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The V. World Congress of the Communist International

Report of Comrade Kolarov on the Agrarian Question

Twenty-Fifth Session.

July 3.

After the opening of the Session by comrade Smeral, comrade Torgashov welcomed the Congress on behalf of the proletarian students.

Then the next item on the agenda the Agrarian question was dealt with. The report was presented by comrade Kolarov.

Comrade Kolarov:

Comrades, the agrarian question was brought up at the Second Congress and at nearly all the subsequent Congresses under different aspects. At the Second Congress the general program of the Comintern on the agrarian question was the main topic; at the Fourth Congress attention was paid to the elaboration of a program of action on the agrarian field. The Fifth Congress occupies itself with the political and revolutionary strength of the peasant masses. Communist parties are mass parties, and the social revolution for which they work can come only as a result of revolutionary action by the masses. Generally speaking, for us the masses are first and foremost in the towns. This is the proletarian class. But apart from the proletarian class, in nine out of ten countries, there are masses also in the country side.

In Great Britain only 9% of those who participate in production are employed in agriculture. It is the most industrialised country in the world. In Belgium there are already 23%. In Bulgaria 83% of the population are peasants. In Germany about 29% of the population are employed in agriculture. In Denmark 82.6%, in Italy 59.4% of the population are peasants. In Norway there are 29.8% peasants, in France 41.2%, in Holland 29%, in Switzerland 31%, in Sweden 50%, in Austria (former Austria) 56.8%, in Hungary, including Croatia and Slovenia (pre-war Hungary) 64.3%, in Spain 56.3%, in the U. S. A. 33.2%, in Japan 64%, in China 60%, and in the present Yugo-Slavia 80%.

An analysis from the viewpoint of the differentiation between classes will be useful, and by taking a few countries as a typical example, we shall arrive at the following results:

In Germany, of the 29% who work in the rural districts, 12% work for themselves, 13% are semi-proletarians and 75% are agricultural labourers and employees. Thereby you see that in Germany the peasant question presents itself to us communists, first and foremost under the aspect of the capture of the agricultural labourers. In France, of the 41.2% which constitute about 8½ million peasants, 60% work for wages, and 40% for themselves. Thus you see that in France the peasant question appears under the aspect not only of the capture of agricultural labourers, but also of the capture of small peasants and small farmers who work for themselves. In Yugo-Slavia, Croatia, and Slovenia, 85% of the population are engaged in agriculture. And of this population 72% own plots of land not exceeding five hectares. These are semi-proletarians or small peasants. In Bosnia-Gerzegovina, where 80% of the population are engaged in agriculture, 77% own plots of land not exceeding 5 hectares.

In Japan 64% of the population are engaged in agriculture, of these 70% are farmers or small proprietors and farmers at the same time. 89% of proprietors own plots of land not exceeding 2 hectares.

These figures show us that a large section of the working-masses to be captured by us for the social revolution, is to be found in the country-side. History has shown us the importance of the peasant masses for the revolution. It is a well-known fact that all the urban revolutionary movements of the past were crushed by the bourgeoisie with the help of peasant masses. We have the example of the Paris Commune. We have also example of the Russian revolution in 1905 in which the movement of the workers of St. Petersburg, Moscow, and the other great Russian towns was crushed by Cossaks, soldiers, who, are nothing but peasants. This historical fact has been recognised by great revolutionary writers, such as pro-Marx, and Paul La Fargue. But the Social Democrats sooditions
iversify

this revolutionary tradition and abandoned this viewpoint entirely.

Comrade Lenin, during the revolution of 1905 when Russia was on the eve of a bourgeois and democratic revolution, realised the importance of the capture of the peasant masses for the revolutionary movement, and issued the slogan: "The dictatorship of the proletariat and of the peasantry. As soon as the bourgeois democratic revolution in Russia is achieved with the help of the workers and peasants, it must serve as the prologue to the socialist revolution in the west." In 1917, when the situation in Russia was, in the opinion of Lenin, ripe for the socialist revolution, he substituted the slogan of the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Poor Peasants" for the old slogan of the "Dictatorship of the Peasants." But the dictatorship of the proletariat and of the poor peasantry meant already socialist revolution in Russia itself.

Each of our Communist parties and the Communist International must find ways and means for the establishment of a close contact between urban workers and the poor peasantry, for uniting the latter with the revolutionary party, for making those sections of the peasant population, which can be won over to the side of communism, participate in the revolutionary movement and for neutralising the other sections in order to rob the bourgeoisie of an opportunity to organise a campaign against the proletariat and the revolution.

Are there objective conditions which make the capture of the peasants masses possible? This question was answered by the International with an emphatic, "Yes!"

These conditions are of an economic and political nature. The most serious economic factor is the agrarian crisis which prevails in some countries, is imminent in others.

From the political viewpoint, we see the bourgeoisie taking advantage of its power for placing on the shoulders of the peasant masses, which cannot offer any resistance, all the burdens of the war, as well as the consequences of the war, by means of increased taxes. And in countries where farming plays an important part, we notice a considerable increase of rent. Moreover, the war peril is increasing. Peasant masses see a continual growth of armaments in all the countries.

There is another factor which had a great influence on the peasant masses, namely the example of the **Russian Revolution** whose first and foremost act was to give the land to the peasants. Moreover, the Russian revolution, which was the result of the **revolutionary alliance between workers and peasants**, has opened the eyes of the peasants of Europe and America.

During the war the peasant masses became revolutionised, and there was also a re-grouping of peasant organisations in favour of radical tendencies. This happened in Germany. In Baden, a peasant union of small and middle proprietors of a radical tendency was formed. This peasant union participated in the election of 1920 and nominated its own candidates. In October 1923 we witnessed the formation of a "**Labour Commune**" consisting of several organisations of poor peasants, farms, colonists, etc. with a total membership of one million. This "Labour Commune" joined the International Peasant Council. In France, we have also adherents of the Peasant International. There is also in France a peasant union of a radical tendency. At the International Peasant Conference in Moscow in 1923, Comrade Vazeilles, of France, represented the Federation of Land Workers which consists of eighty unions and was founded in Tulle in 1922.

In the U. S. A. a similar movement is taking place among the more radical organised farmers, and the same applies to Czechoslovakia, Poland, Croatia, and Bulgaria. Peasant parties are formed also in many Eastern countries.

The radicalisation of the peasant organisations must naturally lead to the unification of the rural, political, and revolutionary forces in the **Peasants International**.

The initiative of the rapprochement between workers and peasants must come from the communist parties and the Communist International. The peasants will not come to us on their initiative, and if they are really inclined to effect a rapprochement with us, their enthusiasm is sure to flag if the communist parties and the Communist International do not make any attempt to attract them with the object of uniting them politically and organically with the revolutionary movement.

I am coming now to the tactics which must be followed by communist parties in their work for the capture of the

peasant masses. At the Fourth Congress we dealt with the necessity of a program of action for the capture of the masses, but the existence of peasants' organisations and of political peasant parties was almost entirely neglected, and we have not formulated, up to the present day, any general rule concerning our tactics towards the peasant organisations.

