

On the Eve of the Fifth Congress of the Profintern

THE Fifth World Congress of the Red Trade Union International will convene in July of this year. July also means the 10th birthday anniversary of the Profintern. Of course, a congress to us is not a jubilee parade in the traditional style of the trade unions of the Amsterdam International, but rather a very significant milestone in the development of the international revolutionary trade union movement.

About two years ago the IV Congress of the Profintern stood at the threshold of the Third Period. The contradictions of the partial stabilization of capitalism expressed themselves very strongly even then in a great sharpening of economic struggles in the capitalist countries of the west and in a prodigious upsurge of the anti-imperialist movement in the colonial east.

The historic significance of the IV Congress of the Profintern consisted exactly in the fact that all its decisions were made at the *turning point* of two periods and that it has succeeded in correctly pointing out the immediate tactical problems of the revolutionary trade union movement of the coming period.

The IV Congress of the Profintern passed off under the sign of an *increasingly pitiless struggle with right opportunism* in the international trade union movement; it has raised the slogan "Class against Class" in the economic struggles of the proletariat, having decidedly taken up the line of *independent* organization and leadership of economic struggles by the revolutionary trade union vanguard. The IV Congress revealed the capitulatory meaning of the Right opportunistic slogan "force the trade union bureaucrats." At the IV Congress the question was also raised of the beginning of a process of fascisation of the reformist trade union apparatus.

The decisions of the IV Congress of the Profintern were on the whole an important step in the bitter discussion with the Rights that has ended with the chasing out of the Rights from the ranks of the Comintern and Profintern and their rapid transformation into direct agents of international social-fascism. Two years have passed since then. The Third Period has matured. The VI Congress of the Comintern and then the X Plenum of the E.C.C.I.

have laid down in exact detail the problems of the Third Period that have grown out of the very process of development of capitalist economy and of the proletarian revolutionary movement. The growing world economic crisis both in manufacturing and agricultural industries, the unheard of extent of unemployment, the shocking growth of exploitation of labor resulting from capitalist rationalization, the massed attack by monopolistic capital against the standard of living of the proletariat and the efforts of the bourgeoisie, of fascism and of social-fascism to transfer the entire burden of the economic ruin in all capitalist countries onto the shoulders of the laboring masses—such is the background out of which grew out the increasing resistance of the working class, assuming more the *counter-offensive* and the development of more intensive revolutionary class struggles.

The truly international character of the Profintern always distinguished it from the social-fascist Amsterdam International, that always limited its activities to the countries of capitalistic Europe.

If at the time of the IV Congress, the Profintern already stood solidly planted in China and was opening up a new continent of Latin-America for the development of a revolutionary trade union movement—today the Red Profintern is already a *world-wide* organization. The General Secretary of the Amsterdam International, one of the meanest and yellowest professional bureaucrats, Sassenbach, was, for instance, compelled to admit not long ago in an interview with a representative of the newspaper, "Social Demokraten" that "We (i.e. Amsterdam Center) have practically speaking no connections whatever with China because, due to internal disturbances, and *Bolshevik influence*, the ground is decidedly unfavorable for it." In East India where at the time of the IV Congress of the Profintern the membership of revolutionary trade unions was being counted by hundreds, today there exists a mighty revolutionary trade union movement and the old bourgeois-reformist leaders have been thrown out of the leadership of the Trade Union Congress. A mighty revolutionary trade union movement is unfolding itself in Latin-America. Revolutionary trade unions are growing up in the United States.

And lastly in Europe itself there is growing up the revolutionary opposition within the reformistic trade unions ever stronger and more centralized.

All the tendencies that have been pointed out at the time of the IV Congress of the Profintern have *developed further*. We can see this first of all by comparing the two existing international centres of the trade union movement, the revolutionary Red Profintern, and the yellow social-fascist Amsterdam International. The process

of *fascisation*, of *growing into* the monopoly capital and the fascist bourgeois state was even deeper (if that is possible) within the reformist trade unions than within the political organizations of the Second International.

