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**BRITISH AND
RUSSIAN WORKERS**

By A. Lozovsky

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**THE NATIONAL MINORITY MOVEMENT
38 Great Ormond Street London WC1**

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FOREWORD

The publication of this book, "British and Russian Workers," by A. Lozovsky, General Secretary of the Red International of Labour Unions, comes at a very opportune moment; and just when the General Council is endeavouring to kill the Anglo-Russian Unity Committee, the workers will have presented to them a reasoned statement of all the events which led to the formation of this Committee, and a merciless exposure of the reasons why the General Council has taken up its present attitude towards the Anglo-Russian Unity Committee.

It will be remembered that Lord Curzon delivered an ultimatum to Soviet Russia, and the central point of his ultimatum was the British Government's refusal to allow the Russian Government to interfere in the internal affairs of the British Empire.

It would appear that since the Bournemouth Congress, when the receipt of the now famous telegram from the Russian Trades Union Congress to the Bournemouth Trades Union Congress aroused the ire and wrath of the men who betrayed the workers last May, the General Council is now offering a shoddy and cheap imitation of Curzon and can only reiterate his capitalist dogma of "no interference in our affairs."

The workers should not be misled by this attempt to bolster up the insularity and nationalist outlook of the leaders of the trade union movement. These phrases about "autonomy" and "non-interference" are being made by leaders who simply use them as a smoke-screen to hide their real policy: that is a policy not of class-solidarity with the 8,500,000 trade unionists of Soviet Russia, but of class collaboration with the very capitalists who this year have used the entire resources of the State to beat down the miners to the lowest possible depths.

That this policy of class collaboration is no figment of a lurid imagination is proved by the speeches made at the recent dinner organised and paid for by the "Westminster Gazette," a capitalist newspaper representing the oil interests of the Pearson-Cowdray group. One has only to read the weekly Sunday articles by prominent trade union leaders, in

every capitalist paper, urging co-operation between employer and workmen or talking about the folly of the General Strike, etc., to understand quite clearly the reluctance of this type of leader to participate actively with the leaders of the workers of Soviet Russia, who have thrown off the yoke of capitalism and established the rule of the working class.

The policy of the trade union leaders in resenting interference is farcical, and the absurdity of it must strike every worker when he realises that the General Council, which, at Bournemouth and since, has been so concerned to stand on its dignity and resent what it calls the "internal interference" of the Russian trade unionists, never lifted a finger during the whole of the seven months of the lock-out to stop the "internal interference" of the yellow Amsterdam leaders who consistently encouraged the importation of coal into England in order that they might help to defeat the miners. Apparently while revolutionary support is not wanted, reformist interference of a strike-breaking character is welcomed, and we wait with interest to read the first speech or article protesting against the policy of the Amsterdam International in encouraging the importation of coal into this country on the one hand, and on the other, offering to lend money at $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to the very miners this coal was intended to defeat.

For our part we see clearly that international action is impossible unless workers of the various countries understand that the cause of the workers has no State or National boundaries; it is the duty of the workers to help one another not only morally, but materially, and we are thankful to the Russian workers for the splendid financial support they organised for the British miners, and which they are organising now for the victimised miners, and for their honest criticism of the action of our leaders—criticism which is the result of their own rich experiences in the struggle against the reformists.

Perhaps we should not be too much surprised however, when we remember that the General Council is led by prominent members of the Privy Council. This fact explains in a sentence why it is that the General Council in relation to class solidarity with the Russian Trade Union Movement finds itself in the same camp as was the late Lord Curzon and the rest of his capitalist satellites who are also Privy Councillors.

It is clear now that the workers are beginning to analyse very clearly the treachery of the leaders of the General Council last May, and the fact that the Special Conference of Trade Union Executives is to be held in January makes the publication of this book all the more timely because it will show the workers what the actual position is and what is involved in a real alliance between the workers of Britain and the workers of Russia. It will help to clarify the present position and to reinforce, by an argument and indictment that cannot be denied, the absolute necessity of the workers once more forcing the immediate opening up of negotiations between the Russian and British Trade Union Movements.

There are one or two points which comrade Lozovsky has not dealt with at sufficient length in his book, which must be mentioned in order to make quite clear to the workers the sequence of events leading up to the formation of the Anglo-Russian Unity Committee.

We believe that he under-estimates the feeling of solidarity amongst the British workers after the November Revolution in 1917, which consistently grew in volume and was largely responsible for the sending of the first Labour Delegation to Soviet Russia in 1920. It must also be mentioned that the sending of the General Council Delegation in 1924 was preceded by the Hull Congress at which the representatives of the Minority Movement put up a strong fight for International Trade Union Unity. This found a big response in the Congress itself and a still bigger response amongst workers all over the country. Of special significance is the fact that comrade Tomsky, who headed the delegation of the Russian trade unionists at Hull, had taken a very prominent part in the negotiations with the MacDonal Government which had aroused the interest of the British workers towards Russian questions in general and the Russian Trade Union Movement in particular, as this was the first occasion in the history of any diplomatic negotiations when the trade unions had a direct representative participating on their behalf.

Further, the General Council of the Trades Union Congress only approved the action of its Delegation in forming the Anglo-Russian Unity Committee after the Trade Union Unity Conference organised by the National Minority Movement on January 25th, 1925. At this Conference, 617 delegates were present representing 750,000 workers and when

the General Council met on January 29th, 1925, it could do no other than give expression to the feelings of the mass of the workers by endorsing the action of its Delegation in Russia. This fact stands out in direct contrast to the attitude of the Delegation itself, which, in point of fact, had kept absolutely silent on the whole question of unity from the time it left Russia in December until the meeting of the General Council in January.

We hope that this book will have a large sale as it appears at a most critical period in the history of the British Trade Union Movement when the full lessons of the General Strike have yet to be learnt, and when the future of the whole movement is at stake. The book will do much to bring together in a closer bond of class-solidarity and fighting unity the workers of Soviet Russia and of Great Britain.

HARRY POLLITT.

BRITISH AND RUSSIAN WORKERS

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

THE greatest interest attaches to the mutual relations between the workers of Great Britain and those of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in view of the special role being played by the Labour Movement of both countries in international politics and the world Labour Movement. Gone is that time when the relations between these two countries were determined by the leaders of the ruling classes, when it needed but an Order in Council to send tens of millions of men to war.

Since the "Great War," the part played by the working class has extended tremendously and the merciless struggle now developing along all sectors of the social front, a fight that has acquired especially sharp forms in Britain, confronts each one of us with issues and problems that have got to be studied if we are to determine properly the line which we have to take. Compared with what it was before the War the world Labour Movement has become of a more international nature, in spite of its organisational divisions. Connections have been extended; the masses show a greater interest in international questions; and this because the economic position of the workers in one country has been most closely bound up with the interests of the workers in other countries. The Labour Movement is being internationalised; despite all the Second International's opposition, the tactics and strategy of the working-class struggle have transcended all national frontiers.

It is particularly important that we should study the rapprochement that has grown up during the last two or three years between the British and the Soviet working classes which finds its expression in the Anglo-Russian Committee. This is all the more urgently necessary since the last few months have been marked by a crisis in the relationships of the leading organisational bodies of the trade union movements of the two countries.

What we must ask ourselves is this: is the crisis in the Anglo-Russian Committee a crisis in the relations between the working classes of the Union of Soviet Socialist

Republics and Great Britain? Are the differences that have arisen between the British General Council and the Soviet Central Council of Trade Unions differences as between the workers themselves of both countries?

Only through a careful study of the character of these differences and their influence on the Labour Movement of Britain and the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics can we come to any conclusion regarding the outlook for the Anglo-Russian Unity Committee.

CHAPTER TWO

THE RAPPROCHEMENT: ITS ROOT CAUSES.

THEORETICALLY the beginning of the rapprochement between the trade unions of Britain and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is traced to the Sixth Congress of the Soviet Trade Unions held in December, 1924. Actually it began much earlier. During the period of intervention, when the British Government was doing its utmost both in the northern and the southern parts of Russia to deal a mortal blow at the Soviets, it was the working masses of Britain who proved to be the most determined and consistent opponents of all such military adventures.

Though the working class of Britain was ill-informed on what was actually being done in Russia, yet their class instinct told them that the intervention was not only against the interests of the Russian, but of the British working class as well. The British workers showed a steadily growing interest in Soviet Russia; so much so that as far back as 1920 their organisations sent a fairly big delegation to investigate the position in the latter country.

