

# THE MINORITY IN THE DOCK

By LOZOVSKY.

*Speech of Comrade Lozovsky (abbreviated).*

*(From August 11th to 18th, the Executive Bureau considered reports from three federations of the French trade unions, where the leading rôle is in the hands of the so-called "revolutionary syndicalists," who are a minority in the Unitary Federation of Labour (C.G.T.U.)—the minority. We publish here the speech of Comrade Losovsky in the Executive Bureau. The speeches of Comrades Abolin and Piatnitsky will be published in the next number.)*

## INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

**T**HE condition of the revolutionary labour movement in France has always especially interested the Executive Bureau of the R.I.L.U. First of all because it is a revolutionary movement, and secondly, because it is the French revolutionary movement, in other words, a movement which has as its task to fight with the predatory imperialism of the French bourgeoisie, which after its victory in the imperialist war has become transformed into one of the most dangerous bulwarks of the world counter-revolution.

The French labour movement, like the labour movement of other countries, has its own peculiarities which are to be explained by historical reasons. It is obvious that it is necessary in this instance to take into account the condition of the French capitalists, the conditions of the working-class, the condition of the labour movement, up to, during and chiefly after the war, the long struggle of various tendencies within the labour movement, which has lasted for so many years, and finally the development of our revolutionary trade union movement, beginning with the split of 1921.

But if the labour movement in France is distinguishable by certain peculiarities, the ideological struggle and the events which we have to consider to-day have no relation to those peculiarities.

The fight against the line of the R.I.L.U. and opportunism is also an international phenomenon, with all its varieties in the different countries. This international phenomenon is one with which we, the R.I.L.U., have had to carry on a struggle from the very inception of our revolutionary International.

We have invited here the minority delegation, so as to become acquainted with its point of view, so as to hear from the members of the minority what it is

that they want and how they look upon the development of the revolutionary labour movement in France. We expected from the minority comrades, reports on the condition in their respective federations, reports which could have given us a picture not only of the struggle of tendencies, which find their reflection in the Press, but chiefly of the work carried on during the last years.

I do not know what impression the reports have made on other comrades. As far as I am concerned, it seems to me that these reports are too much pervaded with the apologetic spirit. They do not give us sufficient information in regard to the peculiarities of the condition in each industry and the conditions of the working-class as a whole. What strikes one mostly is the absence of self-criticism in the reports.

It follows from the report that the weakening of the position of the C.G.T. is the fault of the majority, and that the minority has nothing to do with it. Moreover, the comrades here have said if the C.G.T.U. still continues to exist it is only because of their activity.

This innocence which seems to me exaggerated, especially when I look upon Comrade Rambaud with his appearance of a naive virgin person, if I may so express myself. It appears as if you saved or claim to have saved the labour movement in France. And the real "saviour" is Comrade Boville of which we shall convince ourselves further on. The innocent virgin Rambaud and Boville the saviour! A fine picture!

We asked the comrades: Are you members of the R.I.L.U.? and have received the positive reply from all the speakers: "Yes, we are in the R.I.L.U. and we will remain in it."

This is very pleasant. But I consider that it would have been very, very useful to begin with an enumeration of the points which divide us and those which we have in common. We cannot remain in one organisation for abstract reasons.

## AND SO WHAT DIVIDES US?

We do not agree with you on the following points:  
1. On the question of the estimate of the position of international and French capitalism.

2. On the question whether there is a radicalisation of the working-class and what are the causes and the symptoms of this radicalisation.

3. On the question of the inter-relations between economics and politics, of the relations between the trade unions and the Communist Party.

4. On the question of the forms and the methods of the struggle for trade union unity and on the question as to what is the unity of the working-class, what are its aims, and how it must serve them.

5. On the question of the position which we must take up in relation to reformism, and the reformist political organisations and trade unions.

6. On the question of strike tactics and the duties of the revolutionary trade unions in relation to the strike movement in other branches of industry and other countries.

7. On the question of the structure, the inner life and the daily work of the trade unions, since we interpret the conception of trade union democracy in a revolutionary spirit and you in a reformist sense.

8. On the question of the inter-relations between the central organisation and the organisations in the localities, and also on the question as to how to straighten out the line, if this should prove necessary.

9. On the question whether war is really imminent, and how, when and by which means the revolutionary international and its sections must struggle against war.

10. On the question of the inter-relations between the International and its sections, and the local organisations of these latter.

11. We disagree with you on the question as to *who you are*.

12. We disagree with you on the question as to where you are going.

On all other questions we agree with you. (Laughter).

And now let us proceed to a systematic consideration of the various points.

#### IS THE STATEMENT REGARDING THE DECLINE OF INTERNATIONAL CAPITALISM CORRECT ?

I know that there are trade union functionaries, especially from amongst those who call themselves revolutionary syndicalists, who consider that such questions do not concern the trade unions. And yet, we cannot take a single step forward unless we give a reply to this question. The tactics, the daily struggle, all the possibilities and methods of struggle, everything, depends upon the estimate of the question as to the condition in which capitalism on an international and national scale finds itself.

I have put to you the following question : Do you maintain the estimate of the condition of international capitalism which was made by your speakers at the Paris Congress ?

The answer which we received was too astronomical, not sufficiently concrete, We like facts and

not general statements. Your Comrade Chambelland said at the Paris Congress in 1929 :

"It (capitalism) has perhaps been shaken during the crisis which followed the war, but at the present time we see that it has not only become stabilised but it is becoming stronger every day."

Further : "Capitalism has almost entirely emerged from the crisis, which had been brought about by the war of 1914."

And more : "We affirm that it is not true to say that capitalism is in a period of decline." "We do not see a prospect of a decisive economic crisis, (what prophets !), we consider that we have before us a period which will last twenty or thirty years." . . .

These forecasts were made in September, 1929. The economic crisis began in America at the end of 1929, and in 1930 and 1931 it became world-wide. Credit, industry, everything is cracking up, and at the end of 1930 France in its turn is drawn into the world crisis. There are times when people err, but if your "Napoleon" miscalculated, it was necessary to say so, it was necessary to write about it.

Are you responsible before the French working-class ? The thing is not to engage in empty talk, you cannot treat the workers as a flock of sheep. You affirm that there is no crisis, that there is no decline in capitalism and a month afterwards a crisis begins all over the world. Have you had sufficient conscientiousness and sufficient courage to say : "Yes, we were mistaken." Where and when have you, responsible functionaries, recognised your mistake ?

What is now the position on an international scale ? It is sufficient to follow the economic and political Press of the whole world, which registers the crisis, while the statesmen of all Parties foresee great difficulties. And yet you, revolutionaries, you do not see the decline of capitalism. Bourgeois professors, bourgeois economists, English, American, German and even French, speak of the decline of capitalism. But you see nothing ; you remain on the "old positions."

Here is *Cri du Peuple* of February 25th, which contains a leading article on the conduct of the French bourgeoisie in face of the German crisis. The article says : "French capitalism has with a singleness of heart thrown itself forward to the assistance of German capitalism." "It seems as though the French banks are thinking as to how they can help Germany." And all this under the heading of "A Splendid Example of International Solidarity."

What else is said in this article ? In it we read : "See, the Social Democrats in Germany are supporting Bruening and the money which will be received will serve some Noske against the workers." But where in the articles which you write do you say anything about the French Socialists who support French imperialism. You only see the German Noske but you do not notice your own Noske.

But how dare you write in your paper articles on the European position and keep silent about the fact that the French Socialist Party is in favour of the Versailles Peace Treaty, that this Party supports French imperialism to the end, that at its last Congress it was concerned with the question of "national defence" as though this was one of the most immediate questions in France!

Who is threatening France? Disarmed Germany, Soviet Russia, Bulgaria? Yes? The Socialist Party supports French imperialism with all its might, but you yourselves do the same as the social patriots did during the war when they incessantly decried the German Social Democrats, but said nothing of the treachery of the French Socialists.

(VASILIEV: Perhaps the U.S.S.R. is now threatening France?)

And this is called an analysis of the international position. . . . It is thus that you educate the French working-class whom you are preparing for the impending struggles. Your action is a means of diversion, it is a method which consists of keeping silent about the most burning problems which are capable of interesting the French working-class and speak only of general questions, you revile the German Social Democrats and are silent about their French colleagues.

#### DEADLY ACUTENESS. A FINE EXAMPLE OF INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY.

If you were possessed of two sous-worth of political reason, you would have clearly seen what is clear to all: French imperialism puts before Germany financial, economic and political conditions; and the political conditions are: you will receive financial assistance provided you join the anti-Soviet front.

