

ORGANISE THE COUNTER-ATTACK OF THE PROLETARIAT—FORWARD TO THE MASS REVOLUTIONARY TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

(On the Eighth Session of the Profintern Central Council).

THE Eighth Session of the Profintern Central Council, which has just concluded its work, reviewed the struggle which has been going on in the revolutionary trade union movement, based on the line set by the Fifth Congress, and put forward tasks for the future.

The Fifth Profintern Congress, which met when the world economic crisis had already broadly developed and the revolutionary upsurge had begun to increase, clearly laid forth the prospects of a further development of the class struggle together with an even sharper attack on the part of capital and a deepening of the crisis. It was on this basis that the Fifth Congress took the line of bold leadership and independent organisation of economic struggles, the creation of an independent revolutionary trade union movement in those countries where the class struggle had become especially sharp (Germany, Poland), rapid consolidation of our foothold in the factories and increased work inside the reformist trade unions.

Events have completely confirmed the forecast of the Fifth Congress. The Eighth Session worked in circumstances of an extremely sharp struggle between the capitalist and the revolutionary way out of the crisis.

Despite the prophecies of the social-fascist theoreticians, the third year of the *world economic crisis* has not only brought no signs of an improvement in capitalist economy, but the crisis has deepened considerably. The largest capitalist countries catch up and surpass each other in curtailing industrial production, the volume and rate of which have reached a figure which is absolutely exceptional. *The army of unemployed* was swelled in 1931 by 14 million new proletarians and in November, 1931, reached 40 million. *The agrarian crisis* rages with increased force, impoverishing tens of millions of peasants. The only capitalist country which was previously hardly touched by the whirlpool of crisis, and to which the "healers of capitalism" in the camp of the Second International looked hopefully—France—has firmly taken up its stand this year among the other countries, which are being eaten up by the economic crisis. *The financial crisis*, which burst forth as a result of the deepening industrial and agrarian crises, and which represents a characteristic peculiarity of the present stage of the world economic crisis, has already brought about inflation in several countries and considerably sharpened the tariff war. The extreme force and rapidity with which the

financial crisis, while developing at an unequal rate in individual countries, has seized the whole of the capitalist world, emphasises most clearly all the instability and decay of capitalist economy.

The bourgeoisie, tossing more and more in the throes of the crisis, are increasing their struggle for a way out of the crisis by means of war and a universal lowering of the standard of living of the broad masses. The war in Manchuria, which increases the provocation of war against the U.S.S.R., and the new universal increase in armaments, which is taking place behind much talk of preparations for the "disarmaments conference," are an indication of the fact that it is just war alone that the bourgeoisie are bringing to the forefront as the means of cutting the knot of crisis. These increased efforts to cut the knot presuppose a further increase of the attack upon the working-class, upon their standard of living, upon their revolutionary organisations—the attack which is now the general line of the capitalist way out of the crisis and bourgeois defence against proletarian revolution.

The attack of the bourgeoisie upon the standard of living of the working masses has been carried on during the last year to an unprecedented extent. The attack, primarily, has been far more extensive than ever before. It most cruelly affects not only the lower-paid and middle-paid sections of the proletariat, but also the upper strata; and even to an increasing extent broad sections of clerks in private and governmental institutions. In Germany, England, the United States, Czecho-slovakia and other countries, a cut in wages has already been introduced in whole branches of industry among the municipal and State workers and clerks, and even among such categories as the sailors in the Royal Navy (England) and the middle grade officials of the State apparatus (Germany). This offensive has also become much more intense. At the same time there are more and more cases of a 12 to 15 per cent. and even a 25 per cent. cut in wages. In the leading branches of industry which have been hit particularly hard by the crisis (mining, metallurgy, etc.) repeated cases of wage-cuts are observed over a very short period of time. The German bourgeoisie during the current year have twice lowered the wages of the miners (Ruhr and other regions), and the wages of the metal workers have been cut for the third time in several districts. *The multifarious forms and methods* used in the bourgeois offensive, and the various channels used for

this purpose by the bourgeoisie, are characteristic of the present stage. The real standard of living of the masses is being lowered not only by wage-cuts, mass dismissals from work, and cuts in the dole, but by the wide adoption of the method of transferring qualified workers to lower-paid grades of work, increasing the social insurance contributions, cutting down the working week with a corresponding decrease in the total wage fund, and also by means of new taxes, increase in prices and, in many countries, inflation. The bourgeoisie during the last two years have managed to lower the wages of the workers in the United States by 30 per cent., in Germany by 27 per cent., in England by 20 per cent., and in Japan almost 35 per cent. This universal offensive of the bourgeoisie, which flaps from time to time on one section of the front while redoubled efforts are made on other sections, has been going on during the whole of the period under review on an increasing scale. The struggle of the proletariat for the revolutionary way out of the crisis has also increased. The perspectives outlined by the Fifth Congress for an increased development of the struggle of the masses were wholly justified.