There were many reasons for this sympathy. The masses instinctively felt that the struggle fought by the Russian workers against their capitalists, far from doing any harm to the British workers, was rather working to their advantage. The blockade of Soviet Russia affected the economic development of the whole Continent, and Great Britain most of all; and the renewal of political and economic relations with Russia promised an extension of markets and a reduction of unemployment. Again, there was the interest in something novel—the happenings in what had been the Russia of the Tsars; happenings which, although not fully understood, were regarded as interesting social and historical events (the

destruction of the monarchy, expropriation of landed property, abolition of private property, etc.) ; further, the instinctive recognition of the fact that the smashing of Soviet Russia would strengthen the ruling classes of Britain, which in turn would have its effect on the position of the workers. All this helped to foster that tremendous interest taken by the British workers in Russia and to swell the volume of protests voiced up and down Great Britain against intervention.

The first delegation sent to Russia consisted of representatives of the Labour Party, the Independent Labour Party and the Trade Unions, being composed, to the extent of a good nine-tenths, of Right Wing elements. The Left Wingers on the delegation were Robert Williams, A. A. Purcell, and the I.L.P. representative, Norman Allan. Notwithstanding the fact that out-and-out Right Wingers like Mrs. Snowden, Tom Shaw and Dr. Haden Guest formed the bulk of its members, the delegation expressed itself on the whole in favourable terms regarding Soviet Russia, despite Mrs. Snowden's isolated attacks. The reason for the favourable views expressed by these reactionary leaders of the British Labour Movement lay not in any recognition on their part of our principles and methods, but in their fear of coming back to the workers with any criticism of Soviet Russia—while at the same time they had no desire to facilitate the British capitalists' policy of intervention by anti-Soviet speeches.

No improvement took place in Britain's position from 1920 on—rather the reverse—and unemployment became a chronic evil. Try as she might, Britain was unable to win back the markets she held before the war; she had more workers than the capitalists needed; and some way out had to be found. It could be found by opening up new markets and establishing peaceful relations with Soviet Russia. The result was that as unemployment spread in Britain, as the economic inter-relations became more strained, and as Big Business got weaker and weaker, the desire of the masses to bring the two countries into closer contact and so enable the British working class to maintain its standard of living gathered strength. Thus a favourable attitude towards Soviet Russia already existed among the British workers long before the conclusion of the formal agreement, and the presence of the General Council's representatives at the Sixth Soviet Trades Union Congress was a reflection of the new sentiment which had not failed to influence the trade union leadership as well.

ORIGIN OF THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN COMMITTEE.

THE Delegation of the General Council which attended the Sixth Soviet Trades Union Congress (Messrs. A. A. Purcell, chairman; Fred Bramley, secretary; Herbert Smith; Ben Tillett; John Turner; John Bromley; Alan A. H. Findlay) and which expressed the friendship felt by the British workers towards the Soviet workers was met with a suggestion from the Central Council of Russian Trade Unions that steps be taken to consolidate the concord between the workers of the two countries in organisational form.

The resolution passed by the Sixth Soviet Trades Union Congress reads :

“As the work of speeding up the unification of the International Trade Union Movement is acquiring a general historic importance, especially in view of the fresh period lying ahead of capitalist imperialist reaction in many of the more important countries, the Sixth Congress considers it its duty to do all it possibly can in this direction.

“In this regard the Sixth Trades Union Congress considers that its duty is to identify itself with the intentions voiced by the Hull Congress of the British Trade Unions, and notes with satisfaction that, as the British Trade Union Delegation now in Moscow states, by the decision it has adopted it is meeting the wishes of the overwhelming majority of the British workers.

“With a view to co-ordinating the work of the British and Russian Trade Union Movements in promoting unity, the Sixth Trades Union Congress hereby furnishes the Central Council of Russian Trade Unions with full powers, after the necessary negotiations with the General Council of the British Trades Union Congress, jointly to form an Anglo-Russian Committee whose task it shall be to co-ordinate the activities of the trade union movements of both countries in their struggle for International Trade Union Unity.

“Congress urges the Central Council of Russian Trade Unions to take immediate steps to carry the foregoing into effect, consideration being given to the Congress's earnest desire that the said Committee should be set up not later than January, 1925.

“Congress further instructs the Central Council

to undertake any other measures which the Central Council may deem necessary in the interests of International Trade Union Unity.

“Congress notes with satisfaction the statement of the British Trade Union Delegation now in Moscow to the effect that it considers this effort as a step in the right direction and will advocate the same to the British trade unions and the General Council. In such co-ordinated action for the realisation of the unity of the British and Russian (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) trade unions, the Sixth Congress sees a strong guarantee for success in bringing about International Trade Union Unity and consolidating fraternal relations between the workers of Britain and the workers of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

“Congress considers that the trade union organisations of other countries, by following this example, will be displaying the proper activity to realise unity.”

The Central Council's suggestion, formulated in extremely cautious and moderate terms, raised considerable doubts and hesitancy among the delegates. Had it not been for the Delegation Secretary, Fred Bramley, a man of very moderate outlook but with a clear head and a firm will, it is not unlikely that the Delegation would never have made up its mind even as much as to express agreement in principle with the proposal submitted by the Central Council. It did, however, intimate to the Sixth Trades Union Congress its agreement in principle to the formation of the Anglo-Russian Committee, the matter being deferred for submission to the General Council of the British Trades Union Congress.

On the Delegation's return to Britain the General Council approved the steps it had taken, thereby signifying that, in principle, the formation of such a committee was favourably regarded. The General Council's decision was approved by the Scarborough Trades Union Congress, thus lending special weight to the Committee.

The Trades Union Congress's decision was all the more important, seeing that the Second and Amsterdam Internationals had launched a bitter campaign against any effort to bring the British and Soviet trade unions into line with each other. As a section of the International Federation of Trade Unions (Amsterdam International), the British unions had to withstand a fair amount of pressure brought to bear by the Amsterdamites, but the British workers' need for rap-

prochement with the Russian workers broke Amsterdam's pressure in this direction, and the Anglo-Russian Committee was formed.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN COMMITTEE AND THE GENERAL COUNCIL.

THE Anglo-Russian Joint Advisory Council (as it is officially called) has held three meetings since its formation. There is no need here to go into all the details of the course and outcome of the labours of the Anglo-Soviet Conference. We need only touch briefly on the more outstanding points in the declarations and manifestoes drawn up by the Committee, viz., (1) joint struggle against capitalist attack; (2) against military adventures and intervention; (3) struggle for International Trade Union Unity.

If it be asked how the two agreeing parties stood by their pact it will have to be admitted that each acted differently. From the very start the General Council regarded the jointly-adopted decisions as mere abstract theorising. Actually, what did it do to organise any struggle against the capitalist attack? Nothing at all.

Moreover, when the question of putting up real resistance to the employers did face them as a fact to come to grips with in Britain itself, the General Council surrendered all its positions and sold both the General Strike and the miners' struggle. Again, what did the Council do in the way of opposing war and intervention? We must confess to being unaware of its having ever taken a single step to stop the criminal policy of the British capitalist class in the British colonies and in the Far East. That does not mean, though, that the Council did not pass its protest resolutions from time to time, but you will never frighten the British capitalists with resolutions.

Well, but what has the Council done for unity? It is its official view that unity will be established by the Central Council of Russian Trade Unions joining the Amsterdam International!

Friction has occurred on this head between the General Council and the Amsterdam International, causing grave concern to reactionary trade unionists and the Labour reformists who have already become part and parcel of the capitalists. Instead of raising the entire issue of building up

a United International, the General Council, in the persons of its Right and so-called Left Wingers, is toying with this idea, and using a lot of verbal fireworks without moving matters one bit. It has promised to call a conference between the International Federation of Trade Unions and the Russian Central Council, but has put it off from month to month right up to now.

The General Council thinks it is enough to pass a resolution now and then without doing anything to carry out the decision it embodies. It has shown itself afraid of organised work, of lining up sympathetic organisations with the Committee, and most of all of getting the masses into the struggle for unity.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN COMMITTEE AND THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING CLASS.

KEEN interest was shown by the masses in the agreement between the General Council and the Central Council of Russian Trade Unions. The British trade unions form the strongest section of the International Federation of Trade Unions, the Soviet trade unions the most powerful section of the Red International of Labour Unions, and the coming together of these two big sections of the two Internationals demonstrated not only the feasibility of a united front between both Internationals but also the possibility of their organisational fusion. And that was the way the masses looked at it.

In quite a number of countries fairly big groups began to take shape inside the Amsterdam unions pledged to support the Anglo-Russian Committee, and everywhere—in France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Czecho-Slovakia, Austria—they were set up under the uniform title of "Unity Groups." They issue their own organs, but they are linked up more with the Russian Central Council than with the Anglo-Russian Committee, for the General Council has shown very little interest in this matter.

Besides these groups, we find that a few national bodies have expressed themselves in favour of the Anglo-Russian Committee's platform, such as the Trade Union Federations of Norway, Finland, etc.

