
The “Reds” in Congress:

Preliminary Report of the 1st World Congress of the Red International of Trade and Industrial Unions [circa Oct. 1921]

by J.T. Murphy

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On July 3rd, 1921, in the famous Hall of Columns, Moscow, 342 delegates from trade unions of 42 countries gathered together to face important issues: to determine how the workers of the world could best conduct their struggle, and marshal the hosts of organized labor for the final conquest of Capitalism. It was a remarkable scene. The hall was ablaze with light, and the great spaces behind the delegates, and also the big gallery, were packed with the Moscow workers, enthusiastically greeting the representatives of the revolutionary proletarians of other lands. Where once the nobles and their ladies had feasted and danced, and lightheartedly ignored the miseries of the multitude, there gathered now hundreds of keen, alert minds, determined on the task of mobilizing and leading the rest of the international working class army towards the conquest of power. It was a study in contrasts. It was easy to shut one's eyes and see the gallant officers and graceful beauties gliding about the polished floor to the dreamy music of a fine orchestra. But that, was a dream. Open day and open eyes declared, here were many men and women from many lands, representatives of a class rising to power, met in a council of war. They meant business. They mean business.

Comrade **Lozovsky**, leader of the Russian trade unions, opened the Congress before a large and keenly interested audience. There had been twelve months of hard preliminary propaganda work by the Provisional International Council and the propaganda bodies they had created, paving the way, to the Congress, and everybody was keenly interested to see not only how many

delegates had arrived, but also the kind of men and women who had come from the union movement of the world. Did they look as if they had come for serious work? Was the world revolution a matter of absorbing interest to them? Was it something for which they would give time, energy, and life itself? Or was the journey to Russia a trip, and the Russian Revolution a matter for mere curiosity? One swift look across the Congress was enough to satisfy the most critical that here were men scarred by battle with our class enemy-men direct from the factories and mines; men and women grimly earnest, with all the marks of the daily struggle of the toilers upon them; with eyes alert, keen to get to business and to go forth across the frontiers to face the fortunes of the workers' fight whether good or bad. There was no room for fears. Everybody felt the work was well begun. Critics and criticized passed on to the work in hand.

This was the audience which Comrade Lozovsky welcomed in the name of the Provisional International Council and of the All-Russian Trade Unions. He then told of the early desire of the Russian trade unions, at the 3rd All-Russian Congress of Trade Unions, to form a new Trade Union International, and how the blockade of Russia had prevented anything being done in this direction until 1920. Then was formed the Provisional International Council, and the magnificent response to this, the first Congress, was a true indication of the spread of the revolutionary ferment among the workers of the world. He said: "We are in the midst of a world crisis of capitalism which is proving too difficult for the capitalists. Unemployment

is a world phenomenon for which the employers have no solution, and which is sharpening and deepening the class struggle in every capitalist country. Capitalism is in decay and the exploiters of the masses, resentful and conscious of their doom, are determined upon fighting every step. The problems before us are consequently tremendous problems, international in scope, and demanding a powerful international organization of the workers to wage the revolutionary fight. The Amsterdam International has failed all along the line to meet the demands, of the workers' struggle. It has lined itself up with the capitalist League of Nations, and failed in every crisis to lead the workers aright. Its treachery and inability to fulfill the demands of the revolutionary struggle compelled us to begin the task of organizing a new "Red" International of Trade and Industrial Unions, and now at this, the 1st World Congress of Revolutionary Trade Unions, we have to set the pace for the revolutionary workers of all lands, firmly establish an international of action, and determine our tactics for the days ahead. Here we shall find a variety of opinions on matters of policy. Some there are who are against cooperation with the Communist Parties and the Communist International. Some there are in favor of leaving the old unions, destroying them, and building new revolutionary unions. Others believe it better to remain in the old unions and revolutionize them. All these views will undoubtedly find powerful adherents, and it is good that all of them will be presented to the Congress. By thorough discussion we shall clear the way to a united policy and the establishing of a real revolutionary trade union, International of action.

"After electing its representatives to the Presidium, the Congress will consider the report of the Provisional International Council, and then proceed with the principal tasks of the Congress, to discuss the work which falls under the following headings:

1. The World Economic Crisis.
2. The Relations between the Red Trade Union International and the Communist International.
3. Problems of Organization and Tactics.
4. The Constitution of the RTUI [RILU].
5. Workers' Control of Industry.
6. Unemployment.
7. Shop Stewards and Workers' Committees.
8. Manifestos.

"We have thus great work before us. The first session of the 1st Congress of the 'Red' Trade Union International has now begun. Long Live the Red Trade Union International!"

Comrade **Koennen**, on behalf of the Communist International, then delivered a speech of warm welcome to the delegates, and proceeded to survey the international situation and show the need for the closest cooperation between the trade unions and the Communist Parties. He made a great appeal for the closest cooperation between the Red Trade Union International and the Communist International.

Comrade **Tom Mann** then addressed the Congress on behalf of the English-speaking delegates. He took the opportunity, this being the first time he had faced an audience in Revolutionary Russia, not only of welcoming the delegates from all parts of the world, but of specially greeting the Russian comrades, and congratulating them on the most magnificent struggle and achievement ever made by any section of the working class. They had often times seemed, and no doubt had felt, they were isolated, struggling on against great odds entirely alone. The day of even apparent isolation was now passed and gone, and the evidence that the masses of the world had been, and were, struggling towards the same goal was before us in the splendid rally to this, the 1st Congress of the Red Trade Union International.