Since the Fifth Congress the economic struggle of the proletariat has grown considerably and broadened over a wider front. The experience of the economic struggles of the period which has passed has not only smashed to atoms the theories of the reformists of all kinds and their opportunist satellites concerning the impossibility of developing economic struggles during periods of crisis, but has at the same time aimed a blow at the sufficiently widespread "theories" about no success being forthcoming from economic struggles during a period of crisis. The strike movement during the year that has passed has advanced to a higher stage both as regards the number of strikes and in particular as regards the vigour with which they were conducted. The strikes like that of 60,000 miners in the Ruhr, 140,000 metal workers in Berlin, 125,000 textile workers in France, the miners in the United States, in England and in France, the broad wave of strikes in Poland, the strike of agricultural labourers and builders in Czecho-slovakia, the wave of strikes in the Balkans where for a long period of time there had been no strikes at all, the strikes in China and other countries, show quite clearly that ever more and more masses of workers are entering the struggle against the offensive of capital and that ever more and more frequently they are taking up the sharp, tried weapon of struggle—the strike. But it is not only in these movements that the growing will and determination of the masses for struggle can be seen. The will, the determination, the initiative of the masses is sharply reflected in the broad adoption of other, often quite new forms, of economic struggle. The Polish textile workers, in resisting wage-cuts, frequently used the method of

downing tools, ceasing work and refusing to leave the factory, as a new method of struggle, at the same time maintaining contact with workers and unemployed outside the factory occupied by them. In Poland, Czecho-slovakia, Bulgaria, Germany and other countries there have been frequent cases of strikes in departments, which have passed from one department to another, and have thus thrown the whole factory for a fairly considerable period of time, into a state of militant agitation. There have been frequent cases of strikes on the part of the Italian workers, demonstrations and meetings in the factory yards and before the buildings of the management, and the causes which bring about the strikes are far more varied. The growth of the strike movement and all these new different forms, causes and methods of carrying on the economic struggle, show that considerable inflammable material is accumulated among the masses, that the dissatisfaction and militancy of the masses is increasing. The increased struggle of the unemployed is also witness to this fact as well as the ever-growing strike solidarity among the workers, and the absence in all countries of any sort of mass blacklegging among the enormous starving army of unemployed.

An extremely important characteristic feature of the economic struggles of the period which has passed is the growing role played by the revolutionary trade union movement in these struggles. Moreover, it is necessary to emphasise in particular that this increased rôle played by the Red trade unions and the trade union opposition in economic struggles was manifested most clearly and fully in those countries where the revolutionary upsurge rose particularly high—in Poland and Germany and, moreover, in Czecho-slovakia. In these countries during the last year the majority of strikes were led by the revolutionary trade union organisations. Of no less importance is the fact that in separate strike struggles since the Fifth Congress, the revolutionary trade union organisations have been able to show in actual practice true examples of how to carry out the strike tactics drawn up by the Profintern. The strike of the tramwaymen in Warsaw during which the revolutionary trade union opposition in Poland, having been extremely successful in launching the strike struggle, was able to form a united front from below over a broad basis under revolutionary leadership and organisationally consolidate the growing influence among the masses, showed how economic struggles should be prepared for and carried through and confirmed the fact that by correctly adopting strike tactics and carrying on mass work, it is possible even in circumstances of the most cruel fascist terror to achieve success. In organising the strike of the metalworkers in Berlin and the January miners' strike in the Ruhr, the revolutionary trade union opposition of Germany showed how, by mobilising

tens of thousands of workers in the struggle for their own demands, to create the direct concrete prerequisites for the operation of the historic decisions of the Fifth Congress regarding the creation of an independent revolutionary trade union movement in Germany, and giving this decision living content. The Red trade unions in Czecho-slovakia in the strike movement of the agricultural workers and later in Freiwaldau showed how, by developing numerous partial movements, it is possible to convert them into a whole wave of political strikes (Koschitz, Freiwaldau). The actual realisation of the decisions of the Fifth Congress in the course of the struggle which has been shown in these and other economic struggles, has considerably enriched the experience of the masses and the revolutionary trade union organisations. The whole strike struggle during the period under review has shown the broadest masses that *only* the revolutionary trade union movement under the leadership of the Communist Parties is fighting for the daily needs and the common aims of the masses.