It has been the endeavour of all these groups and national centres to make organisational connections with the Anglo-Russian Committee, but the General Council has been rather suspicious of this growing sympathy towards the Anglo-

Russian Committee. It does not wish to extend the Committee organisationally or to enlarge its forces because it has put all its hopes into benign conversations and lobbying instead of winning over the masses.

Yet in spite of this adverse attitude to any extension or "activation" of the Committee, the Committee was greatly looked up to by the mass of the workers. They saw in it a first step to international trade union unity and gave it every moral and political support. It became a battling ground inside the reformist unions for and against the united front, for and against unity, for and against building a bloc with the Soviet trade unions.

In this lay the great and exclusive value of the Anglo-Russian Committee.

CHAPTER SIX

THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN COMMITTEE'S WEAK POINTS.

THE weakest point in the Anglo-Russian Committee was that it did not become a permanently functioning institution; it met once every three or four months, adopted certain resolutions, and the delegates then left for their respective countries. There was no standing body to carry into effect the decisions adopted, no machinery to work day in, day out, drawing in fresh strength and supporters for the cause of unity.

The Committee was therefore rather in the nature of a mere periodical conference, not an organisation operating the decisions come to at its conferences; and this was, without question, its weakest feature. It is easy to pass a resolution to fight the capitalist attack; but it is not the resolution that counts so much as the practical work following on it.

The same thing happened with every other question. No sympathy was manifested by the General Council with the efforts to make the Anglo-Russian Committee of a more stable character and to go into the question of consolidating its political influence and prestige organisationally, again owing to the Council representatives' wrong approach to the Committee they had helped to set up.

At the beginning of 1926 the General Council showed signs of disappointment in the Anglo-Russian Committee. The Council members thought it was sufficient to arrive at a decision and leave it to be performed through some inscrutable and unfathomable channels. Representatives of the Council began complaining that it was very difficult to carry

through these decisions, that the Amsterdam International was resisting them, and that no hopes could be entertained of bringing any of the Amsterdam leaders round to their viewpoint.

Diplomatic shuffling began on the Council. There were chance meetings with representatives of the International Federation of Trade Unions and so on. That all goes to show that the General Council prefers wire-pulling behind the scenes to taking the only plain and obvious way of coming out to the workers, of driving agitation and propaganda among them, of recruiting them to support the platform it itself had already subscribed to.

These inadequacies were coming to light as far back as the beginning of 1926, when it became plain the Council had no intention of going beyond formal decisions, pious resolutions and abstract declarations, which meant, it seems, the undermining of the Anglo-Russian Committee. If even the notion alone of the Anglo-Russian Committee was of such vast significance, then surely it stands to reason that its actual practical activities should have been of still greater importance.

The General Council's passivity was threatening the very foundations of the Committee, and, quite naturally, the Central Council of Russian Trade Unions did everything that lay in its power to lift the General Council out of its passivity and dead complacency.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE GENERAL STRIKE AND THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN COMMITTEE.

THE British General Strike that was declared on May 3rd was announced from the very outset by the General Council as being a purely industrial movement concerning the "domestic affairs" of the British working class alone. Had the General Council been at all serious in regard to its duties it would have, long before the strike began, taken the initiative in convening the Anglo-Russian Committee and raising the question of what was to be done to support the struggle.

Dragged into the strike against its will and wish, the General Council, however, did not even dream of applying to the Committee. Standing by the narrow national view, it tried to get as well away from the Committee as it could so as not to "compromise itself" in the eyes of the capitalists.

The fact alone that it quite "forgot" the existence of the

Committee "for the duration" of the General Strike demonstrates that the General Council regarded the Anglo-Russian Committee as a talking shop, but not in any way as a rallying point for the fight, as an organ able to do something real during the struggle. It was a perfectly **conscious undermining** of the Committee's authority, the natural consequence of the stand the General Council had taken all along.

Had the General Council had any respect for the clause in the Declaration it had signed concerning joint struggle against the capitalist offensive, it would have immediately called the Anglo-Russian Committee together, and invited to its meeting all those organisations which had intimated their support of the Committee. Having paved the way to selling the strike, before it had actually begun, the Council however, was in no mind to link up with people who would have thwarted its treacherous plans.

The explanation may be sought in the Council's "forgetfulness" of the existence of the Anglo-Russian Committee. This was the first blow dealt at the Anglo-Russian Committee.

CHAPTER EIGHT

"DAMNED RUSSIAN GOLD."

THE second blow came right in the high-tide of the General Strike. Abiding by the obligations it had taken on itself, the Central Council of Russian Trade Unions sent its measure of fraternal aid to the General Council at once. The General Council refused to accept the money sent on the grounds that it did not want to rouse the capitalists, and informed the Soviet unions that the acceptance of the money "would be wrongly understood and misinterpreted." It was really a foul blow at international unity, and at proletarian solidarity.

It was not a blow at the Anglo-Russian Committee alone, however. The refusal to take the money gathered by the Soviet unions struck right at the General Strike and the miners' struggle. It spelt the beginning of capitulation, the first surrender of all their positions, since it meant subordinating the class interests of the workers to the views and interests of the capitalist class.

We will not here begin examining the General Council's convictions in regard to this Soviet money; they are so basely petty, so cringingly respectable, that there is no need to belabour them. We all know what the capitalists have to say

about "Red Gold" and how it is using the fraternal solidarity of the Russian workers in order to disorganise the workers of their own countries.

Nothing new in this direction was said by the General Council or its literary gentlemen—nothing. The only novel feature about the situation was that the very General Council that had come to an agreement with the Soviet unions about jointly fighting the capitalist attack did not only refuse to ask the Soviet trade unions for assistance, but even turned down their help when offered. The General Council did this to win the sympathies of the capitalist class and to demonstrate its "loyalty" to them and its "independence" of Moscow. By this cowardly and treacherous act the General Council also demonstrated to the capitalists that it was composed of traitors, that such "leaders" could be twisted round their little fingers.

Three days after the Council refused the Soviet money it called off the General Strike and started a planned and organised sabotage of the miners' struggle.

It should be noted that there was a certain amount of consistency: first the blow at the Anglo-Russian Committee; then at the General Strike, and afterwards at the miners' struggle. There is no getting away from it that this was done advisedly and consistently, and that it was bound to have its effect on the fate of the Anglo-Russian Committee.

To sign an alliance for joint struggle against the employers' offensive and then to strike at your ally right at the moment the fight starts is something that only craven cowards like the men on the General Council could ever dream of.

CHAPTER NINE

LEFTS AND THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN COMMITTEE.

THE Left Wing members of the General Council—A. A. Purcell, George Hicks, Ben Tillett, John Bromley and others—had been preaching unity all the time. They were the first to stand up for the Anglo-Russian Committee; they brought the matter up before the Council, and it was they who usually played the leading part in the British delegations attending the Committee's meetings.

The political line followed by these Left Wingers need not be gone into here—it is as good as non-existent. They had a special "policy" practically every day: and were con-

sistent in one thing only—in their inactivity. They were prepared to pass resolutions along with the Russians, to deliver themselves of fine speeches—mainly in Russia—and made all sorts of pompous declarations, but when it came to organised measures, actually to fulfilling their pledges, they were as slippery as eels and would all start talking at sixes and sevens about the impossibility of undertaking organised measures, of the need for deferring, delaying, postponing, pondering, thinking things over.

This elastic policy of the Lefts was seen at its best during the General Strike. Everyone knows, of course, that they did not lead the strike, that they disappeared from the scene as soon as it started.

Before the strike came off they were fond of talking about the leading role they played in the General Council on which they were supposed to have a majority. Whether that was true or not is hard to say. Anyhow, when the strike started its leaders proved to be Jimmy Thomas, Arthur Pugh, and the other big bugs, while the Lefts did the disappearing trick.

Neither before, and still less during, the strike did the Rights want to have anything to do with the Anglo-Russian Committee. And what about the Lefts? They had not given a thought to the matter, and like the Right Wingers they were beset by a hide-bound narrow national outlook, and they, too, approved the General Council's refusal of the "Red Gold." With that they vanished from the political horizon.

If those who shouted most about the Anglo-Russian Committee betrayed it at the critical moment; if those who beat the big drum about fraternising with the Russian Trade Unions refuse their fraternal aid at a time of need, in what respect do they differ from those openly and secretly opposed to all rapprochement with the Russian workers? In no way whatsoever.

On to the stage strutted the Rights, who reconciled themselves to the existence of the Anglo-Russian Committee, but did not display any marked enthusiasm for it. When they did get a chance to deal it a blow in the back, the Right Wingers took advantage of it with a consummate skill born of long years of experience in selling the working class.