It must be taken into consideration that the conditions of life of the poor sections of the population differ in the various countries, and that it is very difficult to formulate rules which would be valid in all countries. On this field, our tactics must be pliable, capable of adapting themselves to the conditions of the peasantry in the various countries, and to their various struggles and movements. We must take into account all the special conditions which in any country determine and create in the masses a revolutionary state of mind. The peasants are of a practical and utilitarian turn of mind, they cannot be moved by grand abstract ideas and can be captured only by paying attention to their immediate interests and demands.

We have in the first place **trade-union organisations of agricultural labourers**. Our tactics towards these organisations must of course be determined by our general trade-union tactics. But we must lay special emphasis on the possibility of influencing agricultural labourers through the medium of the small peasants among whom they live, and vice versa.

Another form of organisation is the **organisation of small farmers** which to a certain extent is a trade-union organisation. Opportunities must be found to connect this sort of organisation with the trade-union organisation of agricultural labourers. But on the other hand we must establish a direct connection between these organisations and the Communist Party; we must also do our utmost to get them affiliated to the International Peasant Council. Nuclei must be formed in these organisations by means of which communist control must be gained within them. For the purpose of winning over their members, we must practice the united front from below and from above at the same time.

There are, thirdly, **organisations of small peasants and peasant unions** in the various countries. Generally speaking, these organisations are of a very heterogeneous social character. We must endeavour to eliminate from the leading organs of these unions the rich peasantry, and must see to it that their leadership be in the hands of poor peasants. Our method of action must be the establishment of nuclei in these organisations and the practice of the united front from below in every case, and from above, in some cases.

In the **co-operatives and agricultural unions** we must apply practically the same tactics of communist permeation and we must endeavour to form a left opposition wing eliminating the control of the rich peasantry. The same may be said in connection with other organisations of a cultural and sportive character, etc.

But the question becomes more difficult when it comes to determining our attitude toward peasant unions of a **predominantly political character**. We have such parties in Czechoslovakia, Poland, Bulgaria, and Croatia, and also in other countries. As their united-front tactics are evidently applied from below, opportunities must be found to get into contact with the masses organised in these parties by means of these tactics.

We have such an opportunity, for instance, in Bulgaria in the case of the **peasant union**, most of whose membership is already imbued with a revolutionary spirit. In connection with this union, the united front can and must be applied from below as well as from above. Under certain conditions, the same solution may be necessary for the republican peasant party of Croatia, the Farmer-Labour Parties in the U. S. A., etc.

The International Peasants Council, which was established in Moscow as a result of the first International Peasant Council, is of great political and evolutionary importance. This initiative must be welcomed by the Communist International. The efforts of the International Peasants Council to rally to its banner all the more or less revolutionary peasant organisations, to encourage the radicalisation and the revolutionisation of the peasants' movements born spontaneously in all countries as a consequence of the world war, of the industrial crisis, and of bourgeois reaction which is raging, etc. must receive the support of the International.

After Kolarov's report comrade Treint in the name of the French Delegation, made the following declaration; an extract of which we give below.

Declaration of the French Delegation.

Treint: "The socialists in France have just committed a new crime against the proletariat of the Ruhr, against the German proletariat, and against the international proletariat.

Repeating in peace-time the treason of the holy alliance of 1914, they have just voted in the French Parliament the credits for the occupation of the Ruhr.

They are permitting the imperialist bourgeoisie of France to place their bayonets, their rifles, and their guns at the service of the capitalists of England, France, Germany, and Belgium, who are on the point of forming an alliance for the common exploitation of the proletariat of the Ruhr, in a more aggravated form.

A working day of 10, 12, and 14 hours at reduced wages; armed opposition by the combined forces of French militarism and of the German police and fascists against the strikers and against the workers' organisations of the Ruhr; these are the starting points of the increased capitalist offensive in Europe and in the rest of the world.

The socialists of France, in order to support the government of M. Herriot, and in order to continue behind the curtains their shameful collaboration with the government of the left bloc, do not shrink from following a policy which is directed against the German proletariat, and consequently against the world proletariat and the world revolution.

This attitude should open the eyes of those workers in Germany who have hitherto allowed themselves to be influenced by the Social Democratic leaders.

The German Social Democrats, who will not disavow their French accomplices, because the latter do the same job for the restoration of the capitalist regime on the backs of the working class, will continue to belong to the same International as the French Socialists who are handing over the proletariat of the Ruhr to the tender mercies of international capitalism.

This emphasises more clearly than ever the downfall of the Second International.

Before 1914, the refusal to vote for the budgets of bourgeois states was a thing agreed upon by the majority of the Socialist parties without any discussion.

By definitely quitting this policy to form a holy alliance with the bourgeoisie, by voting the credits for the occupation of the Ruhr, the French Socialists flagrantly followed the lead of the German Social Democracy and of the Labour Government of England on the path of treason.

In 1923, on the eve of the 11th of January, the socialists protested in the French parliament against the occupation of the Ruhr and declared themselves ready to combat it by means of the general strike.

A little later the reformist Internationals, without any protest from the socialists from France, rejected the proposals of the Communist International and of the Red International of Labour Unions to make common preparations for a general strike for the workers of the west against the occupation of the Ruhr, against the perils of war.

The French socialists fought only with words against the occupation of the Ruhr, pretending that the adoption of the Experts' Plan would involve the retirement from the Ruhr.

It was a mere electoral comedy to draw the workers into the fold of the left bloc.

No sooner did this left bloc succeed to Poincaré than it began to practice virtually the same policy as the national bloc.

Today the socialists support both the Experts' Plan and the continued occupation. They join Herriot who joins Poincaré.

In the period of history which now begins, the fight against the bourgeoisie, the fight against the Experts' Plan, assumes more and more the nature of a relentless fight against the treacherous International of the Social Democrats.

The Communist International must wrest from its grasp those workers who are still deceived by it and lead them into the decisive fight against all the capitalist forces, from the fascists to the social democrats.

In this fight the communists parties of France and of Germany, united more closely than ever, and under the leadership of the Communist International, will lead the proletariat to the victory of the revolution.

Down with the capitalist regime!

Down with the Experts' Plan and with the occupation of the Ruhr!

Down with the international social democracy!
Long live the world revolution!
After this declaration, the chairman, comrade Smeral, called upon

Comrade Thälmann

to make a statement which was as follows:

"The declaration of the French delegation showed us that the analysis by our Congress of the further development of political events throughout the world is correct. The attitude of the French socialists to the Ruhr credits shows at once the real nature of the "new" democratic-pacifist wave, as well as the role which the Second International will play in this phase of the history of mankind. We have before us, in a new form, the old struggle of the international bourgeoisie for the salvation of the capitalist world order, the old treachery of the social democrats and the desperate, brutal and at the same time cunning action of the counter-revolutionists. To fight against it is not only the task of French communists but of all our Sections of the International as a whole. I think that I will express the feelings of the Congress if I say with comrade Treint:

Down with the report of the Experts and with the occupation of the Ruhr!