You do not even know that during many years the whole international policy of England, and especially France, turns upon the problem as how to draw Germany into the anti-Soviet front, so that Poland and Rumania could begin war against the U.S.S.R. You do not even know this and when analysing the international position you keep silent about the tactics of the Socialist Party, and by avoiding this subject you tell the working-class a half-truth which is equivalent to a lie.

Is international capitalism in a phase of decline? Even the leaders of the Second International at their last Congress, looked on all sides for a medicine to cure sick capitalism. I ask you, are you as little revolutionary as they? or is their revolutionism even too great for the minority leaders?

#### THE RADICALISATION OF THE MASSES.

You said: "Revolution is not yet knocking at the doors of France." Of course not, no, it is not yet at the door, but what is it that you want to say by this?

Do you want to say that the tens of years of capitalist stabilisation, on which you reckon, will permit you to sit with folded arms, and as capitalism is still feeling well, there is no need to think of the future? You wipe out in this manner, from the prospects of the French working-class, not only the revolutionary struggles for power, which in due course will arrive in France, but also—and this is most important—the daily struggle which prepares and hastens the revolutionary fight.

You have created a whole theory, which, strictly speaking, cannot be thus termed, but we have to be indulgent to the "theoreticians" of the *Cri du Peuple*. This theory says that the radicalisation of the masses is nonsense, that there is no such thing. And you said this not only in 1929 at the Paris Congress, where Boville proposed to turn the helm to the right, as if he were not already enough of a right-winger, but you repeat this now also.

What do you call the radicalisation of the masses? Do you mean when the workers go out on the street? But when they go out on the street this will be something bigger. So what then do you understand by the radicalisation of the masses? The comrades of the French minority have a completely metaphysical conception of this problem, which is so important for the international movement. They imagine the thing in the following manner: To-day the workers are asleep; this was, if I am not mistaken, the expression of Chaussin, and a number of other members of the minority, such as, for instance, Boville; they maintain passivity, they have no desire to fight, but to-morrow the working-class will wake up and the struggle will begin.

There are prophets who are called "prophets after the event." There are plenty of these among the minority. Such prophets begin to see a thing when even the blind cannot deny them. But this is not the behaviour of a leader of the labour movement. The rôle of a leader of the national and international labour movement consists of stating, on the basis of definite symptoms, facts which are not yet known or noticed by others.

When I read all that you had written on the radicalisation of the masses, I said to myself that the minority are either unconscientious or unscrupulous. A legend was spread at a certain time in France, that Comrade Molotov in a speech at the Presidium of the Comintern said, in 1929, that the French working-class is on the threshold of the capture of power. Quotations were cited and even yesterday Engler demanded from me that I should "give him Molotov's speech." I asked how could Molotov in 1929 affirm that the French working-class was on the eve of the capture of power? I have just read all the speeches and I could find absolutely nothing approaching it. But what did Molotov say?

He said that the struggle in the whole world is assuming a more and more embittered character. The French labour movement is also entering upon a period of increasing struggle. To be ready for it, to learn not only how to defend ourselves, but also to pass over to the offensive, it is necessary to double the energy of the Communist Parties. It is necessary incessantly to prepare for the great fight and great events.

No conclusions in your sense can be drawn from the speech of Molotov in 1929 and if you will read the speech conscientiously you will recognise that he was right.

But let us return to the problem of the radicalisation of the masses. By reason of a singular perversion of thought, you consider that radicalisation means that this process assumes the same forms all over the world, that it has the same symptoms and entails the same degree of strenuousness in the class struggle. But to think thus means not to know the A.B.C. of the labour movement.

Every one of you looks upon the mass movement from his own corner, from Bordeaux or Rouen, from Gisors or Marseilles. You do not notice the colossal conflicts which are shaking the whole world and side by side with it also the contradictions between Governments, between world imperialism and Soviet Russia, nor do you notice the growth of the revolutionary movement in the colonies. In the growth of discontent in all capitalist countries, including in their number also France, in all these events you have a reflection of the radicalisation of the masses which you do not recognise.

(RAMBAUD : This is not altogether so.)

Is not the strike of 120,000 textile workers in France radicalisation ? Is it not radicalisation of the workers, the fact that in 1931 we had in England with the "Labour" Government hundreds of thousands of workers on strike against the wishes of the trade unions and the "Labour" Party ?

Is it not a sign of radicalisation that the Fascist militia in Italy in some places supported the workers on strike ?

But can we build the tactics of a revolutionary international on the short-sighted estimates of certain minority leaders, who see no further than their noses ?

Has radicalisation been invented in Moscow ? Such a formula is indeed a find for the whole international opportunist Press.

Yesterday the theory was mentioned here, which in America is called the theory of "exceptionalism." Some time ago we heard in this very hall about its exceptional position in the whole world. But now all these prophets are already outside the movement and I fear that if you keep to this "philosophy," as formulated by Comrade Rambaud, you will also find yourselves outside the revolutionary trade union movement.

For one participates in the movement so as to lead it, so as to clear its path, so as to give the workers clear directions and not to put the brake upon it. It is often necessary to put on the brake on railways. Was it then under the influence of the railwayman, Rambaud, that you consider it possible to apply *this* special method, to the labour movement ?

But beware of accidents, they threaten you more than anyone else !

Radicalisation, fortunately, is no invention ; it manifests itself in life, it manifests itself in the struggle. It is but necessary to watch the facts, it is but necessary to read, I will not weary the members of the Executive Bureau with quotations,—I have a whole pile of them from the *Cri du Peuple*, and they resemble the *Peuple* (organ of the reformist C.G.T.), as much as the Siamese twins resemble each other. There is nothing wonderful in this since it is the same "cry" of the same "people."

But there is something in this line of thought which the comrades of the minority should think about. The radicalisation of the working-class movement is composed of objective and subjective elements. It may happen that while there is the radicalisation of the masses this radicalisation does not find any outlet. It remains separate and diffused. In these conditions, the subjective factor, the presence of a revolutionary Communist Party and a revolutionary trade union, play a colossal part from the point of view of the possibility of taking advantage of the objective situation.

But when you deny the radicalisation of the masses, do you remain only on the theoretical plane ? But if I am not mistaken, you are not cabinet scientists nor historians, and when you deny the radicalisation of the masses you draw your daily practical conclusions from such a denial.

What does this mean ? This is what it means. You not only deny the presence of a huge number of new facts, the strengthening of the struggle, but as a result of this view, you take up a passive attitude. You are pulling back the movement which is commencing. In political and trade union language, this is called revolutionary tactics inside out. This term seems to me to be sufficiently scientific and precise.

#### THE TRADE UNIONS AND THE COMMUNIST PARTY.

I now pass on to the most burning question of the whole of our discussion. The question of economics and politics, of the Party and the trade unions.

This is a question in which you have proved yourselves masters of confusion. You have resolutions, articles, formulations and you make use of all your fire so as (in your own words) to defend the old traditions of French syndicalism.

Let us consider first of all your point of departure. You say that the economic and political struggles go along parallel lines. The Party exists for the

political struggle and the trade union for the economic struggle ; there are occasions when their paths cross ; then they greet one another and part again. But this is the old anarcho-syndicalist ideology and you are now engaged in reviving and galvanising it.

You state that you start from the resolution of the 1929 Paris C.G.T.U. Congress regarding the leading rôle of the Party. I have asked myself the question : What kind of a resolution is this, which is capable, in the opinion of the minority, of leading to the ruin of the French revolutionary labour movement ?

Here is this unfortunate resolution. Let us look at it. At the end of the resolution adopted on the report of the general activity of the C.G.T.U., it is stated :

“Finally, the Congress declares its decision to carry out its work at all sections in close contact with the Communist Party (the resolution does not say in subjection to it) the only Party of the proletariat and the revolutionary class struggle, the Party which has won, in the fire of past battles, its place as the sole proletarian advance guard, the leader of the labour movement.”

You may argue on the question as to whether the Party has already won the leading place, or whether it will still win it, you may be satisfied or dissatisfied with this formulation, but I put to myself the question : what is it that you have found catastrophic in this resolution ?

But this is not yet all. In the same resolution we read on the following page that : “The proclamation of this leading rôle and its recognition must not be interpreted as either the subjection of the trade union movement or as any change in organisation as foreseen in the constitution, or in the mutual relations between the Communist Party and such mass organisations as the unitarian trade unions.”

(RAMBAUD : To-morrow we will bring the declaration, published in the “Cahiers du Bolchevisme,” in which the Confederation majority is condemned for that concession and for having accepted that addition, and points out the mode of application of the thesis on the leading rôle of the Party in the trade union movement.)

What is more important, a Congress decision or an article ? The Paris Congress, in which as may be seen from the results of the voting, the Communists had a majority, expressed the opinion of the Communists. But have Communists no right to express their opinion ? I think they have.