On this high note of enthusiastic welcome the first session closed, and paved the way to the hard, detailed work of the commissions. Revolutionary Congresses on the Continent are not like the show conferences in England, where only a select few participate in the work of the conference. For every subject before the Congress a thesis is prepared, which becomes the basis of discussion first for the Congress, and then for a commission. Each delegation has to elect its representatives to each commission. Practically every delegate, therefore, has to do some spade work in the Congress. By these means, every thesis is thoroughly discussed sentence by sentence, and the final theses are indeed the considered views of the delegates.

Hence, the next two days were full of committee meetings, election of commissions, etc. When the Congress opened on the 5th of July [1921], we were

therefore able to proceed straight to business. It was unanimously agreed to accept the voting arrangements for the delegations which had been fully discussed by them in the interval, and finally put to the Congress by Comrade Lozovsky. The voting was determined by the importance of the union movement in the countries represented by the delegations. So the allotment of votes was as follows Germany, England, France, Italy, Spain, Czechoslovakia, Poland, East Galicia, Russia, USA, 16 each; Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Norway, Ukraine, Australia, Argentina, 12 each; Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Romania, Canada, Mexico, Greece, 8 each; all other countries, 1 each. Each delegation divided its votes among its constituent members where agreement was possible. Failing agreement, the credential committee should decide, the delegation having the final right of appeal to the Congress.

This session was marked by the receipt of the news that the brother of Comrade Arlandis (delegate of the Spanish CGT), Evilio Boul, Antonio Felin, Domingo Rodrigues, of the same organization, had been foully murdered by the enemies of the working class movement in Spain. The Congress stood in silence for a moment to honor their memory.

Then Comrade **Rosmer** (France) gave the report of the Provisional International Council. This was much more than a report of the activities of the Council. It was also an historical survey of the origin of the Council, telling of the failure of the old internationals, the proposals of the 3rd Russian Congress of Trade Unions in the Kerensky period [July 1917], and how the old trade union leaders had not only led their members into the butchery of the late war, but immediately it was over had further used the complaisance of their Governments to establish the Amsterdam International to pursue the policy of collaboration with the Governments and become the ally of the Labor Bureau of the League of Nations. He told of the arrival in Russia of the English and Italian trade union delegations in the summer of 1920, the part they played in the formation of the Provisional Council, and its successful start after the 2nd Congress of the Communist International. He dwelled upon the formation of Bureaux of Propaganda in Germany, England, America, and the Far East, and of the success attending the efforts of these organizations. Strong opposition had been

met with in Germany and England, an opposition which they certainly had expected, and on no account must we underestimate it. In spite of that opposition, great work had certainly been accomplished, and he estimated that we had 300,000 supporters in Britain, 2 million in Germany, and that the total membership of the unions in the Red Trade Union International would be 17 million workers. This, he contended, was a great response to an inaugural Congress, but still greater tasks were before us. Two enemies had to be conquered — the capitalists and their servants, the reactionary officials of the union movement.

Comrade **Kiraly**, of Hungary, opened the discussion on Rosmer's report by criticizing the data presented, especially with regard to figures, and asked for the report to be checked in accordance with later information brought by the delegates to the Congress.

Comrade **Murphy** (England) stated that the report was incomplete and not sufficiently informative as to the effect of our work upon the Amsterdam International, nor sufficiently critical of the internal work of the Council. No information had been given to the Congress as to the subsequent activities of the Italian delegation, which had played a part in the formation of the Provisional Council, and since then stood with one foot in Moscow and the other in Amsterdam. The Italian Syndicalists had protested against the policy of the International Council towards the Italian Confederation of Labor, and later a resolution had been passed by the Council demanding of the Italian Confederation that they convene a national conference within three months of the receipt of the resolution, to decide as to which International they were to join. This resolution had never been sent, and today we were still in doubt as to what were the intentions of the Italian Confederation. On this matter the report was entirely silent, and we would be glad of more information. Further, the figures given did not indicate clearly enough what were actual union affiliations and what proportion was an estimate of minorities in unions. The actual fighting strength of the organization could only be correctly estimated when these proportions were known, because the position of minorities in unions was altogether different from those who had complete control of the union machinery. We expected and requested more and clearer information.

Comrade **Bartels** (Germany) followed, and ques-

tioned the accuracy of the figures with regard to Germany, and criticized severely the work of the German Bureau. Indeed he questioned the soundness of the policy that was being pursued by the Bureau and by the International. It was useless to attempt to transform the unions into revolutionary organizations. It was bound to fail, and the sooner we realized that we had to destroy the old unions and build new revolutionary organizations, the better.

From this time on the discussion on the report took the form of a debate on the policy of working within the unions versus the destruction of the unions and the building of new revolutionary organizations.

Comrade **Lozovsky** took up the cudgels on behalf of Comrade Rosmer, stating that the Congress itself was the answer to Comrade Murphy's criticism on our progress against Amsterdam. As for the Italian question, they had deliberately refrained from sending the resolution for tactical reasons. He hoped that the Italian delegates would arrive, and then the matter could be more fully discussed.

Turning to the disputants with regard to the policy of working within the unions, he said remaining in the unions did not mean simply the formal capture of "the cash box and offices," but the revolutionizing of the minds of the members of the unions, so that they would use the unions as organs of revolutionary struggle. Inside the Red Trade Union International, however, there were varieties of opinions, and it was good that they should find expression. But whatever the differences of opinions may be, we are all united in our opposition to the Amsterdam International and in our desire to force the capitalist class of the world to an unconditional surrender.

Comrade **Tom Mann** followed, and immediately launched into the debate on the "boring from within" policy.

