

ON THE TASKS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY TRADE UNION ORGANIZATIONS IN WORK AT THE FACTORIES

Resolution of the Eighth Session of the Central Council of the Red International of Labor Unions

1. The Vth Congress demanded from all sections a radical turn in the matter of the reconstruction of the revolutionary trade union movement on a factory basis.

During the past 15 months, certain achievements may be noted in this direction only in Poland and Germany and partly, and that only, during the very last time, in Czechoslovakia. And even in these countries in which there are factory trade union groups, these do not yet by far always find everywhere carry on mass day-to-day work among the workers in their factories, and do not expose the reformist leaders or organizationally consolidate at the factories the mass influence of the revolutionary trade union movement. And yet, the whole experience of the economic struggle of the proletariat for the past period has shown with particular clearness that the further development of the struggle against the offensive of capital is impossible without transferring the center of gravity of the work of the revolutionary trade union organizations to the factories, without forming in the factories strong and initiative factory trade union groups.

There is not a single strike which the reformists are not trying to betray with every means. The only possibility to prevent them from disrupting the economic struggle of

the proletariat is the mobilization of the working masses, and the members of the trade unions in the first place. This can be done more easily in the factories than anywhere else. The Central Council demands from all sections to place in the center of their attention the speediest reconstruction of all their work on a factory basis.

The Central Council demands the establishment of systematic control over the actual realization of this directive and the removal of all those leading functionaries who will turn out to be incapable or will not desire to carry out in practice and replace them by fresh militants who will arise in the process of struggle (organizers and leaders of strikes and various movements of protests, etc.)

The factory, and the big factory in the first place, must be won and must become the fortress of the revolutionary trade union movement—such is the fundamental slogan of the International Revolutionary Trade Union Movement for the nearest time.

workers is not the same. In the reconstruction of the revolutionary trade union movement on a factory basis, there will be cases in the future, as there were in the past, of resistance and direct counteraction on the part of comrades who do not understand the importance of the work in the factories or on the part of the opportunist elements. In such cases, while patiently and persistently reconvin-

ing and re-educating such comrades, the necessary changes in the methods of work and organizational structure of the revolutionary movement must be secured, relying upon comrades who understand the importance of this work. In striving to penetrate into the factories, the formation of strong revolutionary trade union groups in the main leading shops must be striven after with particular persistency.

which the revolutionary trade union movement is illegal as well as in those where it is legal according to the laws. However, all these difficulties in the work of the revolutionary trade union organizations in the factories can be overcome by way of properly arranging the work, provided the factory groups will be built up as illegal organizations which will ensure contact with the wide masses of workers of the factory by way of a proper coordination of the illegal methods with the semi-legal and legal ones.

The work of the factory revolutionary trade union groups of sections must be built up in such a way that, while preserving at all costs the mass and, as far as police conditions will permit, open character, they should be at the same time defended against the repressions of the police and employers' terror. With these objects in view, the factory trade union groups (or sections) should: (1) be built up according to the shops, shifts and brigades everywhere by their

elected shop, shift and brigade trade union delegates; (2) prepare and carry through mass action, relying upon the various factory organizations such as factory shop committees, revolutionary delegates, workers delegations, elected delegates, various kinds of committees of struggle strike committees and committees of struggle against lockouts, etc.; (3) the factory groups must be surrounded with a network of various openly existing and formally not connected with the factory organizations, such as mutual aid funds, cultural and educational circles, clubs, sport groups, etc. taking upon themselves the initiative of the formation of such groups and adopting measures so that every one of them should have a firm kernel from consistent adherents of the revolutionary trade union movement; these organizations should, at the same time, be the organizational base for the mass work. The members of the factory groups must carry out in the most consistent manner the tactics of the united front from

below within all these auxiliary organizations.

The permanent and temporary factory organs, such as workers' delegates, factory shop committees, strike committees at times of strikes, etc., elected by and representing all the workers in the factory, are of particular importance. Such organs which arise on the wave of the mass revolutionary activity of the workers are the transmission belts which link up the factory groups of the revolutionary trade union movement with the masses and, at the same time, by relying upon such organs of mass revolutionary activity, it will be possible to break through police barriers, for instance, to establish by direct action the control over the employment and dismissal of workers, to secure changes in the internal regulations of the factory, to carry through proposals for the expulsion of spies, also the expulsion of foremen and technicians hostile to the workers, etc.