(RAMBAUD : Without asking the opinion of the trade unions !)

The same Congress declared that this opinion changes absolutely nothing in the inter-relations between the trade union and the Party, either in the sense of the constitution or from the point of view of organisation.

But it must first of all be pointed out that these decisions were adopted by your Congress, the Congress of the unitarian trade unions. Why then do you, during the course of months, during the course of a number of years, keep on talking and talking about this question and yet do not tell the workers that the Congress, whose decisions you discredit, declared that there is no subjection, that the inter-relations remain the same as foreseen in the constitution ? Why did you not tell them this ? Obviously, because you wanted to engage in petty intrigues, because you wanted to clear the path for reformism.

Let us consider this problem, the Party and the trade unions. Has a worker the right to be a member of the Communist Party ? It would seem as though he had. Have the members of the Communist Party the right to unite and discuss the questions which interest them ? It would seem as though they had. They have, besides this, the right to express their opinion at any meeting and to put their proposals to the vote. If the majority is for them, the proposals are passed, if they are in a minority the proposals are rejected. Have they this right or not ?

(PERIGNON : This right has never been denied.)

Comrade Perignon says that this right has never been denied. But this is not so, you have denied it. You deny to the Communists in the trade unions the right to strive that the proposed resolutions should be freely adopted, by explaining to the workers the meaning of revolutionary tactics.

You are extremely suspicious of the Party. Under the slogan of the independence of the trade union movement you are conducting a bitter campaign against the Party.

But what is the independence of the trade union movement ?

You write that the question is independence from the whole world, from all Parties ; but is a Party an accidental phenomenon in social life ? You are sufficiently politically educated and you know sufficiently well the past and present of capitalist countries. You know that a Party always reflects the interests of one class or a section of a class.

To say that you are independent of all Parties is to declare your independence also from the struggle of the working-class, it means that you are floating in the clouds, notwithstanding the fact that some of you, Comrade Engler, for instance, have a sufficiently weighty appearance ; this means that you are independent of the working-class itself.

How did it happen that there are two or three Parties with a proletarian social composition ? This happened because the working-class consist of different strata ; side by side with the most conscientious part of the workers there are also the backward elements, there are the elements under

the influence of the bourgeoisie and bourgeois civilisation.

The Communist Party expresses the quintessence of all that is revolutionary in the proletariat ; while the Socialist Party, which carries out the policy of the bourgeoisie within the working-class, reflects all that is backward in the working-class.

This is why we see within the working-class the struggle between various Parties, which reflects the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

You are not members of the Communist Party. But some of you have passed through the Party. It seems to be a simple matter with you. To-day you become a member of the Party and to-morrow you say "I am tired of it."

There are among you people who have been expelled from the Party, some who had left the Party of their own accord, and non-Party people, those who were not members of the Party and who have remained non-Party. Now you are all non-Party. But have you, non-Party members of the minority, any policy? You are trying to work out your own policy. But it is not a policy, it is a kind of mad-cap dance.

How is this to be explained? This is to be explained by the circumstance that the very idea of taking up a middle course—to attack the Communist Party, and yet retain at the same time independence from politics,—this is an absurd idea. History has shown the inevitable bankruptcy of all such attempts. The bourgeois Press expresses its full satisfaction in regard to your independence. If you like, I will quote to you extracts from articles by Charles Dulot, the editor of *Information Sociale* and the editor of that independent paper the *Temps*. If you like I will give you quotations from the *Bulletin Quotidien*, the organ of the Comité des Forges—an absolutely "independent" paper. They take your part. They say: Here we have serious and sensible people, here are people with a true French soul.

The editor of the *Temps*, a highly independent gentleman (laughter in the hall) since he receives hundreds of thousands of francs from the bourgeoisie, characterises the leaders of the C.G.T.U. and the Communist Party in the following manner:

"They are used to submitting without a murmur (Boville told us the same thing), to think as they are ordered, and to seek in the Leninist gospel a solution for all the problems which arise before them."

But who has corrupted the French labour movement?

Boville told you here that it was the fault of Moscow. He tells us: "Your representatives there have no thought for anything. They no longer believe in their cause, they have lost the methods of struggle, and all the possibilities of action are lost. They are not even capable of speaking any more.

They are machines for the preparation of resolutions, empty people who signify nothing, etc. Such are the results of fidelity to the R.I.L.U."

Boville told us about all this; but another supporter of independence, Dulot, speaks in the same language:

"Since the time that Moscow has put in the workers' midst hatred, calumny, insults and dishonourable acts, going to the length of physical force which took place in the Volie Hall, etc.—since that time the cause is not making any progress." It is obvious that Dulot is highly pained that the cause is not making any progress.

Dulot is occupying himself with the labour question. He publishes a paper under the name of *Journal d'Information Sociale*, in which the left Dumoulin is one of the contributors.

(BOVILLE: Perhaps he was a contributor sometimes but not now.) (Laughter.)

Dulot is well informed. He tells us how the left wing of the C.G.T. met, in accordance with his expression, the right wing of the C.G.T.U., and how a common line was worked out at these private meetings. He is so well informed that he must have had access to reliable sources, is it not so, Comrade Boville?

I pass on to another "independent." This is the paper of the Comité des Forges, a highly solid organisation. It turns out that the Comité des Forges is dissatisfied with our despotism. Boville spoke here of our Asiatic methods. He is a European, but we are, of course, Asiatics. So the *Bulletin Quotidien*, also does not like us. It writes:

"The unitarian militants, coming out against Bolshevist despotism have come, on the one hand, to a peculiar reformism (don't think that he does not understand these things), and on the other hand, have become imbued with the spirit of the Amiens Charter." (12/9/1929.)

"The minority feel that the workers are tired of fruitless struggle to which they are incessantly pushed by the Communist Party: they demand a movement for positive reforms (!) or a trade union movement which does not bear a purely political character." (19/9/1929.)

International wisdom is speaking: listen attentively to the words of a class enemy. But it seems that this wisdom is not to the taste of the minority. You repeat in your Press the same language without knowing perhaps that it is anti-proletarian prose of the purest type. You have resuscitated the Amiens Charter, you wish to push back the French labour movement twenty-six years, and you think that the French proletariat may accept this retreat, this "independence of the trade union movement," which leads the trade unions directly into the camp of the enemies of the working-class.

It is no difficult matter to repeat : "independence, independence !" Even parrots can be taught to do that. But it is necessary, however, to see the new position of the French working-class, it is necessary to take account of the fact that its composition has changed since the war.

Before the war you had no powerful heavy industry. To-day France is one of the first countries in Europe in respect of heavy industries. Great changes have taken place both in the social structure of the country and also the co-relation of the forces. But you take no account of this, you continue to repeat one and the same thing.

Whether you want it or not, but the Communist Party is carrying out and is heading mighty class struggles, winning in the fire of these battles the leading rôle and it is not you who can stop the growth of the influence of this revolutionary Party.

I will, in passing, touch upon the strange method which you apply as a form of defence. One of you has said : "Lenin was an opportunist, and it was because he was an opportunist that the October Revolution was victorious."

(VOICE : This was said by Chaussin.)

Comrades, if Lenin had been an opportunist, the Russian Revolution would not have won.

It is curious how you try to hang on to opportunism and try even to drag Lenin himself into the bosom of your family.

(RAMBAUD : We will speak of this.)

What, however, do you call opportunism ?

(ENGLER : To choose the favourable moment . . .)

The favourable moment for action, but this is not opportunism. To choose, however, all moments for inaction—this is reformism. (Laughter.)

It is important to know what we understand by opportunism. Revolutionary tactics is not a straight line ; a different situation arises, and it is in conformity with this, that the methods change, only the methods, and not the positions aimed at. In regard to the methods, they always remain revolutionary.

There is another thing to which I should like to draw your attention. The minority comrades have said in all their speeches : We are not against the Communist Party doing this or that, we do not object to the workers being members or supporters of the Communist Party (just as they do not object to the workers being members of the Socialist Party). (Laughter.) But in our organ, from the first to the last line, you attack the Communist Party on all questions. And if after this you declare that you have nothing against it, well, this does not sound serious.

Your paper has fully deserved the name "anti-Bolshevik" since from the first line till the last it is directed against the Communist Party. This is why your slogan about independence is only a manoeuvre so as to introduce under that flag reformist contra-

band. This is a pseudonym for anti-Communism. Let us call things by their proper names.

I now pass on to the most important question upon which the minority have specialised, the question of trade union unity.

It is just on this question that they send us their endless reproaches. They ask us : Why have you changed your tactics on the question of trade union unity ? We, however, they never leave off repeating to us, have not changed our positions. We are remaining in our old positions. As MacMahon said : "J'y suis, j'y reste" ("Here I am, Here I remain").