In the lately published report of the activities of the Amsterdam International for the last 10 years the only achievements it boasts of is an endless list of memoranda addressed to the International Labor Buro at Geneva and the struggle against the "attempts of the Russians to squeeze into the trade union secretariat for the purpose of provoking splits." Still more important in this connection is, however, not so much as to what the report states as what it does not state. Very discreetly are hushed up the proceedings of the May Plenum of 1929, which ordered all sections of the Amsterdam International to *actively help along* in the carrying out of *capitalist rationalization*. Discreetly also is hushed up the warning issued by the English General Council calling upon the English workers not to help the striking textile workers of Bombay (India). Discreetly again is hushed up the trip of Zitrin, and Sassenbach to fascist Italy, a trip undertaken with the knowledge of the "left" Italian Amsterdam Emigres for the purpose of establishing close contact with fascist-syndicalists. Hushed up are also the as yet unsuccessful schemes of merging with the company-unionized American Federation of Labor and with the reactionary Pan-Asiatic Trade Union conference—as a kind of lightning rod against the rapidly growing revolutionary trade union movement in Latin-America and in the colonial East. Very characteristic for the fascization of the Amsterdam Trade Unions is the international congress of railroad workers that is to take place in Madrid the 30 of April of this year. It is well known that the international of the transport workers is headed by the most "militant," most "left" of the Amsterdam leaders—Mr. E. Fimmen. And here, at the very moment of an unusually sharpened danger of war and unheard of anti-Soviet baiting, this "fighter against Imperialism" and "friend of U.S.S.R." places for the working class the following "burning" questions in the very center of attention before the railroad workers of the entire world: competition with automobile transport; participation of labor and other transport employees in the profits and the problem of capitalist rationalization in transport (of course from the point of view of cooperating in carrying it out). This is a 100% *fascisation* program of the reformist trade union movement. To overlook the question of U.S.S.R., the open and brazen preparations for intervention, is in this case nothing less than a *thin covering* for a *most active preparation* of such intervention by the Right Wing of the International Social-Fascism. And yet the point of

departure, the basic idea of all the liquidators and opportunists in the ranks of the Comintern and Profintern was always their orientation on the so-called "left" layers of the social bureaucracy and of the reformist trade union movement. The right opportunists never did perceive those social processes that have created new tactical problems for the revolutionary trade union vanguard. Any independent movement of the revolutionary trade union vanguard *without* and *outside* of the social-fascist trade union apparatus seemed to them as suicidal tactics of the Communists and revolutionary trade union vanguard. We remind ourselves of the IV Congress of the Profintern when the renegade Wailcher declared: "If only the Russian trade unions would declare their desire to be taken in by the Amsterdam International, that would accelerate the disintegration inside the Amsterdam camp and would have made our fight for the conquest of the masses so much easier."

Of course, *the least weakening* of effort on the part of revolutionaries towards the conquest of the masses within the reformist trade union would be a crime against the proletarian revolution. A thousand times right was Comrade Thaelmann when he said at the meeting of the Enlarged Presidium of the E.C.C.I., that to leave five million members of the A.D.G.B. and one and one-half million members of the Christian and of the Hirsh Dunksers Trade Unions to the mercy of their trade union bureaucracy "would be equivalent to betraying the proletarian revolution."

The revolutionary opposition not only does not reduce but on the contrary, must do its utmost to *increase* its work within the reformist trade unions because this work affects millions upon millions of organized workers. This is one of the most important sections of our elementary work in dragging up the organizationally still backward masses on the crest of the present day revolutionary upsurge.

At the same time not for a moment should the fact be left out of sight that in the process of a developing revolutionary situation the proletarian revolution will find it impossible to get along without the creation of independent revolutionary trade unions.

The Profintern was never merely the *ideological* center of the international revolutionary trade unions. Only direct agents of social fascism such as Weilcher, Brandler & Co. can talk about the "coming in" of the V.C.S.P.S. (All Russian Central Trade Unions) into the Amsterdam International. But the question is when, where and under what circumstances are the independent revolutionary trade unions to be organized. They can and ought to be organized only then and under such circumstances as to make sure of the

adherence to the revolutionary vanguard of the *broadest masses of workers*. From this point of view the V Congress of the Profintern will prove to be an important milestone.

Of great significance is the political and organizational *preparatory work* for the Congress. This work must be based upon the most militant and fearless self-criticism within the separate national organizations. The preparatory work itself, the *popularization* of the Congress will have to be carried way *down* into the masses, the mills, the factories. Only such preparatory work will enable the V Congress of the Profintern to be representative of the objective conditions of the world-wide labor movement and map out for the *present stage* of it that particular line and those methods and forms of struggle that will assure to the Red Profintern the organizing and leading role within the world trade union movement during the period of decisive class fights.

