have no fractions — we already have fractions in all countries — the chief question consists in that they are working badly, they are functioning poorly.

An additional deficiency is the disproportion between political influence and organisational strength, which is still very great. This is one of the most dangerous phenomena which we must combat.

An additional weakness consists in our insufficient experience in the exploitation of campaigns. We are not yet able to exploit 100% the campaigns that we have launched.

In a number of countries we have not yet sufficient concrete trade union slogans. We have decided many times in the past to formulate not only a special programme of action for each country, but also for each important industry, such a pro-

gramme was not only to be worked out, but is, was to be propagated over a period of years, so that it would come to be understood by every worker. Our action programmes are much too long. The main thing is to put five or six striking points and to mobilise the workers behind them. The British comrades have a good practice in this. The other parties should learn from them.

A further defect are the extremely weak cadres. It is necessary to train cadres politically and practically, to create special trade union schools. And this must proceed parallelly, not only must cadres be created, but at the same time we must draw new elements into the schools to be used for our work later on.

The Parties in the capitalist countries still have but very poor connections with the labour movement in the Colonies. Relations with the Colonies are very weak. The British Labour Party has a great influence in India. It has formed a Labour Party there according to the English pattern. This is a democratic method of maintaining the political power of Britain in India. We are doing very little on this field.

A further question that I should like to touch upon is the strengthening of our organisations, our minority movements. Of course, there is no uniform method for the carrying out of our decisions on this question. In Great Britain one must proceed otherwise than in France, and in Germany differently from Czechoslovakia. In general we must say: strengthen the R. I. L. U.; strengthen the minorities in the trade unions; develop our minorities and their organisation; extend our unions, recruit new forces, viz. broaden the basis of our trade union organisations. And that is the only possibility also of strengthening the Profintern.

All Communist Parties are in favour of strengthening the Profintern. This can be done only if in every country trade union work is really carried on and the influence of the Communist Party is extended, if our influence in the organisational amalgamation of the revolutionary unions becomes larger.

One cannot say that the strengthening of the Comintern and of the Profintern are two different things. No, our trade union work is an important work for the Communist Parties, in order to strengthen and broaden them; in order to extend their influence.

One of our most important tasks is to establish a direct connection between the European trade unions and minority movements and the Indian, Indonesian and Chinese trade unions. This has a very great political significance. We are now trying — and I believe that we shall succeed — to call together a Pan-Pacific Conference for May 1st, 1927 in Canton. It is absolutely necessary that we discuss which trade unions, also which European trade unions from the large imperialist states, are to be represented at this conference, in order that an amalgamation be effected between the Pan-Pacific labour movement, the toiling masses of the Far East, and the European labour movement.

The coalescence of the trade unions of China, Australia, Japan, Indonesia and the Philippines with those of Europe will play a tremendous political role for the international labour movement. Our comrades in the various countries should look a little further than Europe, they should see what is going on outside of Europe and then we will be able to conduct a correct policy.

A further question is the struggle for a united International. In this respect, our propaganda and agitation is not sufficiently concrete. We have already spoken a good deal about the formation of a unified International. But which International? What should this International do? We always say: united front, and again united front. But which united front, on which basis? Surely only on the basis of the class struggle, for the conduct of international class struggles, etc. We are now in possession of splendid examples showing what an International should not be. We know the "activity" of the Amsterdam International in the British strike movement. But has this been adequately exploited in our propaganda? No. We must make clear to every social-democratic and non-Party worker, on the basis of these facts, why the Amsterdam International did not do its duty; in order on such a concrete basis to bring into being one International, to put to the foreground and the creation of a unified international upon the basis of the class struggle. We have not

understood this sufficiently. In the immediate future we shall have to fight bitter struggles in a number of countries against the official trade union representatives, against the whole trade union apparatus, against the Social Democracy, against the united front between the Amsterdammers and the employers. Our Parties must prepare themselves well for this. If we want to carry out such struggles with good preparation we must extend and strengthen our work in the factories a hundred fold. Only then when every factory is a vantage point, when we have a solid fraction there, only then can we successfully conduct this severe struggle against the whole official apparatus of the trade union and social democratic bureaucracy. I believe that in the immediate future the Comintern and Profintern must concern themselves specifically with these questions of the economic struggle. Only if the Communist Parties occupy themselves fully with this question can we make progress in this respect, if not we shall remain stationary and the bureaucracy in the trade unions and Social Democracy will sabotage the coming strikes, will more and more depress the standard of living of the working class.

On the whole I believe that the next period will raise

economic problems for every Party. This does not mean that we should not concern ourselves with politics. I only mean that economic problems, such as unemployment, lengthening of the working day, wage cuts as a consequence of rationalisation and trustification, will seriously concern our comrades in the immediate future. All possible material must be gathered and, on the basis of our experiences, our tactics must be worked out. Possibly special socio-economic departments should be formed, etc. Only if we study these new phenomena on the economic field, which have very great importance for our whole policy, will it be possible for us to carry out successfully a good trade union policy and a correct general political line. A splendid trade union work might be done, but if the Party had a wrong policy we would always experience defeat because one depends upon the other.

In conclusion I should like to say that in general we have had a good policy, but this policy was often carried out badly in practice. I only wish that our practice was equal to our good policy. When our practice will correspond to our good policy we will make big progress and the next World Congress will be able to record this progress. (Applause.)