First of all I ask you : May not tactics change ? Are they to be fossilised ?

During the course of our struggle there was a definite period when a somewhat vague left tendency was beginning to form in the Amsterdam International, when the leaders of the British trade union movement expressed their desire to establish systematic contact with the Soviet trade unions. This was an epoch when our task in the international trade union movement was, as it is now, to plant deep roots among the wide masses, and to profit by all the zigzags in the policy of our opponents.

In that epoch, fighting against our line, fighting against the R.I.L.U., the Comintern, the U.S.S.R., etc., the reformists had not yet come out as blacklegs during economic strikes, in that epoch the reformists still carried through economic strikes, they still pushed forward the direct and daily demands of the workers, and we considered that on the basis of these immediate and daily demands we could have entered into negotiations with the leaders and get into touch with new strata of the working-class.

When did we break with the new tactics ? when did a change set in ? It was at the moment when the British trade union leaders betrayed not only the General Strike, but also the miners' economic struggle. The international labour movement had to emphasise this event, it was necessary to say what has changed in the reformist trade unions since in so far as the position of capitalism becomes more complicated and its possibilities for manoeuvring become narrower, reformism passes on to direct strike-breaking. We have seen this in France, and we see this in every other country.

We have, therefore, said : The fight for trade union unity—yes, but only from below. Create the united front with the workers in the process of struggle, organise committees of action, committees of struggle, strike committees with workers of various tendencies ; unite the workers of various organisations in the framework of one and the same movement, endeavour always to isolate the leaders, who enter into agreements with the bourgeoisie, and who come forward against the immediate demands of the working-class, against the eight-hour day, etc.

At the present time we see, and I am surprised how blind you are that you do not see, that in all countries, France included, the reformist trade unions not only assist the employers' offensive, they not only support it, but they very often head the movement with the sole purpose of disrupting it.

Is this of any importance to you? Not in the least. Life, the struggle, all the changes that are taking place, are they of any importance to you? Absolutely none. You do not change, you are fossilised.

Not to change is not difficult at all.

You prepared a resolution for the Congress of the C.G.T.U. in which it says: "Unity on the basis of the class struggle, on the basis of the independence of trade union democracy and free convictions." Here we do not see the Amiens charter!

This result is a compromise between your various groupings, for you are not at all as one-sided as you wish to pretend. This can be seen from the articles in the Press of your industrial unions. But we want to know—unity with what aim, with whom and on what basis, etc.

You try to picture yourself unity as an object in itself, as a panacea.

There is a united trade union movement in England, and this united trade union movement disrupts all strikes.

The thing is not in abstract unity, in reformist unity, in unity at any price, in Unity with a capital letter. What we want to know is the object for which unity will be established, who you will unite with, and on what basis unity will come about.

If you were real supporters of unity, if your slogan of unity were not the product of political calculations, then why did you not accept the proposition of the C.G.T.U. on the question of unity?

The manifesto of the C.G.T.U. on the question of unity is not acceptable for the minority, because it does not pre-suppose linking up with the reformist leaders. This is the one disagreement. But if so say so openly. You have told us here that Domoulin is a great revolutionary, and that you have not despaired of him. You have a strong digestion if you can digest such things. It appears then that Domoulin is a revolutionist, but in the first place he is a member of the Socialist Party, and in the second he is a responsible member of the "Populaire" . . . (Boville protests.) Why does your left eye see crooked while your right eye sees straight?

You have told us here that there is a great reformist leader who also stands for unity, namely, Digat. I know him a little. In the Socialist Party he belongs to Renaudel's fraction; here is a 100 per cent. unitarian, and so, in your opinion, the fraction of Renaudel, and Paul Boncour, is something good; and you consider that these persons, open imperialists, and open servants of French imperialism, are

unitarians who want unity? They play with you as with children. But you are not children and this is mutual inclination. A friend of Renaudel, a member of the right wing of the French Socialist Party, a friend of Paul Boncour, is also a friend of Rambaud, Engler, etc. And you want us, who have, after all, some international experience, to trust these manoeuvres even to the extent of one cent. What do you take us for?

If you would have carried out a policy which was capable of attracting the workers, the members of the reformist unions, which was capable of setting the workers against these friends of Renaudel, then you would have done a good thing. But you do not want to, or cannot understand, that the object of all these machinations of Dumoulin, Digat and others, is but the disorganisation and corruption of the C.G.T.U. and the French revolutionary movement.

You must understand that Jouheaux has become unbearable even to the reformists. He sells himself too often and too openly. I would not like to use vulgar expressions, but Jouheaux is something in the nature of a fashionable cocotte; he has become unbearable even to the reformists. They are looking for a deputy, who is supplied with a certain amount of left phraseology, who should replace Jouheaux, who has already compromised himself. Jouheaux receives from the French Government approximately 600,000 francs per annum, this, of course, is not very much for a trade union functionary . . .

(BOVILLE: Not so much, not altogether . . . .)

Well, I have not the personal account of Mr. Jouheaux, I have not checked his bookkeeping, but you must understand that when a Minister travels to Geneva and he is paid like a Minister, because he there represents imperialist France, then he receives a nice round sum.

Jouheaux has become unbearable even for the reformists. If this continues the reformist C.G.T. will begin to decompose. The leaders of the Socialist Party, more conspicuous than others, enter into all sorts of combinations, all sorts of machinations, they seek new methods so as to keep the C.G.T. on the path of reformism, on the path of French capitalism.

Such are the tasks of these so-called lefts of the C.G.T.

(LUTHGEN: Dumoulin said at the Conference of the 10th of June that the reformist district secretaries are as imbued with the same spirit as the prefects.)

You may believe him, he speaks by the book.

Your good intentions do not cost very much, for the road to hell is paved with good intentions. If you want to sit down between two stools, if you consider it possible to cure the reformist leaders of reformism then one can see at once who is the deceiver and who the deceived.

Here is Comrade Bour, an old functionary who bears on his shoulders thirty-five years of a fighting life. What does he do at the time of the textile strike? He sends 500 francs to the reformists, 400 francs to the autonomists and 100 francs to the unitarians. I suggest to you to name even one "left" reformist trade union which would have done any such thing.

It is possible that Bour has acted sincerely, but he committed a crime since it is a crime against the French working-class when a unitarian trade union acts in a manner which shows that it is the reformist union which is of importance and not the unitarian trade union. How then do you, after this, want us to judge you if not as of enemies?

And to think that all this is done in the name of the unity of trade unions!

#### THE MINORITY AND THE REFORMISTS.

I now pass on to a very important disagreement, which touches upon the question of the relations to the reformists. You say that they are brothers. In your Press you always speak of fratricidal war. What does that mean? When fights go on between workers, these are fratricidal fights, but I ask you: when and where did the Communist Party and the C.G.T.U. leadership organise fratricidal fights between workers? They are fighting, but against the reformist leaders, who are not our brothers, but the brothers of the bourgeoisie, of the Briands, the Poincarés, the Lavalles and the other rascals. These are not *our* brothers, but yours and you have remarkable relatives.

We notice in all your activities, that you are exceedingly gentle, polite and amiable in relation to the reformist leaders and aggressive, sharp, and cynical, as Boville says, who is a specialist in this business, in relation to the Communists and the C.G.T.U. Do you think that this is only a question of temperament? No, this is a policy, this is your line for an approach towards reformism.

Another thing. Our task is to tear the masses of workers, the members of the reformist organisations, from the reformist leaders, to create a gulf between the rank and file workers who are toiling in the factories, and those who draw them towards the bourgeoisie.

Can this be attained by your methods? No. With the assistance of your methods you will not succeed in creating a hostile tendency directed against these gentlemen. Our duty, if we are revolutionists, is to create this hostile current, to make life burdensome to all these bandits, who sell the workers. With your methods, however, you try to make life a burden not to them but to the Communist functionaries, and this is another thing altogether.

This is why your methods of struggle and ours are diametrically opposed to one another.

We want to win the masses by means of the united front and the unity in the struggle against the bourgeoisie and not with the assistance of idle talk, not by entering into alliance with the leaders, as you do, which delays trade union unity and which will in any case be realised without you, against you and your reformist allies.

#### THE MINORITY STRIKE STRATEGY.

We do not agree with you on the question of the leadership of strikes. You have told us here about strikes in which you have shown wonders. Be it so. Let us take only two great strikes of the current year, the miners' strike and the strike of the textile workers. In the miners' strike we openly confessed our mistakes. We did not carry on self-criticism of the kind which was carried on by Boville here, and which amounts to the criticism of others. You can find in the pamphlet, issued by the C.G.T.U., an enumeration of all the mistakes committed by our comrades in the miners' strike. They made many mistakes, but they did not carry on any strike-breaking work, while there are minorities who did carry out such work, as I will prove to you immediately on the basis of documents signed by them.

