

POOR DOCUMENT

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Soviet Has Grip On Russian Trade Unions

Labor Organizations Operated by Communist Party for Revolutionary Purposes.

(BY G. ZINOVIEV)

(Translated from Petrograd Pravda by David A. Modell.)

The Bolshevik party has never considered trade unions as organizations whose object is only to fight for reforms, for specific improvements within the limits of capitalist society. On the contrary, the Bolshevik party, in full accord with the teachings of Karl Marx, has always regarded trade unions as one of the principal forms of labor organization called upon, together with the party, to fight for Socialism and hence also for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

But since 1918 a great change has taken place in Russia. The working class has secured control of the government. The bourgeoisie are expropriated. The proletariat must no longer sell its labor power to private enterprising exploiters. Along with this, it is necessary to say, the problems of trade unions in Russia have considerably changed. The trade unions at the present time do not have to consider themselves first and foremost as the protectors of the wage-workers in the sale of their labor power to the employer. The old employer, the purchaser of labor power, is no more. Under existing conditions in Russia the trade unions do not have to accumulate any strike funds, organize economic strikes, etc.

What, then, are the actual problems of trade unions in Russia at the present juncture? "The centre of gravity in the work of trade unions at the present time should be transferred to the field of organization," says the resolution of the first All-Russian Trade Union Congress, which I introduced.

The question, what are trade unions in Russia at this time, we would answer as follows: "The industrial labor union in Russia in the present era is a permanent organization of all the workers engaged in a given industry and forming one of the bulwarks of the proletarian dictatorship."

Taking for its aim the energetic participation under the direction of the Communist party, in the whole struggle of the proletariat for a Communist reconstruction of society and the abolition of classes, the modern trade union shifts the centre of gravity in its work towards economic organization: (1) general participation in the organization of industry on a Communist basis through the Soviets; (2) the rehabilitation of the country's productive forces, which were impaired by the war and the present crisis; (3) the enumeration and distribution of the country's labor strength; (4) the organization of a system of exchange between city and country; (5) the introduction of universal labor conscription; (6) assisting the government's boards of food control; (7) rendering similar aid to the commission trying to solve the fuel crisis, etc.; (8) general support in the work of creating the proletarian "red army"; (9) along with the defence of the workers' economic interests, combating the narrowly selfish group tendencies of such workers as, owing to their backwardness, still look upon the proletarian government as upon an ordinary adventure.

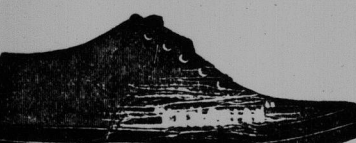
As a school of Communism for the great mass of proletarians and semi-proletarians, the modern trade union enters into the general machinery of government administration, becoming one of the organs of the proletarian state, subservient to the Soviets as the present historic form of proletarian dictatorship.

Communist Party and Soviets.

The trade unions exist side by side with the Communist party and the Soviets. The work of these three organizations overlaps. In order to get a correct idea of the interrelation existing between trade unions and the labor party, we must bear in mind in present-day Russia the Soviets are still more representative of the masses than the trade unions, and that the Soviets include some of the functions of the latter.

The eighth general congress of the Russian Communist party gave the following definition of the party and the Soviets: "The Soviets are the governing organizations of the working class and the poorer peasantry that are putting into effect a proletarian dictatorship pending the establishment of some (more

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gress has been borne out by actual experience. The trade unions are constantly assuming the functions of government agencies. When the trade unions mobilize their members; when they restrict the works to a given city; when they make transfers of labor power from one point of Russia to another; when they give the deciding word on the tariff question, etc.; and when through their representatives they exert a dominant influence on the activity of the Soviet—they do act, in fact, as organs of government administration.

But just because the process of transforming the trade unions into governmental organs is going on steadily and quite normally, there is absolutely no necessity for forcing it and proclaiming the formal transformation of these unions. The Communists working in the trade union movement can fully accept the resolutions of the first and second All-Russian congresses of trade unions on this subject.

Every trade union should have a well-organized and well-disciplined group of Communists in its midst. On questions of economic policy the local groups, . . . must carry out to the letter such decisions as are reached by the central party and the All-Russian Congress of Trade Unions. No concessions to so-called localism are permissible. The tariff policy, questions concerning hours of labor, matters concerning the food supply, etc., are settled on a strictly national basis.

At the same time every Communist group in the trade unions is nothing but a party cell of local organization. The local trade unions are wholly subject to the local Communist committee, while the All-Russian organization of trade

unions is subservient to the Communist central committee. The distribution of labor, its mobilization for the needs of the "red" army, belongs in every given town or city exclusively to the local party organization, working under the general direction of the party's central committee.

The struggle against these negative sides of the trade union movement is one of the most important tasks for the Communists working within trade unions.

Nationalization of Trade Unions.

Already, in the resolution of the first All-Russian Congress of trade unions, which met in January of 1918, it was stated: "The congress is convinced that, as a result of the process already underway, the trade unions will necessarily be transformed into organs of the Socialist government, participation in which will be a government duty" for all persons engaged in a given trade (Point 9 of the resolution).

This belief of the All-Russian Con-

URGES RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION IN N. B.

Ottawa, June 10.—The desirability of the government immediately authorizing the construction by the C. N. R. of the twenty-two miles connecting link between the St. John and Quebec Railway at Medville to the Maine Central at Bancroft, Maine, was strongly urged before the committee of the commons today, by F. W. Caldwell, farmer near Carleton-Place.

and was not paying its way, Mr. Caldwell said. He was confident that if the connecting link were constructed there would be a different story to tell. He wondered what pressure was brought to bear or what reason there was for the road not being built when it was so urgently needed.

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