Once again [he said], the long experience of the struggle with old-fashioned trade union leaders shows that our need is to make our tactics suit our real position. I am not speaking for other countries, but I can say definitely that to attempt the policy of building new unions to compete with the big trade unions of England is doomed to failure. I can say definitely that while 20 percent of the British workers are in a revolutionary mood, they would not agree to that policy. Things are moving in Britain, as elsewhere. With a clear vision and the requisite energy and push in the right direction, great things are coming our way. There is no need to waste our energies — we are none too strong — in

erecting independent organizations. We, the 20 percent, must try to force radical changes inside the old organizations. The workers of Britain are moving forward to victory, and with persistent effort the day is not far off when the whole working class movement of Britain will be enrolled under the banner of the Red Trade Union International.

Comrade **Glinski**, of Poland, then rose to speak, and after describing the difficulties they had to encounter with the Polish Government, digressed into the debate on the union policy.

Tomassi, of France, moved the closure on the grounds that the debate had ceased to be a discussion of the report, and had become a debate on tactics.

We then passed on to a report by Comrade **Varga** on

The World's Economic Crisis.

Varga is an Hungarian professor of economics, now in charge of the research department of the Communist International, and a very able scholar. He and Comrade Trotsky had already presented theses on this subject to the Communist Congress, and therefore much was expected from him. We were not disappointed. He gave a most exhaustive survey of the world situation, and presented much data to bear out his contentions. (A copy of his speech is not yet to hand or translated into English. The following, which I think will give a fair representation of what he presented to the Congress, is based upon the theses as presented to the Communist Congress and the notes gathered by my colleagues and myself from the verbal translations of the speech.)

Capitalism, he said, reached its high tide in the two decades preceding the war. The intervals of prosperity were superseded by periods of depression of comparatively short duration and intensity. The general trend was that of an upward curve: the capitalist countries were growing rich.

Having scoured the world market through their trusts and consortiums and cartels, the masters of world capitalism well realized that this mad growth of capitalism would finally strike a dead wall confining the limits of the capacity of the market created by themselves. They therefore tried to get out of the difficulty by a surgical method. In place of a lengthy period of economic depression which was to follow and result

in wholesale destruction of productive resources, the bloody crisis of the world war was ushered in to serve the same purpose.

But the war proved not only extremely destructive in its methods, but also of an unexpectedly lengthy duration. So that besides the economic destruction of the surplus productive resources, it also weakened, shattered, and undermined the fundamental apparatus of European production. At the same time it gave a powerful impetus to the capitalist development of the United States and quickened the aggrandizement of Japan. We have therefore to consider that Europe is ruined: that its productivity is much smaller than before the war, and that America has become the centre of industrial gravity, not through a process of gradual development, but through the exploitation of the European war market. This is an unprecedented historical situation which can never be repeated: a situation in which, for a period of four and a half years Europe has been putting all its life and strength into the war, which has served as a basis for the development and ascendancy of America.

The period following upon the termination of the 4 years' slaughter, the demobilization of the armies, the transition to a peaceful state of affairs, and the inevitable economic crisis coming as a result of the exhaustion and chaos caused by the war — all this was regarded by the bourgeoisie with the greatest anxiety as the approach of the most critical moment. As a matter of fact, during the two years following the war, the countries involved became the arena of a mighty movement of the proletariat.

It was a critical period, but the bourgeoisie preserved its dominant position by cleverly stimulating an apparent economic revival whilst they dealt with the political crisis consequent upon the demobilization and the first squaring of accounts.

This commercial and industrial revival of 1919 and 1920 relieved to some extent the tension of the post-war period, and gave the bourgeoisie the confidence to proclaim the advent of a new era of organic development of capitalism. The expansion, however, was artificial: only a continuation of the war inflation methods and practice. The financial, economic, and industrial crisis was inevitable. It began in March 1920. Japan saw the beginning of it in the month of April. In the United States, it opened by a slight fall of the

prices in January. Then it passed on to England, France, and Italy (In April). It reached the neutral countries of Europe, then Germany, and extended to all the countries involved in the capitalist sphere of influence during the second half of 1920.

Thus the crisis of 1920 is not a periodic stage of the "normal" industrial cycle, but a profound reaction consequent upon the artificial stimulation that prevailed during the war and during the two years thereafter, and was based upon ruination and exhaustion. The upward curve of industrial development was marked by turns of good times followed by crises. During the last 7 years, however, there was no rise in the productive forces of Europe, but, on the contrary, they kept at a downward sweep. The crumbling of the foundation of industry is only beginning, and is going to proceed along the whole line. European economy is going to contract and expand during a number of years to come. The curve marking the productive forces is going to decline from the present fictitious level. The expansions are going to be short-lived, and of a speculative nature to a considerable extent, while the crises are going to be hard and lasting. The present European crisis is one of underproduction. It is the form in which destitution reacts against the striving to produce trade and resume life on the usual capitalist level.

Briefly, therefore, we are faced with this position. The crisis embraces the whole world. It is not an accidental crisis, but one arising out of the war. Capitalism must try to save itself; this it can do only by finding new markets or cheapening the cost of production by increasing production per worker employed. Capitalism cannot find new markets, and it is driven, therefore, to increase the productivity of the workers. Against this we have the new psychology of the workers who are not prepared after all the sacrifices of recent years to be driven down to lower standards of life and harder conditions of labor. Nor must it be forgotten that the physical condition of the workers will not permit increased productivity. The physical standard of the workers has deteriorated enormously during the last seven years. Especially is this the case in Europe, and it is impossible to get increased productivity with the general decline of human vitality through starvation and poverty. It is impossible for the capitalists to get out of the present crisis. They cannot

crush the workers. They cannot find markets. They cannot deal with the many and varied factors which they are up against. During the war the workers learned to shoot. During the war the workers learned how to suffer privations, and the effect of the Russian Revolution upon them is to perpetually inspire them to challenge the continuation of capitalism. We are in for a period — it may be a long one — of persistent struggle, in which the unions will be called upon, to play an important part. It was therefore necessary to push on rapidly with the work of revolutionizing them, and he believed to do that the best policy was that of working within the unions rather than attempting to build new competitive organizations.