CHAPTER TEN

RUSSIAN COUNCIL AND GENERAL STRIKE

SOME time before the General Strike the Central Council of

Russian Trade Unions repeatedly went into the question of ways and means to assist the British workers when their strike started. When it was declared it at once appealed to all members of the Soviet Trade Unions to levy themselves two hours' wages, and immediately forwarded the money to the General Council. What was the Central Council of Russian Trade Unions to do when the British General Council refused to accept this money, and then shamelessly betrayed the strike?

The agreement concluded between the Soviet and British trade unions was no mere agreement between five or six British trade union officials and a like number of Soviet trade union officials. Had that been so, it would have been neither a bloc, nor an agreement, but simply a little bit of shuffling that would have interested no one. The importance of the Anglo-Russian Committee lay in the fact that it reflected the coming together of the British workers and the Soviet workers.

The Russian Central Council of Trade Unions could not take the view that it was responsible only to the Soviet workers. It felt it was responsible to the International working class, and the British workers in the first place, inasmuch as it had undertaken certain obligations in relation to the Anglo-Russian Committee. To maintain silence on the General Council's traitorous behaviour would be tantamount not only to tolerating, but to aiding and abetting its treachery. For did not the General Council jointly subscribe to the agreement along with the Russian Central Council?

It was completely out of the question for the latter to withhold its opinion on the action of its co-partner to the pact, and pass over in silence what it had done to the British workers. From the point of view of trade union bureaucrats' solidarity the Russian Central Council should have said nothing, but from the viewpoint of the solidarity of the masses, the Russian Central Council was obliged to come out openly, and, making no bones about the business, say what it thought of the General Council and its tactics of betrayal.

That was what it did. It openly stated what it thought of the behaviour of the British trade union leaders. It addressed its statement* to the international working class, giving its opinion as to what had led to the collapse of the

* See Appendix 1.

General Strike. The statement was a logical part of its open and above-board policy. It would only have been playing the worst sort of diplomatic game if the Soviet unions had confined themselves to mere correspondence, private talk or negotiations on the matter between the two national bodies, and on a matter, too, that affects not the British workers alone, but the international working class as well.

Any worker might have got up and asked the leaders of the Soviet unions: "Why didn't you say a word when the very people you signed the agreement with sold the General Strike?" And they would have been right.

There could be no keeping silent. Ugly as the facts of the case were, they had to be faced; the canker eating into the heart of the movement had to be shown to the workers. It had to be pointed out to the British workers wherein their weakness lay.

That is what the Central Council of Russian Trade Unions did in the statement it issued.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

GENERAL COUNCIL HUFFED

THE statement in question gave great offence to both the Right and Left leaders on the General Council. Yet what did they do in reply to this "insult"? They met it with stony silence. First they tried to suppress the fact itself. The "Daily Herald" did not print the statement. It would seem that the simplest and most obvious plan would have been to publish the statement along with a counter-statement replying to it point by point. But that is just what the General Council did not do.

First of all it tried to hide the fact of the statement, while at the same time spreading rumours through the capitalist press to the effect that after this statement relations with the Central Council of Russian Trade Unions would be broken off, and its representatives not invited to attend the forthcoming Trades Union Congress, and so on. These rumours from various capitalist sources were plainly inspired by the General Council leaders who lacked the courage to prove openly the correctness of their own views.

Nothing was said by the General Council, not because its members could not speak, but because it had nothing to say for itself.

What could the General Council say to the charge of betraying the Strike? Repeat its first statement? But hardly any grown up man in his right senses can believe that the General Council obtained certain guarantees from the Government and therefore called off the strike. No one can have any doubts as to the cowardice, treachery and weakness of the General Council. Actually, therefore, it was beyond the powers of the General Council to give an answer; so it started shouting about offensive accusations and insults, about interfering in purely British affairs, and so on.

Instead of frank counter-criticism all it had to offer was sulky silence; instead of a plain-spoken explanation, underhand machinations against the Russian Central Council. Such a craven policy on the part of the General Council was bound to weaken the Anglo-Russian Committee still more, weakened as it already was with blows previously struck at it by the British trade union leaders.

CHAPTER TWELVE

OPEN SABOTAGE OF ANGLO-RUSSIAN COMMITTEE

OF course, such a state of things could not last long, particularly as the miners were still keeping their struggle going in spite of all the General Council's gerrymandering. It was essential to raise the whole matter of the Anglo-Russian Committee's practical activities in all bearings, and that was done. The Russian Central Council took the initiative and suggested to the British General Council that a meeting be called of the Anglo-Russian Committee.

It was some time before the General Council gave its answer, but it agreed at last. At the end of July the Anglo-Russian Committee met in Paris, when the Russian Delegation brought up the question of getting to work forthwith to organise assistance for the miners. For their part, the British Delegation moved that the Russians should withdraw their statement, when they could then consider going into the questions on the agenda.

This effort to get the Russian Central Council to retract was most characteristic. It should be noted that at this meeting the British representatives made no endeavour to refute essentially the charges brought against them; they regarded the Russian Central Council's statement as an insult to them. The insult had to be wiped out; only then could there be any thought of tackling the agenda. Instead of a policy, the

sulks. But the chief thing is this—that the General Council delegates refused, simply refused, to consider the question of helping the miners.

After two days' discussion on what the agenda was to be, the meeting was put off for a few weeks. It met again in Berlin at the end of August, when the British delegates tried to take the same stand as before and demanded once more that the Soviet trade unionists should withdraw their statement. The Russian Central Council representatives again raised the question of helping the British miners; but the British delegates, after two days' talk, once again refused to consider it.

When the Russian Central Council submitted practical proposals for aiding the miners, the General Council representatives stated, firstly that all that could be done was being done already; secondly that they could not be carried out; and thirdly that it was meddling in domestic matters. It was an open and brazen-faced sabotaging of the miners' fight; it was the finishing touch to the whole treacherous policy the General Council had been following during the Strike.

The Paris and Berlin meetings proved the General Council to be an out-and-out opponent of the Anglo-Russian Committee that would do its level best to sabotage, disorganise, and undermine the Committee, but which, out of fear of the masses, was afraid of taking open action against it.

This attitude is greatly complicating the work of the Anglo-Russian Committee, and faces the workers with the question: what next? Before giving our answer, however, we must dwell for a little on the fresh conflict that arose between the Central Council of Russian Trade Unions and the General Council at the Bournemouth Trades Union Congress.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

RUSSIAN COUNCIL AND BOURNEMOUTH T.U.C.

THE Central Council of Russian Trade Unions intended sending a delegation to the Bournemouth Trades Union Congress, but visas were refused. Both the "Times" and the "Manchester Guardian" ironically commented that the Government had rendered the British General Council a great service, as it had saved it from a meeting with the Soviet delegates; but the Soviet unions would not accept the refusal to give them visas and addressed a letter* to the Trades

* See Appendix 2.

Union Congress in which the Russian Central Council reaffirmed its previous stand.

The letter roused the indignation of the General Council. It distributed the letter among the Congress delegates just as it came from the telegraph office, with a few changes, along with its resolution† in which the delegates were informed that the letter violated all "international courtesy," that it constituted an "intolerable interference in the domestic affairs of the British Trade Union Movement," and so forth.

Once again, instead of sticking to essentials, instead of replying to the letter point by point, instead of open public discussions with the Soviet unions on the issues raised, the General Council set the whole business in the light of a dignified accusation of lack of courtesy, of not minding one's own business, and so on. It makes a simply ridiculous impression.

Setting aside the question of manners or lack of manners—not of so much consequence after all—what actually is there in the charge of "intolerable interference in domestic matters"? What does an accusation like this mean really? What conception do the leaders of the British trade union movement hold of relationships between the workers of different countries? That every man may do whatever he likes at home, and the rest just look on? Can any effective International ever be built up if the workers are not going to have their say in the affairs of the workers of other countries? It is a theory entirely directed against the workers' interests, incompatible with the internationalisation of the working class movement. It would destroy all that has taken scores of years to build up in the way of bringing the progressive sections of the working class together.

One may be displeased with the sort of letter that was sent to the General Council, one may repudiate its contents, but to protest against interference of this nature is simply unthinkable. Are we interfering in internal matters when we send subscriptions to the miners to help them during their struggle, or are we not? Apparently, we are. Are not we interfering in the class struggle of the country concerned? Are we intermeddling or not when we do not send money during such a strike and when the General Council is not extending help? Theoretically it would appear as if we are not. Theoretically, this is sticking to the philosophy of non-

† See Appendix 3.

interference. Actually, though, it is interfering, but **to the advantage of the employers.**

Twist it as you will, all this empty theorising won't stand the test of criticism. There is not, and must not be, any place for it in the Labour movement. It should be roundly and soundly condemned, for a theory like this can only lead to the workers in one country taking a passive stand in the fate of the workers elsewhere, to the leaders of the workers' organisations being completely freed from international control, and to treachery to the workers going unpunished.