The various kinds of elected organs of struggle (strike committees, etc.) formed in the factories, must be elected by all the workers and not only by the members of the factory groups, but the factory groups of the revolutionary trade union opposition, as is stated in the resolution of the Vth Congress, must take upon themselves the initiative of the formation of such organs and the direction of their activity from within. Two dangers must be avoided in this in their interrelations with the organs of struggle from the factory revolutionary trade union opposition; as is stated in the resolution of the Vth Congress, must take upon themselves the initiative of the formation of such organs and the direction of their activity from

within. Two dangers must be avoided in this in their interrelations with the organs of struggle: (a) naked commanding and the striving to lead by orders, (b) the separation of the organs of struggle from the factory revolutionary trade union groups.

The latter must establish close contact with the factory organs of struggle by way of work from within. They must secure by way of persistent and patient explanatory work the adoption of the line of tactics of the revolutionary trade union movement by the entire mass of workers and secure on the basis of elections of such composition of the organs of struggle which would fully ensure the line of the revolutionary trade union movement; (4) to penetrate into all enemy organizations which exist in the factory, also in to all organized by the employers (workers' mutual aid funds, sport, etc.), to utilize as far as possible also their premises (names etc.) so as to get into contact with the workers who are members of these organizations and by way of persistent educational work to win them over to the side of the revolutionary trade union movement; (5) while forming various organs of struggle, not to include in them the entire factory revolutionary trade union active and factory group, but always to leave a reserve against cases of possible repressions; (6) unemployed members who were previously working in the given factory, also workers of other factories, should be appointed for the accomplishment of work which may more easily draw the attention of the police and employers' spies (speakers at factory gates, distributors of literature outside the factory, etc.); (1) the factory newspaper, legal and illegal trade union literature and the press of other mass revolutionary trade union organizations, should be widely utilized for spreading the slogans and directives of the revolutionary trade union movement among the workers in the factory.

THE BASE IN THE FACTORIES

2. All sections of the R. I. L. U. must immediately enter upon the reconstruction of the revolutionary trade union movement on a factory basis, taking into account, in doing so, the experience of the past, and it must be borne in mind that this reconstruction cannot be realized: (1) by bare resolutions and appeals; (2) by legal and non-legal measures according to general plans; (3) the reconstruction of the revolutionary trade union movement on a factory basis must go on from day to day as an inseparable component part of the preparation and realization of concrete strikes and other forms of mass struggle and the revolutionary activity of the workers; and the unopposed against the present offensive of capital. The reconstruction of the revolutionary trade union movement on a factory basis in every country, must be carried out in the most consistent manner in those factories in which the offensive of capital is most advanced; (4) the main organ of contact of the revolutionary trade union movement with the proletarian masses on the basis of the day to day defense of their interests and the struggle against the employers and their police, the fascists and social-fascist agents.

The fundamental method of the work of the factory group is the tactics of the united front from below by way of drawing into the day to day struggle of the broadest masses of workers in the given factory, irrespective of their political convictions, sex or age. In conformity with this, the work of the factory group should be built up in such a way that it should immediately respond to the everyday needs and requirements of the workers of its factory, and its work should in this manner become filled with live day to day content on concrete questions of the organization of the workers in the factory and their mobilization for the struggle in defense of their interests—it is only in this way that the factory revolutionary trade union group will be able to win the confidence of the working masses. To secure upon everything, including the smallest of questions which arise in the day to day life of the factories, to mobilize the working masses for the struggle for their vital demands—such is the chief task of the groups in the factories. Such is the substance of its day to day work, the main path towards the solidarity of the trade union groups with the broad masses which is one of the most important prerequisites for the independent leadership of the economic struggle of the proletariat.