However, the revolutionary trade union movement as a whole has not yet been able to organise sufficiently strong resistance to the offensive of the bourgeoisie. And this refers not only to those sections of the Profintern which lag behind most (France, England). In tens and hundreds of cases in the overwhelming majority of countries, wage-cuts, mass dismissals, the reduction of the dole relief, etc., take place without any resistance or very little resistance on the part of the workers. The revolutionary trade union movement has been able in the majority of countries to mobilise only the *minority* of the workers in the struggle against the constant lowering of their standard of living.

The causes of this insufficient development of militant resistance on the part of the masses is to be found, primarily, in the *weaknesses of the revolutionary trade union movement itself*, which have not yet been overcome. The Red trade unions and the trade union opposition in the majority of cases have still not learned how to prepare for economic struggles determinedly, day by day, and in an organised manner. In this respect spontaneous action, lagging behind events, and the habit of waiting for the workers themselves to take action, in order to come along afterwards and join in the struggle, are not only still to be found in the majority of countries. They are even characteristic still in those sections of the Profintern which may be said to have already achieved a great deal in the work of independent leadership of economic struggles as, for example, the German trade union opposition and the Czech Red trade unions. In conditions of crisis and mass unemployment, *which are creating additional difficulties in connection with the launching of economic struggles*, to lag behind or to limit the work to agitational and propagandist

preparations, instead of carrying on systematic work from day to day to organise the workers in the factories for struggle, amounts in hundreds and thousands of cases to merely avoiding the struggle altogether. We find that this defect is closely linked up with an under-estimate of the fighting capacity of the working-class and a *fear of strikes*. Despite the fact that experience has not only shown that there is a very high fighting capacity evident among the masses and that it is possible for these strikes to end successfully, nevertheless in certain sections of the more active revolutionary trade unions opportunist tendencies are not yet outlived: for instance, the feeling that the workers do not wish to fight and that economic struggles in circumstances of crisis are doomed to failure, hence—they are afraid to organise the strike struggles. . . . These right-opportunist tendencies of fearing to organise strikes, which are the chief danger at the present stage, are often hidden behind “leftist” phrases about the workers, in existing conditions, preferring political struggle to economic strikes. Opportunist fear of strikes is frequently encouraged by incorrect and *dangerous tendencies to call for strikes without preparing the broad masses of workers in the factory for them*. It is quite obvious that in such cases only the vanguard, only a comparatively small group of revolutionary workers can be brought out into the struggle which, in the majority of cases is doomed to failure. An absolutely essential prerequisite for the independent organisation and leadership of the workers’ struggles by the Red trade unions and the trade union opposition is that all these opportunist tendencies in the ranks of the revolutionary trade union movement should be completely overcome.

Preparations for struggle on a broad front presuppose, first of all, preparations for the struggle and the inclusion in the struggle of all those masses of workers which do not yet follow the lead of the revolutionary trade union movement and, primarily, that still large mass which is still under the influence of the reformist trade unions. *Experience of the struggle that has taken place during the period under review, especially in Poland, Germany and Czecho-slovakia, has shown that the development of economic struggles depends, chiefly, upon our ability, while preparing for and carrying on the struggle, to win away from their leaders, those workers who are organised in reformist trade unions, upon our ability to create a united front with them inside the factories and on the basis of their immediate demands, in order to continue the struggle*. This is obvious both from the strike movements which have been carried on successfully, i.e., the tramwaymen’s strike in Warsaw and other Polish strikes, the Berlin metal workers’ strike, the political strikes in connection with Freiwaldau in Czecho-slovakia—as well as from the unsuccessful movements like the October strike in the Ruhr and

so on. It is just for this reason that the weaknesses of the revolutionary organisations in the struggle for the reformist workers, which finds its expression in the *inability to create a united front with the workers in the factories* and in the *extreme slackening of work inside the reformist trade unions*, are the main weaknesses of the revolutionary movement in organising economic struggles. The organs of struggle in the majority of strikes are still not created in the form of true organs of the united front, i.e., with workers elected to committees and with the participation of other workers, especially reformist workers. The successful creation of a united front in the factories depends to a very considerable extent upon the work among organised workers inside the reformist trade unions. And yet the Eighth Session had to place on record that there has been a general slacking off in the work inside reformist trade unions which to an enormous extent has complicated the work of drawing the reformist workers into the struggle.

