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# Brief Report on the 1st World Congress of RILU: Moscow — July 3-19, 1921

by Evan E. Young  
US Commissioner, Riga, Latvia

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**Office of the Commissioner of  
The United States, Riga.**

Riga, July 28, 1921.

No. 1119

The Honorable  
The Secretary of State,  
Washington, DC

Sir:

I have the honor to submit the following brief report with reference to the 1st International Congress of Red Trade Unions, which convened at Moscow on July 3rd [1921].

The Congress was opened by [A.] Lozovsky, who said in his opening address that the red trade unions now include some 17 million members. The election of the Presidium resulted as follows: Russia — Lozovsky and Rykov; France & Belgium — Rosmer; United States & Canada — Nait; Austria, Hungary & Germany — Heckert; England & Australia — Tom Mann; Spain — Nin; Poland — Mosievsky; Czechoslovakia — Hampel; Balkans — Pavlovich.

Greetings from labor organizations within their respective countries were presented by Kohnen, Mann, Rykov, and others.

The following program for the Congress was then adopted:

1. Report of the Soviet of International Trade

Unions.

2. World Crisis, Tasks and Tactics of International Trade Unions.

3. The Communist Party and Trade Unions.

4. Factory Committees, Soviet of Senior and Junior Unions.

5. Trade Unions and Control of Production.

6. Unemployment.

7. International, Trade and Production Unions.

8. Organization Questions.

9. Movement among the Women.

10. Elections.

## **July 5th (2nd Session).**

At this session the various countries represented were divided into the following classes of voting strength in the Congress:

Germany, England, France, Italy, Spain, United States, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Russia — 16 votes.

Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Ukraine, Norway, Australia, Argentina — 12 votes.

Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Romania, Ireland, Canada, Mexico, Greece — 8 votes.

All other countries — 1 vote each.

Rosmer then presented a report on the activities of the Soviet of Trade Unions. He first reviewed the movement and then outlined the future tasks of the International Trade Unions. According to Rosmer their principle task is the struggle against the Amsterdam

Trade Union [International] and the effort to obtain the dominating influence in these unions. He said that all revolutionary workers must be united in the trade unions and that a program must be evolved under which a strong revolutionary organization may be effected for the purpose of protecting the interests of the laborers and for the purpose of fighting capitalism.

### **July 6th (3rd Session).**

This session was devoted to discussions of the report submitted by Rosmer at the preceding session. The majority of the delegates were apparently of the opinion that it was not necessary to effect the organization of new trade unions throughout the world, but that an effort should be made to operate within the existing trade unions and to develop in these unions a revolutionary spirit among their members.

### **July 7th (4th Session).**

Lozovsky reported on tactics and the tasks of the trade unions. According to Lozovsky the main task is to carry on a systematic and well-organized revolutionary propaganda within the ranks of the existing trade unions. Varga submitted a report in reference to the alleged world economic crisis, following in the main Trotsky's report to the 3rd Congress, Communist International.

### **July 9th (5th Session).**

Rosmer addressed the Congress on the subject of the relations which should exist between a Communist International and the Red Trade Unions. He said that the unions should not be subordinated to the Communist International but should maintain close connections and relations with it, in precisely the same manner as relations are maintained between the Amsterdam Trade Unions and the Second International.

Reinstein (United States) explained certain misunderstandings which it appeared had arisen between the American delegations. The representatives of the IWW demanded that the representatives from trade organizations belonging to the [American] Federation

of Labor should not be accorded the right to vote, and that of the 16 votes to which the delegates from the United States were entitled, 13 should be accorded to the IWW, with the remaining 3 votes allotted to representatives from other organizations which had been excluded from the [American] Federation of Labor.

The Credentials Commission had decided to grant 3 votes to each of the following groups: IWW; Representatives of the independent unions; The representative of a local branch of the Miners' Unions and the New York organization of the Workers' Council; The representatives of the Central Council of Trade Unions of the cities of Detroit and Seattle; and 1 vote to the representative of 3 local branches of the American Association of Machinists. This proposal was finally accepted by the Congress.

### **July 9th (6th Session).**

Tom Mann spoke on the question of parliamentarism and supported the idea of fighting capitalism by participating in parliaments.

### **July 10th (7th Session).**

The discussions on the question of the relations between the Third International and the Trade Unions were continued. Lozovsky said that certain trade unions in foreign countries which are, from a theoretical standpoint, in favor of a class revolution nevertheless believe that the trade unions must be entirely independent of the Third International, since the latter organization has a political character while trade unions are economic organizations, which participate in the class warfare only in its economic phases. According to Lozovsky this attitude is wrong, and in his opinion it is necessary that the trade unions join the Third International, to which they need not be actually subordinated but with which they must be in entire sympathy and in the same revolutionary spirit.

Many of the foreign delegates opposed Lozovsky's attitude in the matter, taking the position that trade unions, having their own tactics, methods, and organizations, do not wish to be united with a purely political institution or organization, such as the Third International.