The National Board of the Trade Union Unity League Reviews Its Work and Outlines Its Tasks

THE National Executive Board of the Trade Union Unity League met in New York City on April 20 and 21. In addition to the regular members of the NEB there were present a number of comrades from the factories, the organizers of the most important districts of the TUUL and other active workers in the revolutionary trade union movement, among them comrades active in developing the opposition work in the old unions, railroad workers, building trades workers, printers and others. Comrade Minerich of the National Miners Union was elected chairman for the first day and Bill Siroka of the National Textile Workers Union, recently released from jail, having served a six months sentence in connection with a textile strike in Putnam, Conn., was elected chairman for the second day.

The agenda was the report on the work and decisions of the 8th session of the RILU Central Council by Comrade Stachel followed by reports of the secretaries of the National Miners Union (Borich), of the Metal Workers (Meldon), the Marine Workers (Hudson), the Textile Workers (Surlak), the Railroad Workers League (Wangerin), and a report on the New York Dress Strike (Wortis), as the first point followed by a report on the tasks of the TUUL unions in the work among the unemployed. Of particular importance was the report of Comrade Foster on the work in the reformist unions. In addition to these main points there were reports on Labor Unity, the campaign against deportations, with special resolutions against lynching, for the release of the nine Scottsboro boys, protest against the decision on Mooney, Defense of Soviet Union, etc.

Significance of RILU Plenum

Comrade Stachel in outlining the work of the RILU plenum emphasized that the plenum was especially significant for two reasons. First because it met already at the time when the Japanese imperialists having invaded Manchuria were threatening at the borders of the Soviet Union. Secondly, while the plenum of the RILU did not have the same importance as the 4th Congress when the basic line of independent leadership was laid down or the 5th Congress which elaborated on the basic line and laid down basic organizational principles it was the first plenum of the RILU in which it was possible to review the lessons of the struggles carried on by the RILU sections in the various countries under their own leadership since the period between the 5th Congress (July 1930) and the 8th session (December 1931) was the period during which a whole number of the RILU sections led important strikes and unemployed struggles.

Preparation of Struggles

In reviewing the work of the plenum Comrade Stachel emphasized the main points: first, the preparation for strikes, concretely pointing out the mistakes made by the TUUL unions in the failure to properly prepare the strikes (Penn miners' strike, Kentucky, textile strikes, of Lawrence and Paterson, etc.). Secondly, the possibility of the development of other forms of economic struggle than mass strikes (exposure of conditions, stoppages, protests, slowing down on the job, department strikes, local strikes, etc.), not as an end in themselves but as part of the development of the day to day work of the unions and in preparation for mass struggles. Already it was possible to give a number of illustrations in the work of the Metal League (McKeesport, Mansfield), of the Shoe Workers Industrial Union, to prove how effective these other forms of struggle can be. He emphasized that at the present time our unions, though no longer purely in the agitational stage, still suffer considerably from this. They confine their work to agitation and propaganda and this activity is punctuated by strikes from time to time depending mainly on the spontaneity of the masses (Lawrence, mining, etc.), thus the unions in between strikes carry on no day to day struggles. Under such conditions they can not properly prepare strikes. He further emphasized that the question can not be put as some perhaps have a tendency to do, preparations for strikes, partial struggles or mass strikes, but that the question must be put: preparations for strikes and the others forms of economic struggle, the day to day work, as part of the preparations for mass struggles.

Work in the Factories

The two main questions dealt with at the RILU Plenum were the questions of work in the factories and the tactic of the united front. Comrade Stachel gave the major attention to