Down with the International of social democratic treachery!

Down with the deceivers of bourgeois-democratic pacifism! Long live world revolution!"

This speech was followed by the discussion on the agrarian question. The first speaker in the discussion was

Comrade Nguyen-Ai-Quack (Indo-China):

Industry and commerce are very little developed in the French colonies. Out of a total population of 55,571,000 natives, 95% are peasants. They are abominably exploited.

Since the conquest of Indo-China, the peasants were driven off the land by the war. After the termination of the war they came back to their villages to find their lands occupied by concessionaires who followed the army. Thus the Annamite peasants find themselves obliged to become serfs and to cultivate their own land for the new and alien masters.

The French concessionaires, in addition to obtaining free grants of land of an area from 20 to 25 thousand hectares, obtain also all the facilities for exploitation and the use of the labour power of the inhabitants.

Apart from expropriation and ruinous and unjust taxes, the Annamite peasants are also burdened by statute labour, head taxes, salt-duty, compulsory loans, obligatory subscriptions, and so on. In Algiers, Tunis and Morocco, the same methods of banditism and pillage are practiced by French capitalism. All the fertile and cultivable lands are declared as colonized land, and the native peasants are driven either into the mountains or into the plains. The concession companies, the speculators, and the big officials share out the colonies among themselves. By direct or indirect operations, the Bank of Algiers and Tunis has made in 1914 a profit of 12,258,000 francs on a capital of 25,000,000 francs.

The Franco-Algerian Company possess 324,000 hectares of the best lands; the Calsa Phosphate and Railway Company has obtained 30,000 hectares of mines, including an option on 20,000,000 hectares situated around these mines, and so on.

French colonization has caused collective property to disappear, replacing it by private property. It went on to cause the disappearance of small property in order to transform it into large concession property. More than 5,000,000 hectares of land were robbed from the natives.

In the course of 15 years the natives of the province of Kabylia were robbed of 192,000 hectares.

Since 1913, the cultivable lands stolen from the Moroccan peasants amount to 12,000 hectares annually. This average was increased to 14,540 since France emerged victorious from the "righteous" war.

At the present time 1,070 Frenchmen occupy 500,000 hectares of Moroccan soil.

The misery of the native population is appalling. In years of good harvests the peasants fight the dogs for contents of the garbage cans in the towns. In case of failure they perish by famine on the plains and highways.

In Western and Equatorial Africa the situation is even more deplorable. Our conditions are such that we must diversify

peasants is even more appalling. They are expropriated and compelled to work freely for the concession company. Among the methods of compulsion should be mentioned the system of hostages. The system consists of arresting the old people, the women, and children as hostages. These are imprisoned in barracks, maltreated, tortured, starved, and sometimes killed. In certain regions the masters keep a number of hostages equal to the number of toilers, in order to restrain the latter from escaping. This system of slavery has ruined, depopulated, and destroyed entire regions.

It should be mentioned that in certain colonies, like Madagascar, Réunion, Algier, etc., the native population is starved out through the substitution of cereals by other cultures that are more in demand by the French industries, and are consequently more advantageous to the colonial planters.

The International should help these unfortunate peasants to organise; the International should give them leaders. The International should show them the way to revolution and emancipation.

Comrade Varga:

Comrade Zinoviev has already pointed out the slight interest of most of our comrades in the peasant question. I believe that one of the principle reasons in this slight interest is the fact that the comrades themselves are not familiar with the question. I was therefore instructed by the Executive to edit a large treatise on the agrarian question upon an international scale. But I must say that the lack of interest on the part of comrades in parties was manifested also in the course of this work. This had a detrimental effect upon the quality of the work. As there are two more volumes to be published, I would urge the comrades present here to devote greater attention to this question and to help me in the elaboration of the studies by the sending of material, by good advice, and by critical remarks.

Already at the Fourth Congress I pointed out that the outstanding feature in the situation of the peasantry, and of the agricultural population in general, is the elusive nature of class divisions. Whereas, in industry it is quite clear and plain who is the wage worker, who is the small master, and who is the capitalist; in agriculture there is a constant passing from one class to another. The reason is that the most important means of production in agriculture, the land and the soil, can be divided without any particular detriment to production, while in industry a division of a large factory, of an increase of a small workshop into a gigantic factory, is technically impossible.

Yet another question. What shall be the attitude of the Communist Party, if in a capitalist country there is a strong movement among the peasants in favour of buying out part of the soil from the large landowners? Shall the Communists hold aloof from such movement, shall they remain neutral, or shall they support this movement? The Communist Party must come along and say: We support you, but we raise the further demand for the confiscation of the land and for its free distribution among the peasants.

We are told by comrades of the left radical wing that if the peasants obtain land, they cease to be a revolutionary element. Of course, we cannot control history to the extent of bringing about the ideal developments whereby the revolutionary peasantry would obtain the land without compensation from the proletarian dictatorship by synchronising the peasants' and workers' revolution. We must assume the risk of such an agrarian movement being successful before the conquest of power by the proletariat, and in such case it will be impossible to win the peasantry for our aims if we would reject or stay neutral towards their demands from all ends. Only by supporting the peasantry, while giving a revolutionary trend to their demands, can we hope to gain the latent revolutionary forces of the peasantry to our side.

Ordont (Poland):

I am not in favour of propaganda for the organisation of peasant parties. Such propaganda must not be conducted; we take the facts into consideration. Peasant parties exist; are even joining the Peasant International. The peasantry in various countries are creating, and demanding the creation of peasant parties, the creation of a political organisation. In approach to the peasantry we must not for a moment lose the teachings of Leninism on the peasant question. The peasantry must be regarded, from the point of view of the dicta-

torship of the proletariat, as an ally and the forces existing within the peasantry must be made use of. It must not be thought that the peasants in every country will come over spontaneously to our side. In the West, where feudalism has been abolished and bourgeois relations have penetrated into the village, there is no strong factor to set the peasantry into motion, we can find no ground on which to bring them into movement against the bourgeoisie. We must enter into closer contact with the peasant organisations which are following our road and are desirous of emancipating themselves from the bourgeoisie, and must use this movement against the bourgeoisie. If we however strive to lead the peasants back into the path of economic organisations, it will check the urge for the creation of political organisations, which from our point of view is desirable in many countries. For instance, in Germany, where the peasantry is demanding the creation of a political organisation, our comrades said: No, only economic organisations. The result was that our German comrades, in spite of the peasantry and their demands, fought for a political organisation and refused even to accept communist peasants as their candidates. And it is by no means surprising that Seeckt also fought against this striving of the peasantry and that thus a united front was created between our comrades and Seeckt, which compelled the peasantry to go over to the side of the fascists. This attitude towards the peasant organisations is not permissible. The Fifth Congress must give a reply to the this question, for otherwise we shall only talk and make no progress in our practical work.