The date of the declaration of the miners' strike was fixed for the 16th of March, but the minority miners' trade union in Loire was against this date. Every trade union has a right to be against, when a question is under discussion, but when a decision has been adopted, when a call for a strike has already been issued, then every trade union, whether minority or not, is bound to march together with the others even if it does not agree with the date selected.

But the minority trade union of Loire a few days before the 16th of March, published a placard containing as follows:

#### UNITARIAN MINERS' TRADE UNION OF LOIRE.

COMRADES, MINeworkERS!

ATTENTION!

MADMEN OR SWINDLERS.

Miners of Loire, the 16th of March is drawing near.

Miners, a big noise has been raised in connection with this date.

Miners, irresponsible persons or disrupters, alien to your trade, desire to compel you to obey without a murmur, like little children, and are spreading false rumours about our trade union and our functionaries.

Miners, remember and bear in mind that there is only one unitarian trade union.

Miners, do not follow any other slogan but the one which will be proclaimed by our respective

trade union organisations ; otherwise we cannot take upon ourselves the responsibility for the actions of others.

Miners, trust us to the end !

Engler, what does that mean ? Is not this strike-breaking ? I ask you what right have the minority to act so despicably ? Is this the independence of trade union movement ? Is all this done for the attainment of trade union unity ? This is the purest strike-breaking and only renegades, people who have sold themselves can act thus, such people and also provocateurs.

Boville said in his speech : "Take the miners' strike, it did not draw in the wide masses." But if your minorities are against, if you are acting against strikes, how do you want the reformist workers to participate in them ? I am no longer surprised that only 35 or 45 thousand miners took part in this strike ! their strike was directed not only against the mine-owners, not only against the Government, not only against the reformists, but also against you.

In connection with the strike of the textile workers you wrote articles. But did you not write in the *Cri du Peuple* that the "conduct of the reformist leaders at the time of that strike was irreproachable?" As though you did not know all the negotiations of the reformists which were going on behind the scenes, as though you are little children ! As though you did not know that the reformists placed themselves at the head of this strike so as to behead it more easily.

The reformist leaders were drawn into the strike of the workers because if they had not taken part in the strike, the workers would have left the reformist trade unions. And you say that "the position of the reformist leaders was irreproachable." In this case, who then is not irreproachable ? Obviously they must be the unitarians.

Another thing, When the strike came to a critical moment, the reformists proclaim the slogan to return to work, and the unitarians the slogan to continue the strike, what does the *Cri du Peuple* do ?

"We, of course, could not find a decision which was capable of reconciling all. . . . If unity had existed," the paper writes. It was necessary to say whether to strike or not to but you declare : Oh, if unity had existed . . . and you do not say whether you are in favour of the strike or not, Of what use is it to whimper when the reformists say : "Return to work" and the unitarians : "No, do not return to work." You should not whimper but you should say that it was necessary to continue the strike.

You are searching for a golden mean between those who are striking and those who are disrupting the

strike and you have not the courage to take up a definite position.

In the course of many years we have studied every strike, every dispute, We organised a conference on the questions of strike strategy in Strassburg. No one of you has, of course, read the resolutions of this Conference. We try to find out the methods with the aid of which the working-class can secure victories, can come out of the difficult position in which it finds itself ; but we could never have believed that we could find people in our own ranks who would proclaim slogans directed against strikes.

Neither the R.I.L.U. resolutions nor the resolutions of the conference took any account of the experience, which this new method can give, and for which you have the right to take out a patent.

This is something quite new for us, but something which is so disgusting that I cannot understand how any honest workers can bear it.

#### TRADE UNION WORK AND THE MINORITY.

You, in accordance with your own words, have your own peculiarities. But are these peculiarities of the movement so great that you must apply trade union democracy absolutely upside down ?

Trade union democracy has not been invented by you. It pre-supposes not only the election of all trade union organs, but also the responsibility of all these organs before the electors and before the higher organs, including in that number also the R.I.L.U. Comrade Rambaud said to us in reply to the question of Piatnitsky : "If your proposals will conform to our constitution we will agree ; if, however, our constitution will not conform to the proposals, the constitution will be the supreme law." Do you think that a national or international movement can exist, can develop, can be strengthened and extended, can increase its influence, if everyone of us will remain in his own little corner and say : "Attention to my constitution !" ? Is anything laid down in your constitution about a revolution in France ? I believe there is nothing stated in it and if a revolution will come, if it will be necessary to fight you will say : "This is against our constitution."

(RAMBAUD : The constitution does not foresee a revolution !)

No. And it will be bad for the revolution when it happens in France ; Rambaud will say : "First of all the constitution and then the revolution."

I ask you how you, supposed to be adherents, members of our R.I.L.U., have the pitiable courage to say : "A new congress is unacceptable !" Why ? We do not know any details. You say that you have the majority. Others say the same thing. Is it anti-democratic on the part of the R.I.L.U. to appeal to the majority and the minority and say : "You argue upon this question, so organise a congress and let both sides be given all the guarantees."

What is there anti-democratic in all this? Why cannot the supreme international organisation apply such a method of intervention and what in your opinion is the role of the R.I.L.U.? What must it do with you? To leave it to all to act as they think fit and not to fight against a split in the organisation, to permit the penetration of the enemy into our ranks, to leave it to you to be independent of the revolutionary international? And you consider that our proposals are opposed to trade union democracy?

I ask you: what inner life exists in your trade unions? what education are you according to your members? where and how have you members of the minority carried out self-criticism of your weaknesses and mistakes? Trade union democracy, however, pre-supposes the carrying on of such self-criticism. Why, after every strike, do you not convene special meetings for the study of the weaknesses and the negative sides? How do you want to educate those who have committed these foolishnesses and mistakes and those who have sincerely made mistakes? But you have a different idea of trade union democracy.

#### THE ATTITUDE OF THE MINORITY OF THE C.G.T.U.

We disagree with you on the question of the inter-relations between the federation and the trade union centre. Let us make ourselves acquainted with your brief but brilliant history. You have said here that you wanted to straighten out the line of the C.G.T.U. But is it in such ways that the line of an organisation is straightened out? Is it possible to do it with your methods?

First of all, being members of a central organisation, you have formed your own organisation which embraces members of others. You have formed one organisation with the reformists. You call it a committee, but you act as an organisation, with its own budget, with its own newspaper, calling conferences, etc. You have formed a united front with the reformists and against your own trade union centre.

Is it by such methods that it is possible to straighten out a line if there is something to straighten out at all? No, in such a way an organisation is simply corrupted.

But there is something else. You have resorted to methods absolutely unheard of in the labour movement.

That there are spies in every revolutionary organisation is known to all. It is quite obvious that the police would not send their spies to the reformist C.G.T., since the same work is being carried out by its leaders. It is not worth the trouble. The police will also not send their spies to you, since you are hindering the revolutionary movement.

The police send their spies into our ranks in all countries in the world. This is its speciality. It is necessary to fight energetically against such spies,

but it is necessary to know how to fight. The duty of every militant is to strain all efforts to expose these spies. And when Comrade Rambaud puts the counter-question to us, should we expose provocateurs or refrain from doing so, I say that to put such a question is to answer it. Obviously he who conceals provocateurs is an enemy of the working-class. But there is struggle and struggle. There are different methods with which this business can be undertaken.

Referring to all your literature on the question, I see that the whole of your Press write that the Communist Party and the C.G.T.U. is bubbling over, and penetrated through and through with this infection, that the Communist Party is concealing spies, and that the leading organs of the C.G.T.U. do the same.

I ask you, why do they conceal spies? To conceal them they must in some way be interested in this. Therefore, these are such organisations at the head of which are people who are interested in concealing such types?

Let us pass on to the article of Boville in the *Cri du Peuple* on 15th of April. It is headed "We will Expose the Source of Impotence in the Labour Movement—the Police Agents!"

"It is time to raise the alarm," writes Boville, "more energetically than was the case before. The miners' strike has confirmed the fact that the police infection, has brought about a mass devastation in the ranks of the Communist Party and has also embraced the C.G.T.U. Why, they may ask, does the confederation take as bed-fellows anyone without choosing?"

The language of the article is somewhat singular. After all, the C.G.T.U. is your organisation in some way. You declare that you are members of the C.G.T.U. and when you say that the C.G.T.U. is "sleeping with anyone without choosing," do you ask yourself what it means? What is this? Is it the language of a labour militant or that of a Montmartre apache?