The crucial weakness of the whole revolutionary trade union movement, which is the main source of the weak preparations made for economic struggles, the insufficient organisation of the united front from below and to a large extent the poor work inside the reformist trade unions, is *the weakness of the work and the insufficient consolidation of work done in the factories*. In spite of the decisions of all the Congresses and plenums of the Comintern and the Profintern, the revolutionary trade union organisations have still not made the factories the basis of their work. The revolutionary trade union work is still carried on mainly *outside* the factories. This is true also of those sections of the Profintern which can register successes in the work of creating workshop trade union groups (4,000 groups in Germany, about 600 in Czecho-slovakia); the majority of these groups do not carry on intensive work, are passive and poorly connected with their factories. Even these trade union groups carry out the greater part of the work they do outside the factories. The majority of the revolutionary trade union organisations (France, England, United States and so on), are still in the main organised on the territorial principle. The weak connection with the factories is the cause of the mistake of under-estimating the fighting capacity of the masses. This weakness is also responsible for the under-estimation and poor work in connection with the *launching of partial strikes in factories*, for the organisation of strikes of this kind is largely dependent upon a knowledge of the moods and the concrete requirements and demands of the workers in the factory, upon the ability on this basis to put forward not a general, but a concrete factory programme of demands. The under-estimation of the need for organising partial struggles, which is a direct result of the poor work in the factories, has in many countries, particularly in Germany, been one of the most vital

causes of the absence of large economic struggles since the January strikes in the Ruhr. The whole question of the organisation of the struggle of the workers depends in the main upon good mass work in the factories.

All these weaknesses were the main cause of the insufficient organisation of the struggle against the offensive of the bourgeoisie. They did not allow the revolutionary trade union movement to overcome the continual state of lagging behind, the ever more rapid rate of development of the class struggle, which was laid on record at the Fifth Profintern Congress and the Eleventh Plenum of the E.C.C.I.

But it is not only the weakness of the revolutionary trade union movement which serves as a reason for the insufficient development of the defensive and counter-offensive of the working masses against the lowering of their standard of living. *The chief obstacle in the way of developing the struggle of the masses is the mass influence of social democratic parties and the social-fascist trade union apparatus, which although already weakening is not yet completely undermined*. The estimate given about Social-Fascism by the Fifth Congress of the Profintern and the Eleventh Plenum of the E.C.C.I. has been completely confirmed by the experience of the economic struggles which have taken place during the period under review. The sharpening of the crisis and the growing revolutionary upsurge have increased the efforts of the Second and Amsterdam Internationals and their sections to guarantee that the bourgeoisie are given a capitalist way out of the crisis. Since the main line of the bourgeoisie for a way out of the crisis takes the road of a lowered standard of living for the broad masses, Social-fascism—the main social pillar of the bourgeoisie—has harnessed all its forces to prevent and to smash any form of resistance on the part of the masses against the introduction of this line. The changed situation demanded, however, considerable alterations in the ways and means of strangling the efforts of the workers.

In 1929 and the first half of 1930 the Social-Fascist trade union bureaucracy, reckoning upon the masses not fighting in the existing circumstances of crisis, and as a result of the weakness of the revolutionary trade union movement, made use of direct, unmasked strike-breaking methods, in the main, for the purpose of smashing strikes (the strike of pipe fitters in Berlin and so on). Now, when in spite of the crisis and in fact as a direct result of it, the economic struggle of the workers has surged up higher and higher and the rôle of the revolutionary trade union movement is continually growing, the social-fascist trade union bureaucracy is feeling the need for combining methods of open black-legging with “left” manoeuvres. Manœuvres of this kind are being made by the trade union bureaucracy in the strike struggles

