

# For the Fourth Congress of the Red International of Labour Unions.

By A. Lozovsky (Moscow).

More than three years have passed since the Third Congress of the Red International of Labour Unions, and therefore the Fourth Congress will be called upon to review a very important and eventful period in the development of the international labour movement.

At the close of 1927, the international trade union movement was characterised by the following features:

1. The connections between the reformist leader organisations of the trade union movement on the one hand and the capitalist States and the League of Nations on the other, were consolidated to an extraordinary degree. We may even speak of a nationalisation of the reformist unions.

2. As a result of this interweaving of the reformist trade unions with the bourgeois State, the trade unions became in the hands of the big employers' organisations an instrument for carrying out the rationalisation of production at the cost of the working class.

3. The orders received from the capitalists are executed by the reformist trade unions under the cover of democratic phrases and of much talk of economic democracy. Equal rights for capital and labour, creation of economic councils (in France and Germany), schemes for profit-sharing, transformation of society by the foundation of workers' banks and the like.

4. This united front of the employers' organisations, the bourgeois State, and the reformist trade unions, has induced broad masses both of the organised and of the unorganised workers, to seek new forms of fighting and new methods of self-protection, since they are forced to struggle not only against the employers and the State but also against their own trade unions.

5. In their search for new forms of defence against the offensive of the capitalists, the workers have come to have recourse to the tried methods of revolutionary tactics and very frequently employ them in practice without even being aware of it themselves.

6. One of the characteristics of the change that has taken place in the broad working masses is the desire for a united front both within their own countries and especially with the trade union movement in the Soviet Union.

7. This tendency in the direction of the working class of the Soviet Union is an outcome of the economic advance of that country, which has practically demonstrated that a victory of the revolution and a development of Socialism in a single country are, by no means impossible.

8. Alongside of this revolutionising of the masses, which assumes the most varied forms, according to this situation, mention must also be made of the increased interest of the international proletariat in the Chinese revolution.

9. This interest may be explained by the fact that during the last few years the events in China have assumed a stormy revolutionary character, in which connection the fight of the Chinese people against the foreign imperialists is so closely and organisationally connected with the fight of the working class of the imperialist countries against their own bourgeoisie, that the workers cannot help feeling interested in the events occurring in the Far East.

10. Simultaneously with the awakening and the growing activity of the Chinese working class, the activity of the workers' movement along the entire coast of the Pacific has grown, quite particularly in the colonies and semi-colonies, in which connection this growing movement has inevitably turned to-

wards the trade union movement of the Soviet Union and towards the Red International of Labour Unions.

11. In the background of this convulsion and of the new events occurring in the entire trade union movement of the world, a particularly mean and miserable rôle is played by the Amsterdam International, whose leaders are clinging desperately together, so as to set up a common barrier against the menacing Communist danger.

12. At the same time there is a growth in the importance and the rôle of the Red International of Labour Unions, which has enrolled in its ranks the most important troops of the labour movement of Asia and those of quite a number of South American countries.

13. The increase and development of the labour movement in the new countries has found expression in the creation of a trade union secretariat for the countries of the Pacific and in the preparatory work for the foundation of a Latin-American trade union secretariat. The significance of the organisations already founded and in the process of formation lies in the fact that these two bodies comprise both the trade unions affiliated to the Red Trade Union International and such as are outside this International.

14. Finally it should be pointed out that the international Labour movement is on the eve of a strike wave, which will sweep one country after another and which is to be looked upon as a forerunner of great political and economic fights.

Such are the chief characteristics of the position of the international Labour movement at the close of 1927, and this is the starting point for establishing the next tasks of the revolutionary trade union movement.

The next question is, **what** is to be done and **how** is it to be done? How is this increasing revolutionising of the masses to be exploited in the interest of the proletariat? The peculiarity of the position lies in the fact that the revolutionising process is noticeable both **inside** and **outside** the reformist organisations. There cannot be the least doubt that the working class as a whole has made a turn to the left. Thus very big groups of Britain workers, who formerly voted for the Conservatives, Liberals, or for others, now vote for the Labour Party. At the same time, part of the Labour Party, formerly adhering to men like MacDonald and Thomas, are now disappointed in these leaders. Workers who not very long ago placed their confidence in representatives of the General Council, have now turned away from them. Much the same process can be traced in other countries.