Comrade Bringolf (Switzerland):

At the Second Congress an Agrarian Commission was held under Lenin. It adopted theses, but very little was done towards their practical realisation. All that was done was to appoint an agrarian section, subordinated to the Central Committee, which perhaps worked out a program, but that was all. This same was the case with us in Switzerland. We must learn to talk to the peasants in their own language about their conditions. We must understand that the terminology used by us in our propaganda among the working class will not do in our efforts to win over the peasantry. These questions must be probed thoroughly.

If we do not learn to speak in peasant language, we shall fail to win over the peasantry, and our agrarian program will remain on paper, especially in those countries where we have to contend with strong peasants' organisations. In regard to strong peasants' organisation, Switzerland is probably in the lead, it has a highly developed peasantry with a strong peasants' organisation led by Doctor Lauer, which has international connections, and whose aims transcend beyond the borders of Switzerland. One of its chief slogans is the fight against industrialism and for the return to agriculture. Lauer has connections not only with Doctor Heim, Germany, but he also attended the conferences at Paris in order to carry out these aims internationally. We must understand that the peasants, at least in Switzerland, are not only amenable to practical proposals, as it used to be universally asserted, but they acquiesce also quite easily in the demagogical slogans and utopian proposals of their leaders.

The question of land plays no part whatever in Southern Germany and in Switzerland. Here we are confronted mainly with the question of relieving the peasantry of the burden of mortgage-interest, and of obtaining fixed prices for agricultural products. Furthermore, in districts where there are no small or middle peasants, and where industrial workers are living in agricultural districts, we should send industrial propaganda among the peasants. We have found from experience that in spite of the fierce propaganda that is conducted against the working class among the peasantry, we succeeded in obtaining the support of a fairly large number of peasants in industrial districts to the proposition of the eight-hour day for industrial workers, when the plebiscite was taken.

We must systematically furnish to the peasants the materials dealing with the Russian revolution. It should be the business of the Comintern and of the Program Commission, and above all, of the Peasants' Council, to discuss the things that are to be done by us among the peasants of the East and of the West.

Comrade Amter (America):

The agrarian problem in America is one of most important the communists have to face, which the following facts will indicate: in 1910, 33% of those gainfully employed were agricultural workers. In 1920 this number did not increase in proportion

to the increase of population, but actually decreased to 26% of those gainfully employed. The output of the farmers has increased in 20 years by 37% but the number engaged in farming by only 5%. This indicates that there has been an increase in efficiency in farming methods, but not that the American farmer is in a better position than before. The contrary is true. Since 1880 the number of tenant farmers increased from 25% to 38% of the total number of farmers. The American farmer pays 16% of his income in taxes. He must pay interest on his mortgages. He must pay high transportation costs to carry his produce to the market, sometimes amounting to 34% of the value of the produce. He must pay the elevator companies 10% for storing his grain. The farmer gets about 1/3 of the average income of the industrial worker.

In America the farmers do not constitute a distinct class. Farms are changing hands continually, and many farms are occupied by men who only recently took to farming. Country banks are failing because the farmers find it impossible to pay their mortgages, which increased from 4 billion dollars in 1920 to a total of 7 billion, 800 millions in 1924. The banks or the state are not even attempting to collect interest or taxes. There are 2 million agricultural workers in America who are unorganised except for 11,000 in the Industrial Workers of the World (I. W. W.). The poor farmers are a political factor. They are one of the most oppressed and exploited classes in America and are in rebellion. Their movement is vague and clouded, but they want political power.

The workers have some interests in common with the exploited farmers and the Communist Party must be given the credit for having exploited the discontent of the farmer to the full. The Farmer Labour Parties that have been formed show clearly the co-operation of the workers and exploited farmers.

In some sections the farmers have gone so far as to call themselves peasants instead of farmers.

The Ku Klux Klan is also trying to take advantage of the discontent of the farmers, and the farmers of the Middle West are a hotbed for the Ku Klux Klan. The communists must beware of this situation and lead the farmers in the right direction.

Comrade Wolfe (Mexico):

In predominantly agrarian countries, the Communist Parties have especially difficult tasks to face. In Mexico, there is a petty-bourgeois, semi-socialist government which is actually distributing land to the peasants. The peasants are partially reconciled, and not so open to our propaganda. This problem will face various European countries as peasant parties come into power.

The Indians, before the Spanish conquest, lived under a system of primitive communism. The Spanish introduced the serf system, and during the three centuries following, the land became so concentrated, that in 1910 over 95 percent of the rural population had no land at all. Whole states were owned by two or three individuals.

The agrarian revolutionist, Zapata, and the peasants who followed him, revolted in 1910 because they wanted a redistribution of the land. He joined one revolutionary faction after another, being promised distribution of land by the promoters of each revolution. Each time he was disappointed. When the Russian Revolution occurred, he immediately saw the significance of it and thereafter favoured the union of the peasants with the revolutionary workers. He was assassinated in 1919 but the agrarian revolution continues.

The present government is distributing the land, but only as much as they absolutely need to, to keep the peasant from revolting.

The communists have 1) opposed the granting of small parcels of land to individual peasants, because it is impossible for the peasants to do small scale farming under conditions in Mexico; 2) opposed the granting of land on a provisional basis, depending on court decisions; 3) opposed the division of the untitled national land, but favoured turning the large estates of land which are already under cultivation into communal farms for large-scale farming; 4) opposed the slogan of the government: "Every man has the right to a piece of land"—with the communist slogan—"Every man has the right to as much land as he can work"; 5) advocated the Workers' and Peasants' Government with excellent effect against petty-bourgeois social-democratic government already in power; 6) opposed the legal methods of distributing land, favouring the peasants taking land and holding it by force of arms, and that peasants be allowed to have arms

in their possession; 7) studying the special need of the peasantry in regard to irrigation, credits, etc.; 8) forming communist fractions successfully in the Agrarian Party, and causing a division in that party on the question of whether the peasant is to make an alliance with the yellow Labor Party or with the communists.

Thus Mexico shows that the viewpoint of Comrade Bordiga, that it is no longer desirable for communists to form fractions in other parties, is incorrect. The peasant of Mexico is readily able to understand the slogan: "Workers' and Peasants' Government." He has responded to communist propaganda both in the question of retention of arms and the rejection of small parcels of land on the private property system.

Comrade Popescu (Roumania):

In Roumania the peasants are neither small proprietors, free labourers, nor farmers, since they are not allowed to dispose of the land which they managed to obtain after three successive uprisings; the land apportioned to them was so small that they are obliged to hire themselves out to the landed proprietors. Economically and legally the peasant is in a position of semi-slavery.

The so-called Peasant Party is a party of the large peasants and the city and country intellectuals are striving to secure power in order to suppress the growing movement of the workers and peasants. In Roumania the Peasant Party is playing the same role as the fascists in other countries.

The peasantry are becoming steadily proletarianised; how far this proletarianisation has proceeded it is difficult to say because in Roumania there are either no statistics at all, or what statistics there are, are false.

The Communist Party is endeavouring to study the position of the peasantry. It has more than once proposed a united front with the Peasant Party. After the treachery of the right wing of the peasant party, it will now be possible to create a revolutionary peasant party in Roumania.