The Soviet trade union movement will never agree to any such non-interference, no matter how loudly the British General Council may howl for it.

At Bournemouth the General Council followed its usual practice: it did not bring up the question of the Anglo-Russian Committee's meetings, of what further was going to happen to it, or even the matter of the Russian Central Council's letter. All it did was to make passing reference in its report to the Paris and Berlin meetings.

On one of the delegates asking whether it was true that the General Council had refused to discuss the question of helping the miners, Pugh replied that it was not true; in other words, he purposely lied to the whole Congress. In answer to another delegate's proposal that Congress should consider the Russian Central Council's letter and the General Council's reply, the same Pugh said that the correspondence of fraternal delegations was not supposed to be discussed by the delegates to Congress, although he asked them to approve the reply.

Letters are not supposed to be discussed by Congress—nor their replies—but they are supposed to be approved. Bedlam, and no mistake! It says a lot for British trade union democracy!

That is the way the British trade union leaders take advantage of the full powers with which they are furnished! Be that as it may, the fact remains that to the political letter of the Central Council of Russian Trade Unions the General Council tendered a pale, ghastly answer that begged the whole issue raised by the Russian Central Council.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

DISSOLVE THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN COMMITTEE

THE crisis the Anglo-Russian Committee is passing through

has led some people to the conclusion that the Committee should be broken up right away. The following arguments are advanced in defence of this plan :

(1) The General Council sold the General Strike and the miners' struggle, and if the Soviet unions are going to continue sitting on the Anglo-Russian Committee it will be equivalent to covering up this betrayal ;

(2) The General Council will try to use the Committee to screen its dirty work ;

(3) The British workers will not understand why the alliance between the Russian Central Council and the British General Council is still being maintained after the latter's act of betrayal ;

(4) Owing to its internal crisis, the preservation of the Anglo-Russian Committee will only tend to bewilder the minds of the revolutionary workers everywhere and carry disorganisation into our own ranks ;

(5) The public break-up of the Anglo-Russian Committee will open the eyes of the British workers and the international working class to the real part played by the General Council.

These are the motions urged for breaking the Committee. Of all these arguments only one is indubitable—that the General Council betrayed the General Strike and the miners' struggle. But the entire "break it up" theory is built on the desire to make an heroic gesture that no one needs and that would only do harm.

There is no getting away from it : the General Council **sold the pass**. That is true, but is the Anglo-Russian Committee merely an **alliance of the leaders**? If it were so, of course it would be useless to waste one's breath on the matter. But the point is just this—that the Anglo-Russian Committee constitutes a **political alliance between the trade union organisations** representing the mass of workers of both countries. This fact must never be lost sight of, and if we are going to demonstrate to the masses what difference there is between revolutionary and reformist tactics it won't be by breaking up the Anglo-Russian Committee but by appealing to the British workers over the head of the General Council, and showing them in actual practice how their leaders conducted themselves.

No British worker would ever grasp the motives underlying any ultra-Left policy. Where would such tactics lead

us? They would lead to the Russian Central Council issuing a manifesto announcing the Anglo-Russian Committee's break-up and that would be the end of it. But would it be in our interests to wind up in this fashion an alliance like this to which the British trade union leaders subscribed neither for the love of the thing nor with their hearts in the business? Would it be in the interests of the British working class? Would it not be better for us to keep bringing up the Anglo-Russian Committee before the British workers again and again; to expose the Committee's sabotaging members, the General Council's behaviour, its repudiation of all its solemn pledges? Would it not be better if we were to remind the British workers a little oftener of the fact that the Anglo-Russian Committee is out to **act**, not to fall asleep on the job; and that, thanks to the General Council's treachery, the Committee has been turned into a passive body sunk in the slough of inaction?

Looked at from the **angle of the political enlightenment and education of the working masses** the "break-it-up" view will be seen to be beneath all criticism. Living realities have shown these tactics would be turned against us.

Who won after the Paris and Berlin meetings of the Anglo-Russian Committee? Can it be that the General Council strengthened its authority by its attitude at these meetings? Could the General Council, pressed to the wall, have won morally and politically? The fact alone that at the Bournemouth Trades Union Congress it was compelled to **conceal** its work in Paris and Berlin, and that neither during nor after the Bournemouth Congress did it give an open reply to the charges preferred by the Russian Trade Union Council delegation, shows that its position is by no means that of a winner.

It would be an easy business to break up the Anglo-Russian Committee, but it would benefit nobody. Of course, with sharp differences between the General Council and the Russian Central Council, and the British trade union leaders openly sabotaging the business, it is far more difficult to manœuvre. But it is not always the easiest tactics that are the best, and in politics a straight line does not always lead the quickest to one's goal.

"Let us just suppose for a minute, though," it may be said "that this is the right way of going about the job, that good results can be obtained by these tactics. But then it is

not at all clear why the General Council does not drop the Anglo-Russian Committee. Surely the men on the Council realise what it will lead to if the Anglo-Russian Committee is kept going? ”

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

WHY THE GENERAL COUNCIL DOES NOT SMASH THE COMMITTEE.

As we have seen already, the General Council is using the tactics of quiet sabotage. At the Anglo-Russian Committee meetings the General Council representatives blustered and bluffed; at Bournemouth they held their tongues; to-day they show not a sign of life. Yet, the General Council is not making a break with the Committee, although the majority of its members would like to.

What is the explanation for their holding on to the Committee like this? Those in favour of breaking up the Anglo-Russian Committee might say it is because the General Council hopes to use the Committee yet for its own ends. But after what happened at the Paris and Berlin meetings, it is doubtful if anyone can be found who believes the General Council could make use of the Committee for its own ends.

Then what is preventing the Council from taking the initiative in tearing up the agreement it concluded jointly with us? **The British workers are preventing it!** There can be no mistake about it!

In spite of the petty, grabbing, opportunist spirit prevailing in the General Council, its leading lights cannot ignore realities altogether. They are aware of the spirit moving the masses and are certain that the workers, even those belonging to the most reactionary unions, are strongly against the dropping of the Anglo-Russian Committee. If they were confident the workers would give them their backing in this matter the leaders would smash the Committee, but they know for certain that exactly the reverse is the case. In this respect the Bournemouth Trades Union Congress is extremely characteristic.

The General Council undoubtedly did have nine-tenths of the Congress with it. Most of the delegates were well-disposed towards it, while all the trade union officials followed its lead on all questions. Yet even before these, its “own men,” the Council was afraid to submit the question of the

Anglo-Russian Committee. Why? Because there would have been a big fight in the Congress over the question.

The General Council had no guarantee that it could get the majority even at this Congress if it raised the whole issue of the Committee.

It was this fear of defeat in the event of the matter being raised of breaking up the Anglo-Russian Committee that forced the General Council to maintain silence on the business, to avoid discussion, to pass over the Committee, and—instead of a reasoned reply—to hand out a quibbling answer to the questions raised by the Central Council of Russian Trade Unions.

Precisely because it fears to lean on the mass of the workers in the event of the Anglo-Russian Committee being broken up on its (the General Council's) initiative, the General Council is not inclined to take the first step. It is in an awkward fix. It would if it could, but it can't—but how it wants to smash up the Anglo-Russian Committee!

It would be a fine thing if we were to make it easier for the General Council to do so. It would be anything you like, except a realist's reasoned tactics. That is why the Communist International is against the tactics of breaking the Anglo-Russian Committee and why it spoke out against any undue display of nervousness in this most important international question.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

RELATIONS BETWEEN BRITISH AND RUSSIAN WORKERS STRONGER THAN EVER.

THE General Council's fear of following the policy of breaking up the Committee is to be explained first and foremost by the tactics hitherto applied by the Soviet trade unions during both the General Strike and the miners' struggle. They made a splendid response to the appeal made by the Red International of Labour Unions and organised a brilliant campaign of help. While the British trade union officials refused to accept financial assistance from the Soviet trade unions, the miners neither could nor wished to do so. The eight million roubles they got from Soviet Russia rendered a great service to the miners' cause.

During the struggle the difference between solidarity as understood and acted upon by Moscow and solidarity of the

Amsterdam brand was amply demonstrated to the British working class as a whole as well as to the miners. On the one hand you had wholehearted, purely comradely solidarity, prepared to do everything possible without having to be asked or reminded of its plain duty; on the other hand, a policy of "wait and see" that lasted some months, an underhand sabotage of the whole struggle, meagre assistance, and to cap it all a loan at $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.!