In view of these facts the main task now consists in discovering forms of organisation for the consolidation of this radical tendency. In itself the revolutionising of the masses cannot have important political results save if the Red International of Labour Unions and its sections succeed in conducting the stormy torrent into a firm organisational channel, thus consolidating this tendency by organisation. This brings us to speak of one of the weakest points of our work, i. e. the disproportion between the political influence of the Red International of Labour Unions and its sections on the one hand and the consolidation of this influence on the other. In certain countries, quite particularly in France, this lack of proportion is especially noticeable. In the first place the organisations in France are not sufficiently stable, the workers come and go, and every year the composition of certain of the organisations changes by more than 50 per cent.

The Fourth Congress will have to deal with the complicated problem of the further struggle for the united front and for trade union unity in its entire extent. Does this question appear to be exactly the same as it was on the occasion of the Third Congress of the Red International of Labour Unions? Naturally not. These three and a half years were rich in experience in regard to the execution of united front tactics and trade union unity. This experience must now be taken into consideration, classified according to countries and according to professions. We shall have to decide how this united front is to be realised "from the bottom up", what organisatory forms it should assume, considering each country separately. Therefore it is quite especially important, that all delegations to the Congress of the Red International of Labour Unions should come provided with concrete material as to these questions and, what is of particular importance, with concrete suggestions. This question deserves the very closest attention on the part of all sections of the Red International of Labour Unions.

One of the great questions at the Congress will undoubtedly be that of the fight against imperialism and the threatening danger of war. It may be said that there is full clarity on this point in our organisations, but it would be wrong to say so. The more we know of what is happening in this connection, the more convinced we are that the Congress will have to deal with a very great amount of theoretic and practical work. And that not only because there are pacifist tendencies noticeable in the broad masses and because fairly extensive groups of workers do not believe in the possibility of war in the near future, but rather because even our trade unions have no very clear conception as to what levers must be worked for the purpose of effectively combatting the war danger in a revolutionary way.

The Fourth Congress of the Red International of Labour Unions will have to examine this question from a trade union standpoint and point out concrete tasks. In the case of warlike operations, we must prove not only theoretically but also practically that there must be no repetition of the year 1914. To be able to prove this at the most acute and critical moment, it is necessary that, in the course of long years we should prepare the entire working class and our own organisations for the coming storm.

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Like all former Congresses, the Fourth Congress of the Red International of Labour Unions will devote much attention to the Labour movement in the colonies and semi-colonial regions. Seeing that the working class and the trade unions of China have come most to the fore during the last few years, the tasks facing the Chinese trade unions during the revolution will be the subject of special consideration.

Quite apart from the Chinese trade unions, which bear upon their shoulders the great weight of the struggle against the internal and external enemies, the trade unions of India, Indonesia, the Philippines, and a whole number of other countries play a very prominent part in the fight for national and social emancipation.

In its treatment of the Labour movement in the colonies and semi-colonial territories, the prospective Congress will have to undertake a differentiation and specification of the facts submitted to it. Upon the whole, the Fourth Congress of the Red International of Labour Unions will have to reply to a great number of questions, not only as regards the colonies and semi-colonies, but also in respect of the imperialist countries. This refers quite particularly to the colonial countries, however, since there the trade union movement is yet young, so that errors committed are more easily made good than is the case in countries in which definite forms of organisation and a hard and fast organisatory system have evolved and assumed a permanent form.

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A special point on the agenda of the Fourth Congress of the Red International of Labour Unions is the question of the tactics to be observed by adherents of the Red International of Labour Unions in Great Britain. For the decision of this question, not only the experience made during the last few years in Great Britain, but also the revolutionary experiences in other countries will have to be taken into consideration. All objective circumstances speak for the fact that Great Britain is likely soon to experience an aggravation of social struggles,

and that despite the energetic attempts on the part of the General Council leaders to bring about "industrial peace". All such struggles, however, are doomed to fail, if they are carried on under the guidance of those men who deliberately abandoned their position in May 1926. For this reason the question as to the tactics of the Minority Movement in Great Britain, as to the methods of capturing the masses, and the process to be observed in instilling our revolutionary fighting methods into the masses, gains quite special importance.

At the same time I should like to raise the question of the immediate tasks facing the revolutionary wing of the Labour movement in Japan. Naturally the situation in Japan is different. In Great Britain the trade union movement can look back on a long history, while in Japan it is still quite young and comprises a far smaller proportion of the working class. In Japan, however, the situation is quite peculiar. We there see a rising wave. The labour movement is extremely split up. There is a serious revolutionary wing but it controls only a small percentage of the working class. The task of gaining hundreds of thousands of Japanese workers for the trade unions is a question of great historical importance, and therefore we shall also pay attention to this country, which plays so prominent a part on the shores of the Pacific.