On account of persecution, it is very difficult for us to maintain contact with the peasantry, but nevertheless we are making good progress in this respect.

Twenty-Sixth Session.

July 4.

At the opening of the session, a representative of the school of Red Commanders delivered greetings to the Fifth World Congress. Comrade Bordiga responded on behalf of the Congress.

Before proceeding with the agenda,

Comrade Sellier (France)

moved the following resolution of protest against the murder of Comrade Ilech by the reaction in Roumania.

A telegram from Roumania brings the sad news that Comrade Ilech, secretary of the Communist Party in the district of Kronstadt (Siebenbuergeren) was murdered by the police in jail. This foul murder is merely a link in the chain of oppression of the members of the working class in Roumania by the Roumanian bourgeoisie. At the same time in the jails of Bucharest, Kishinev, Sibian, Doftano, and in the fortress of Jilav, scores of our comrades are dying of a hunger strike to which they were driven by the bourgeoisie, in order to get rid of them in this dastardly manner. The Congress takes cognisance of this crime against the Communist Party and against the labour movement, and lodges its protest on behalf of the Communist International against the oligarchy of the Roumanian boyars and capitalists who, frightened by the wave of revolution on their borders and within their country believe themselves capable of staying the tide of revolution by the increase of the white terror.

To the brave Communist Party and working class of Roumania the Congress sends its warm fraternal greetings of solidarity, in the conviction that the Roumanian proletariat and its Party will continue to march along its revolutionary path.

This protest was adopted unanimously by the Congress.

Comrade Kolarov's Concluding Speech on the Agrarian Question.

Arising out of the discussion on the peasants' question, I would like to deal with three questions. The first of these questions has to do with the character and the details of our program of action in regard to the peasantry, with the conditions in the village, and with the consequent need for us to diversify

also our program of action. Everybody knows that in Russia it was the question of the land, as well as the question of peace and the fight against the war, which were the principal factors that attracted the peasant masses to the revolution.

The Communist Parties should not be afraid to raise the question of the confiscation of capitalist property in the agrarian domain as well as in industry. In many of the countries this question is bound to play a predominant part, as for instance in Hungary, where a large part of rural property is concentrated in the hands of large landowners.

In many countries the bourgeoisie has already voted and introduced agrarian reforms. We know quite well that these agrarian reforms are, after all, nothing but deceptive tricks, and that the bourgeoisie is now trying to withdraw all the concessions which it was bound to yield at moments of revolutionary effervescence in the village.

In regard to such countries, our program of action should contain an exposure of these reforms. It is not enough to point out to the peasants the inadequacy of these reforms, and their deceptive nature, it is also necessary to urge the peasants towards the extension of these reforms, that is to say towards the demands for the confiscation of the estates and for their free distribution among the peasants.

The question of the repudiation of mortgage debts, and of all the other debts encumbering the land, will play a large revolutionary part, equal to the question of taxes.

But the agrarian crisis puts before the peasants the question of the fight, against the monopoly of capital, whether commercial, financial, or industrial. The small peasants are the victims of the speculation of the big capitalists, of the large banks, of the large agricultural societies which pay them for their products at ridiculously low prices, while on the other hand, they exploit the consumers without safeguarding the interests of the small producers.

The greater that the peril of a new war becomes imminent, the greater will become the influence of the anti-war propaganda, organised by the Communist Parties, and the greater will be its growing power to bring the peasant masses into our ranks.

Finally, the political situation, the white terror and the violence which rages in all countries, not only against the workers, but also against the peasants, will serve as a cause for common fighting by workers and peasants. In many countries, there are still comrades who are suffering punishment for war-time offences. There are people who serve sentences in connection with the agrarian reforms, with the revolutionary agrarian movements of 1918, 1919 and 1920. Well, in these countries the amnesty question will also play a big part in arousing the peasants and in causing them to make common cause with the working class.

It goes without saying that the Communist Parties in the different countries are not going to develop all these questions in that program. They must adapt themselves to local conditions, which presupposes, above all, a special and minute study of the conditions of the peasantry among whom the campaign is to be waged.

We have seen journals, claiming to be peasant journals whose duty it is to carry on revolutionary activity in the village, which occupy themselves chiefly with technical questions of agriculture. In Germany, side by side with the records of the First Peasants' Conference at Moscow, they published documents dealing with the question of poultry-feed. Well, this agronomic instruction we should leave to the bourgeoisie.

The Communist Parties must organise special commissions for propaganda and agitation among the peasants. We must organise conferences, particularly in agrarian regions. They must organise special local commissions, charged with the struggle and agitation in the village in general.

But of far greater importance is the question of the minute organisation of aggressive sections for the needs of the revolutionary movement in the country. The country-side is poor in intellectual communist forces. It is the duty of Communist Parties to supply them with these forces; if they cannot be found on the spot, they should be secured elsewhere. It is necessary to organise sections which should go out on Sundays and holidays, equipped with literature and all the other means of propaganda, to carry out a vigorous agitation in the rural districts on all the questions which are of interest to the peasant masses. The attention of our propagandist sections should be concentrated on the special and concrete questions that are of a local character. In every village, in every agrarian district, there are special burning questions for the population.

Comrades, since the aim of our propaganda in the village is to bring about the revolutionary union between the peasants and the workers, we must conduct our activity in such a manner as will bring about this union in reality. For this reason it is necessary, in the first place, to popularise the peasants' demands among the workers and to get them accepted by the working class, and, vice-versa, to popularise among the peasants the demands of the working-class, by demonstrating to the masses the possibility of uniting and defending together, by common effort, the common aims and interests of the workers and peasants. In the second place, every time that a political question concerning the workers is raised, it is necessary always to think of the influence which this question will have over the peasant masses. We must get accustomed to dealing simultaneously with the workers' and peasants' interests.

The third question with which I shall deal briefly is the question of the attitude of the Communist Parties towards the peasant masses from the standpoint of organisation.

In many countries we have to do with peasant masses which are unorganised and amorphous. Of course, our first duty is to agitate and make propaganda. We must also endeavour to consolidate the influence which we have gained, and this we ought to do by means of organisation. In order to attract the peasant masses, it is necessary to demonstrate that the Communist Party is the only organisation acceptable to the peasantry. The Communist Parties must, of course, continue to rest on the basis of the working class; it goes without saying that we cannot risk shifting this basis of our parties by opening our doors wide to the unorganised peasant masses. Shall we then allow the masses of the peasants who have already been influenced by our propaganda to stay without an organisation? If we do so, we run the risk, of allowing them to fall back under the influence of the bourgeois parties, and of the social-patriotic parties. We must absolutely raise the question of rural organisation.

There can be no talk of creating a special rural party. It would not do for us to create a peasant party. The Communist Party is the political leader of the peasant masses as it is of the working masses. Our aim is to attain the predominance of the Communist Party in the towns and in the villages. Consequently, we should do our utmost to organise peasant masses in economic groups: the agricultural labourers in their unions, the small farmers in their farmers' organisations, and the small producers in the poor peasant organisations. I believe this to be the only reasonable and possible solution from the viewpoint of a communist party.