"The miners' strike has thrown a bright light on that which yesterday was called the politicalisation of strikes. A happy formula . . . and really, this formula has permitted (listen to this attentively!) all agent-provocateurs, all police informers to pass from their nuclei, where as the result of their caprice too much attention was devoted to theory in the domain of real action."

What have you here in view, Boville? Prison cells or Party cells? ("Cells" is in French the same as "nuclei.")

I continue:

"The document published by us below proves without the possibility of contradiction the colossal rôle which the police play in the leading organs of the strike movement. And it is this Party which pretends to be the leader of the labour movement! The

Party which up till now was unable to drive out from its ranks a single police agent, because, to speak the truth, these gentlemen leave of their own accord, when they consider their mission ended."

And here is the conclusion :

"This ulcer has penetrated much more deeply than we thought up till now. The C.G.T.U. is infected from top to bottom."

I ask you, Boville, have you gone so white that you have lost the ability of blushing? What does all this mean? Spying from top to bottom, spies make the policy of the Party and the C.G.T.U., and the bourgeoisie is against the Communist Party and against the C.G.T.U.!

And you think, that with the aid of such methods you will be able to straighten out the line! What is this, a proletarian method or a police one?

(BOVILLE : They speak of us still more badly.)

Why have you raised such a noise? Where are your documentary data? There is a police protocol in which some sort of a woman spy reports that she had heard of some kind of a strike committee at some kind of a meeting. In accordance with the words of the *Cri du Peuple*, this report fell into the hands of the *Cri du Peuple* through the intermediary of the Socialist Party and the reformist trade unions. Here are the links of the chain: the Intelligence Service, the Socialist Party, the reformist union and the so-called revolutionary minority.

And so a spy was present at a meeting, who then reported to his superiors. And this is described in such a manner that the whole Party, the whole C.G.T.U., is bubbling over with agents.

We, Russian Bolsheviks, have in this respect somewhat greater experience than you. Our experience was first of all based on our personal experience, and also on the data which we have discovered in the archives after the October Revolution. In the archives we have found the names of such workers in the movement whom we could never have suspected of provocation. The documents in these archives are many, and they illustrate the most varied methods of spying.

One of these methods consists in throwing suspicions on active functionaries who cannot be bought. Rumours are begun to be spread that a certain comrade is connected with the police, and the work of corruption of the organisation begins.

But you, members of the minority of the C.G.T.U., are you there so as to assist the police work with your articles which are full of the most absurd stories? Do you consider that it is possible in this way to purify our organisation? Never on your life! If you say that the whole organisation from top to bottom is bubbling over with spies, how do you wish to purify it? What class enemy could take upon himself work as dirty as this? If the Intelligence

Service paid you for your articles, you could not have worked better!

Comrade Boville told us here with his habitual eloquence, upon which I congratulate him, that there are people in France who are speculating on the Russian Revolution.

I ask who are these speculators? The revolutionaries who are persecuted and thrown into prison? What advantages does the membership of the Communist Party give in France? Is it the advantage that all, including in their number also the minority, should throw mud at you, that you should be thrown into prison, and be subjected to persecution? Is this what speculating on the Revolution means? Your language is known to me. Does not the bourgeois Press speak with the same language? Do not the reactionary deputies, the radical-socialists, the Socialists, all the reactionary papers, and the whole yellow Press, cry at all the street corners that the Communist Party, and that the C.G.T.U. is in the pay of the Russian Government, that they speculate on the Russian Revolution?

Why do you make use of the language of our enemies? Why have you forgotten the revolutionary grammar? Your language, your expressions, your turn of words, all this has been appropriated from the Press of the worst enemies of the French working-class. You come to Moscow, to the R.I.L.U. and repeat the same phrases and say the same things.

If you are sincere, what poverty of thought! But such things cannot be spoken sincerely, this is politics, the worst form of intrigue, the worst methods of bespattering with mud.

I ask you: how could it happen, that, whatever proposals were made by the C.G.T.U., whatever campaigns and proposals had originated from the R.I.L.U., you are always against them, you must always speak against us? Either it is too soon, or it is too late. Either it does not conform with the specific peculiarities of the French working-class or you are otherwise engaged. You always find thousands and hundreds of thousands of excuses to be against and always to think of the united front with our enemies against us. What is this, an accident? I do not think so.

#### THE IMMEDIATE DANGER OF WAR.

You are against our tactics. You have come here to tell us, relying upon the dictionary of Larousse, that the danger of war is not so immediate.

You say: If we will always cry war, the working-class risks being caught unawares, that the working-class does not believe in war. There is no danger of war, no one wants war. I am quite certain that the French workers do not want war. But is it of this that we are speaking? Did the workers want war in 1914? No, they did not want it, but they were

engaged in it and you know what it cost them. Is war prepared openly? Or do you wish to convince us that international imperialism is not preparing war, that the danger of war is not immediately in front of us, that it is not an urgent question?

But in this case, why the armaments? Perhaps, as Briand said at the Washington Conference in 1922, the submarines are built with the objects of catching crabs, and cruisers to catch fish.

And the armaments of Poland and Rumania, and all these negotiations about the united front against the Soviet Union? How do you imagine to yourselves the beginning of war? Perhaps you imagine it as follows: On one fine day, the Committee of the Independence of the Trade Union Movement receives the following letter: "Dear citizens, We herewith duly inform you that we intend to begin war. Please take the necessary measures. (Signed) Briand." (Laughter.)

How, in your opinion, will war break out?

Lenin wrote that war is prepared in the dark, that the struggle with war is exceedingly difficult. Do not believe those who say to you, Let us wait to fight war until the time when war breaks out.

It is necessary to fight against war every day. And when in such an international situation, you in your Press, at the congresses, in your decisions and special resolutions,—when you say that the question of war is not immediate, you thereby disarm the working-class. Did you not say: We do not consider that the danger of war is directly inevitable? Did not Boville here tell us under cover of the dictionary of Larousse, that the danger of war does not bear an immediate character?

When, then, will you begin the struggle against war? What will you do? how will you organise the working masses? Is not the experience of 1914 sufficient for you? What else do you require, what else are you waiting for?

You are so unconscientious that you do not even understand that by your methods you are bringing war nearer.

If we fight every day, if we beat the alarm, if we mobilise the masses, the bourgeoisie sees that the working masses are declaring against war and they therefore retreat.

If you begin your work of lulling, if you keep on repeating that there will be no war, you are doing the work of French imperialism. French imperialism says: These fellows are not acting badly. We may, during that time, engage in negotiations. The French General Staff may send its generals to Rumania, to Poland, may send out its military instructions, etc. The minority will willingly cover us up.

Do you know how many French officers and military instructors there are in Rumania and in Poland? You do not know it. Do you know that in France

where you are playing the rôle of leaders, there are special ports for the forwarding of war material to Poland?

(ENGLER: Yes, yes.)

Do you know that there is a special port for the forwarding of war material to Rumania? Do you know that French imperialism is building strategic railways, that it is assigning millions for the strengthening of the war industry in Poland, Rumania and Czecho-Slovakia?

And you have the doubtful courage to speak, write and declare at meetings and at congresses that the danger of war is an exaggeration, an invention of those who stand at the head of the Communist Party and the C.G.T.U.

Whom are you working for with such methods? Is this revolutionary tactics? These are tactics, which are in contradiction to all the traditions, and the whole practice of the international revolutionary movement.

And you continue to call yourselves revolutionaries, you remain members of the Red International of Labour Unions, and you write on all your letter-headings "R.I.L.U.," as does the trade union of Loire. But tell me, must there be a certain minimum of common ideology, yes or no?

WHO ARE YOU?

In the beginning I asked you: Who are you? As you have not replied to this question, I will try to establish this on the basis of documentary data, because I have an old habit of appealing to documents, even when they are not interesting.

Here is an open letter, sent to the Fifth Congress of the R.I.L.U. by the minority. Two members of the minority were included in the unitarian delegation, Rambaud and Olivier. Rambaud is a sufficiently representative figure for the "revolutionary" ideology and tactics of the minority. They refused. "We will not go," they said, "because the C.G.T.U. has elected a delegation for the whole C.G.T.U."

Then instead of Rambaud, I do not know whether Rambaud could have been so eloquent,—the minority published a document. This document will remain a shameful stain for the whole of your life! You will see that at once.

"Bolshevism," this document says, "is a political system which arose in Russia in 1903 in the specific Russian economic and political conditions (listen to this well!); this system was inspired by bourgeois and petty-bourgeois revolutionary methods (Jacobinism and Blanquism) and has made use of the discovery by Marx and Engels and together with them of the class struggle of the proletariat."

Taking into consideration that scientific discovery is not one of the strong points of the minority, I should like to tell them the following: It was just the Russian Mensheviks who always accused the

Bolsheviks of Jacobinism and Blanquism to which Lenin always replied: "Yes, we are the Jacobins of the twentieth century, the proletarian Jacobins."

