

IN THE R. I. L. U.

Lessons and Perspectives of the Economic Struggles.

We publish below the most important parts of the Resolution adopted at the VI Session of the R. I. L. U. Central Council on the Reports by Comrades Lozovsky and Merker.

Political Nature of the Economic Struggles and the Mass Political Strike.

The experience of recent strikes confirms the deeply political nature of the present economic disputes. This is frequently forgotten by the RILU supporters and for this reason throughout their whole course strikes take place under the same slogans as if no change had occurred during the whole period of struggle. Under the present conditions of intense struggle, there can be no talk of "purely economic" strikes, precisely for this reason the adherents of the R. I. L. U. must be extremely vigilant and not allow the moment to slip by for developing the strike to a higher level.

The combining of economic and political strikes brings up the problem of the **mass political strike** whose dimensions and nature must be determined in each given case. The mass political strike may involve an entire district, a whole industry or a whole country (general strikes) . . . the main thing in such a strike is its general class demands. Experience has shown that the RILU adherents are unable to extend strikes (the Berlin plumbers' strike), to mobilise all sympathisers around any politically important strike, and that they often isolate a mass political strike from its economic demands. It must be plainly stated that this is the weakest point in the work of the RILU adherents. Now it must be clearly realised that as the struggle grows sharper, mass political strikes will come to play a more and more important role.

Fascisation of the Reformist TU Machinery.

The reformist TU bureaucracy have passed from covert sabotage of strikes to the open recruiting of blacklegs and the direct organisation of police-reformist raids on strikers and their strike committees. To-day every strike is opposed by the open blackleg machinery of the reformist unions. We find a rapid fascisation of the reformist TU apparatus taking place, this machinery becoming the initiator of the attacks launched by the bourgeois State on the working class. In some cases, when the will to fight and the militant sentiment of the working masses reaches a point where the social-fascists are unable to nip a strike in the bud, i. e., before it actually breaks out, they then take the lead in the strike in order to smash it later. Sometimes the social-fascists declare demonstrative

strikes, for the purpose of breaking the fighting mood of the workers. In both cases the revolutionary TU movement must expose to the full these manoeuvres of the social fascists and transform such demonstrative strikes into a mass struggle for concrete demands, into a struggle for winning over the workers still under the influence of the social-fascists. Here our most important task is to intensify the struggle for the trade union masses and to pit them against this blacklegging trade union machine, to sharpen the struggle against the scab functionaries of social-fascism.

Independent Revolutionary Leadership of Economic Struggles.

The general class nature of each strike, the necessity of fighting against the united front of the State, the employers and the social-fascist TU apparatus, confronts the RILU supporters with the problem of careful and serious preparation of every strike and of every action undertaken by the workers. Beginning from the Fourth RILU Congress, experience has shown that this aspect of our work has suffered the most. In spite of the decisions of the Fourth RILU Congress and of the Strassburg Conference, old mistakes are being repeated. In many countries the RILU supporters have not only failed to prepare strikes, but have themselves frequently been caught unawares by various disputes. This is the worst sign of the Right deviation in actual practice.

The course of many strikes has further shown to what extent our own contingents are still unacquainted with the elementary rules of strike tactics. There have been cases when RILU supporters have refused to set up elected strike committees, have appointed strike committees from above, transforming them into subordinated technical organs of the trade unions; the unorganised workers, the women and young workers, were not represented in these committees . . . our adherents there failing to realise that such action only undermines our contact with the various strike organs, thus reducing the chances of victory. It has been further shown by experience that our comrades are incapable of mobilising new reserves, of extending a given strike and making each such strike the common cause of all the revolutionary workers. Finally the sound leadership of economic struggles presupposes the skilful application of the tactic of the united front from below and the mobilisation of all the workers in each enterprise in the struggle for the demands put up.

The Central Council urges all RILU Sections to adopt for guidance on this question the Decisions of the **Strassburg Conference** on strike tactics.

Economic Struggles and Growing Unemployment.

The tremendous growth of mass unemployment as the result of the new economic crisis, and the huge increase in the reserve of cheap labour, confronts the revolutionary TU movement with the necessity of making a drastic change in the tempo, methods, and forms of activities among the unemployed. Sound leadership of economic struggles also involves the question of getting the unemployed to participate in these struggles and in the fight against blacklegging. The supporters of the RILU must get down to work of organising the unemployed, linking them up with the men on the jobs, and utilising the period of preparations of economic struggles for laying the basis of solidarity of action. The unemployed must be drawn into the Strike Committees and into all commissions formed by the latter.

On the other hand, the struggle for unemployment relief must become the business of all workers on the job. That is why the adherents of the RILU should concentrate their attention on organising joint action of the men on the job and the unemployed in defence of the unemployed workers' demands. We must energetically combat the transfer of the unemployed to the Colonies and Dominions, the object of such settlement and mass migration schemes is to get rid of the restless elements and to provide the bourgeoisie of the subject country with cheap labour and foremen and overseers for the exploitation of the native proletariat. The whole proletariat must be roused to fight for the 7-hour day and for the maintenance of the unemployed at the expense of the employers and the State. Thus the most important tasks of the RILU adherents in connection with the rapid growth of mass unemployment and the sharpening of the class struggle, are: — to rally the unemployed on the basis of a class programme; the welding of the unemployed with the men on the job; the constant defence of

the interests of the unemployed, and the winning of the unemployed for active participation in economic and political struggles.

Against the Right Capitulators.