During the struggle the British workers obtained an object lesson in solidarity. Naturally, the masses are for Soviet solidarity, and against the Amsterdam brand. This one act of fraternal solidarity has done a hundred times more to establish contact with the British workers than tons of declarations, resolutions or pamphlets would ever have done. Deeds speak more powerfully than words, and it is difficult to knock one's head against a deed like this. No matter how great the indignation of the big-wigs of the British trade unions or how many wires they may pull with a view to dealing a vital blow at the Anglo-Russian Committee, the fact remains that relations between the working classes of Britain and the U.S.S.R. have improved, and friendly relations become stronger, for the working masses of Britain have had it shown to them in actual practice that working class solidarity is no empty phrase.

The actual rapprochement between the Soviet and British workers is developing parallel with the cleavage taking place between the leaders.

While among the leaders differences are becoming sharper and the Anglo-Russian Committee's meetings are becoming mere debating assemblies, relations among the rank and file are being consolidated, their fraternal solidarity is getting stronger, the working masses of both countries are drawing nearer to each other, there is talk of setting up a unity committee for the miners, and so on. Such being the case, can there be any sense in breaking up the Anglo-Russian Committee? Why should we take the first step? What would we stand to gain? By doing a thing like that we would only create confusion in the minds of hundreds of thousands of workers both **inside** and **outside** Britain.

So, looking at the matter in this light, we still consider it inadvisable to break up the Committee and still hold to our tactics of preserving it for the purpose of appealing to the British working class and to the workers of other countries through its instrumentality.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN COMMITTEE OUTSIDE BRITAIN.

As previously stated, the Anglo-Russian Committee has aroused the greatest interest and enthusiasm among the masses of the workers.

In many countries groups have come together basing their activities on the Committee's platform. The Committee has become the apple of discord among the warring factions in both the Second and Amsterdam Internationals. It is highly important, therefore, to realise clearly how the opponents and supporters of the Anglo-Russian Committee are reacting to the differences which have arisen on the Committee. Naturally, the leaders of the Amsterdam and Second Internationals are in high glee over the differences of view which have come to the fore on the Committee. Long articles are now being written by the Labour reformists proving conclusively that they had "told us so" months before, that they had predicted that the Committee was not going to be a long-lived body, that the Britishers would live to regret their friendship with the Russians, and so on, and so forth.

Their writings breathe fiendish joy at the turn events have taken, and their sympathies are naturally with the General Council and against the Russians' "intolerable interference" in Britain's domestic affairs. And, of course, the Second and Amsterdam Internationals are entirely in sympathy with the General Council, and against the Central Council of Russian Trade Unions. Both organisations are anxious, now that these differences have arisen, to regain their full ascendancy over the General Council which had been "wandering from the fold" for a time and had taken up, even though most moderately, its stand in the Opposition. It is a natural position for these leaders to take.

Well, and what is being done among the supporters of unity? It looks as if the differences between the Russian Central Council and the British General Council have confronted all workers in favour of unity with the question: "With whom shall we march—with the Russian Central Council or the General Council?"

There is no getting away from the fact that in these groups there is many a Labour-Socialist worker who considers the Russian Council's letter to the General Council

as somewhat too sharp in tone, a bit too blunt, not tactful enough. It is natural that where tactics and policy are weak, more attention is given to matters of "good taste." But most of the workers rallied round the unity groups realise that it is not a question of manners; that in this dispute between the Russian Council and the General Council, class truth is on the side of the Russian Council.

Thus the struggle going on inside the Anglo-Russian Committee, which began on the issue of the General Strike, continued around the miners' struggle, and raised practically all the most important problems of proletarian tactics, has forced a differentiation to be effected among all these groups. It is compelling those workers in sympathy with the Anglo-Russian Committee to think out for themselves whose tactics are the sounder, whose tactics the more likely to promote working class interests.

The division between the Russian Central Council of Trade Unions and the General Council is clarifying the position. Attention has been focussed on the question of putting our unity principles into practice. If the Anglo-Russian Committee aims at unity, then it stands to reason the General Council and the Russian Council should act on a united front; that the General Council should rather ask assistance of the Russians, not refuse it. This rift will make all true friends of unity think the matter over; they will have to choose between two sets of tactics.

The necessity for making that choice will impel them to ponder over the issue involved, will clear up the whole situation and in the long run strengthen all these groups, even if some of their elements stand for the General Council or may be unable to make up their minds as to what tactics they are to give their allegiance.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

FUTURE OF THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN COMMITTEE.

WHAT is the Anglo-Russian Committee's future going to be? That is a question of concern to every worker interested in the fate of the International Labour Movement. What is to happen to it? If the differences of view are so great, if the General Council openly sabotages, then the Anglo-Russian Committee will not be able to do anything at all. It must be quite frankly admitted that the Committee's position is by no means an enviable one. In point of fact,

the General Council is dragging, delaying, deferring, and sabotaging the Committee's work and refusing to abide by the obligations it has taken upon itself.

It would be the height of simplicity to expect that the General Council is likely to do anything practical in the direction of unity. In Berlin it was unanimously resolved that the General Council should carry out the pledges it had undertaken of calling a conference between the Amsterdam International and the Russian Council of Trade Unions, but it has now deferred the matter for another three months. With the present spirit prevailing on the General Council and its sabotage of the miners' fight and the proposals emanating from the Russian Council, it is very doubtful indeed if it will display any initiative in this direction.

The General Council members, even its Left Wing, have not thought out to its logical conclusion what real trade union unity would mean. They have frequently hidden behind the formula of unity without having found the time to ponder over all it implies. Their idea of unity is entirely soulless. And indeed, if an organised body is not going to fight the capitalists, is going to stand aloof from the workers' struggle, that sort of unity is going to give the working class nothing. Even if an International like the one the General Council representatives have been dreaming of were to be created it would be just as impotent as the existing Amsterdam International.

The Council's basic principle is that trade union centres are to be completely autonomous in respect to the International they belong to; but such wide autonomy excludes the possibility of effecting real aid when required. If the formal attitude is to be adopted towards the International, then the latter is only bound to help when asked by the national centre. Moreover, if there is a cleavage between the national trade union centre and the International on the struggle generally or the methods to be used in the struggle, must the particular section of the working class involved in the struggle be helped or not? As the General Council sees it, it should not be assisted. As we see it, it should undoubtedly, since international interests are above national interests.

It is difficult to believe that the General Council will become any more active, or that any serious joint action will be undertaken by it and the Russian Council along the lines

laid down in the Anglo-Russian Committee's declaration. Thanks to the Council's sabotage, the Committee's activities are held up.

The General Council is trying obstruction in order to kill the Committee, a thing the Soviet trade unions cannot, and will not, allow for one moment. To let the Council do that would only be to help it to get rid of a stumbling-block to its policy.

As far as the Soviet trade unions are concerned, they will do everything they can to prevent the General Council from undermining the Anglo-Russian Committee on the quiet; but we can expect no activity on the part of the Committee, for after all, it consists of two parties, and if one—the General Council, that is—purposely sabotages, then the Committee and its work are going to suffer incalculable harm.

CHAPTER NINETEEN WHAT NEXT?

THE Anglo-Russian Committee must be approached, of course, from the viewpoint not only of the mutual relations of the Soviet and British workers, but also of the whole international trade union movement as it is at present, and particularly of the position of the trade union movement in Britain.

It is common knowledge that two policies are contending for recognition in the world's trade union movement: the revolutionary (R.I.L.U.) and the reformist (Amsterdam I.F.T.U.).

The strength of the Red International of Labour Unions lies in the fact that, apart from other factors, it wields very considerable influence in the organisations affiliated to the Amsterdam International Federation of Trade Unions. Inside the Amsterdam International itself there are two oppositions: one standing wholly for the Red International policy (the Minority Movement, etc.); the other being that which is responsible for the setting up everywhere of unity groups. The second consists almost entirely of Labour-Socialist workers supporting the programme of the Anglo-Russian Unity Committee.

The struggle inside the reformist unions is becoming more and more acute. All the leading lights of the Amsterdam I.F.T.U. and its national sections are being rapidly

Americanised. Right before us we can see how the reformist machinery of the trade unions and the capitalist State is undergoing a process of concretion. This aspect of Americanisation is now taking place in Britain as well.

Only in the light of these contradictory tendencies inside the reformist unions can the general outlook for the movement be understood. On the one hand the leaders are becoming more and more Americanised, tending to become part and parcel of their capitalist governmental apparatus, and working to build up and consolidate capitalist institutions like the League of Nations, the International Labour Office, coalition Governments, the League of Industrial Peace, and so on. On the other hand, we find that inside the reformist organised bodies dissatisfaction with these tactics is increasing; that ever more and more elements are breaking away from reformism; that, although standing officially between the Red International and Amsterdam, politically they have left Amsterdam though still affiliated to it organisationally.

This war of tendencies within the Second and Amsterdam Internationals and their affiliated bodies is bound to become more and more bitter as a consequence of both the General Strike and the miners' struggle as well as of the struggle which has begun between the Russian Council of Trade Unions and the General Council on the Anglo-Russian Committee.