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That item of the agenda which appears under the head of "problems of organisation", covers all questions of daily practice in our revolutionary trade union movement. In this respect we shall have no further general principles of organisational development to work out, since this has already been done by former Congresses. At this Congress, however we shall have to investigate the organisatory condition of our sections, and of the minorities, the reasons of the weakness noticeable in the independent organisations and minorities, the relations between the minorities and the independent unions, the activity of the existing factory councils and the creation of new councils, the reasons of their possible inactivity, the methods of work among the masses, the position of our finances, the mutual relations and the aid institutions in the unions, the question of fighting funds, and other matters. We need self-criticism, severe and pitiless self-criticism. Only thus can we derive useful lessons from our weaknesses and shortcomings.

Finally we shall have to treat the very serious question of the International Propaganda Committees. We already possess some such committees, which do far more work than the respective internationals. What next? Should they be left in this condition or should steps be taken for enlarging their functions, as some comrades suggest? All these questions demand detailed consideration. The organisation of all our revolutionary forces in a vertical direction is a question of the greatest importance. To content ourselves in this connection with some resolution or other, to repeat what was already said some years ago, would be senseless. Here, as in regard to the other questions, a very definite expression of opinion on the part of the delegations is necessary. Only our collective experiences can help us to make another step forward on the way of a better organisation of all revolutionary forces.

Of the other items of the agenda, the winning of the youth, the recruiting of the young workers for the trade union movement deserves special attention. This is a matter of paramount importance in countries like France or Czechoslovakia. Though there are resolutions to hand in regard to these questions, they will yet have to be formulated once again. The question of creating trade union sections will have to be thoroughly considered. This problem has already been discussed with the Young Communist International. The Congress will have to pass its final verdict on the matter.

Very much attention will also have to be paid to the matter of educational work. Though this point is not one of the separate items on the agenda, a special commission will yet be appointed in the section for the discussion of this problem. The discussion in regard to the creation of a trade union cadre must be set on foot. In this respect little has as yet been done. While the bourgeoisie attempts to demoralise the children of the working class by means of its schools, and while the Social Democrats and reformists co-operate with the bourgeoisie in feeding the children in their schools with reformist wisdom, we have as yet done very little. The erection of schools in each

individual country, the establishment of international schools, of finishing courses, the organisation of correspondence courses, the provision of the requisite literature, and so on, are all points that will have to be dealt with, while at the same time our **trade union press** will have to be made the subject of detailed discussion. We already possess a very extensive revolutionary trade union press, but it is in need of a thorough reform. And in this connection, as in all others, we shall have to appear at the Congress armed to the teeth.

Among the questions to be discussed by the sections and commissions, there is that of **emigration and immigration**, a question which is of quite particular importance for a whole number of countries. It is of particular significance in the case of **France**, where there are millions of imported workers. True, on this subject, too, a certain resolution is to hand, but we shall have to see how much has been done towards its realisation and if little has been done we must know the reason why.

Besides all this, the coming Congress will have to deal with the **work among the women** and to ascertain on the strength of experience how much has been done in this respect. It will also be of interest to find out how large the proportion of women is in our minorities, in the leading organs of those minorities, in our independent unions and their leading organs. I am under the impression that we are advancing far too slowly in this respect. The Congress will have to take the matter in hand most energetically if we are to abolish conservatism and put an end to routine.

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Among the numerous items on the agenda, there is also one which refers to the **fight against Fascism and the Fascist trade unions**. This question is of all the more importance, seeing that under our very eyes there is in some countries a political and in other countries an organisatory fusion of Fascism and Reformism. The Reformists are very fond of putting Bolshevism on the same level as Fascism, on the grounds that both of them are inclined to resort to force in fighting their opponents. This demagogic comparison must not discourage us. For us the main question is against whom this force is employed. Fascism employs force against the workers, Bolshevism against the bourgeoisie. Meanwhile the co-operation between the Reformists and the Fascists becomes daily more apparent. Apart from the fact that the American trade unions are in no way to be distinguished from the Fascist ones, we see this co-operation in **Italy**, where some of the most prominent Reformists simply placed themselves at the service of the Fascists. In quite a number of other countries we see the reactionary Fascist Governments making use of the Social Democrats and Reformists for the purpose of fighting the Communists and the revolutionary trade unions.