It goes without saying that in creating or basing these organisations on the economic aspect, we must not prevent these organisations from interesting themselves in political questions.

But, comrades, the question is whether under certain conditions it would not be necessary also to create political parties of the peasants. I believe that to this question we should answer in the negative. This solution does not exclude the possibility, under certain conditions, of supporting, and even aiding, peasants' unions of a political character, for instance after a coup d'état. In Bulgaria, when the peasants' union as a political organisation was the target for fierce attacks by the counter-revolution, by the bourgeois and social-patriots, the Bulgarian Communist Party found itself obliged to help this peasants' union to recover, and this attitude of the Bulgarian Communist Party has helped the development of the influence of the Communist Party over the peasant masses. One of the chief causes of the alliance between the workers and peasants, which has already been established among the masses and which no force on earth will be able either to check or destroy, lies in this very friendly attitude that was taken by the Bulgarian Communist Party towards the peasants union in Bulgaria.

In conclusion, I wish to second the appeal made by Comrade Varga that we give greater attention to the agrarian question and that we devote greater effort towards the conquest of the village for the revolution, and for the alliance with the working class.

The chairman, called upon Comrade Otto Unger to deliver his report on the question of the youth movement.

Unger (Young Communist International):

I think, that the manner in which the various Communist Parties deal with the question of the youth movement gives an idea of the measure of the bolshevisation of these Communist

Parties. This is not an exaggeration, for the questions of the Young Communist International are not only purely youth questions. The question of the capture of the working-class youth for the fight of the Communist International, is a question of the greatest importance for the future of the Communist International. Let us therefore learn from the Thirteenth Party Congress of the Russian Communist Party which made it perfectly clear that the question of communist work among the working-class youth is of great importance for the future development of the Party.

In my report, I will deal mainly with three points:

1. With the decisions made by the Fourth World Congress of the Communist International and by the Third World Congress of the Young Communist International, which followed it, in connection with the work of the Young Communist International.

2. With the results and lessons achieved by the Young Communist International in the course of the work done on the strength of these decisions.

3. With the future tasks of the Young Communist International. The working-class youth, which was among the most determined fighters against the imperialist war, which was most eager to enter the foremost ranks of the proletarian revolution, lost some of its fighting spirit as a result of the decline of the revolutionary movement. The decline took place although the numerical strength of our movement had not decreased. It was shown also by the falling off of the young workers' interest in things political, while their interest in that direction was very keen at the beginning of the revolutionary movement. This gave rise to a seeking of new ways and methods for the capture of the working-class youth. There were tendencies to reduce the political activity of communist youth organisations to a minimum, and to limit it to purely theoretical educational work. These tendencies have been overcome, and to-day we can safely say that the decisions of our Third World Congress and with it also the decisions of the Fourth World Congress of the C.I. have been carried out. Our movement not only has gained in numerical strength, but also has become more active and more efficient. The successes are due to a great extent to the growing acuteness of the political situation. The decisions of our last world congresses have laid down the right premises and opportunities for the transformation of the Young Communist Leagues into mass organisations of the working-class youth, provided they succeed, by direct participation in the actions of the working class, to make the working-class youth energetic and class conscious fighters in the struggle of the working class for emancipation.

We had three main tasks to fulfil in the course of our activity: firstly, participation in working-class actions and in the solution of the tactical questions and questions of principle of the C.I.; secondly, work in the army and war against new wars; thirdly, transference of the centre of gravity of the communist youth organisations to the factories.

The main international activity in all working class actions was the fight of the Young Communist International against the occupation of the Ruhr. Even before this occupation took place, the Young Communist Leagues of Germany and France carried on a big political campaign in both these countries. The main object of this campaign was to establish between the German workers and French soldiers in the occupied parts of Germany, an alliance which was to bring to nought the plans and designs of the French and German imperialists. To enliven this campaign, we organised an international propaganda week against war and militarism, which took place shortly before the well-known Frankfurt Conference. In connection with this campaign against war and militarism, the Young Communist International approached also the other two Youth Internationals with a proposal to form a united front, which proposal met (as was anticipated) with a refusal. This form of work brought life and action into large sections of the working-class youth.

The second important international political campaign was the united-front campaign in connection with the fusion of the two socialist Youth Internationals and their Hamburg Congress. This action too resulted in considerable success for us, because in connection with it, it was possible to carry on active agitation in Germany and Austria among the socialist youth. This agitation contributed subsequently to a great extent, because of the acuteness of the political situation in Germany, to the decrease of the influence of the socialist youth and helped us to capture considerable sections of their organisations.

In connection with the events in Germany we carried out several joint campaigns with the Comintern, and a big inter-

national mobilisation campaign among the Young Communist Leagues and the working-class youth.

We also took an active part in the discussion which took place after the October defeat in Germany and Russia, and did our utmost to keep our members well-informed about the problems connected with this discussion.

In all these discussions, the Young Communist International always upheld the line adopted by the Comintern.

These are the most important points on an international scale as far as the participation of the youth in the action of the working class and in the solution of the tactical questions, and questions of principle of the Communist Parties is concerned.

It goes without saying that all Young Communist Leagues took part in all the actions which took place in their respective countries.

In Bulgaria, the youth recognised immediately the correctness of the position taken by the Comintern, and mobilised at once all the forces to ensure the adoption of the Comintern lines by the Bulgarian Communist Party. When events became very acute in September, the communist youth was the first to urge the Communist movement to take up and organise the struggle.

In France, our Young Communist League mobilised its last forces in the Frossard crisis with the object of helping to solve this crisis in the Comintern spirit.

In Norway, the Young Communist League forms together with the minority of the Norwegian Workers' party a very important nucleus in the fight against centrist and social democratic tendencies which existed in the Norwegian worker's party.

Even in the East, the Young Communist Leagues form a centre of political life. They work there on the lines laid down by the Communist International and the Young Communist International for the conduct of working class actions in those countries.

In the past there were some erroneous tendencies in our Leagues, tendencies which, on the one hand, looked upon the political activity of the Young Communist Leagues as on a partial task which made that all the other work of the Young Communist Leagues, namely activity on the economic and trade-union field and in the field of education, activity for the capture of the rural youth and work among children assumed an unpolitical character. We always offered energetic opposition to such tendencies.

The second erroneous tendency which made its appearance during the last 12 months, was the tendency to represent political activity as the main tasks of the Young Communist Leagues. This must of course also be considered as a very erroneous conception on our part. Behind this tendency there was the tendency which we had liquidated at the Second World Congress of the Young Communist International and at the Third World Congress of the Communist International: the tendency which wanted to make the Young Communist Leagues leading organs of political work.

Another important part of our work is—work in the army and the fight against the war peril. The work done by our Leagues in connection with the Ruhr crisis was the first big campaign among the soldiers.

But we cannot say that on an international scale our Young Communist Leagues have been sufficiently active on this field. The only League of the few Leagues which carry on this kind of work which was successful is our French League which has done magnificent work on this field.