the question of the work in the factories, the methods of work, the methods of penetration into the factories, the reorganization of the TUUL unions and revolutionary oppositions in the old unions on the basis of the factory. He pointed to the resolution on Work in the Factories adopted by the RILU plenum and stressed the final warning given by the RILU Executive that a turn must be made at once with regard to the work in the factories and that those trade union leaders who are incapable or unwilling to make this turn will be exposed by the RILU before the masses, and their places taken by workers from the ranks who are willing and able to carry through these tasks. Why was this final warning given to the leaders by the RILU? Because it is impossible to carry through the leadership of the struggles of the masses, to develop the united front from below, to prepare and lead strikes properly without entrenching the revolutionary unions inside the factories. Unless the work in the factories is seriously undertaken all other good resolutions remain on paper. Stachel brought forward numerous examples with regard to the preparation of strikes, the leadership of strikes to show how the failure to work inside the factories, to base the unions on the factories made it impossible to develop and lead the struggles of the workers (1931 wage cut in steel, the second Lawrence strike, East Ohio miners strike, etc.) and the loss of influence to the reformists in the course of the strike as a result of this (Paterson). The TUUL leadership which has not yet made the turn to the work inside the shops is now before a test. The RILU has spoken quite definitely and sharply. We must now give the answer. Not any more in resolutions. But in actual work of penetrating the factories and in building our organizations there. The leadership of the TUUL and the unions must make themselves responsible for directly undertaking the leadership of the work in a definite factory, learn through experience how to conduct the work, how to overcome the obstacles and make this experience available to the entire revolutionary trade union movement. At present our leaders have too much the tendency to blame their lack of decisiveness and initiative in carrying through the turn to the factories on the passivity of the rank and file workers inside the shops. While here and there we can find this passivity to exist this is not the basic cause. We can not make the turn by denying the problems and difficulties raised by the rank and file comrades in the factories. These problems do exist. Our task is to help the workers to solve them. But to solve them we must have the knowledge of the conditions in the factories and the various problems. This can not be acquired merely by reading resolutions. This must be acquired through practical leadership and work in the factories.

United Front

The RILU pointed out that the united front tactic is the best weapon to mobilize the masses for the struggle. Very often we fail to realize this and look upon the united front tactic as merely some maneuver in the course of the struggle. We fail to realize that unless we watch every move of the reformist bureaucrats, counteract it and expose it they are able to blame us for disunity. Recently the social fascists have taken more and more to maneuvering. They are applying the most radical phrases in order to mislead the masses. We in many instances allowed them to get away with these maneuvers. We did not expose them. We have underestimated their ability to maneuver because we already spoke of the complete fascination of the trade unions. But what do we see in practice? While we assured the workers that the reformist bureaucrats will not undertake strikes, they do undertake strikes. Thus we appear before the masses as ridiculous. Instead we should have warned the workers that seeing the mood of the masses for struggle the bureaucrats will not hesitate to use the most radical phrases in order to fool the workers, will not hesitate to call strikes in order to defeat the demands of the workers, to stop the development of the revolutionary trade union movement. In recent months we have seen in the U.S.A. how this has proven correct. In Paterson and Lawrence the A. F. of L. and its Mineite wings have carried through such strikes. Just recently they have carried through such strikes in East Ohio among the miners, among the longshoremen in New York City. In Illinois we could see the extent of the maneuvers of the bureaucrats when in answer to a demand for a 80 per cent wage cut on the part of the operators they answered with demands for a 20 per cent increase

in wages and for the 8-hour day, never intending to fight against the wage cut but merely to secure the confidence of the miners. Already they are, through agreements as to stoppage, causing the demoralization of the miners and laying the basis for the wage cut which they have already accepted in part in the negotiations they are now carrying through.

The RILU pointed out that in this country have reduced the united front to a mere formula which is the same for all occasions. It pointed out that the forms of the united front tactic must be varied depending upon the special conditions in each instance, that we must not believe that because of the growing radicalization of the masses all necessity to maneuver in order to defeat the reformists is no longer necessary. On the contrary the growing radicalization of the masses, the consequently increasing use of demagoguery and maneuvers on the part of the fascist and social fascist leadership of the A. F. of L. requires greater maneuvering on our part. But that while we must vary the forms of the united front while we must take the initiative in the fight for unity which the workers are pressing for, we must never deviate from the following basic content of the united front tactic from below. The united front organs should be:

1. Formed for the struggle against the employers.
2. Elected by the workers in the factories.
3. They should consist of workers of various tendencies.
4. They should not substitute for revolutionary trade unions.

Comrade Stachel dealt briefly in the course of his report on the work among the unemployed and the work inside the reformist unions since there were special reports on these two questions.