This speech was well received by the Congress, and accepted as an agreed upon thesis. It is a pity that the Congress did not give this speech a thorough discussion. But its importance was overshadowed by the keenly anticipated struggle on the

Relationship of the Red Trade Union International to the Communist International.

The Presidium had elected Comrades Rosmer and Tom Mann to be the referees on this subject. ROSMER spoke first, and surveyed the historical development of the revolutionary industrial movement, and traced its trek towards cooperation with the Third International. He showed how the tactics had changed with the onward development of the movement. At the same time he appreciated the suspicion which the Syndicalists and the IWW had against the political parties. It was a healthy suspicion, justified by the treachery and the betrayals of the old Labor and Socialist parties. But it was absurd to treat the Communist International in the same way. The Communist International had justified its claim to be a revolutionary organization, and he appealed to the Syndicalists not to forget that point. He traced for them the history of the French Syndicalists and the origin of the famous Amiens Charter. He claimed that the conditions which gave birth to that charter were gone. The situation was a new situation, demanding measures totally different to what this document contained, and to stand by this old document in the face of today's conditions was to act contrary to the best interests of the world revolution. He accordingly appealed to the

Congress to agree that the Red Trade Union International should work in close accord and cooperation with the Communist International.

[The Amiens Charter referred to by Comrade Rosmer, forms the basis for the speakers in opposition to the policy of cooperating with the Communist International, and also the minority in the debate on tactics. Because of its importance in the debates and its place in the history of the French Syndicalists, I quote the Charter in full.]

The Amiens Charter: Resolution Adopted at the Congress of the Confederation Generale du Travail at Amiens, September 1906.

The Congress of Amiens confirms Article 2, which forms the basis for the Constitution of the CGT.

The CGT groups together, independently of all political schools, all workers who are conscious of the struggle to be carried on for the abolition of the wage system....

The Congress considers that this declaration is a recognition of the class struggle, which, on an economic basis, places the workers in revolt against all forms of exploitation and oppression, material and moral, put into operation by the capitalist class against the working class.

The Congress makes this theoretic affirmation more precise by adding the following points:-

In the sphere of everyday demands, trade unionism aims at coordinating the efforts of the workers and improving their conditions through the realization of immediate ameliorations, such as the shortening of hours, increase of wages, etc.

But this is only one aspect of its work; trade unionism is preparing the integral emancipation, which can be realized only by the expropriation of the capitalist class. It commends, as a means to this end, the general strike, and considers that the trade unions now grouping for the purpose of resistance will be in the future the basis of social organization, as the group for production and distribution.

The Congress declares that this double task of everyday life, and of the future, follows from the situation of the wage earners, which exerts its pressure upon the working class, and which makes it a duty for all workers whatever their opinions or their political and philosophical tendencies, to belong to the essential group, which is the trade union. Consequently, so far as individuals are concerned, the Congress maintains entire liberty for every trade unionist to participate, outside of the trade organization, in any forms of struggle which correspond to his philosophical or political ideas, but asks of him only one thing in return—that he shall not introduce into the union the opinions which he professes outside of it.

In so far as organizations are concerned, the Congress decides that, in order that syndicalism may attain its maximum effectiveness, economic action should be exercised directly against the class of employers, and the confederated organizations must not, as trade union groups, pay any attention to parties and sects which, outside of them

and by their side, are at full liberty to work for the transformation of society.

This resolution or Charter promises to become the key to controversy not only in the French trade unions, but in practically every country where trade unionism flourishes outside Russia.

Tom Mann followed Rosmer. His speech was looked for with eagerness, because of his long association with Syndicalism. His speech was undoubtedly a surprise to his syndicalist colleagues. He opened out by tracing the development of industry from national limitations to internationalism, and transforming the struggle of the working class into an international class struggle. The expansion of the struggle along these lines called for an international organization to cope with the demands of the struggle. We could not fight an international fight without real international organization. The question as to which international we should join becomes then one of supreme importance. Shall we join an organization which does not stand for the workers' emancipation, or an organization which will wage the revolutionary struggle? The Amsterdam International stands for the perpetuation of capitalism. The Red Trade Union International which we had now founded based its program upon revolutionary action, and placed before it new objectives, new aims—the overthrow of capitalism. The Red Trade Union International, therefore, was the only International worthy of our support.

Turning to the question of the relation of the unions to the Communist Party and the RTUI [RILU] to the Communist International, he said it was certainly a vexed question which was bound to play an important part in the future development of the movement. He had never had any faith in using the instrument of State Parliament as a means of achieving economic freedom. And, because he believed that 95 percent of the workers' troubles were economic in character, he believed that the question of economic organization was more important than political organization. The capitalist class in England had no votes until it had sufficient economic power to compel the aristocracy to give them votes.

His observations years ago had made him a Syndicalist, and he had applauded and supported the work of the French Syndicalists. But he had not hesitated to

change his line of action when circumstances demanded that he should in the best interests of the revolutionary struggle of the workers. Vast changes have taken place during the last seven years, which have completely modified and changed our social, political, and economic views. But none of the changes had altered his conviction of the futility of orthodox parliamentarism. If the Communist International was basing its line of action on parliamentarism from the orthodox point of view, he would unhesitatingly oppose the Red Trade Union International associating with the Communist International. But the Communist International aimed at the destruction of Parliaments, and not their perpetuation. He therefore unhesitatingly appealed to the Congress to vote for the Red Trade Union International cooperating with the Communist International. "We have got the same objective in view, and we must accordingly put up a united struggle for the complete victory of the workers of the world."