Now I should like to deal with one of our most important fields of action in the past: with the reorganisation of the Young Communist Leagues on a factory-nuclei basis. The application of these directions aims at the consolidation of the proletarian nucleus of our movement. It is self-evident that in the factories we come into direct contact with the young factory workers and that our propaganda had therefore to take a different form. It had to be more concrete and more in touch with the everyday questions of the fight of the working class and of the working-class youth.

The ideological and objective difficulties connected with the application of these decisions were considerable. It is interesting to note that to-day, when the question of reorganisation on a factory-nuclei basis is also before the Communist Parties, the same arguments make their appearance which our members used as far back as our Third World Congress. We never allowed ourselves to be scared by any difficulties but set about overcoming these difficulties.

We can say to-day the greatest difficulties have been overcome, and that henceforth we can work on the field systematically and successfully. Apart from the Russian League,

we have to record successful work by three of our most important Leagues—the German, French, and Czech Young Communist Leagues. Our German League was the first to overcome the ideological difficulties in its ranks.

We achieved considerable success also in France where the Young Communist League has made its influence felt in many industries.

The same is the case in Czecho-slovakia where the League has already established 100 nuclei.

Our second success on this field consists in having compelled the various Communist Parties to pay more attention to this serious question and to do their share in the reorganisation of communist work on a factory-nuclei basis. This was the case in Germany, France, and Czecho-slovakia.

Our most important experiences in connection with this reorganisation are as follows:

It became evident that factory nuclei were not looked upon by our Leagues as the basis of our movement, but as an organ somewhat in the nature of a trade union fraction, a fraction in a Sports League, in the co-operative, or something of this kind. It must be laid down once and for all that factory nuclei must be the basis of our movement.

The second important lesson which we have learned from the past, is that there must be perfect clearness about the activity of our factory nuclei. It must be borne in mind that factory nuclei have to do practically the same work which the former organisation on a residential basis had to do.

The third lesson is that the movement has to be completely reorganised on the factory-nuclei basis.

Very little has been done to capture the youth of the country-side.

Another important branch of our work, which we have rather neglected, is the education and training of our members and of the working-class youth as whole.

Neither was work among children properly attended to. Comparatively little was done on the trade-union field. The reason for this lies in the fact that we are now taking a more active part in the political actions of the working class, and that there is a great deal of confusion in connection with the methods of our trade-union work.

I should also like to say a few words about the lack of support from communist parties. With the exception of the French and the German Parties, we have done very little in this direction.

During the last twelve months many of our leagues increase their membership: in Russia the membership has gone up from

420,000 to 700,000, in Germany from 28,000 to 70,000. This was, of course, before the October fight. Owing to the prohibition of our League and to the disputes within it during the period of illegality, the membership dwindled to about 40,000. In France the membership went up from 4,000 to 7,000 in Italy from 2,000 to 4,500, in America from 2,000 to 5,000, in Czecho-slovakia from 8,000 to 13,500 and finally (to mention one of our Leagues in the East) the membership of the Mongolian Young Communist League went from 2,500 to 3,000.

Just a few more words on our relations with the Communist Parties.

There were a number of countries where the decisions of the Third World Congress on the organisational independence of the Young Communist League, were entirely ignored. This happened in Poland. In Bulgaria, the Young Communist League succeeded only during the last twelve months to establish its organisational independence. This happened after the June and September events had brought a thorough change into the movement.

A few more words on the tasks before us. In looking back on the experiences of the recent period, we can safely say that it is not necessary to make any drastic changes in the lines on which we have hitherto worked.

Young Communist Leagues must be now more energetic than ever before in the work which our leader Lenin has begun. You know that Comrade Lenin has given us very important and valuable directions in connection with a very important and decisive question. I mean the question of anti-militarist work.

Therefore we pay special attention in our theses to this branch of our work. There is a paragraph in our theses which says: Young Communist Leagues must become Leninist youth leagues, namely, they must do their utmost to follow Lenin's precepts and to train revolutionary fighters capable of standing up for communism not only with arms in their hands, but also by carrying on clear and persuasive propaganda. We must capture the masses of the working class youth.

The work done by the Young Communist International in the past, can be reckoned among the most important work in the fight for communism. I assure you that we will develop our organisation into a big preparatory school for Leninism for the entire working-class youth. We will not only encourage our young comrades to study Lenin's works, but will also lead them into the fighting ranks which will emancipate the oppressed of the whole world under the banner of Lenin. The young guard of the working class, the Young Communist International will always remain the vanguard on the way to the development of Leninist and Bolshevik world organisation.

Twenty-Seventh Session.

Resume of Lozovsky's Report on the Trade Union Question.

July 5, 1924.

The question of our trade union tactics crops up inevitably at all the congresses and sessions of the Enlarged Executive of the Communist International. This is the case because it constitutes one of the most complex questions of communist tactics.

In fact, what is the role of the trade unions in the fight of the working class? In the past, trade unions were organs against exploitation. Since the war they have become under the influence of the bourgeoisie auxiliary organs of the bourgeois State. It is only very gradually that they emancipate themselves from the bourgeois and reformist influence and become again in the hands of the communists, organs of attack against the capitalist regime.

Trade unions are the natural link between the Party and the working class. It is only through their medium that the Party can permeate the labour movement. That is why the Communist International has always paid much attention to the trade union movement, and that the Fifth Congress will give it its most careful consideration.

The Communist International must adapt itself to a certain social and economic situation, and therefore its first and foremost duty is—to study this situation. The present situation within the trade union movement can be described as follows:

1. The general retreat of the working class has come to an end. In many countries the working class has already taken up the counter-offensive. In Great Britain especially, there has

been during the last few months a strong wave of economic strikes which are assuming a great political significance. The importance of these strikes is all the greater as the Labour Government played in all of them the role of defender of the interests of the bourgeoisie.

Even in Germany where the working class is in very difficult position, the recent Defensive of the miners can be considered as a success, for it succeeded in repulsing the attack. In Norway a six months strike has not succeeded in breaking down the power of resistance of the working class and of the trade unions. In some industries a wage rise was even obtained. In France too, there were a number of offensive strikes. In fact, we can say that the retreat has come to an end, and that we are entering upon a new period of activity when economic conflicts will increase and become more serious, when offensive and defensive actions will become more violent and when political instability in the capitalist countries will increase.

2. During the last two years of the class struggle, relations between the ruling class and the reformists trade union leaders have become closer. We witness the liquidation of many conflicts with the help of the reformist trade union leaders.

We can safely say that reformism has reached its climax. It began with national defence and has landed in the defence of employers' profits.

The methods of struggle of the Amsterdamers are as platonic and inefficient as before. In spite of its verbal protestations, the Amsterdam International has supported the occupation of the Ruhr. It sees salvation in the Report of the Experts.

This yellow role of the Amsterdam International and of its national sections could not but increase the discontent of the masses. At present the influence of the Communist International and of the Communist Parties is growing in all the trade unions, and our Parties and the revolutionary minorities are playing an increasingly important role in the economic actions of the proletariat.

