

# OUR PROBLEMS

## The Question of Strike Strategy

The Executive Bureau of the Red International of Labor Unions, issues the following appeal to the organizations affiliated to the RILU., with the object of having the strike question brought up for discussion and clarified.

During the third session of the Central Council a special commission for strike strategy was appointed, and this submitted the draft of a resolution to the Central Council. As this problem is extremely complicated, and has not yet had light thrown upon it from all sides, it was resolved to lay the question before all organizations affiliated to the RILU. for debate, and to place it on the agenda of the next congress of the RILU. after all press opinions have been carefully collected, and all suggestions thoroughly worked out. You are being sent the material which we have at our disposal, and the draft of the resolution drawn up by the commission. The Executive Bureau begs that you devote your most earnest attention to this question. You yourselves will be well aware that the strike movement, though involving every year millions of workers in all parts of the world, has as yet been but little investigated. Methods which the working class frequently resorts to spontaneously in its impulse towards liberty, and which gain victories for the workers of this or that country, or of this or that branch of production, have not yet become the common property of the whole international proletariat. The wide experience which has been gained in the matter of strikes is not properly utilized. The question of strike strategy, which forms an inseparable part of the universal class struggle, has never yet been placed, so far as we know, on the agenda of a national or international congress. In this respect, as in many others, the working class has lagged behind the bourgeoisie. It suffices to draw a comparison between the work accomplished by the bourgeoisie in the study of war experience and that which has been accomplished by us towards a utilization of the experience of class warfare. Every diplomatic conflict, however small, every military collision and separate battle, has been accorded the profoundest consideration. Every country possesses an extensive war literature, war schools and academies, where the most thorough examination is given to everything which may serve to throw fresh light on the forms, methods, and accompanying phenomena of military conflicts. What have we to show in respect of study expended on the strike movement? Practically nothing! Some few articles, notes in our chronicles, expositions of the external situation of strikes and strike forms in union organs, and a large number of books and pamphlets. That is all. But was the strike of 1,200,000 English miners, which shook the mighty British Empire to its foundations, of less importance from the standpoint of historical evolution than the battle of Sedan? Is the strike struggle which swept over the whole world from 1919 to 1920, and which awakened millions of workers, not worthy of being studied down to the last detail? Will our class be able to carry off the victory if we do not call ourselves to account for even the slightest expenditure of energy, and for everything which we have accomplished in the struggle? Strategy is in itself an exceedingly complicated matter, and our class strategy is much more difficult than military strategy. In war there are definitely outlined firing lines—fronts. We all know where the enemy is. In class warfare the case is very different. We have first to convert millions of proletarians to a realization that a class front exists at all. Millions of workers, organized in the reformist unions, are still obeying the commands of their headquarters, although these include many conscious and unconscious agents of the bourgeoisie. If the adherents of the RILU. in every country would devote greater attention than heretofore to strikes and to the causes of the outbreaks of strikes, to the forms and character assumed by the negotiations, to the activities of auxiliary organizations during the strike struggle, the nature of the collisions with the authorities, the methods of combatting blacklegging, the rôle played by the bourgeois press during the conflicts, the moral mobilization of the strikers, further, the rôle played by the members of the strikers' families in diminishing the energy of the strike, the activity of the pickets, the effects of boycotts and spontaneous sabotage, the corruption of the leaders, the forms of organization adopted by the employers' unions and the nature of their resistance to the workers, etc.—if accurate data were collected, sifted, and studied on all these points, we should be in possession of an inexhaustible mine of information for the

internationalization of our tactics, and could render the results of our experiences accessible to all. The indications we have given will enable you to judge of the significance of what has just been said. We have, accordingly, complete confidence that you will take all necessary steps to make possible the serious study of the comprehensive data of strike struggles, and the working out of strike strategy.

## THE COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT

### The Russian Cooperative Organizations

By Karl Bittel (Weißentels).

In connection with the export activity of Soviet Russia and the great All-Russian Exhibition for Agriculture and Home Industries in Moscow, reports are frequently published on the Russian cooperatives. The appended survey of the largest cooperative central unions may therefore be of interest:

#### 1. Zentrosojus.

The Zentrosojus is the central union of Russian cooperative societies. It comprises 87 provincial unions (Gubsojus), divided into 48 district unions, these again comprising 455 localities with about 27,000 cooperative societies and over 40,000 stores. Among the societies affiliated to the central union are the "Workers' Supply Section" (Cerab section), the "Transport Section", the "Union of Transport Cooperatives", and the "Military Cooperative Directorate", which last comprehends the whole of the military cooperatives of the Republic.

In order to give an idea of the complex machinery of the "Zentrosojus", the following departments may be named: Bread supply (provision of cereals such as rye, barley, oats, groats, etc.); meat and fats (meat, butter, eggs); groceries (sugar, spices, sweets); fish, salt (fish, herrings, caviare, salt); manufactured and fancy goods, footwear (linen, cloth, wool, textiles, lace, shoes); provision of raw materials of every description; department for household articles (objects of household use); department for economic and technical publications (book publishing and book selling). Industrial activity is very highly developed, as well as export and import. A model cooperative store, completely equipped, is to be erected at the exhibition, combined with a cooperative tea-house.

#### 2. Selskosojus.

The Selskosojus is the All-Russian union of agricultural cooperatives; it unites four All-Russian central unions, 47 provincial unions, 50 district unions, and 25 local unions, comprising a total of 200,000 agricultural undertakings. The activity of the Selskosojus consists in the sale of seed corn, corn, oil-cake, chopped straw, cattle rearing products, butter, cheese, eggs, game, poultry, tobacco goods, skins, bristles, horse-hair, horns and hoofs, raw wool, feathers and down, fish glue, medical raw materials, flowers, plants, vegetables, and other agricultural products. The main objects imported by the Selskosojus are agricultural machinery and implements, technical requisites for small agricultural undertakings, seed, remedies against insect pests, artificial manures, cattle and poultry for breeding purposes, and other aids to agricultural production.

#### 3. Vsekomprosojus.

This is the Russian union of craft cooperatives. It comprises 170 local home craft unions with a total of 4,000 workers' cooperatives (artels).

#### 4. Lnozentr.

This is the Russian central cooperative union of the flax and hemp growers.

#### 5. Vsebank.

This is the All-Russian cooperative bank developed in January, 1923, from the cooperative societies' bank (Pokobank). Today it possesses 14 branches throughout Russia, and 5 agencies in Moscow. It corresponds with 9 foreign banks. The activity of its goods department extends chiefly in financing the commercial operations of the central cooperative organizations. Thus this bank financed an export operation of the Zentrosojus in bran. The agricultural cooperatives have also been financed in their export operations in tobacco and flax. It need not be said that the bank has taken a conspicuous part in the organization of labor credits.

For the purpose of furthering joint work for the Exhibition, the whole of the cooperative organizations have formed an Intercooperative Exhibition Committee, which will doubtless