

Speech of Comrade Losovsky in the Discussion on Comrade Manuisky's Report.

(Conclusion).

Our comrades showed great weakness in connection with the situation in the French mining industry. The offensive of the employers against the miners began long ago, but what was done in connection with this by the Unitarian and the Miners' Federation? Wages in a number of districts (Gard, Aveyron, Loire) were reduced from March 1st. Our Party and the Unitarian Confederation decided that the districts where wages were reduced must not come out on strike at once, but must wait for wage reductions in the Nord and Pas-de-Calais mining districts, and then organise together a strike on a national scale. Of course, a national strike is better than a district strike, but what tactic is this? Why was it necessary to delay the strike in the smaller districts? Did not the employers make a start on purpose with the smaller districts, to test the fighting capacity of our organisations? And you—under the pretext of a national strike—capitulated, and then the employers directed their attack also against the larger districts. This relinquishment of the partial strike is a big political mistake, which resulted in these districts not responding enthusiastically to the national strike, and dropping out of the struggle after a couple of days.

Another mistake is that we are practically following in the wake of the reformists; we declared a strike for the 16th, and subsequently postponed it, owing to the manoeuvres of the reformists, to the 30th. But as the reformists performed another manoeuvre on the eve of March 30, and some of our functionaries imagine that one cannot come out on strike without the reformists, a demonstrative one day strike was declared for the 30th. According to the press, 49% are on strike in the northern districts. If one takes into consideration that this district has been a stronghold of the reformists for a long time, one can say that this is a considerable success. Nevertheless, by an erroneous tactic, inadequate preparation of this strike and inability to carry on an independent policy, we missed the favourable moment for drawing the majority of the French miners into the struggle.

Can one say that we have made real progress in France since the V. Congress? Certainly not. If in some enterprises the fall in the membership of our unions has been put a stop to, and an influx of new members can even be recorded, there is a whole series of federations where the membership continues to fall, and there are also important branches of industry, such as metallurgy, sea transport, railways, which are in a state of stagnation. There is no concentration of forces on the most important branches of

industry, no reorganisation of the whole basic network of organisations. In this connection the inadequate work of the Party Nuclei in the factories is making itself very much felt. That is why I am not inclined to speak about the successes of Unitarian Trade Unions of France.

Enormous shortcomings and weaknesses were noticeable, also in the trade unions of the **United States**. Comrade Browder has said that it has been possible to stop the loss of members, and that there has been even a certain increase. But compared with the loss of membership throughout 1930, and taking into consideration the growing unemployment and destitution of the masses, and the frenzied capitalist offensive in the United States, this increase — a couple of thousand new members — is not a great achievement.

What is the fundamental weakness of our American Trade Unions? They do not know how to intervene in the economic struggle of the toiling masses, and when they do intervene, they frequently do it bureaucratically. Our trade unions lack internal life and trade union democracy: every union has the ambition of going in for high politics, instead of concerning itself with the every day needs of the workers. Party leadership consists in the fractional nuclei substituting themselves entirely for the trade unions: the trade union members suddenly hear that since such and such a date not X, but Y is chairman or Secretary of the union. Functionaries are removed and appointed behind the scenes, as if this did not concern the rank and file members, Party and non-Party, organised and even unorganised workers who follow us. Workers to whom membership in revolutionary trade unions is connected with privations, with the risk of losing their jobs, must have faith in their unions, they must know where they are going and whom they are following. One cannot therefore reduce the trade unions to a few officials and circular instructions. Such a trade union cannot grow. A trade union can grow in the midst of struggle, it can grow through the development of trade union democracy, it can grow, if every worker, every member, knows well his elective leading organ; the union will grow, if the leadership will carry every question to the masses. Nothing of this kind is as yet to be seen in the United States, and it is not surprising that the Seamen's and Miners' Unions have lost most of their members.

True, our trade unions participated in a series of strikes since the V. Congress, but nevertheless our mass work is limping

on all its four legs. I would like to be able to record achievements in the United States but this is more than difficult.

A special situation has arisen in the trade unions of China. The Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, under leadership of Li Li-Hsian who is present here, conceived the following ingenious idea: since there is a revolutionary situation in China, and an uprising must be prepared (first of all, there is not yet a revolutionary situation in the whole of China, and there was no necessity to prepare an uprising in the whole of China!) trade unions are not required. It was decided to do away with the trade unions, and to replace them by committees of action, which were in reality the committees of inaction. This left deviation cost the Chinese trade union movement dearly. It was already in a difficult situation in connection with the appalling terror, and this self-liquidation cut off our Party still more from the masses.