### **July 11th (8th Session).**

The discussions were continued. A considerable number of delegates spoke in favor of and against Lozovsky's thesis. Rosmer finally said that the majority of the delegates are in favor of a close union between the Third International and the Red Trade Unions and that the principal task of the Congress is to work out a program for the establishment of such a relation.

### **July 11th (9th Session).**

At this session a resolution was adopted, through a majority vote, of which the following is a substance:

(1) The necessary measures to be taken to bring all revolutionary trade unions into a single organization with an international center, the Red International of Trade Unions.

(2) To establish as close relations as possible with the Third International through the exchange of representatives in the respective Executive Committees, through conferences, etc.

(3) This close relationship to be marked by a businesslike character and organization.

(4) Attention drawn to the necessity of striving at a real revolutionary activity within the trade union organizations and the necessity of establishing connections between the Red Trade Unions and the Communist Party, this in order to better carry out the orders of the two Congresses.

This resolution was adopted against the votes of certain foreign delegates, including 3 votes of the delegation of the United States.

### **July 12th.**

On this day the delegates attended the Congress of the Third International and participated in the discussions which there took place in reference to the International trade unions.

### **July 13th (10th & 11th Sessions).**

These sessions were devoted to a discussion of the question of factory committees and also as regards the position of the General Confederation of Labor in Italy. It was decided to refer the first question to a spe-

cial commission. As regards the second question a resolution was adopted which demands that the Italian Confederation of Labor should immediately decide whether it will join with the Red or the Amsterdam International.

### **July 14th (12th and 13th Sessions).**

The discussions in reference to the tactics of the trade unions were continued. The discussion centered around the question as to the methods which should be employed in obtaining control of the old trade unions or of causing a split in their organizations.

### **July 15th (14th Session).**

Discussion of tactics continued. It is apparent from a reading of the report of these discussions that a portion of the delegates favored the immediate organization of new trade unions while another group supported the proposition that a concentration of revolutionary forces should be effected within the existing trade unions.

### **July 15th (15th Session).**

Lozovsky stated that, in his opinion, there were two things which if done would serve quickly to increase the revolutionary movement in the trade unions:

(1) The organization of the trade unions according to "branches of production," instead of on the narrow basis of trade occupations as is the case at present. He said that, for instance, in America a large number of trusts are in existence and this shows that the capitalists are organized according to "branches of production," while the laboring men remain organized on the narrow basis of trades. The result is therefore that within each trust there exists many small groups of trade unions.

(2) The organization of factory committees. As far as the existing trade unions are concerned it is necessary to organize at once small secret revolutionary groups within the old trade unions. These groups would carry on the necessary propaganda among the great mass of members of the trade unions.

Lozovsky then explained the conditions for membership in the Red International of Trade Unions.

The fundamental and essential condition is the recognition of the principle of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Members of the Red International of Trade Unions cannot also be members of the Amsterdam International. The decisions of the Congress are binding upon all members of the Red Trade Unions.

Lozovsky's thesis was adopted by the Congress by a vote of 270 against 28.

The IWW and other syndicalist unions proposed the following resolution: "The 1st International Congress of Red Trade Unions considers the organization of revolutionary syndicalists, industrialists, and unionists as organizations of the revolutionary class struggle. All organizations belonging to the Red International of Trade Unions are obliged to refrain from all propaganda against these organizations; in other words, they are not to hinder the constructive work of these organizations."

The resolution was rejected by the Congress.

A brief report was then submitted by Sturm in reference to the trade union movement among women.

#### **July 19th (16th Session).**

A proclamation addressed to the laboring class of the world and directed against the Amsterdam International was read and approved.

The Congress concluded its work with the election of a Soviet of Red International Trade Unions, to which the following were elected:

Russia — Lozovsky, Nogin, Rykov, Tsiperovich.  
 Germany — Meyer, Mueller.  
 England — Mann, Watkins.  
 United States — Andrew [Nicholas Hourwich],  
                   Dixon [Earl Browder].  
 Spain — Arlandis.  
 Czechoslovakia — Hamplekuntze.  
 Bulgaria — Dmitrov.  
 Yugoslavia — Pavlovich.  
 Ukraine — Dalkevich.  
 Norway — Nansen.  
 Mexico — Ramirez [Charles Shipman].  
 Sweden — Tilbusch.  
 Denmark — Johansen.  
 Finland — Luenviokki.  
 Far East Republic — Kasparson.  
 Azerbaijan — Kabanovsky.  
 Armenia — Fundustan.  
 Georgia — Kurlangvili.  
 Korea — Chan Min.  
 Latvia — Anderson [Kristap Beika].  
 Lithuanian — Girins.  
 Luxemburg — Rosmer.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

*Evan K. Young,*  
 Commissioner.s

*Edited by Tim Davenport.*

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