The differences outstanding between these two bodies constitute no mere Anglo-Russian altercation. Here two sets of tactics have clashed, revolutionary and reformist; the tactics of alliance with the capitalists, the tactics of fighting the capitalists.

Through the vivid example of the General Strike in Great Britain, the masses have had it demonstrated to them what reformist and what revolutionary tactics are. In this way the struggle, **inside**, **outside** and **around** the Anglo-Russian Unity Committee, bound up as it is with the fight around the General Strike, is bringing the masses face to face with the question: "With whom shall we march—with the Central Council of Russian Trade Unions or the General Council; with the Red International or with Amsterdam?" In this international aspect lies the significance of the sharp conflict between the Central Council of Russian Trade Unions and the General Council.

This is a dispute that will be settled on the international arena in the struggle between Communism and Reformism.

APPENDICES.

Appendix 1.

APPEAL BY THE PLENARY MEETING OF THE CENTRAL COUNCIL OF RUSSIAN TRADE UNIONS TO THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING CLASS

COMRADES.—The development and issue of the great General Strike fought by the British working class compels us, the representatives of the organised workers of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, to make the present declaration.

Together with the British trade unions, the trade unions of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics were the pioneers in the struggle for international trade union unity. We have begun working to rally and unite the scattered forces of the working class against the offensive launched by the employers, who in many countries are now attacking the working class with a view to lowering the workers' standards of living, depriving them of their gains won by years of hard struggle, and devitalising and utterly shattering the workers' organisations. Against this capitalist offensive, against the danger of fresh wars, and in favour of building up a united, class-conscious, militant Trade Union International, we are struggling for international trade union unity.

We have repeatedly pointed to the inevitability of a capitalist attack on the British workers in order to depress their standards of living to the level of the worst-paid workers of other countries competing with British industry. And, in point of fact, the working class of Britain was the first to bear the brunt of the employers' determined attack, replying with the stubborn resistance of millions of its proletarian ranks. Unbounded enthusiasm, steady firmness and discipline were shown by the British working class. To a man the workers of Britain rose to the defence of the miners.

The British General Strike demonstrated to the entire capitalist world the power of the industrial workers welded together by the struggle against the common enemy. Victory was promised by the splendid behaviour of the masses during the strike; yet, notwithstanding, instead of victory, the working class has so far only suffered defeat. It has always been held by the Soviet workers and their unions that the great struggle of the working class for its final emancipation from the oppression of capital is international in character. We cannot help regarding the defeat of the British

workers as a partial defeat of the entire international working class.

That is why we consider it our duty to declare, openly and in face of the whole world working class, that this defeat is the result of the treacherous work of the heroes of Black Friday, of the Right Wing leaders of the Labour Party and the General Council (Thomas and MacDonald), and also of the surrender of its Left Wing (Purcell, Hicks, etc.). These last bear still greater responsibility for the defeat, since, though wielding great influence on the General Council, they ignominiously dragged at the tail of the known hirelings of the capitalists, and along with them, surrendered the position to their class enemy.

Events have proved the soundness of the policy of the Anglo-Russian Conference, but have not equally shown up the ineptitude of the present-day Labour leaders, blighted as they are by the reformist policy of continual compromise, to guide the tremendous struggle of the workers with the consistent determination it requires against the capitalist class. At a moment when the greatest fight the workers ever conducted against the frenzied efforts of the coal barons to degrade the miners' standards was coming to a close, their gravest concern was of being charged with disloyalty to the very enemy that was tightening its stranglehold on the working class. Their greatest fear was of being accused of disloyalty to the capitalist State; they were afraid it might be necessary to make the fight a consciously class issue, that is, a political struggle, which was what the capitalists actually did by mobilising all the resources and instruments of State coercion against the workers. Surrender was already indicated by the refusal to make it a political issue.

The General Strike has not only not shown itself a failure, but has, on the contrary, demonstrated its exceptional value as a method of struggle. It was not the General Strike that went bankrupt, but the General Council leaders directing it.

Even from the point of view of elementary trade union duty we are bound, unfortunately, to confirm the fact of this bankruptcy of both the "Right" and "Left" members of the General Council of the Trades Union Congress. To sell the miners; to leave them in the lurch; to call off the General Strike without a single guarantee of any sort, leaving all the men out on strike to the tender mercies of the victors and thereby affording the capitalists and their Government just the opportunity they required to smash different con-

tingents of the workers, section by section; and then to heap strictures and accusations on the heads of the miners—does not mean the fulfilment of one's elementary duty of class solidarity. It is a violation of all the obligations directly laid on the shoulders of the Labour and trade union leaders; it is tantamount to desertion in the field, and can only facilitate victory for the enemy.

We must bring the fact to the notice of the international working class that the working masses of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, who in a most remarkable spirit of solidarity throughout the vast extent of our enormous land, have been collecting, penny by penny, money for the support of their fellow workers in Britain now out on strike, were outraged by the cowardly action of the General Council in refusing to accept this support despite the fact that one of the most important tasks of the Anglo-Russian Committee had been defined as that of rendering mutual support to the workers of Britain and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in their struggle against the capitalists. We further confirm the fact that, scared stiff by the Government and the bourgeoisie, the General Council in this case supported the Government; even screened the Government when it ordered the banks not to issue the Russian trade union monies to the General Council.

This policy was most clearly given expression to in George Hicks' statement about "damned Russian money," a statement he has not yet refuted. We are confident the British workers hold a different opinion on this matter from that held by the leaders.

We know that the workers of Britain see for themselves how the British capitalists managed to get support from their class allies in other countries. We know how the French police helped to get out the English capitalist papers in Paris. We know that through its Press the American capitalist class expressed its readiness to assist the British capitalists even to the extent of providing military support. We understand why, after having declared the General Strike illegal, although not yet having declared the miners' struggle illegal, the British capitalists and the British Government are, nevertheless, threatening to confiscate the money being sent to support the miners.

But we, and with us all the workers of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, cannot but regard the General Council leaders' refusal of our fraternal aid as an attempt to isolate the British workers from the Soviet workers, and

to restrict the scope of the strike, which is equivalent actually to helping the mineowners and their Government in the struggle against the working class.

The trade unions of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, have always regarded the Anglo-Russian Committee as a body which was to cement the bonds of fraternity between the millions of workers of both countries in their fight for real international trade union unity on the basis of the joint active struggle of the workers of all countries against capital. What the British workers are passing through amply demonstrates most objectively the full urgency and crying necessity for a strong alliance between the workers of Britain and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Events have shown that as far as the workers of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and their trade unions are concerned, their fraternal alliance with the workers of Britain is no empty sentimental phrase, no mere expression of platonic sympathy, but a really genuine bond of brotherly, working class solidarity, a union of active mutual aid in an uphill fight, an alliance to carry on a common struggle against the capitalist class. This is, in spite of the cruel blow dealt to the British working class, the cause of international unity and the Anglo-Russian Committee by the trade union leaders, the earnest conviction of the Russian workers.

That is why we are not only not proposing the destruction of the Anglo-Russian Committee but are calling for everything to be done to vitalise it, and to extend and strengthen its activities which, as we see it, ought not to cease for one moment. The Anglo-Russian Committee must become a more effective body. Strength and vitality must be given to the bonds of unity between the workers of the two countries. The situation demands it.

Every effort must be strained now to support the miners; not only to prevent their being smashed, but to help them obtain victory. International assistance for the miners, too, must be further intensified. Events have shown the need for doing so sufficiently plainly.

We hope and trust the British workers will ponder the bitter lessons of the Strike and will realise the main task imposed on them thereby, namely to fight for a strictly class-tested working class make up of all organs of the trade unions, including the General Council, as well as its representatives on the Anglo-Russian Committee.

All trade union bodies must be swept clear of "His Majesty's Privy Councillors," of all big holders of shares

in businesses—that is, of people who, when all is said and done, are nothing but capitalist informers who have managed to creep into the headquarters of the workers' unions. It is most essential to clear the leadership of the trade union movement of all "privy" and open traitors as well as defeatists and cowards if the working class is to develop a victorious struggle.

This is all the more urgently necessary seeing that, even now after the calling off of the General Strike, the General Council leaders are still carrying out their bankrupt policy; are opposing the idea of the General Strike, justifying their behaviour, trying to wheedle the miners into surrender, and screening their capitalist Government—that is, actually assisting it to smash up the British organised Labour movement altogether.

Once again it has been demonstrated to the whole international working class by the General Strike how utterly unfit the Amsterdam International Federation of Trade Unions is to become a real International in the world-wide struggle being fought out between Labour and capital. Its complete passivity and indifference in face of the greatest strike the world has known is crushing proof of its entire inability not only to direct the workers' international struggle, but also of the fact that it is unable or has no wish to mobilise and give a lead to the masses of the trade unions in which they are organised for the cause of the most elementary solidarity. Events have shown with exceptional clearness the crying need and urgency for the workers everywhere to launch a determined struggle for unity in the international Labour Movement, for an effective united, class-true, trade union International.