Insofar as we meet from time to time with the ridiculous attempt to set the tasks of armed uprising against the tasks of trade union construction, I want to quote here a short excerpt from Lenin's letter to Gussev in 1905. In 1905 the Odessa Party organisation conceived the idea that during the preparation of an armed uprising, economic struggle and trade union organisations must take a back seat. This is what Lenin wrote to the Odessa comrades:

"The armed uprising is the highest means of political struggle. Its success from the point of view of the proletariat, i. e. the success of the proletarian uprising led by social democracy, and not an uprising of any other kind, requires a broad development of all the sides of the labour movement. Utterly erroneous is therefore the idea of setting the tasks of the uprising against the task of leading the trade union struggle. This degrades, makes small the task of the uprising. Instead of the success and crowning of the labour movement as a whole, one gets some sort of a setting apart of the task of uprising."

What was correct in 1905, is also correct now. China's experiment with regard to doing away with the trade unions owing to the revolutionary situation, is of international significance. That is why the Comintern and R.I.L.U. have severely condemned this left deviation which has done much harm to the Chinese proletariat and to the Chinese revolution.

The weakest point in the work of the Chinese Communist Party has been its non-participation in the economic struggle. Instead of utilising the illegal trade unions for penetration into the masses, it severed this weak connecting belt which kept it in contact with the masses. The group of the Rights took advantage of this mistake, and attacked the party and the Comintern. This group had the majority in the fraction of the Pan China Federation of Labour. The left deviation turned out to be, as usual, of advantage to the Rights. The trade unions had to be re-established. If revolutionary trade unions were not necessary, it stands to reason that it was still less necessary to work in the yellow trade unions. All this happened because Li Li-Hsian and his followers considered the economic struggle as something secondary, as some very low form of the movement, quite below the dignity of great revolutionaries. Either politics or economic struggle, either uprising or strikes, such as Li Li-Hsian's metaphysical reasoning. Here is what Lenin wrote on this subject in 1911, when summing up the struggle of the Russian proletariat in the period of the first revolution:

"Throughout the three years of revolution, we see at every sharpening of the political crisis the upsurge not only of the political, but also of the economic strike struggle. The combination of the two constituted not the weakness but the strength of the movement. The contrary view is the view of the liberal bourgeois which would rather like the workers to participate in politics, provided the broad masses be not drawn into the revolution and into the struggle against the bourgeoisie".

It turns out that the "frightfully left" tactic of Li Li-Hsian was long ago described by Ilyitch as the tactic of a liberal bourgeois.

One thing is clear, namely, that the harm done to the Chinese Labour Movement by this left deviation can be remedied only by a genuine right-about-face of the Party and Red trade unions towards economic struggles, work in the yellow and Comintang trade unions and careful consideration of the necessity to organise the masses on the basis of their everyday demands.

The Comintern and the R.I.L.U. must pay great attention especially now, to the Labour movement in India. At present, when the National Congress has gone over to the side of British imperialism, a real class differentiation has begun in India. The mass demonstrations and strikes are now directed against the Indian bourgeoisie. But the Indian bourgeoisie is loth to give up its position in the working class. Through the National reformists and active trade unionists who represent in India the point of view of the renegade Roy, it brings disintegration into the revolutionary wing of the Labour movement. Owing to the manoeuvres of the National reformists and all sorts of renegades, the militant union of the cotton operatives, Girmi Kamgar, has deteriorated, but on the other hand, we have throughout India an enormous growth of the revolutionary Labour movement and sanguinary collisions in some cities. It is incumbent on the Comintern and R.I.L.U. to pay now the utmost attention to the struggle of the Indian proletariat. We can see the small Communist party steadily growing. Among the toiling masses there is a growth of the revolutionary spirit and revolutionary consciousness. There is now, more than ever before, the necessity of establishing revolutionary trade unions in India, of winning over to our side the workers who are still in the national reformist trade unions. The strikes in Calcutta, Bombay, and on the Great Indian Railway show that neither the national reformists, nor the Kandalkar group are able to get hold of the mass movement.

I have to point out that the support of the Labour movement in India on the part of the R.I.L.U. sections of the large capitalist countries is very inadequate. Very little is done in this direction by the Minority Movement, though it especially should do more than anyone else in this respect. We must help the Indian proletariat by our political and organisational experience. This is just now the most important task confronting the Comintern and R.I.L.U.