in France (textile workers) and in the United States (among the miners) in the form of the demagogic launching of the united front slogan. The direct aim of these manœuvres is to guarantee that the trade union bureaucracy maintain the leadership of the masses who are already fighting, and thus ensure the failure of their struggle. In several strikes in Poland, Czecho-slovakia, England, Scandinavia, the reformists at one and the same time pay a certain amount of strike pay to one section of the organised striking workers, and organise the other section for open blacklegging, thus helping the police to smash the struggle. In other strikes, the reformists adopted other manœuvres: where the masses openly demonstrated their will to begin the struggle, the reformists issued the slogan of a one-day strike in order to avoid a long struggle (for example, in Dombrovo, Poland), or called for demonstrations in order to avoid a strike (Czecho-slovakia). All these and other similar demagogic tricks on the part of the reformists during strikes, aimed at the same thing—to smash the sharp weapon of struggle of the masses, to prevent the struggle from developing, to prevent the masses from being drawn in under the banner of the revolutionary trade union movement, to ensure that any strike which had already broken out should bring the “lesser evil” to the bourgeoisie. Side by side with these manœuvres in time of struggle, the reformist trade union apparatus tried to *keep the masses from fighting* and made this their main task.

Besides the “theory” that it is better not to fight and to work for low wages than to fight and “thus worsen the crisis and lose your job,” besides the “theory” that it is better to agree to a cut in wages because if not, then wages will be lowered still further, we find the Austrian trade union bureaucrats of late toying with the theory that it is better for wages to be lowered on an *all-round basis* by agreement with the reformist trade unions, than without their agreement. The social-fascist trade union apparatus is actually not only actively operating a cut in wages and benefits with the bourgeoisie, but very often takes the initiative in this respect (the proposal of the slogan for the forty-hour week with correspondingly lowered wages and so on). The whole theory and practice of the “lesser evil” which is being operated day by day, hour by hour, by the social-fascist trade union bureaucracy in the factories amounts to the same thing: the attempt to find a capitalist way out of the crisis. It is for this reason that the violent offensive of capital is declared to be the “victorious advance of State capitalism” and “a bit of Socialism.” This is why the trade union bureaucracy tried to make things as quiet as the grave inside the factories by smothering and suppressing any demonstration of dissatisfaction on the part of the workers which might, in present circumstances, rapidly develop into a fight for the workers’ demands and therefore for the

revolutionary way out of the crisis as opposed to the capitalist way. In this connection the main weakness of the revolutionary trade union movement is just this: that unfortunately it is not sufficiently capable of using every manifestation of dissatisfaction on the part of the masses, however small, in order to organise their struggle and unmask the social-fascists. The main task of the Communist Parties and the revolutionary trade union movement remains the same: to isolate the social-fascist parties and the trade union bureaucracy, to unmask their “left” manœuvres and their various “left” *posturings* (Seydewitz and others), to win the masses away from them.

The whole experience of the last year in the sphere of economic struggles has shown more clearly than ever before the true rôle *played by strikes and the significance of the revolutionary trade union movement* in the present stage of class struggle. And here we find the main lesson of the struggle since the Fifth Congress of the Profintern. Where the revolutionary trade union movement has been able to develop the strike movement, where by overcoming additional difficulties brought up by the present state of crisis and mass unemployment it has tried to organise an entire wave of partial strikes and to unite them in larger movements, to constantly arouse detachments of the workers to struggle first here and then there, again and again—in these places the *struggle of the working-class as a whole* has moved forward on to a higher plane, there the crisis *is already urging forward* the struggle of the masses, there it is easier to *repel* the attacks of the bourgeoisie and transform the struggle of the workers into a *counter-attack*. This is the case in Poland, where thanks to the bold organisation of partial strikes and large economic struggles by the trade union opposition, it has been possible to break down the barriers of fascist terror and social-fascist blacklegging, to *gain complete or partial victories in the majority (81 per cent) of strikes*, to determine the mass influence of the social-fascists and to transform the defensive struggle into a counter-attack. From this point of view, the position in Czecho-slovakia is also typical. There the Red trade unions, having determinedly taken up the work of organising innumerable partial strikes (200 building-workers’ strikes) and more important struggles (the agricultural workers, Karlsheute and so on), were thus able to prepare for higher forms of mass struggle, for political strikes (Freiwaldao), to gain a victory over the Government (annulment of the previous decision concerning non-payment of benefits under the Ghent system), to raise the general fighting spirit of the masses. Several signs—the still rising tide of partial strikes, the development of the unemployed workers’ movement, still point to the fact that in Czecho-slovakia a turn has been taken which means the

breaking down of police and social-fascist barriers and the transition of the masses to the counter-offensive.