Fight Against White Chauvinism

The final point in the report was the work among the Negro masses. Sharp criticisms were made with respect to work of the revolutionary unions among the Negro masses and in the first place regarding the work of the TUUL Bureau itself. Two points were particularly emphasized. That while we talk generally about the winning of the Negro workers for the trade unions we have made no real steps forward in putting forward special concrete demands for the Negro workers. Where demands are being put forward they are of the most general character such as "equal pay for equal work", but the concrete demands for the Negro miners, steel workers, etc., are not being put forward. This was clearly seen in the complaints raised by the Negro miners in the recent convention of the National Miners Union. Secondly, that the revolutionary unions do not carry on a struggle against the existence of white chauvinism in the ranks of the revolutionary unions. It was pointed out that not always does this white chauvinism expose itself openly but hides itself under many flags. We have not been sharp in unearthing and exposing this concealed form of white chauvinism. One of the manifestations of this white chauvinism is the failure to put forward and develop leading cadres from among the ranks of the Negro members of our unions.

War Danger Center of All Our Work

Throughout the report Comrade Stachel emphasized that in all our work we must bear in mind that already war rages in the Far East. That Japanese imperialism isn't only making war on the Chinese people, but is moving closer and closer to the borders of the Soviet Union. That U. S. imperialism is doing everything possible to hasten the attack of the Japanese imperialism against the USSR as part of its struggle for hegemony in the Pacific. That the U. S. is carrying on a double faced policy. It is shipping munitions to Japan to be used against the Chinese people and against the USSR. From this it follows that we must do all in our power to mobilize the masses against U. S. imperialism, against the ruthless imperialism of Japan and for the Defense of the Soviet Union. This requires that we undertake immediately practical steps with regard to the work in the basic industries, in the munition plants and to stop the shipments of war supplies and munitions. This requires not a change from the detailed practical day to day struggles in the factories for some general activity but on the contrary the most painstaking attention to these tasks.

WORKERS' DEFENSE

All the measures of self defense against the employers' terror carried out by the revolutionary trade union factory group must under no circumstances serve as a pretext for the justification of opportunist moods which are to be found among the adherents of the revolutionary trade union movement, such as, for example, the fear to come out openly in the factory. The best means of defense of a factory trade union group against repression, terrorism and dismissal is that it should win the workingmen of the factory. While it will be capable to liquidate a trade union group which is isolated from the workers, even the most perfect system of

terrorism will prove powerless before a factory revolutionary trade union organization which has the capacity of penetrating into the very depths of the working masses. The factory groups must therefore be broadened by enrolling new members from among the factory workers. This will make it possible for the trade union group to extend its influence in the factories. The extent to which the revolutionary activity of the proletariat and the consolidation of its class factory organizations will grow, to that extent will the possibility of the application of repressions become more difficult and the conditions of revolutionary work in the factories become easier.

DAY TO DAY WORK

6. The factory trade union group must carry on intensive day to day work. This work must be based on the demands in every factory, which must be formulated on the basis of the general line of the revolutionary trade union movement and its application to the concrete conditions of the given factory. The day to day work must also consist in the explanation of this program of action and, together with it, the aims and tasks of the revolutionary trade union movement to the workers with whom the work has to be carried on (carefully selecting every time a special form of approach and avoiding provocateurs and reactionary workers who are collaborating with the police), exposing at the same time the reformist social-fascist and fascist leaders.

Every event in the factory and outside it which affects the interests of the masses (reduction of

wages, dismissal for revolutionary work, deductions, rude treatment on the part of foremen, cases of injury, etc.) must be immediately taken advantage of in individual agitation by way of the holding of meetings if possible in the place of work, and the shops (even though these meetings be numerically small), so as to explain what has to be done, and to defend the interests of the workers, and also by way of elucidating all the questions of the struggle of the workers for their vital demands in the factory newspapers or special leaflets. Initiative should be taken in putting forward questions of carrying through various kinds of mass action, meetings, demonstrations, shop and general factory conferences and strikes according to the situation, also initiative in the formation and organization of various kinds of organs of the strike committees and committees of struggle against lockouts, etc.