Comrades **Williams** (IWW), **Bartels** (German Free Unions), **T. Barker** (Argentina), **Mater** (German Seamen), **Arlandis** (Spain), and **Sirole** (France), took up the fight on behalf of the opposition. The comrades from the Latin countries took their stand on the Amiens Charter, and argued that association with political parties would be detrimental to industrial movement. To place the unions of France, for example, under the French Communist Party, would weaken the revolutionary fighting spirit of the syndicalist organizations. At present they were more revolutionary than the party. While they could not say the same about the Communist International at present, it may become reformist like the rest, and we ought not to take risks. They said that the industrial movement and the Red International was strong enough to stand alone, and the interference of the parties in the industrial movement was a danger which should not be encouraged. It would lead to a change in the character of trade union organization, and prevent it from continuing to organize the workers irrespective of their political views. They were opposed to the domination of the parties over the national trade unions, and they were equally opposed to the domination of the Red Trade Union International by the Communist International.

Other speakers, **Lozovsky** (Russia), **Tomassi** (France), **Murphy** (Britain), **Tsyperovich** (Russia), addressed the Congress in favor of cooperation of the Internationals, and explained that there was no intention of taking away the autonomy of the unions, but to establish a real working practical arrangement between the two organizations. After a very long controversy, which was based on the points I have brought out, the resolution in favor of a harmonious working arrangement between the two Internationals being established was carried by overwhelming majority — 285 votes for and 35 votes against.

Afterwards, the Syndicalists who had spoken and voted against cooperation of the two Internationals issued the following statement:

The Red Trade Union International has been formed. From now on, all those trade unions of the whole world who wish to bring about the overthrow of capitalism will crowd to this organization.

We, the Revolutionary Syndicalists, came to Moscow to defend our principles in the inaugural Congress of the Red Trade Union International. However, our tendency did not prove to be the strongest. The trade union organizations of Central Europe do not fully agree with our syndicalism, but nevertheless they are distinguished by great revolutionary strength. The proletariat of Russia, Germany, Hungary, Yugoslavia, and Czecho-Slovakia can point to splendid pages of revolutionary history. We are separated by varied opinions on certain phases of the struggle, but we are united by the same revolutionary fire and the same belief in the triumph of the proletariat. The division of the revolutionary trade unions into two internationals would be a crime against the whole proletariat, whose efforts would be powerless against the coalition of the bourgeoisie and the Yellow International of Amsterdam. The formation of a united front is the duty of the hour, when the capitalist world is shaking to its foundations. The creation of the Red Trade Union International is an event of the greatest moment, for it signifies the complete fusion of the workers who are struggling for the final liberation. Fifteen million workers are today standing round the banner of the Revolutionary International.

They will see the numbers of the proletarian army grow, and from it will come the battalions for the deciding battle. The Red Trade Union International, which has been formed in the revolutionary furnace of the Communist International, sets itself the immediate task of uniting all the revolutionary masses for the revolution. Your autonomy can be preserved and your independence ensured by the union of all the revolutionary syndicalist groups. It is self-evident that we have not been satisfied by all the decisions of the Congress, and that new mutual concessions will be necessary. Nevertheless, we hold it to be necessary to remain in the Red Trade Union International, and to strengthen it if we wish it to accomplish really revolutionary work. Therefore we address this manifesto to all Revolutionary Syndicalists

of all lands who have not united, so that they will remain in the International with the firm will to defend our principles and to cooperate in the triumph of the revolution in all lands.

Long live the Red Trade Union International!

Long live Revolutionary Syndicalism!

Long live the Social Revolution!

Ramirez

Confederación General del Trabajadores, Mexico,

Andrés Nin

Confederación Nacional del Trabajadores de España,

Julio Marino

Union Sindicale Italiana,

Sirolle

Delegate of the French Syndicalists,

Lorch

Dutch Federation of Transport Workers,

Posthumer

Dutch Labor Secretariat,

George Andreychine

American Delegation, IWW,

Tom Mann.

Comrade **Nin** was selected by the Syndicalists to address the Congress on the lines indicated in the manifesto which was issued later. The following resolution then became the declaration of the Congress:

Whereas the struggle between Labor and Capital in all capitalist countries has assumed, as a result of the world war and crisis, an exceptionally acute, implacable, and decisive character;

Whereas in the process of the struggle every day the laboring masses realize ever more clearly the necessity for eliminating the bourgeoisie from the administration of industry, and consequently from political power;

Whereas the above result can be obtained solely by establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat and the socialist system;

Whereas in the struggle to preserve the bourgeois dictatorship all the ruling classes have already succeeded in consolidating and concentrating to a high degree their national and international organizations, political as well as economic, and making a solid front of all the bourgeois forces, both defensive and offensive, against the onrush of the proletariat;

Whereas the logic of the class struggle demands the greatest consolidation of the proletarian forces in the revolutionary struggle, and consequently means that there should be the closest contact and organic connection between the different forms of the revolutionary labor movement, and particularly between the Third (Communist) International and the Red Trade Union International, as well as between the Communist Parties and the Red Trade Unions within their respective countries;

Therefore this Congress resolves —

1. To take all the necessary steps for bringing together in the most energetic manner all the trade unions into one united fighting organization with one international center: the Red Trade Union International.

2. To establish the closest possible contact with the Third (Communist) International, as the vanguard of the Revolutionary Labor Movement in all parts of the world, on the basis of joint representation at both executive committees, joint conferences, etc.

3. That the above connection should have an organic and business character, and be expressed in the joint preparation of revolutionary actions and in the concerted manner of their realization both on a national and international scale.