In these countries the revolutionising rôle of the strike and the meaning of the Red trade unions and the trade union opposition in the work of educating the masses to fight, of drawing more and more new sections of the proletariat into the struggle and of leading them on to bigger struggles, can very clearly be seen.

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In considering the immediate tasks of the trade union movement, the Eighth Session took this main lesson of the economic struggle during the period under review as its starting point. The central tasks which have been brought before all sections of the Profintern by the Eighth Session are to *boldly develop all forms of economic struggle*, to carefully prepare for the struggle, and to use all means to *strengthen, broaden and build the independent revolutionary trade union movement*, converting the Red trade unions and the trade union opposition into true mass organisations. For this purpose, deep roots must be rapidly developed in the factories, a turning point must be made in the work inside the reformist trade unions, and the tactic of the united front from below must be learned carefully and widely adopted.

The main task in adopting all forms, even the simplest ones based on the most elementary, day to day requirements of the workers in the factories, is to *set the masses in motion*. Let them be "merely" one-hour strikes of protest in one place, "merely" departmental strikes in other places, Italian strikes, demonstrations of protest—a complete, continuous wave of such movements is an excellent school for bigger economic struggles, into which, in the situation which exists to-day, partial movements can very rapidly develop. With mass strikes as their main goal—for they are the main thing—the Red trade unions must adopt the most varied forms of economic struggle on a much broader scale than hitherto.

The organisation of mass economic strikes and the wide adoption of partial activities demand particularly careful, systematic and concrete *preparation* at the present time. And this primarily and in the first place means that *mass work inside the factories* must be given the attention it deserves. The question of work in the factories which occupied such an important position in all previous plenums and congresses, has never been dealt with so acutely as it was in the Eighth Session of the Profintern Central Council. And this, indeed, is the most vital question particularly now in the face of the mighty class struggles before us. Despite the enormous unemployment which embraces 40 per cent. and in some parts 50 per cent. of the proletariat, the *decisive*

sections of the working-class are the workers who are engaged in the undertakings. Without consolidating its work inside the factories, the revolutionary trade union movement cannot rouse the broad masses of workers to struggle, cannot become a truly mass movement, cannot win over those sections of the proletariat which count most—the workers engaged in industry. The session brought forward as one of the most militant tasks of all sections, the question of the *most rapid* reconstruction of the movement on the factory basis by means of organising strong, actively working groups in all the factories and especially *in the large factories*, where the leadership should be democratically elected, and should actually direct the work of the group, and a network of representatives appointed from each department. The session made it incumbent upon all the leading organs of the revolutionary trade union organisations to devote a large part of their work to leading these factory organisations, and to giving practical instruction and tuition to new *cadres* of factory functionaries; the session further laid on record that the Profintern would judge the work of the sections by their work in the factories.

The economic struggles of the period under review confirmed most clearly the fact that the united front is the *chief method* to be used in drawing the masses into the struggle, in winning them away from the social-fascist leadership and strengthening the revolutionary trade union movement. And it is just in the work of practically adopting the united front tactic that we find the main weaknesses of the revolutionary trade union movement in preparing for and carrying on the struggle. Now, more than ever before, it is essential and possible to create a united front from below on the broadest foundation of struggle. In the face of the violent attacks of the bourgeoisie, there is growing up a desire on the part of the masses to act in unison, to close up the ranks of the united militant front. The categories of the working population, thrown into poverty as a result of the crisis and the universal attack of the bourgeoisie, are becoming larger and larger. The upper strata of the working-class and office workers, i.e., those groups which previously considered themselves secure, are suffering more and more from the cruel blows of capital on the offensive. As a result of this and because of the generally increased radicalisation of the masses, the unrest has already begun to affect considerable groups among the more active members of the rank and file of the reformist trade unions. In these circumstances, to know how to lead the united front movement and to organise it correctly would to a large extent mean the solution of the question of drawing the masses into the struggle. In these circumstances it is not only possible, but absolutely essential to create organs of struggle before and during strikes in the form of wide united front

organs. In these circumstances it is possible and essential that the smaller functionaries in the local trade unions or the factory workshop committees should be boldly approached with the proposal to fight together, always remembering, however, the final goal of calling upon *all the workers* to discuss forms and methods of preparing and organising the struggle. The organisation of the united front from below mainly *in the factories* and *only* for the purpose of fighting—this is the main line of the Profintern sections in organising the united front. The session noted the extreme importance in organising the united front, of *developing a broad movement of factory workshop committees*, and improving the entire work of the Red factory and workshop committees.