RECRUITING

In the process of this work, of mobilization of the workers of the factory around the concrete factory demands, there must also proceed day to day work of recruiting new members for the factory group. Collections for the needs of the revolutionary trade union movement, the press, a fighting fund, a strike and lock-out fund, etc. in connection with the sums collected, regular reporting must be organized, publishing in the press statements of all sums collected and disbursed.

The whole of this work can only be carried out provided every member of the group will display a maximum of initiative at the place of his work directly in the factories and will himself be able to rely upon a sufficiently important circle of sympathizing revolutionarily and oppositionally inclined workers who, for some reason, have not yet joined the factory group. Another necessary condition of the successful work of the revolutionary trade union factory group consists in the presence of proper contact between the individual shop and shift cells

of the groups, regular joint meetings and conferences of the shop and shift representatives. Such experiences should be exchanged and self-criticism take place in regard to the work performed and in which the immediate tasks and the methods of their realization should be indicated. It is particularly important and even necessary to have such meetings and conferences when deciding questions of general factory demands and when deciding a question of general factory movements. Finally, the whole structure and forms of work of the leading organs of the revolutionary trade union movement must be built up in such a way as to ensure the possibility of the constant contact with the live day to day leadership of the work of the factory group. This reconstruction must, in the first place, be carried through in relation to the factory groups which are working in the leading big factories, where the question of the organization of resistance to the offensive of capitalism is more acute.

(To be concluded)

METHODS OF PENETRATION

4. The most important condition for the penetration into the factories and for winning it is the capacity of the rank and file leading organs of the revolutionary and opposition elements (including also the revolutionary and opposition elements among the social democrats and members of the reformist and other reactionary trade unions) in the factories, and also a skillful and proper approach to these elements and their organization.

through various revolutionary mass organizations connected with the revolutionary trade union movement; (6) the sale of the revolutionary trade union press, particularly of specially published factory newspapers and the establishment of contact in the spreading of such press; (7) individual conversations with workers at the factory gates before they leave or begin work, in restaurants, etc.; (8) organization of flying meetings at the factory gates; (9) penetration at workers' meetings organized by the reformists and employers so as to establish contact with these workers in opposition to and dissatisfied with the policy of their leaders; (10) utilization of the revolutionary minded unemployed and late workers in the given factory, etc.

To penetrate into the factories and to establish contact, dozens of all sorts of methods may be utilized, particularly in such countries in which the revolutionary trade union movement is legal and semi-legal: (1) the calling of open or half-open (depending upon the police conditions) meetings of workers of those factories in which there are no members of the revolutionary trade union organization, for the discussion of various questions of the struggle and their immediate demands (including also small flying meetings of five or ten persons); (2) systematic discussion of questions of defense of the interests of the workers in the given factory at regularly convened meetings of members of a given trade union working in a given factory (and at such meetings workers who are not members of the revolutionary trade union organizations may also be present); (3) the calling of the workers of a given factory who are members of various mass organizations connected with the revolutionary trade union movement, for example, the Red Sportsmen, Red Aid, etc.; (4) the calling of readers of the revolutionary trade union press working in a given factory; if the police conditions permit it, the organization of meetings of the editorial committees of the revolutionary papers and journals to which workers of the given factory who are in sympathy should be invited; (5) the utilization of the secured

In waging various general campaigns, and also in the mobilization of the workers of a given factory for the struggle for their daily demands, an attempt should be made to organize all kinds of workers' meetings and conferences and in organizing individual and group conversations with workers, it is necessary every time to prepare carefully, and take into account all the peculiarities of every such meeting and conversation, and take into account that there must be one approach to the skilled and elderly workers, and another to the juvenile workers, and a particular approach to the women workers; meetings and negotiations with foreign workers must be prepared in a special way. It is necessary to prepare with special care talks for members of the reformist and other reactionary trade unions, where the line of the united front from below must be carried out in the most elastic forms, but without opportunistically glossing over the counter-revolutionary nature of social-fascism as the main social prop of the bourgeoisie. In such cases it must be particularly stressed that our attitude to the leaders and the honestly erring