4. That it is imperative for every country to strive to unite the revolutionary trade union organizations, and for the establishment of close everyday contact between the Red trade unions and the Communist Party, for the carrying out of the decisions of both Congresses.

After this most important debate, the next theses which formed the battle ground of the Congress, and which includes practically all the controversial matter of the subjects down for discussion by the Congress, were on

The Aims and Tactics of the Trade Unions,

Introduced by Comrade **Lozovsky**. The theses were divided into 8 sections, as follows:

1. Conditions of the struggle. — This section was a brief analysis of the present stage of capitalism.

2. This contained an examination of the part played by the unions before the war, pointing out the different conditions under which the unions had developed in various countries.

3. The third section dealt with the part played by the unions during the war.

4. This section dealt with the activities of the unions after the war, with special reference to the unions in the most important capitalist countries. In this connection, the English delegation had controversy with Lozovsky concerning the account he had given of the activities of the revolutionists of the industrial movement. He evidently thought to criticize the Workers' Committees in the same way that the Communist Party had been criticized by Radek at the Communist Congress, but made the mistake of not becoming sufficiently well acquainted with the facts to be effective. Anyone reading this section would be excused for going away with the conception that the English revolutionary trade unionists were outside the trade unions, setting up new competing organizations.

Comrade **Watkins** gave him a very effective re-

ply, pointing to the fact that every member of the British delegation present at the Congress had from 10 to 40 years' membership of their particular trade unions, and that it was necessary for every member of the Workers' Committees to be also a member of the trade union. It was because the unofficial committees had worked within the unions that they had been so effective in the miners' struggle.

This section gave the ground for the big struggle on the policy of working within the unions against that of leaving the old unions and forming new revolutionary organizations. Much of the debate was a repetition of what had been said in the discussion on the Report of the Provisional Council. The opposition came from a section of the Syndicalists and the IWW. Comrade **Williams**, of the IWW, took the view that it was useless to work inside the reformist unions. He stated that it was hopeless to bore from within the American Federation of Labor, which was the most reactionary craft union organization in the world. Even the Yellow Amsterdam International was too advanced for it. It was opposed to every advanced idea, and a stern opponent of industrial unionism. The only thing to do with it was to smash it.

Other American delegates were strongly against this point of view, and declared that it was possible to revolutionize the AF of L — indeed, they were busy on the job. Because the revolutionists had pursued the policy of getting out of the trade unions associated with the AF of L, Gompers and his crowd had had entirely their own way. It was a mistake, and the revolutionists of America were as much responsible as anyone for the reactionary condition of the American Federation of Labor. They can no longer support the policy of getting out of the unions.

On this question, **Comrade Bartels**, of the German unions, also took up the cudgels on behalf of the policy of leaving the old unions. He stated it was rapidly becoming impossible to work within them. Communists were being expelled, and it was impossible for them to get back into the unions. It was therefore impossible to work on the lines of the theses.

Several other speakers supported this view, but of the twenty further speakers who addressed the Congress, practically all supported the view that revolutionists should remain in the unions, and those who were expelled would fend ways and means of over-

coming their difficulties Section 5 dealt with the question of Neutrality, Independence, and Socialism, pointing out that Socialism had ceased to be a matter of theoretical discussion and become a practical question of the day. This knocks on the head all question of neutrality of the unions as to politics, and has made it imperative that the unions and the Communist Party should act together. This led to a reiteration of the arguments based upon the Amiens Charter. Practically all those who had voted against cooperation with the Communist International spoke in similar terms on this section of the Theses on Tactics.

Section 6 was devoted to a brief history of the Amsterdam International and a criticism of its structure and activities.

Section 7 was concerned with methods of struggle. It indicated that the Red Trade Union International must work and fight with the workers on every issue, however insignificant and petty it may appear to be. Whether the question was a question of wages or relief and work for war victims, social insurance, the labor of women and children, sanitary conditions in industrial establishments, we shall be able to win the masses and consequently the trade unions only on the condition that we lead the fight both offensive and defensive. That is the way to victory.

Section 8 summed up the previous sections, culminating in the Plan of Action, which is a standing challenge to the Charter of Amiens. This plan of action was accepted by both Congresses, the 3rd Congress of the Communist International and the 1st Congress of the Red Trade Union International. It is the new charter and guide for the revolutionary industrial proletariat. Here it is.

Program of Action.

1. The acute economical crisis spreading all over the world, the catastrophical fall of wholesale prices, the overproduction of goods combined with the actual lack of sale, the militant policy of the bourgeoisie toward the working class, the tenacious tendency towards the reduction of wages far backwards, the growing exasperation of the masses on one side and the impotence of the old trade unions and their methods on the other, impose new problems on the revolutionary class trade unions all over the world. New meth-

ods of economic struggle are required. Called forth by the decomposition of capitalism, a new economic policy for the trade unions is necessary in order to parry the attacks of capital, strengthen the old position, and pass over to the offensive.

2. The basis of the tactics of the trade unions is direct action of the revolutionary masses and their organizations against capitalism. The gains of the workers are in proportion to the degree of direct action and revolutionary activity of the masses. By "direct action" we mean all forms of direct pressure of the workers upon the employers and the State: boycotts, strikes, street demonstrations, seizure of factories, uprisings and other revolutionary activity, which tend to unite the working class in the fight for Communism. The aim of the revolutionary trade unions is, therefore, to turn direct action into a weapon of education, and to stimulate the fighting ability of the working masses for the social revolution and the institution of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

3. The last year of the struggle has shown, with a particular vividness, the impotence of the strictly trade union organizations. The fact of the workers in one concern belonging to several unions produces a weakening effect upon the struggle. It is necessary—and this should be the starting point of a tenacious struggle—to pass from a strictly trade union to an organization of trade unions for the struggle for control of production. "One Union for One Industry" — this is the militant motto in the organization structure. The fusion of related unions into one union should be effected in a revolutionary way, putting this question directly before the members of the unions in the factories, mills, etc., and also before district and regional conferences, as well as before the National Conference.

