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# FOREWORD

The Fourth Congress of the R.I.L.U., by the number of countries and organised workers represented, has marked considerable progress as compared with the Third Congress. Represented in this Congress was the trade union movement of the countries of Europe, Asia, North and South America, Australia, and even some African organisations. Well represented were the Pacific, colonial and semi-colonial countries. Such representation testifies to the fact that the programme and tactics of the R.I.L.U. are penetrating ever deeper into the masses, and that the few years' work has already yielded serious results.

The Fourth Congress has summarized a prolonged period in the world's trade union movement; it has furnished advice on all the essential questions of strategy, tactics and organisation, and therefore the decisions of the Congress are of exceptionally great importance. Suffice it to compare the decisions of the Fourth Congress with those of the last Congress of the Amsterdam International to appreciate the difference not only in policies but also in working methods. The Amsterdamites usually confine themselves to passing a few resolutions of a general character, whereas the R.I.L.U. endeavours every time to furnish practical answers to the questions confronting the labour movement of every country. Never has the Amsterdam International taken up at its Congresses the tasks of the trade union movement of this or that country; it never did so because it maintains the standpoint of the autonomy of each organisation, of non-interference in the affairs of the different countries. The R.I.L.U. is combatting ideology and practices of this kind. There is no sense in creating an international organization if it is not to intervene, if it will not take up the essential problems and will not endeavour to utilize the international experience for the purpose of straightening out the line of the labour movement of this or that country. In this respect it will be very useful to study all the decisions adopted by the Congress and compare them with the decisions of the last Congress of the Amsterdam International.

The Fourth Congress has performed a tremendous work in summarizing and utilizing the experiences of the world trade union movement.

In the resolution on the first item on the agenda the Congress raised all the outstanding questions of the international labour movement. We have here a survey of the present stage of world capitalism, a characterization of the evolution of international reformism, questions of strike strategy, questions of unity, the results of the capitalist offensive, the condition of the masses, capitalist rationalization and its consequences, the role of the trade unions in the Workers' State, on the Amsterdam International, on the activity of R.I.L.U. adherents in reformist unions, on strengthening the revolutionary trade unions, on the struggle against expulsions from the trade unions, on the united front of the workers of West and East, on white and coloured labour, on the unity of trade unions in Latin America, on the struggle for the One International of trade unions, and so on. Particular place is given in the first resolution on the clearing up of our weak points and defects, which is characteristic of all the resolutions passed by the Congress.

The Congress did not confine itself to the drawing up of a general line, but it has worked out a programme of action as an international platform of the united front. The first resolution gave the tone to the whole Congress by its exhortation: INTO THE FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS. INTO THE MASSES! This slogan and this standpoint have characterized also all the other resolutions: the resolution on the trade union movement in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, on the struggle against Fascism and yellow trade unions, questions of young workers and women workers, organizational questions, questions of cultural and educational activity, of the trade union press, on emigration and immigration, on social legislation, on rationalization, on the agricultural labourers, and so forth. All of them are permeated with the fundamental idea: INTO THE MASSES! The method and means of organizing the masses—this was uppermost in the deliberations of the Congress and of all its sessions and commissions. And each point in the adopted resolutions furnishes a reply to this very fundamental question to the revolutionary wing of the labour movement.

A particularly prominent place in the deliberations of the Fourth Congress of the R.I.L.U. was occupied by the question on the tasks of the trade union movement in the separate countries. From resolutions carried on such countries like England, United States, France, China, Holland, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Ireland, etc., it will be seen that the Congress had to deal closely with the peculiar circumstances

of each country. Whilst working on common principles, the practical tasks of the R.I.L.U. adherents in England, United States, China, and Ireland are so varied that separate programmes of action had to be worked out in the most minute and detailed manner. Each resolution for this or that country represents the essence of national and international experience, and this constitutes the incontestable value of the resolutions carried on in the separate countries.

The Congress has passed under the banner of stern self-criticism. There was not a single resolution passed in which all our weak points and defects have not been pointed out with full clearness and definiteness. Whether on the report of the Executive Bureau or on the first and all the other items of the agenda, and particularly in the resolutions concerning the separate countries—the Congress has invariably laid stress upon the weak sides of our work. We know that the reformists and bourgeois press has eagerly pounced upon our self-criticism, but this does not scare us in the least. We are not the Amsterdam International, we have nothing to conceal. We expose our weak points in order to put them right; we criticize one another in order to make further progress; we speak openly about our defects in order to dispose of them. If the Amsterdamites indulge in mutual praise, all the worse for them. The working class has no use for hypocritical diplomacy; it needs stern and honest self-criticism, on the basis of which it is possible to make further progress.

From all the adopted resolutions it is seen how seriously the Congress has studied our weak points and defects, and what advice it has given as regards putting them right. The deliberations of the Congress went on on highly constructive lines, regardless of the heated and impassioned debates. The deviations revealed in the course of the last few years were unanimously condemned. Among these deviations should be classed: unity at any price, a passive attitude towards the expulsions, a sentiment of awe in regard to the reformist trade union apparatus, the theory of capturing the reformist apparatus, the refraining from carrying on strike struggles in spite of the reformist leaders on the one hand, and insufficiently serious and reasonable calls for strikes on the other hand. All big and little deviations of this kind were fully dealt with in the debates and decisions of the Congress.

The resolutions and decisions of the Fourth Congress of the R.I.L.U. should not only be read, but also studied, since each passage in these resolutions represents the concentrated experience of the world's <sup>proletarian</sup> movement. The Congress has thought it necessary to furnish minute advice on all questions, bearing in mind that all the questions

NEW YORK  
INDUSTRIAL AND LABOR RELATIONS  
CORNELL UNIVERSITY

of the strategy and tactics of the world trade union movement have been elaborated to a sufficient degree. Of course, something had to be reiterated from the decisions of past Congresses, but the purpose of this reiteration was to lay stress upon the importance of those decisions that have not yet been carried out. Upon examining all the resolutions of the Congress from the standpoint of taking stock of the international experience, it may be said that they constitute a practical guide for all the R.I.L.U. adherents. This does not mean to say that the Congress has succeeded in minutely examining and discussing and formulating absolutely all the problems which now engage the attention of the world's trade union movement. In each country there will no doubt be found a score of questions to be solved, and such questions will daily arise in the international trade union movement. The resolutions and decisions of the Congress cannot furnish a mechanical reply to any questions which may arise in the future; nevertheless these resolutions contain such a vast amount of international experience, such a fund of practical hints for various types of trade union movement, for countries with varying social-economic traditions with a varying level of capitalist development, and a varying age of the labour movement, that a great many useful hints will be found in them for the further struggle to win the masses.

Once more I emphasize the need for all who are interested in the international trade union movement to study the decisions of the Fourth Congress of the R.I.L.U. in the most serious manner. The volume containing the resolutions and decisions of the Congress should become the companion of every class conscious worker, of every R.I.L.U. supporter, because he will find in these decisions, in concentrated and formulated shape, the vast experience of the world's revolutionary trade union movement.

A. LOSOVSKY.

May 11th, 1928.