The fact that the Red trade union movement has become stronger, the class struggle universally more acute and the organised masses more ready for unity has made it opportune at this moment to put forward the slogan of *Unity in the Trade Union Movement* on the basis of class struggle. Experience has shown that tardiness and lack of initiative on the part of the Confédération Unitaire Générale du Travail in regard to this question resulted in considerable losses to the revolutionary trade union movement in France. The Red trade unions must put forward the slogan of unity in the trade union movement on the basis of the necessity for having strong mass trade unions to ensure the victory of the proletariat, unions which embrace the most important proletarian masses *for struggle*, and which, *based on the liquidation of social-fascist mass influence*, will be the embodiment of true unity in the trade union movement. The session emphasised that only in this way must the question of unity in the trade union movement be raised by the revolutionary trade union movement.

The session paid considerable attention to the question of work *inside the reformist trade unions*. The Fifth Profintern Congress raised the question of work in reformist and other reactionary trade unions as one of the central tasks of all sections of the Profintern, on the basis of the fact that to strengthen this work is an extremely important factor in organising the united front, in isolating and liquidating the class influence of the social-fascist trade union bureaucracy and in developing the independent revolutionary trade union movement. All these tasks have acquired acute importance at the present moment. At the same time work inside the reformist trade unions during the period under review was not only not increased, but almost universally slackened off. The session established that this state of affairs is absolutely intolerable and demanded that all sections bring about in practice an immediate change in this work. There is not the slightest doubt that the possibilities of working successfully inside the reformist trade unions have considerably increased. There is a rapid growth of indignation among the

masses of organised workers against the policy of the social-fascist leadership. These masses demand that the trade unions defend them from the constant attacks of the bourgeoisie. However, the fascisation of the reformist trade union apparatus has removed from the work of the trade unions the very things which even the reformist worker demands from the trade unions: economic struggle, defence of social insurance, the struggle for labour defence and against rationalisation. It is just for this reason that the task of the revolutionary trade union opposition inside the reformist trade unions has become much broader, it cannot and must not be just opposition, but must become the independent force inside the reformist trade unions which not only criticises and unmasks the strike-breaking leadership, but itself fights to organise the struggle of the trade union membership for their own demands, and thus brings the members under its own influence, cuts them off from social-fascist leadership and organises them in masses in the ranks of the Red trade union movement.

It is because this task is not understood that in Germany in particular the work inside reformist trade unions was replaced by the new form of work of creating an independent revolutionary trade union movement, as though these two forms of work were diametrically opposed. This lack of understanding was responsible for the liquidation of the Red trade union opposition groups in those factories of the Berlin metal industry where sections of Red trade unions had been created. Whereas the task was really to *strengthen* the work in the reformist trade unions in order to create a Red trade union. For the creation of the Red trade union brings up most sharply the question of hastening the speed with which the broad masses are drawn away from the reformist trade union bureaucracy and of their organisation in the ranks of the Red trade union movement. And this means that the work *inside* the reformist trade unions must be carried on with ten times as much energy as before. This is the line given by the Eighth Session on this question to all sections of the Profintern.

It is impossible to mobilise the masses to resist the attack of capital and to take the revolutionary road out of the crisis, in the circumstances which exist at the moment, without *organising the struggle of millions of unemployed*. In summing up the whole struggle since the Fifth Congress, the session emphasised the fact that the revolutionary trade union organisations lag very considerably behind the activity of the unemployed and the tasks which arise in connection with this work. The main thing is to develop this movement wider and wider, to guarantee that the Red trade unions and the trade union opposition give concrete, day to day, leadership to the unemployed movement. In this lies the guarantee that the struggle of the unemployed will be *linked up*

with the struggle of those engaged in industry, which is the main problem. This leadership must not take the form of a sort of guardianship over the unemployed movement, or of organisationally including this movement as part of the Red trade unions and trade union opposition. This leadership must consist in safeguarding the creation of committees and councils of unemployed on the basis of a true, broad, united front from below; it must take the form of the launching of absolutely concrete slogans which will mobilise the largest possible number of unemployed, of using *all* forms of struggle, demonstrations, the fight for the streets, occupation of municipal buildings, prevention of evictions, hunger marches and so on, which will bring the entire mass of unemployed into the struggle, and, what is very important, the organisation of a struggle on the part of those engaged in industry, on behalf of the demands of the unemployed. For this purpose the Red trade unions and the trade union opposition must immediately take up the struggle of the unemployed, its organisation and leadership.