4. Each factory and each mill should become a citadel of the revolution. Old forms of communication between rank and file members of the union and the union itself, such as money collectors, representatives, proxies, and others should be supplemented by the formation of factory committees. The factory committee must be elected by the workers engaged in a given enterprise independently of the political creed they profess. The problems imposed upon the supporters of the Red Trade Union International is to involve all the workers of a given concern into the election of their representative organ. The attempt to elect

the factory committee exclusively among adherents of the same party, and the casting aside of the broad non-party rank and file workers, should be severely condemned. This should only be a nucleus and not a factory committee. The revolutionary workers should influence and act upon the general meeting, as well as on committees of action and their rank and file members.

5. The first question to be put before the workers and the factory committee is, the maintenance of the workers—discharged on account of unemployment—at the expense of the enterprise. It should not be permitted that workers should be thrown out into the streets without the enterprise being in the least concerned with it. The owners must be compelled to pay full wages to the unemployed, and the Communists should approach these workers and explain to them at the same time that the problem of unemployment is not to be solved within the capitalist regime, and that the only way to abolish it is by social revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

6. By closing down their mills and factories, by curtailing the workers' hours, the capitalists are able to clear out of their establishments all revolutionary workers, and at the same time retain those reactionary laborers who are thus used as a lever to lower wages, to increase the working day, and to assist in depriving the masses of the right to strike. Lockouts are becoming more and more definitely the form of direct action on the part of the employers. For this purpose special controlling committees, composed of workers, should be instituted with regard to rate material and orders, in order to verify the quantities of available raw material necessary for the production, as well as money resources in the banks. Specially elected controlling committees must investigate in the most careful manner the financial co-relation existing between the given concern and other concerns, and the practical task of abolishing the commercial mastery should be imposed upon the workers for this purpose.

7. One of the ways of struggling against such closing of concerns for the purpose of a reduction of wages and the standard of life, should be the taking hold by the workers of the factories and mills, and proceeding with production by themselves despite the owners. Owing to the lack of goods it is highly important to proceed with production, and the workers

should therefore oppose the premeditated closing down of factories and mills by the owners. In connection with local conditions and the conditions of production, the political situation, the tension of the social struggle, should be observed the seizure of the enterprise may, and should, be followed by other ways of pressure upon capital. When taking hold of the mills, etc., the management of the factories should be conferred on the factory and workshop committees and the representatives of the unions specially appointed for the purpose.

8. The economical struggle should follow the motto of an increase in wages and of the improvement of the labor conditions to a much higher degree compared with the pre-war period. The attempts to bring back the workers to pre-war conditions of labor must meet with the most resolute revolutionary resistance. The exhaustion of the working class during the period of the war must be compensated by an increase in wages and the improvement of labor conditions. The reference of the capitalists to foreign competition should by no means be taken into consideration. The revolutionary trade unions are bound to approach the question of wages and labor conditions not from the point of view of the rapacious capitalists of the various nations, but solely from that of the preservation and the defence of the living labor force.

9. The tendency of reducing wages adopted by capitalists during the economic crisis should be met by the revolutionary trade unions in their endeavors to prevent the reduction in wages by turn in each separate concern, in order not to be defeated in parts. The workers engaged in the enterprises of public welfare such as the mining, railroad, electric, gas concerns, and others, should be drawn in at once, in order that the struggle against the onslaught of capital should touch the very nerve of the economic organism. All ways of resistance from a separate intermittent strike up to a general strike embracing all large fundamental industries on a national scale are, in such a case, not only advisable but strictly necessary.

10. The trade unions must consider it their practical task to prepare and organize international action in each separate industry. The interruption in transport or coal mining on an international scale is a mighty weapon against the struggle of reactionary attempts of the world bourgeoisie

The trade unions must attentively study the course of events all over the world, choosing the most appropriate moment for their economic action, not forgetting for a single instant that international action is possible only in case of real revolutionary class conscious trade unions being formed on an international scale, and having nothing in common with the Yellow Amsterdam International.

11. The belief in the absolute value of binding contracts and agreements between Labor and Capital, propagated by the opportunists of all countries, must be met with a resolute and keen resistance on the part of the revolutionary trade unions. Such a policy is nothing more than an armistice. The owner always violates these collective contracts when the smallest opportunity presents itself for doing so. The respectful attitude towards such agreements only shows that the bourgeois conceptions are deeply rooted in the minds of the leaders of the working class. The revolutionary trade unions, without rejecting as a rule the contract stipulation, must realize its relative value, and clearly define the methods to abolish these stipulations when they cease to be profitable to the working class.

12. The struggle of the labor organizations against the individual and collective employer, while adapting itself to the national and local conditions, should utilize all the experience acquired during the previous periods of the struggle for the liberation of the working class.

Therefore, every large strike should not only be well prepared, but simultaneously with the declaration of it, there must be organized special detachments for the struggle against scabbing, and for counter action, as well as the provocative movement on the part of all kinds of white guard organizations encouraged by the bourgeoisie and the government. The Fascisti in Italy, the Technical Aid in Germany, the Civil White Guard organization, consisting of ex-commissioned and noncommissioned officers in France and England — all these organizations pursue the aim of the disorganizing and forestalling all the actions of the workers, with the purpose, not only to replace strikers by scabs, but to materially destroy their organizations and kill the leaders of the labor movement. The organization of special strike militia and special self-defence detachments is a question of life and death to the workers under similar conditions.