A few words about the trade union work in Czechoslovakia and Poland. The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia has certainly grown and its campaign of February 25 was successful. As far as one can judge, the influence of the Party has grown in this period. Can the same be said regarding the Red trade unions? The growth of the trade unions is extremely slow, and if we were to ask ourselves the question where the chief cause of this disproportion between the political influence of the Party and the numerical weakness of the Red trade unions lies, we would have to go again to the root of things — the inadequate work of the Party and Red trade unions in the factories. The agitational campaigns are not followed up, although the elections to the factory committees are conducted under the banner of the Red trade unions, they leave no organisational trace in our trade unions, economic strikes frequently spring up without us, and this has even given rise to the theory of the usefulness and progressiveness of spontaneous strikes. We were behind with our leadership, there is in our Red trade unions a peculiar intertwining of „left“ mistakes (for instance, relinquishment on principle of the Ghent system) with a Right-opportunist underestimation of the activity and fighting capacity of the masses. The study of the causes of the inadequate development of our red trade unions in Czechoslovakia brings us face to face with the question of trade union democracy, with the life and activity of the basic organs, with the necessity to carry on the work of the Red factory committees and factory and works sections on revolutionary lines. Finally, we come face to face with the complete neglect of work in the reformist and national socialist unions which have still in their ranks hundreds of thousands of workers. All this combined creates a situation in which our unions are hardly making any progress, despite the very favourable objective situation and the growth of the Communist Party, the inspirer, driving force and leader of the revolutionary trade union movement.

We have an extremely peculiar situation in Poland. The Party has become consolidated, it has become stronger politically, despite the appalling terror, it works among the masses. But when it comes to the reorganisation of the work on the basis of the decisions of the Congress, to leadership in the economic struggles, we find a considerable lagging behind the masses.

We have to do in Poland with two very important facts: 1. most of the strikes break out without us, and (2) our influence is greatest in the small and middle industry. It goes without saying that one cannot draw a comparison between the conditions under which the Polish Communist Party has to struggle,

and, let us say, those of the Communist Party of Britain or America. In spite of the severe attacks of the reaction on the revolutionary labour movement in Poland, the Communist Party there has some achievements to its credit with regard to leadership in economic struggles. But nevertheless, we have still in Poland the state of affairs that was mentioned at the V. Congress of the Polish Communist Party, last September: "At the front of economic struggles the Party lags behind the mood of the masses and their activity".

I should like to deal also with the work of the illegal and semi-legal trade unions in the Balkans, in Italy, in Latin America, and in a series of colonial countries, but this would take up too much time. I will merely point out that a very weak spot in our work is **Roumania** which does not only lag behind the trade union movement of Bulgaria where we have an indestructible mass trade union movement, but also behind that of Greece. Rumania is the weakest spot in the Balkans, a question which will have to be separately discussed in the Comintern and the R.I.L.U.

This schematic picture of the state of affairs in the revolutionary trade union movement makes clear to us the defects and weaknesses of our work among the unemployed, and the enormous weaknesses which were revealed on the international day of struggle against unemployment — February 25.

What is our task in the face of the enormous **unemployment**? Our task is to get hold of the movement, and to keep the fascists, social democrats, etc., out of it. To do this, we must create something which will attract every unemployed regardless of his Party membership. Is the form of the organisation of the unemployed in Germany where groups of unemployed are formed in the R.T.U.O., but only of elements who are followers of the R.T.U.O., such an attraction? Why should it be necessary to formally connect the basic organisations of the unemployed with the R.T.U.O.? The formal connection does not give anything, the main thing is not the formal connection, but actual leadership of the movement, daily activity among the unemployed. And it will depend only on the measure of our work among the unemployed, whether they will or will not get away from our influence.

It seems to me that a **formal connection between the unemployed organisations and the trade union opposition or Red trade unions is inexpedient**. Taking into consideration the numerical weakness of the Red trade unions and trade union opposition, it is essential to establish a basic independent network of unemployed organisations, to coordinate them on a town and district scale, to lead these organisations through the fractions, to establish, wherever necessary, provincial and central organisations (on this point I differ from Comrade Pianitzky), and the main thing, to make by their every day work the unemployed organisations **attractive to every unemployed, regardless of what Party he belongs**.