You catch hold of the Menshevik accusations, Well, all right, but I do not consider that the Russian Mensheviks suffered from too much revolutionism.

Further on the characterisation of Bolshevism assumes the following form:

"It rejects trade union democracy. It applies a narrow centralism and a method of appointment from above. It readily limits syndicalism by shop trade unionism. It doubts whether freely elected proletarians are capable of leadership. It is a convinced supporter of the subjection of proletarian organisations to the professional revolutionary staff."

This is what Bolshevism is in your opinion.

It appears that you know what is Bolshevism. You are experts in these matters, this is why you have signed all this (. . . . protests).

(PERIGNON: I did not write this!)

The signature under this document is the Committee of the Independence of Trade Unions. Are you a member of the Committee or not? What can be said of such a prosaic style? It is ignorance multiplied by frivolity!

After this brilliant characterisation of Bolshevism—they understand Bolshevism these minority people—they continue:

"Communism is an economic doctrine, which expresses the principles of scientific socialism and manifests itself in the struggle of the proletariat as a class with the bourgeoisie which has constructed itself as a class."

And so, Communism manifests itself, and not through the Party, Communism is something which is on the side of the fight. Every word in this "scientific" phrase is unscientific and is, in plain language, absurd.

But wait a moment, there is something better still. Here is where we can find out who they are.

"The revolutionary syndicalist minority of the C.G.T.U., starting from economic determinism (Boville, Rambaud, you will perhaps explain to us what this means) taking an unceasing part in the class struggle with the employers, striving for labour democracy and having in view exclusively the interests of the proletariat, are of course distinguishable from Bolshevism, but remain in agreement with scientific socialism and aspire with greater right than anyone else to the name of Communists."

Good! Here it is clearly stated that we are not Bolsheviks. We suspected this. Bolsheviks are made of sterner stuff. You cannot make guns and steel shells from warm water and filings. Of course you are not Bolsheviks.

But it appears you are Communists. What does that mean? You are grown-up people and you send such a document to an international congress. Is it

possible to represent oneself in such a ridiculous light? So it appears you are "wild" Communists? Communists who have come to an understanding with reformists against the Comintern? Communists who are fighting with the fundamental principles of Communism? Partisans of Communism, eh? Or Communists-anti-Bolsheviks? You are Communists? Please stop!

In every one of your formulae you manifest your ignorance. What is the difference between a Communist and Bolshevik? And how can it be, that you Communists should be against the French Communists? Why write such things? You say, that you rely upon economic determinism, but none of us knows what this is.

(BOVILLE: This is a misprint! He makes use of a misprint!)

No, this is not a misprint, this is foolishness. If this is a misprint then I can find you tens of these. If your programme consists of nothing but misprints, then why do you send it to the Congress?

But there is something worse, there are some disgraceful things in this document and I will demonstrate them before you.

Is the same open letter we are accused of having broken up the Anglo-Russian Committee, that we have approved of the removal of the old opportunist leadership of the All-Union C.C. of T.U., that we have given instructions in the United States to form new revolutionary trade unions, in a word, we are accused of disruption and are treated as disrupters. But this is not all. I must here cite a quotation which is exceedingly curious.

"The R.I.L.U. renounced the tactics of pushing the trade union chiefs into the struggle in the name of perfectly disruptive tactics, which means that there is a risk that in a short time the German supporters of the R.I.L.U. will unite with the trade unions of the Berlin International."

It appears then that we were wrong when we fought against the slogans of the German opportunists?

Why do you accuse the R.I.L.U. which nowhere maintained these tactics? We consider that you cannot compel reformists to fight. They do not wish to fight, or more truly, they fight against the workers. And so, French opportunism is not sufficient for you, you desire to take under your patronage the German opportunists? I congratulate you on such a kind of internationalism! But there are still worse things. The minority, the representatives of which are here, is dissatisfied with the work of the R.I.L.U. This is its right. If they have something to say, it is their duty to say it. And if Rambaud told us here all that he thinks, it would have been well. Permit me to quote what he writes: "The whole bureaucratic centralism, the whole neglect of trade union democracy, the whole system of secret diplomacy (!), which

was habitual to the Amsterdam International and which we jointly exposed, all this we find in the R.I.L.U. itself."

You had the possibility of coming here and saying all this at the Congress, and to act honestly. And you should have come. Would it not have been better to have appeared, so as to say all this with or without documents in your hands, if you considered your statements right?

You have put forward your accusation absolutely without any proof, without the slightest reference to facts, and with all this you continued to call yourselves members of the R.I.L.U.!

But there is something even still worse.

At the end of this manifesto we read: "In regard to the inner life of the R.I.L.U., we put the question to the Fifth Congress of how does it stand with the question on the financial side? what is the budget of the R.I.L.U.? what are the sums of dues paid from the time of the Fourth Congress by the sections? what is the estimate of expenditure? what is the budget of the working Executive Bureau?"

I see nothing special in this, when one section desires to receive a financial report. But we and you have come here not to play hide-and-seek, and I ask you what should this mean? For you are responsible for this. (PERIGNON: Who signed this?)

This is signed by the Executive Committee of the Independence of the Trade Union Movement of which Chamberland, Boville, Engler, Rambaud and others are members. Answer me: Are you in favour of it?—yes or no! All right, I will answer you: we receive money from the All-Union C.C. of T.U. Is there anything disgraceful in this that we should take money from the Russian proletariat? And you, who have displayed such curiosity, have you sent your dues to the R.I.L.U.? Do you consider that the R.I.L.U. when it has the possibility should assist strikes, yes or no?

(Delegation: Yes!)

Well, and what does the bourgeois Press say? Bolshevik agents, money of the Russian Government, Russian money, etc., etc. You put the same questions to us. Be it so, do not think that we will be ashamed to answer you.

The Soviet trade unions have at present 14 million members. Their annual budget amounts to 600 million roubles, i.e., 7 to 8 milliards francs. For you these are fantastic figures, you have not the slightest idea of all this, but here with unprecedented frivolity write to the Congress and say: "We ask you where did you get your money from?"

Why do you ask this? Are you doing this for the French Government?

(BOVILLE: We will give you a clear answer to this.)

All right, it is necessary to answer this very clearly if you will only be able to do so. I recall how even before the war, in 1910, when the *Humanité* found

itself in a difficult position, the German Social-Democratic Party sent it 20,000 marks. Can you imagine what a howl was raised by the reaction? I understand that the bourgeois Press is against international solidarity, but when you tread the same path, when you do the same, is it not true that this is low-down politics? And you do not protest against this. You wish that the International Congress should wash all this dirty linen? But then one does not reply to such nastiness. One does not reply to provocative letters. (Applause.)

One does not reply to those who are forging weapons for the class enemy, one does not reply to that sort of literature.

After all this, after this manifesto, you say that you are Communists. Being members of this committee you affirm that you are members of the R.I.L.U. Do you think that we shall be able seriously to accept these declarations, do you think that we shall be able to believe you? when you appear before the R.I.L.U. with provocative speeches? Of course not! It is documents that are important, not words.

(PIATNITSKY: Which of the minority comrades here present have taken an active part in the composition of this document?)

BOVILLE AND RAMBAUD: Only we. (Laughter.)

BOUR: Many are laughing. I say that I have not taken any part in the editing of the letter, not because I want to avoid responsibility, but because I was not a member of the editorial commission. But, however, I also take responsibility.

PIATNITSKY: But do you agree with this document?

BOUR: Yes, but you are not interpreting it rightly. (Laughter.)

#### WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

The question arises, where are you going? Who you are we already know. You have declared that you are in the R.I.L.U., that you intend to remain in it. These are only words. And your deeds? Your deeds, the papers which you have signed, the speeches you have delivered, all this contradicts your declarations of your fidelity to the R.I.L.U.

You say that you are proceeding towards revolution. No, the contrary will be more correct; your line leads direct to the reformist C.G.T., and this means that you are proceeding against the revolution. Whether you want it or no, this is the path along which you are going. When your supporters will understand all this, you will obviously remain alone with the reformists.

We have seen here not only you but also others. There are comrades here, who remember great French orators who had come here and made eloquent declarations. I recall Frossard. Six months after he had returned to France he formed a petty transition organisation, so that afterwards he could again join the Socialist Party and become a deputy for

Martinique. Now he is a millionaire. Yes, Frossard is a millionaire. I do not say that any one of you will become a millionaire. I only note the danger of your path. Mind your step!

(BOVILLE : But these are political details.)

And are you not political details?

(BOVILLE : But we are syndicalists.)