We are deeply convinced that the great working class of Britain which has made such a splendid demonstration of its solidarity and its will to fight will retain its belief in its own strength, promote from its rank and file new leaders, and fight confidently to final victory. We are profoundly confident that the workers of all lands will give their support to our struggle for unity and at last bring about real International Trade Union Unity in the form of a united class-conscious Trade Union International—and we are confident that that day is not so far off.

Up, Workers of Britain!

On to Victory for the Miners!

Long live International Trade Union Unity!

July 7th, 1926.

Appendix 2.*

TO THE BRITISH TRADES UNION CONGRESS.

DEAR COMRADES,—In the name of the eight and a half million organised workers of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the Soviet Central Council of Trade Unions sends fraternal greetings to you and in your person to the whole British working class. The Soviet workers send particularly warm greetings to the courageous battalion of the mineworkers who continue to defend their rights, their standards of living, and their past historic gains despite the furious attack of the capitalists and the betrayal by certain leaders of the General Strike and the defeatist mentality of others.

The Soviet Central Council of Trade Unions expresses the hope that the Congress's first word and primary business will be as regards assisting the miners. To do otherwise would be a step unworthy of the grand working class organisation of the British workers. The Soviet Central Council greatly regrets the impossibility of its Delegation attending your Congress, a Congress of tremendous importance. The British Government, under the mask of democracy, but really representing the dictatorship of the Conservative Party, the dictatorship of the manufacturers, bankers, mineowners and landlords, has done its best to keep out our delegation. Thereby they have plainly indicated to the British workers that they are without any rights and cannot even decide for themselves who shall and who shall not attend their own Labour Congress.

The Conservative Government willingly admits the representatives of Amsterdam and the American Federation of Labour who either blackleg on the miners or shamefully talk of loans at interest, that is, speculate like usurers on the unheard-of distress of the miners, on the tears and misery of the workers' wives and children. The Conservative Government does not admit the representatives of the Soviet workers who, under extremely difficult conditions, are giving of their last penny to help their class brothers in their great struggle. Thereby the Conservative Government has the audacity to control the policy of the trade unions. It seems that the "great democracy" does not allow an immense workers' organisation to perform even the most elementary act of comradely solidarity.

Naturally, the Soviet workers are highly indignant at

* "Manchester Guardian," 10th September, 1926.

such maltreatment of the British trade unions by the British Government. The Soviet workers believe the blame must be laid for it on the "bend-the-knee" attitude of trade union leaders like Thomas, towards the Government. They were too loyal to capitalism and too disloyal to the working class. Now that the General Council must report on its activities during the General Strike and the subsequent period, Thomas, the main instigator of the defeat of the General Strike, thinks nothing of leaving for overseas, thereby evading all responsibility.

Had its delegation been admitted to Congress and had the British police and the Home Office not been able arrogantly to trample on the elementary rights of the British trade unions, the Soviet Central Council would have considered it its duty to report to your Congress each step it took in connection with the events. For the concrete development of these events has scores of times demonstrated and still confirms, the absolute correctness of those estimates made by the Central Council of Russian Trade Unions in its declarations and resolutions. It was on the basis of its own historic experience, and the experience of numberless General Strikes fought by our working class before it overthrew once and for all its own bankers and mineowners, that we appraised the unforgivable tactics of the General Council leaders during the General Strike.

We may be accused of being too sharp, but when it comes to choosing between empty compliments, meaning nothing, to the leaders, and to serving the working masses, we will always choose the latter course; these are the dictates of our working class conscience and our bounden proletarian duty. If we Soviet workers hold it necessary to do every thing possible to extend fraternal material assistance, we equally believe it our proletarian duty to extend moral assistance also.

Had the General Strike not been quashed and had it not been for the General Council's order calling it off, the General Strike would have led to a glorious victory, and you would already have long since been freed of your Government of aristocrats, mineowners and other capitalists. Had they not been left to fight alone, the miners would have long since smashed the obstinacy of the clique of mineowners and of Parliament; the capitalists would not have dared to despoil the miners of the seven-hour working day. Had there been other tactics and other leaders, the working class as a whole would not have been increasingly on the defensive, but march-

ing victoriously forward. Even with the finest, most disciplined and courageous army a battle may be lost and the army shattered if there are people at headquarters and in the entire officers' staff prepared to shirk the fight, prepared to give way, and even to go straight over to the enemy.

We most sincerely wish that the Congress of the British unions should with complete proletarian frankness sum up the experience of the great strike and draw the proper conclusions. Only an honest recognition of mistakes will prevent their repetition. Only a frank admission of errors will open the eyes of the masses fighting against the capitalist offensive.

The Soviet Central Council of Trade Unions particularly regrets to have to confirm the fact that at the Paris meeting of the Anglo-Russian Committee the British Delegation categorically refused to discuss the question of assisting the miners. The Soviet Central Council likewise regrets to have to confirm the fact that at the Berlin meeting of the Anglo-Russian Committee the British Delegation completely turned down all our proposals regarding the matter of assisting the miners, including the embargo and the one per cent. levy for the benefit of the miners who were suffering but fighting on, determined not to be slaves to the mineowners.

The Soviet Central Council believes that there is no more important question—not only for the British Labour Movement but also for the entire world Labour movement—than that of aiding the miners. If the miners go down, the capitalists will crush the British workers section by section.

It is not for nothing that "democracy" now appears in the form of the Emergency Powers Act. This "emergency democracy" of the Government of the Diehard Conservatives will not stop at throttling the whole trade union movement. Contrariwise, if the miners stand firm and fast, the working masses of the other unions supporting them, and the mineowners lose more and more without any hopes of winning, then victory is assured to the miners and the retirement from power of the workers' greatest enemy, the Conservative Government, which came to the helm of State through a shameful forgery is certain.

Despite the refusal of the British Delegation to the Anglo-Russian Committee to adopt our proposals for helping the miners, and even to discuss them in business-like fashion, which we believe quite unexplainable from the Labour viewpoint, the Soviet Central Council will continue the policy in its own country of assisting the miners.

The Soviet Central Council has resolved to allocate a further three million roubles for the benefit of the miners on account of receipts from the one per cent. levy which we do not doubt will be adopted by the overwhelming mass of the workers in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Working class solidarity is displayed only in deed. Just as the workers of over a hundred nationalities inhabiting the Soviet Republics helped each other in their struggle, so too our whole working class considers it its fraternal duty to help its British brother workers in this their critical hour.

We are firmly convinced that in our hour of trial the British working class will do the same by us. More than once it has held back the mailed fist of the British capitalists hanging over our Workers' State. Thus will grow and strengthen the brotherly bonds between the toilers of both countries, bonds that will become a tower of strength when in Britain a real Workers' Government, whose advent is inevitable, is formed.

We strongly believe the Trades Union Congress will do all to consolidate further the Anglo-Russian Committee, the symbol of international Trade Union Unity, the symbol of the brotherly bonds existing between the British workers and the Soviet workers.

Long live International Working Class Solidarity!

Up for the Fight against the Capitalist Offensive!

With comradely greetings,

SOVIET CENTRAL COUNCIL OF TRADE UNIONS,

TOMSKY, Chairman.

DOGADOV, Secretary.

Appendix 3.

T.U.C. GENERAL COUNCIL'S COMMENT ON THE TELEGRAM OF THE CENTRAL COUNCIL OF RUSSIAN TRADE UNIONS.*

THE General Council has decided to circulate to the delegates the above telegram, but in doing so the Council feels it necessary to register the strongest possible protest at what can only be regarded as a most regrettable abuse of the ordinary courtesies expected of fraternal delegates to whom has been extended the hospitality of the British Trades

* "Manchester Guardian," 10th September, 1926.

Union Congress. The All-Russian Council of Trade Unions was invited to send a fraternal delegate, and it was assumed that, in accordance with the traditional and universal practice, he would have conveyed the fraternal greetings of the trade unionists of Russia to their fellow trade unionists of Great Britain.

Contrary to this the All-Russian Council of Trade Unions has arrogated to itself the right to indulge in unwarrantable censure of the General Council of the Congress, to abuse personally certain of its members, and to make an unprovoked attack upon other fraternal delegates invited to become the guests of Congress.

The General Council has no intention of replying to this ill-instructed and presumptuous criticism. The General Council most emphatically asserts that it cannot permit the position of a fraternal delegate to be degraded into a tirade against representatives of the British movement and the fraternal delegates of other countries, nor of countenancing an intolerable interference in British trade union affairs. The General Council is confident that the Congress will support it in this attitude.

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