The sharpening of the class struggle, the independent leadership of the economic struggles, and the consequent necessity of further sharpening the struggle against the social-fascist TU bureaucracy have called forth waverings in certain Sections of the RILU. A particular brand of opportunism is revealed in the tendency which under the pretext that at the present time all partial struggles are doomed to failure, and that everything... according to them... must be postponed until the final decisive struggle.

All these currents of various origins, of different dimensions and importance, have one thing in common: — they are opposed to the revolutionary tactics of the RILU, to the sharpening of the struggle against social fascism and to the independent leadership of economic struggles, at the same time they are for unity with the social-fascist oligarchy at the head of the trade unions. The Central Council warns everyone that affiliation to the RILU imposes the obligation to carry out the decisions of its Congresses and that any opposition to the independent leadership of economic struggles, or the repudiation of the struggle against social-fascism, any attempt to split the revolutionary trade unions or to liquidate them out of fear of persecution, or to build up new "independent" trade unions as against the existing revolutionary trade unions, will find the initiators and leaders of any such policy outside the ranks of the Red International of Labour Unions.

Strikes in Countries with Illegal TU Movement.

In a number of countries (Italy, Yugoslavia, China and elsewhere), the revolutionary trade unions have been forced underground by the blows dealt them by the white terror. The growing wave of economic disputes creates conditions favourable for the emergence of the revolutionary trade unions from illegality. Our task is to get out from illegality at all costs, without, however, yielding an iota from our political positions. To achieve this end it is necessary to be able to combine all forms of illegal, semi-legal and legal activities, by organising the workers on any pretext and under any name. The weak point in the work of the RILU adherents in China, Italy and Yugoslavia has been that they have not been able adequately and skilfully to develop the work of the illegal trade unions, that they have not given due attention to the key industries and industrial centres, that they have not consolidated organisationally the influence wielded by the illegal trade unions among the masses, have not fought energetically enough for the open existence of their unions and have not displayed sufficient elasticity to create TU organisations under any convenient cloak. For countries with an illegal TU movement the leadership of the mass movement from underground is a matter of outstanding importance. The development of the economic struggle in countries of this type must compel us to give particular attention to the strike movement which can serve as the starting point for the creation of strike committees at the point of production and for the open existence of the class trade unions.

Strike Struggle in the Colonies.

In the colonial countries the strike struggle has served as the starting point for the political formation of the labour movement and for the creation of trade unions. The experience of the economic battles fought during the past year, on the Philippines, in Central and South Africa, in Indo-China, Singapore and elsewhere in the Orient, has shown that a strike beginning spontaneously in countries like these constitutes an important political event in the labour movement of the country concerned. These struggles serve as the acid-test for all national-reformist elements that creep into the working class to advance their own aims. We find the Bombay working class setting up its own class union, the Girmi Kamgar Union, right in the thick of a strike. This union now plays the leading role in the labour movement of India. Similar facts are to be observed in all the colonial countries. But the experience of these same struggles has further shown that the aid given by the RILU supporters in the capitalist countries to their colonial brothers was most insignificant. A passive attitude like this to

the struggles of the colonial working class against their own and the foreign capitalists cannot be tolerated any longer. The workers of the colonies and the semi-colonies are entitled to demand real help and support from the revolutionary workers of the capitalist countries. It is perfectly obvious that it is very difficult for the workers of Indo-China, Tunisia, Algiers, and other French colonies, to fight without assistance from the French working class: or for the workers of India, Central and South Africa, and other Crown colonies to achieve any serious successes without the real and serious help of the revolutionary workers of Great Britain; and again, for the toilers of the Philippines and Haiti to smash their own and the van-foreign bourgeoisie unless they have the backing of the vanguard of the working class of the United States. But, to look at the matter from another aspect, the workers of the capitalist countries also stand in need of the assistance of their class brothers in the colonies, for only the joint struggle of the working class of the colony and 'mother country' will produce the maximum effect. Systematic assistance given in full measure to the workers of the colonies, and in the first place to the workers of China and India, in the preparations for and the carrying out of their economic battles, political and economic help during these struggles, the intensification of the struggle against the social imperialists who are trying to gain a hold over the labour movement of the colonies, and, finally, the fullest possible support of the young TU movement in the colonial and the semi-colonial countries. . . these briefly are the tasks of the RILU supporters of the capitalist countries in this field of work.

Strike Movement Among Land Workers.

The considerable growth of the strike movement among the agricultural and forest workers in the capitalist and colonial countries, the deeply political nature of these strikes, the resultant sharpening of the class struggle in the rural districts everywhere, confronts the supporters of the RILU with the serious task of organising all revolutionary proletarian forces in the countryside. The way the agricultural workers are scattered out of contact with each other makes it particularly difficult to prepare and carry out mass strikes, and for this reason the entire revolutionary TU movement must extend organisational, political, and material assistance to the agricultural workers in the unification of the broad masses of the land proletariat on the platform of the class struggle. Particular attention must be given to the militant class education of the agricultural workers and to the exposure of fascism and its efforts to draw over to its side the masses of the land labourers by demagogic promises. The strike weapon is the most suitable and effective means of exposing such fascist demagoguery and consolidating the positions of the revolutionary TU movement among the broad masses of the rural proletariat. Outstanding importance as far as the organisation of the agricultural workers is concerned and their induction into the revolutionary movement, attaches to the work of building up mass strike committees and establishing direct connections between these strike committees and the workers of the industrial enterprises.

(To be continued.)

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