The fight against the Fascist trade unions is not only a general political fight, it is a serious, organisatory, and daily struggle. In those countries in which the Fascists have succeeded by force in embodying a small percentage of unenlightened workers in their organisations, our organisatory work must be increased, special attention being paid to the object of saving these workers from the demoralising influence of the Fascist trade unions. Very frequently backward workers who are disappointed in the Reformist and Social Democratic leaders, go over to the Fascist trade unions. Such developments are to be observed in **Germany**, and it is therefore our duty to pay serious attention to this point and to set up a practical programme of measures for the purpose of fighting against the permeation of the workers' organisations by Fascist demoralisation.

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This Congress will also have to work out a serious **programme in regard to the fight for social legislation**. None of the promises was kept, which had been given immediately after the war by the Reformists and the intimidated bourgeois Governments. There is hardly a trace of all the achievements of the reformist-bourgeois bloc in regard to social legislation. The last few years have been characterised by the robbery of a series of elementary achievements of the working class. In many countries the eight-hour day has become little more than a matter of fiction. It will be necessary, moreover, to work out a detailed programme in regard to the protection of women,

the protection of the youth, night labour, unemployment, relief in the case of invalidity, sickness, old age, etc.

All these questions appear to be perfectly lucid. But the actual task before us does not consist in the recognition by the leaders of the trade union movement of the usefulness of social legislation, but rather in the fact that a system of social legislation be made the centre of the attention of the broad masses, that a decisive fight be started, the masses mobilised to fight for concrete demands, and thousands and millions of workers united for the purpose of wresting from the bourgeoisie a real improvement in their position. Social legislation is a matter that ought to attract the attention of all revolutionary workers and all adherents of the Red International of Labour Unions. We must put up a fight for the daily interests of the working class, a fight for partial demands, without of course for a moment forgetting our final aim.

The Congress will open in March 1928. So that this Congress may treat all questions exhaustively and so that all organisations affiliated to the Red International of Labour Unions may benefit by the approaching Congress, it is requisite that all organisations should discuss the **agenda** in detail at their district and provincial sessions and submit their suggestions to the Congress. We must not come to the Congress empty-handed, nor improvise our suggestions on the spot. We must approach the Congress with a collective expression of opinion; we must collect and study the experiences of the last few years and inform the others both of the good and of the bad side of our activity, of our successes and of our failures. It is only by such a serious preparatory work for the Congress that serious and useful results can be attained.

We must not follow the example of the Amsterdamities, whose congresses make such a lamentable and ridiculous impression. I need but remind you of the Paris Congress and of the squabble that resulted in the matter of the secretarial appointments. Every organisation affiliated to the Red International of Labour Unions and every revolutionary minority ought to employ the time which has still to elapse before the Congress for the purpose of a serious and considerate preparation for the Fourth Congress of the R.I.L.U., so that all problems facing the international Labour movement may be comprehensively discussed and the capture of the broad proletarian masses may be promoted.

## POLITICS

### From the Border States.

Government Crises and Regroupings in Latvia, Finland, and Esthonia.

By Balticus.

The recent conflict between **Poland** and **Lithuania**, which showed the whole world how near we are to a repetition of such catastrophes as convulsed mankind in the great war and how great the danger of war actually is, has again drawn general attention to the **Baltic States**.

The latest events clearly proved that these small States represent the arena in which the so-called Great Powers are wont to intrigue and that we can there trace all the endeavours of **British imperialism** to construct an anti-Soviet bloc. For this reason the practically simultaneous change of government in the three Baltic border States **Finland**, **Esthonia**, and **Latvia** cannot but interest the broad working masses of Europe.

In **Latvia** Skujeneck has retired. Skujeneck was at the head of a so-called Left Government, in which the Social Democrats played the principal part. The Government retired because it was no longer in possession of a solid majority and was constantly exposed to the uninterrupted attacks of the bourgeois parties of the Right. Why was the Government the object of such unintermittent attacks? Not on account of its home policy. As a number of Social Democrat leaders admit, the home policy of the Left Government was not calculated to give the bourgeois parties any grounds for complaint. In this respect the Social Democrat Ministers failed at all from their bourgeois colleagues. The Communist Party continued to be exposed to the most brutal forms of persecution. As a sign of protest against the prison regime, the political prisoners were