13. These militant organizations should not only struggle against the attacks of the employer and strike-breaking organizations, but should take the initiative by stopping all the freight and products transported to their respective factories and all other enterprises, and the Union of Transport Workers ought to play a specially important part in this case. The task of stopping transportation of freights has fallen on their shoulders: it can be realized by the unanimous support of all the workers of the given locality.

14. All the economical struggles of the working classes would gather round the slogan of the CONTROL OF INDUSTRY, which control ought to be realized as soon as possible, without waiting for the ruling classes and the government to prevent an initiation of the same. It is necessary to carry on a merciless struggle against all attempts of the ruling class and reformists to establish intermediary labor affiliations and intermediary control committees. Only when that control is operated directly by the workers themselves will the results be definitive. The revolutionary trade union sought to fight resolutely against that perverted socialism and graft which the leaders of the old trade unions, aided by the ruling classes, are practising. All the talk of these gentlemen about the peaceable socialization of industry is done with the sole aim to withdraw the attention of the working classes from revolutionary action and the Social Revolution.

15. In order to withdraw the workers from their direct problem and instil in them the petty bourgeoisie aspirations, the middle-class-minded trade union leaders advance the idea of workers participating in the profits, which means the return to the workers of an insignificant part of the wealth created by them, which is called additional wages. This slogan, only meant for the demoralization of the workers, should be met by severe and rigorous criticism. "Not the participation in the profits, but the entire elimination of capitalistic profit," is the slogan of the revolutionary unions.

16. While carrying on the struggle for the improvement of labor conditions, the elevation of the living standard of the masses and the establishment of the workers' control, it is always necessary to remember that it is impossible to solve all these problems within the limits of the capitalistic forms of government. Therefore the revolutionary trade unions, while

wrenching concessions from the ruling classes everywhere, and forcing them to legislate socialistic laws, should always clearly explain to the workers that only the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat can solve the social question. Therefore, every local uprising, every local strike, and every small conflict should be guided by the above-mentioned principle. The revolutionary trade unions ought to make these conflicts general, elevating the consciousness of the workers to the comprehension of the inevitability of social revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

17. Every economical struggle is also a political one, that is, a general class struggle. Such a struggle can only be adequately organized, no matter what large element of workers it may comprise in each respective country, and carried, through for the greatest benefit of the entire working class, when the revolutionary trade unions will act in perfect unity with the Communist Party in each respective country. To divide the theory and the practice of the struggle of the working class into two distinct parts is extremely detrimental especially at the present moment. Every uprising requires the maximum concentration of forces which is only possible by exerting the greatest revolutionary energy. It must not be divided into two separate parts, some for the Communist Party and some for the Red trade unions such a policy is doomed to failure in advance. Therefore unity of action and the organic connection between the Communist Party and the trade unions is a preliminary condition leading to success in the struggle against capitalism.

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The other subjects before the Congress were but expansions of the above declaration, and the next important discussion took place on the Italian question. The Italian Confederation of Labor had participated through Daragona and his colleagues in the initial stages of the formation of the Red Trade Union International, and since then had attempted to play the game of being in the Red International and the Amsterdam International at the same time. They had attended the London Congress of the Yellow International, and had the cheek to send a wire to Moscow whilst the Congress was in session asking for the Con-

gress to be convened at Reval or Stockholm, and to wait until the Communist International had concluded its Congress. Later they sent delegates "for information," and so they were asked to explain the conduct of the leaders of the Federation, as it was impossible to think that the rank and file of the Italian Confederation were guilty of these kind of tricks. The two delegates, Comrades **Blanchi** and **Arimondi**, pleaded the special difficulties of their country for the equivocation. Both expressed the opinion, however, that the Italian Confederation ought to be inside the Red International. They were subjected to some very strong speeches from a number of the delegates, and finally the Congress passed a resolution asking the Italian trade union movement to convene a Special Congress as soon as possible, in order to decide as to which International they were going to join, and expressing the hope that their decision will be in favor of lining up with the Red Trade Union International.

After this matter had been cleared up, and various manifestos agreed upon, the Congress elected the following to be the Executive Bureau of the Red Trade Union International:

Lozovsky (Russia) — General Secretary;

Noguime (Russia);

Arlandis (Spain);

Mayer (Germany);

Tom Mann (England);

Andreychine (America).

These were elected from an Executive Council composed of two delegates from each of the seven most important countries, plus four from the country wherein were, the headquarters of the International, and one from each other country. Comrades **Tom Mann** and **N. Watkins** were elected to represent the revolutionary industrialists of Britain. It was agreed also that the Executive of the RTUI [RILU] should have its representative on the Executive of the Communist International, and that the latter should be represented on the EC of the Red Trade Union International. That joint sessions of the Executives should be held at intervals, and that joint preparations and pronouncements should take place as the occasion demanded.

Just before the conclusion of the Congress proceedings, a letter was read from Comrade Lenin, in which he emphasized the importance of this inaugu-

ral Trade Union Congress. With the revolutionary greetings from the leader of the world's proletarian revolutionary movement, the Congress rose to forget its differences in a lusty rendering of "The Internationale." The song rolled forth with all the religious fervor of men and women who had dedicated their lives to a mighty purpose.

Thus ended what is probably the most important Congress of the year. Its decisions are of great moment, especially when it is remembered what diverse elements had gathered together. Its significance will be seen more and more clearly in the coming days. Today it has well begun the task of marshalling the "iron battalions of the proletariat." The millions have begun the great trek towards the Moscow Internationals. It is the trek towards the final struggle and certain victory.

Down with the Yellow Amsterdam International!
Long Live the Red International!
Long Live the Communist International!

*Transcribed by Brian Reid for Marxists Internet Archive.
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