On the basis of this struggle of the masses as a whole—those working and those unemployed those organised and the masses of unorganised workers—it is essential that the *mass revolutionary trade union movement should be strengthened and developed to a broader extent*, thus forming the most important lever for the education and mobilisation of the masses for the fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Profintern Session formulated this task as the main line for all supporters of the Profintern:

“The development and consolidation of an independent revolutionary trade union movement is the main factor necessary for launching the struggle of the working masses and carrying it out successfully, as well as the most important task of the supporters of the Profintern; consequently *all the work of the Profintern sections should be subordinated to this task of developing and consolidating the independent revolutionary trade union movement.*”—(Thesis on “The situation in the Profintern sections and their rôle in leading economic struggles and the unemployed workers’ movement.”)

The enormous significance of consolidating the mass independent trade union movement at the present stage raises most urgently before all Communist Parties the question of *strengthening the Party leadership of the trade union movement*. In several places the correct Bolshevik relationship, which should exist between the Party as the vanguard and the trade union as the transmission belt has not been properly understood. Party organisations too frequently still order the trade unions about and act in their place, instead of leading them through their fractions. The flagrant opportunist view that it is the Party’s business to deal with politics and that the

economic struggle can be left to the trade unions, is still not entirely overcome in certain sections of the Communist Parties. The Communist Parties should start the Bolshevik offensive both against tendencies to act in place of the trade unions and also against tendencies to leave them entirely to themselves and refuse to lead them. The Party organisations should *create working fractions* in all sections of the Red trade unions and trade union opposition, should guarantee the creation of a broad *non-party group of active union members* and work on the lines of true proletarian *trade union democracy* in the Red trade union movement. The task of correctly leading the revolutionary trade union movement has become the most important task of the Communist Parties.

The forecast made by the Fifth Profintern Congress and the Eleventh Comintern Plenum regarding the inevitable growth of class struggles in circumstances of deepening crisis and the acute offensive of capital has been fully justified on the experiences of the period under review, and this fact raises most urgently the question of *preparing for and developing mass political strikes*. During the last few months the number of political strikes has grown considerably. Braunschweig and Nalawes (Germany), Koschitz and Freilwaldao (Czecho-slovakia) are a sign that the masses are beginning more and more frequently to use the weapon of political strikes. The revolutionary trade union movement should with all singleness of purpose develop all forms of economic struggle and thus *prepare for* their unification and conversion into political strikes. The experiences gained in preparing and carrying on political strikes of workers from over 100 factories over a period of two weeks and throughout the whole of Czecho-slovakia, show that in several countries the political strike is a *practical* proposition now and that preparations for political strikes and efforts to carry them out should occupy a large place in the work of the revolutionary trade union movement.

The Eighth Profintern Session discussed the question of *strengthening the International Industrial Committees* and mentioned several practical tasks, based upon the important rôle which the international committees are called upon to play in the work of internationalising economic struggles and mustering together the forces of the revolutionary trade union movement.

In the work of mobilising the masses around the struggle for a revolutionary way out of the crisis, the mighty growth of socialist construction in the first proletarian republic—the U.S.S.R.—plays an ever-increasing rôle. Never before has the contrast between the two systems—decaying capitalism and flourishing Socialism—been so vivid as now. In drawing a picture of the enormous growth of Socialist construction and the upward curve of well-being of

THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

11

the masses in the U.S.S.R., the representatives of the Soviet trade unions at the Eighth Session armed the fraternal trade union organisations in capitalist countries with a mighty weapon which will help them in organising the broad masses for the struggle along the road of the Russian proletariat.

The decisions of the Eighth Session emphasise the need for organising the counter-offensive of the proletariat and for creating a mass revolutionary trade union movement which will guarantee and hasten on the revolutionary way out of the crisis.