We are behind with the organisation of our work with the unemployed, and the results bear witness of this: can the movement connected with February 25 be considered satisfactory? With the exception of Czechoslovakia, Germany, and partly Poland, February 25 has not produced what we were entitled to expect. Why? Because we used old methods in our work, wishing to squeeze the millions of unemployed into the frame work which already exists in our organisations, being afraid of exhibiting more elasticity in the creation and utilisation of auxiliary organisations.

One cannot, of course, create uniform forms of organisation for all the countries. We must reckon with the peculiarities, the influence, the forces of our organisations, with the forms of association in every country, but we must also understand that we will not be able to solve the question of coordinating the hundreds of thousands and millions of unemployed, if we cling to the old forms of organisation.

The deepening of the crisis and the growth of unemployment have compelled the Second and Amsterdam Internationals to resort to left manoeuvres. The Amsterdam International was offended by the R.I.L.U. Manifesto with regard to left manoeuvres. It tries to explain our action by the wish to sabotage the "Positive" work of the strike breaking International. But that the Amsterdam International reacts in this manner, is a sign that we were not far off the mark when we exposed strike-breaking under the cloak of left phraseology.

In this connection, just one remark regarding the manoeuvring abilities of the parties of the Second International. The "place d'armes" for the manoeuvring abilities of all the parties of the Second International is becoming more and more narrow. Within the bounds of the more narrow "place d'armes", parties of the Second International should be named in the following order: Britain, France, Germany, and Poland, i.e. the weaker the capitalism, the fewer are the manoeuvring possibilities of the sections of the Second International.

What then are the deductions to be drawn from the brief survey of the state of affairs of the R.I.L.U. sections? They are as follows:

- (1) Since the V. Congress of the R.I.L.U., we can record small successes in some countries, but these successes are in no way in accord with the enormous demands made on the revolutionary trade union movement by the development and sharpening of the class struggle.
- (2) The lagging behind of the R.I.L.U. sections with regard to leadership in economic struggles continues, despite a whole series of new favourable objective possibilities created by the development of the crisis.
- (3) Even the sections which grow organisationally, cannot keep pace with the growth of the political influence of the Communist Parties, and the disproportion remains.
4. The chief reason of the inadequate growth is our lagging behind with regard to leadership of the economic struggles and the inadequate work in the factories.
5. In our ranks we have not yet fully overcome the idea that economic struggle is impossible during a crisis. Hence, the absolute necessity of stubborn struggle against this idea which is still to be found in our ranks.
6. The slow growth of the R.I.L.U. sections is also due to their conversion, in some countries, into ordinary sub-departments of the Party, which does not improve Party leadership, and weakens considerably the attractiveness of a non-Party organisation for broad strata of workers. It is therefore essential, on the one hand, to strengthen Party leadership through the fractions, and on the other hand, to raise the prestige of the trade Union Opposition and Red Trade Unions as non-Party organisations which co-ordinate workers of all tendencies on the basis of class struggle.

7. In many countries Communist activity in the reaction trade unions is not what it used to be. With regard to countries where mass reformist trade unions exist, (Britain, Germany, USA, etc.) this is very dangerous. In this respect, a ruthless and resolute struggle must be carried on against any attempts to shirk this work.

We lag behind with regard to the organisation of the unemployed. This lagging behind is chiefly due to the fact that we want to squeeze the organisation of the unemployed into the framework of the Red Trade Unions or Trade Union Opposition. Our work among the unemployed must be reorganised without delay. A whole network of independent organisations must be created, and simultaneously, Party leadership in these organisations must be strengthened.

Such are the conclusions at which one arrives on the basis of the daily study of the mass work of the Comintern and R.I.L.U. sections. It can be said that I laid it on too thick, but it is not so. There is no need for us to conceal our organisational weaknesses, if we do so, we will never get rid of them.

The crisis is deepening, the political antagonisms are sharpening, the counter-revolutionary wave against the U.S.S.R. is rising, ever-growing masses are drawn into the class struggle. Now is the time to prove by our work (this is what Lenin said at the II. Congress of the Comintern) that there is no way out of the present world crisis for the ruling classes. **It is precisely now that our lagging behind the mass movement assumes a very dangerous character**. It is now that we must get particularly busy in the factories, that we must give an impetus to our organisational work. It depends on the Comintern and R.I.L.U. sections not only to make it difficult for the bourgeoisie to get out of the crisis, but to influence events with the view to a revolutionary way out of the crisis. At such a moment the Comintern and R.I.L.U. sections are expected to display special elasticity and ability to change slogans in accord with the situation and the changed conditions. This is the most difficult side of the Bolshevik tactic.