

THE FIFTH R. I. L. U. CONGRESS APPROACHES

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THE Fifth Red International of Labor Unions Congress will be opened on the day of the anniversary of the Red International of Labor Unions. This does not mean that the Congress is especially being convened merely for the purpose of celebrating the anniversary, or in order to carry out an international manifestation on the event of the Tenth Birthday of the R.I.L.U. This Congress will be of a militant character, for a whole number of extremely important and urgent problems concerning the international revolutionary labor movement will have to be solved by it.

The task of the Fifth Congress is to go ahead of the Fourth Congress. To go ahead from the point of view of ideological political closing up of the ranks of the followers of the Red International of Labor Unions; to go ahead from the point of view of consolidating the revolutionary forces; to go ahead along the road of struggling against opportunism in theory and practice; to go ahead from the point of view of forms and methods for leading the economic battles of the working class; to strain all efforts in order that this Congress becomes a serious event in the life of the labor movement throughout the whole world.

Question of Strike Strategy.

What was the Fourth Congress? This Congress served as the turning point in the history of the development of the revolutionary labor movement; it was convened on the eve of the upsurge in the labor movement, and the greatest merit of the Fourth Congress consists in the fact that it was able to grasp the most important link and bring forward as the central task for the whole revolutionary labor movement, for all Communist Parties, for the revolutionary unions and trade union oppositions the problem of independent leadership in economic battles. This bringing up of the question of the whole revolutionary trade union movement making a determined turn towards the economic battles and the new tactics to be applied in the international labor movement gave rise to some opposition tendencies, which within a short space of time came to be beyond the brink of the real international Communist movement. Already this stresses the fact that this turn was effected in proper time. And today, examining the stage passed and the struggle still ahead with regard to this question in the different countries, it must be said with all conviction, that this turn served to wrest our revolutionary labor movement out from the opportunist mire and forwarned the danger of overlooking the vast revolutionary upsurge among the toiling masses, the danger of continuing to merely talk of revolutionary tactics, without, however, carrying these revolutionary tactics out in actual life.

It must be stressed here that within the ranks of the Communist International, the question of the economic struggle is often neglected, and the significance of the economic struggle for the Communist Party and for the winning over of the majority of the working class is often insufficiently understood. Strikes often pass off without the Party considering it necessary to take the lead of them. Many of the Parties respond when it is already too late. In some of the countries they satisfy themselves merely with devoting several brevier notes in the press concerning the economic struggle, considering this to be absolutely sufficient; in other countries, it is considered to be sufficient to have this work carried out by the T.U. Branch of the Communist Party, while the Party itself, mind you, should busy itself only with questions of "high" politics.

For a Lenin Policy.

With regard to this question, as well as many other, it would be advisable for all parties to take some lessons from the Bolshevik Party, which, even during the czarist times paid utmost attention to questions of the economic struggle.

I want to cite here an extremely instructive resolution written by Lenin, in February, 1907, concerning the question of "The sharpening of the Mass Economic Needs and the Economic Struggle." In contradistinction to many other resolutions, this resolution takes up only one-

half of a page, which by no means, however, belittles its significance.

This occurred in February, 1907, during the time when the reaction intensified, the offensive action of the bourgeoisie against the workers increased, together with a whole series of lockout, strikes, when the crisis became more acute, and when the Bolshevik Conference, held in Leningrad, in February, in connection with preparations for the Fifth Party Congress, accepted the following resolution proposed by Lenin:

.. "Taking into consideration that:

"1. A whole number of facts bear witness to the extreme sharpening of the economic needs of the proletariat and its economic struggles;

"2. According to all signs, these different manifestations of the economic struggle are concentrating in such a way, which makes it possible to expect united mass economic action, which will draw into participation a much wider strata of the proletariat than hitherto;

"3. The whole history of the Russian revolution proves that all powerful upsurges in the revolutionary movement arose on the basis of similar mass economic movements. . .

"In view of this the Conference is of the opinion that:

"1. It is essential for all Party organizations to give their utmost attention to this factor;

"2. It is essential to concentrate the maximum amount of Party forces on economic agitation amongst the wide masses;

"3. It is essential to consider precisely this economic movement as the basic source and principal factor giving rise to the ever-extending revolutionary crisis in Russia." ("The Proletarian," No. 14, March 4, 1907).

Doesn't this resolution sound as if it holds good also today, and doesn't this short resolution, consisting altogether of 30 lines, answer to many questions relating to our present policy from the point of view of leadership of the economic movement?

During the course of the last two years the decisions of the Comintern and all the decisions of the R.I.L.U. bear evidence to the fact that we have sufficiently mastered the Leninist policy. If this was true already at that time, at the beginning of 1907, so to what degree is such a policy true during the present stage, when in consequence of capitalist rationalization, the immense crisis, impoverization of the masses in the economic struggle, taking place in different forms, come to be the chief driving force, or it might be said, the principal symptom of that powerful upsurge which is taking place, if not to the same degree, however, is taking place right before us in all countries.

During the Fourth Congress of the R.I.L.U. the central question was that of the leadership of economic battles. Questions of tactics for economic battles, and of strike strategy occupies during the course of this period the primary place in the activities of the Comintern and R.I.L.U. The concentration of attention of the leading organs of the world revolutionary labor movement on these questions bear witness to the fact that this is that very important link of which the International Communist movement must take hold in order to move forward.

Precisely owing to this, we convened the special Conference on Strike Strategy and Tactics in Strassburg, at the beginning of January, 1929. Precisely on account of this, the economic fights which took place during the course of this period were subject to detailed analysis by the Comintern and R.I.L.U., and the respective Parties, revolutionary unions and trade union oppositions were given detailed instructions concerning the future forms and methods of struggle.

In order to complete the brief characteristic of the past period, it is essential to note that, thanks to the direct organizational and political work carried out by the RILU, it was possible to set up the Latin-American Confederation of Trade Unions, embracing the trade unions of 16 Latin-American countries. It was possible to rivet the attention of the most advanced elements of these countries on the preparation, organization and leadership of the economic struggles. It was also possible to extend the political influence and organizational activities of the Pan-Pacific TU Secretariat.

(To Be Continued.)