Oh, yes! And those who had been born of syndicalism, those shouters and brawlers, Jouheaux, Evette and the others, where are they now? And the anarcho-syndicalists, who shouted night and day of the social revolution, where are they? In the Chamber of Deputies there are many former Socialists and anarcho-syndicalists, the Briands, the Millerands and the Lavalles. I could quote as many names as you like. We have seen orators, who had preached the general strike, and then killed workers at the time of economic strikes. Your path is the path of reformism against the working-class, whatever the signboards under which you appear, whatever the declarations which you make. Our duty is to tell you with full frankness all that we think, however sharp it may sound.

Now you see where our disagreements lie. For the rest as I have already said, we agree with you! Our position in relation to you provokes demagoguery, and calumny in which you willingly swim. If the R.I.L.U. were a purely Communist organisation, you would have been thrown out a long time ago. But we are an organisation which groups the workers of various tendencies, Communists, Socialists, anarchists, syndicalists, non-Party, confusionists, opportunists and members of minorities. This is why you are still not expelled.

But the R.I.L.U. is not a philosophical club, it is not a masonic society, where according to Rambaud they are occupied with philosophy. It is true, that Rambaud considers that even Lenin was a mason! Comrade Piatnitsky, how long have you known Lenin personally?

(PIATNITSKY : From 1902.)

And I was acquainted with him from 1905, I have met him in France and in other places. Piatnitsky and I have never heard anything of the sort! And yet the Russian Party is exceedingly interested in all questions which touch upon the life and activity of Lenin. No one ever knew that Lenin was a mason.

(LETHGEN : Rambaud is sleeping, perhaps he dreamt it!) (Laughter.)

This is no laughing matter. How can militant functionaries permit themselves such things?

(RAMBAUD : And was Kerr also not a mason?)

Yes, Kerr was a mason, and later left them, but Kerr is not Lenin. How can a man who considers himself a revolutionary talk of such wild things? What is the object? Do you consider that the Bolshevik Party would have permitted masons to be at its head?

In Engler's journal, in the "Proletarian Revolution" I have found something about Lenin which it is worth while quoting since it is characteristic of the level of the people, who still call themselves revolutionaries.

In the "Proletarian Revolution" which contains nothing either of the revolution nor of the proletariat, in the July number for 1931, a report is published of the Congress of the Spanish National Confederation of Labour. The author is unknown, but the editorial board is responsible for the article. In this letter they write about Pestanier. It appears that the leader of the trade union confederation, who had come to an understanding with Primo de Rivera and afterwards with Berenger, and who is now coming to an understanding with the murderer of the workers, Cabaliero, it appears that this Pestanier is a great man, one of the most important figures in Spain. The author of the article writes :

"Some journalists have compared him to Lenin. But he is much greater than Lenin because he is a worker, because he was a shepherd, because he did not simply languish in the libraries of the British Museum and elsewhere, because he did not engage in hair-splitting, because in the very height of 'Pistol-ism' he remained for months the regular editor of the *Solidaridad Obrera* in Barcelona. Happy the National Confederation of Labour that it entered into the fight with such a Pestanier at its head!"

(ENGLER : This was no doubt written by some anarchist. You will not deceive me, I do not doubt for a moment what you are reading, but you will not deceive me.)

And so, Pestanier is greater than Lenin, but the thing does not lie there. The following question arises : It is perfectly known to all that the leaders of the National Confederation of Labour have come to an understanding with the Republican Socialist Government, that they assumed the undertaking not to participate in economic strikes. You have before you a type who betrays the labour movement and who in your journal is called a man who stands "higher than Lenin." What is this like?

(ENGLER : It is like nothing on earth.)

What sort of a method is this? This is a disgrace, something absolutely shocking. What should a man say who has at least two sous' worth of lucidity? He should have said that the National Confederation of Labour is a drag on the movement of Spain, is disrupting the movement. And instead of this this counter-revolutionary is represented to the French workers as a great man "because he did not languish in libraries," because he is an ignoramus.

(ENGLER : This is simply nonsense.)

No, this is not nonsense, this is anti-Communist politics which smells of unheard-of poison. But if it were just merely nonsense, if we read in the minority

publications nothing but foolishness then where will this lead to ?

(ENGLER : They will not be repeated.)

(STEPANOV : Who are the members of the Editorial Committee ?)

The manager of the paper is Chambelland and the editor is Monat. However this be, it bears quite an epic character.

What are we, a philosophic club, an international society for the discussion of all sorts of opportunist deformities, or are we an international of action ?

We are a class organisation which has a right to demand discipline, which has a right to demand recognition of all the resolutions of its congresses, the fulfilment of the decisions of all its leading organs on the questions relating to the international and of the French labour movement.

You are for independence and that means that everyone in his own little corner may be guilty of the greatest betrayals. But this is practised in the Amsterdam International and not by us.

You have linked yourselves up in united front with our enemies. From an ideological point of view, from a tactical point of view, from the point of view of your activities, you have already placed yourselves outside the R.I.L.U., but organisationally you are connected with it. I ask you, do you wish to be members of the R.I.L.U. ? does this bind you to anything before our international organisation ?

(ENGLER : Yes, we have never changed our intentions.)

I think I have already told you the duties which this results in. And now in conclusion, I will permit myself to put to you a few questions :

#### BE FRANK AND HONEST.

(1) Do you recognise the decisions of the Fourth and Fifth Congresses and the leading organs of the R.I.L.U. ?

(2) Do you recognise the obligation to participate in the campaigns organised by the R.I.L.U. (the International Day for the Struggle with Unemployment, the International Day for the Struggle with War, the Campaign for the Assistance of the Working-class and the Trade Unions in China and Spain, collections in aid of the fighting workers, strikers in other countries, etc.) ?

(3) Do you consider yourselves to be bound by the decisions of the R.I.L.U. on the general questions of the French trade union movement, and also in connection with the solution of disputes between one or another organisation (disputes within the organisation of the railwayworkers on the State railways, expulsions of trade unions and members, who have not been stained in any way ?).

(4) Do you consider yourselves bound to take part in strikes, in manifestations of protest and in all campaigns, carried out by the C.G.T.U., it being

understood that freedom of opinion is only permissible up to the beginning of the movement and after its conclusion ?

(5) Do you recognise the right of the majority to form their committees of defence of the adherents of the majority, within your federations for the defence of their point of view on condition that discipline is maintained in the struggle with the bourgeoisie ?

(6) Do you recognise the right of the delegates of the R.I.L.U. and the C.G.T.U. to be present at your congresses and general meetings and maintain at such congresses and meetings their point of view, leaving it to the workers themselves to judge as to which of the two points of view is right ?

(7) Will you continue also in future to form mixed organisations with the reformists and carry through, together with them, conferences, work out with them tactics, hostile to the R.I.L.U., on the pretext that every trade union and every member of trade unions has the right to do everything he pleases ?

(8) And finally, will you also in future accuse the R.I.L.U. and the C.G.T.U. of disruption, discredit every one of its gestures, every one of its manifestations, in other words, will you come forward within our revolutionary trade unions in the role of enemies, or will you conduct yourselves as members of a united organisation competing among themselves in the matter of strengthening the class positions of the proletariat ?

#### WITH THE R.I.L.U. OR WITH AMSTERDAM ?

Such are the questions which I put before you. You may still remain in the ranks of the R.I.L.U., you may, remaining in our ranks, enter into fraternal competition with the majority, not on the plane of jumping towards reformism (on this plane we and the majority could not, and indeed, would not, outstrip you), but in the sense as to who can draw the greatest number of workers into the trade unions, who will be capable of organising a strike better, who will be capable of arranging the defence of the workers' interests, who will be capable of carrying through the campaign of solidarity in conformity with the resolutions of the R.I.L.U. and the C.G.T.U. Is there anything unacceptable in these our proposals ?

Through your actions, your policy, your writings, your agitation, hostile to everything which originates from the R.I.L.U., you have now placed yourselves to the extent of being nine-tenths outside the R.I.L.U.

You must understand that an international organisation has also got its charter. You like charters, you only remember charters which are twenty-five years old and forget the constitutions and the charters which have been accepted by your representatives at the congresses of the R.I.L.U.

It is not we who have placed you in this position which leads you into the enemy camp. You have

yourselves gone along this path voluntarily, you did it quite independently, being perfectly autonomous. You will have to make your choice, whom you will march with, with us or against us, with the R.I.L.U. or the Amsterdam International, with the revolution or the counter-revolution.

Make your choice, but beware ! do not imagine

yourselves to be great politicians. Do not think that you will be capable of deceiving the labour movement. Whatever the difficulties that you may create for the C.G.T.U., the international labour movement will help the C.G.T.U. to overcome them, to isolate you from the French and the international movement, and you will be beaten to a frazzle. (Prolonged applause.)