We had examples of it in Germany and in Great Britain where a large number of "non official" strikes were initiated against the will of the leaders, and were conducted with the direct participation of the Communist Parties.

If we take for instance France, we get an idea of the influence of the Communist Party in the Unitarian General Confederation of Labour (C. G. T. U.). Even in Japan, China and in India this question is the topic of the day. The success of the communists in the trade union movement have exasperated the reformists who look upon communists as a disintegrating element.

The evolution of the Amsterdam International, the transformation of its leaders into yellow elements, have not only created among the masses the desire to drive the traitors from the proletarian ranks, but have also made certain sections of workers despair of the efficacy of the slogan "capture of the trade unions". This state of mind is particularly noticeable in Germany where it has led to desertion of trade unions and attempts to introduce new tactics, which, however, were rejected by the Frankfurt Congress. But this state of mind still prevails.

On the other hand we witness a new wave of reformist illusions, a second youth of the League of Nations and of the International Labour Bureau.

We must take account of these main features of the general situation, if we are to determine what our tactics in the trade union movement shall be. We have a new situation and new factors.

Throughout the activity of the Communist International the idea of the fight for unity prevails. It is only natural that we should ask ourselves if this idea has not become obsolete. Unity is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. Trade union unity offers the best field for communist activity and creates favourable conditions for the capture of the masses. It is on the strength of this principle that the Communist International has declared itself most emphatically **against the destruction of trade unions**, and that it substitute for this slogan the slogan of their capture, for the capture of the masses cannot be accomplished without the capture of the trade unions. What is the meaning of the capture of the trade unions? There are some misunderstandings in connection with this question. Some comrades say: "We will never succeed to capture the trade unions because the reactionary bureaucrats will maintain their positions by some means or other. It is self evident that the bureaucrats are not very much inclined to be reduced to a minority and that they will do everything in their power to preserve, if only outwardly, their majority in the trade unions. But capture of the trade union has nothing in common with capture of the reactionary bureaucracy and its apparatus. What we need, is the capture of the trade union masses and here, no reactionary bureaucracy or oath of loyalty, as in Germany, can prevent communists to extend their influence among the masses. Desertion of trade unions is not a sign of activity, but a symptom of despair. If it is understandable on the part of non-party workers, it is quite inadmissible when communists are concerned. If a communist asserts that **he can no longer remain in the trade union** in spite of the decisions of the Communist International and of the Communist Party, he is a bad communist for he allows himself to be carried away by his impulses.

With this question another is bound up: if we fight for unity and against destruction of the trade unions and if we endeavour to capture them, what must be our slogan for the unorganised workers or for those who have left their unions? Our slogan must be: "Return to the trade unions." I know that in Germany this slogan met with a great deal of resistance and that many workers say: "Why should I pay membership fees to the trade union bureaucrats?" But such questions cannot be settled from the viewpoint of membership fees, but only from the viewpoint of the aims of our general policy.

What must we do in countries where the trade union movement has already been split, as for instance in France and

Czecho-Slovakia? Can we issue there the slogan of return to the trade unions? Certainly not. In this case, the main slogan must be unity through a general congress. The fight for unity must not remain a mere formality, but must find expression in effective campaigns. If we publish from time to time declarations for unity, we shall not achieve much. The fight for unity must be a systematic action in workshops and factories. We cannot by any means allow the secessionist reformists to have the monopoly of unity. This would constitute a menace for the labour movement and for the Communist Party which would inevitably see its chances of capturing the majority of the working class dwindle. But it is not enough to keep repeating the word Unity. It is sometimes necessary, in the name of this same unity, to group and organise the expelled trade unionists or workers who have left the trade unions. We must not do this to preserve the small trade unions but to continue with them the fight for unity. In this form, the slogan of the fight for unity does not at all conflict with the necessity of establishing, under certain circumstances, parallel organisations and of giving them support and encouragement. The main thing is—that these organisations fight for unity.

From time to time the desire crops up in communist circles to find new forms of working class organisation. There are comrades who imagine that by creating new forms of organisation, we shall be able to withdraw the workers from the influence of the bourgeoisie. This seeking of new forms of organisation has taken place in America. It was also very noticeable in Germany after the revolution in November 1918 and such attempts continued to be made from time to time.

We must work energetically for the transformation of craft trade unions into industrial unions. But wherever the centralised trade unions are in the hands of reformist trade union bureaucrats, who kill all local initiative, it is absolutely necessary to fight against a centralism which kills initiative, and enforce more freedom for local organisations. We must above all understand that trade unions are not accidental forms of the labour movement, forms which can be abandoned and supplanted by others at will.

Already for some time the situation within the Amsterdam International has been far from satisfactory. This was particularly noticeable at its last congress in Vienna. Since its formation, the Amsterdam International has been a complement of the League of Nations and a tool of the Entente. It has played its part logically and resolutely. But for some time it has been going through a period of crisis, and the crisis has become particularly acute under the growing influence of the Communist Parties and of the political action of the Red Trade Union International.

The crisis did not reach its climax until after the occupation of the Ruhr, when some leaders of the Amsterdam International, especially Fimmen, began to demonstrate the impotence of the Amsterdam International without fully understanding the reasons for it. The internal strife in the Amsterdam International has become acute, especially in connection with the slogan of the united front. The question has arisen—with whom should one join up, with the left wing of the working class or with the left wing of the bourgeoisie?

These contradictions were clearly manifested at the last congress at Vienna, where the decomposition of the Amsterdam International was brought to light. The differences at the Vienna Congress had to do with two questions: the attitude towards the Russian trade unions, and the relations between the international professional federations and the Amsterdam International. At bottom the two questions amounted really to one, because the whole fight between the federations and the Amsterdam International, was over the relations between the former and the Russian unions.

The leaders of the left are not fully alive to the necessity of changing their politics from top to bottom; they fail to see that palliatives will serve no good purpose. We must not hesitate to criticise the inconsistency, the hesitancy, the undue cautiousness of the leaders of the English trade unions, but at the same time we must not forget that they are going towards the left.

The communists must always be prepared to come to an understanding with the workers who want to fight the bourgeoisie; they must never refuse united actions.

On close examination of the action of the communist parties in the different countries, and of their incontestable growth, we notice a certain number of defects which must be absolutely corrected, if we wish to increase our influence.

In a number of countries the communist parties have not yet established their factions in the trade unions. On the whole, the parties occupy themselves too little with trade union work. For instance, the Dutch and Belgium parties have so far confined themselves to simple propaganda and have not undertaken anything as yet to organise the minorities in the reformist trade unions. The same observation holds good for other countries. As long as the Communist Parties do not consider the organisation of factions in the unions as one of their most important tasks, they will not be able to use to full advantage the sympathies which they enjoy among the masses.

Our Parties neglect too much certain parallel organisations such as the N.A.S. in Holland, the Knights of Labour in Belgium, and the Workers' Council in the United States.

In some countries, as in France, there is a tendency to concentrate the entire attention on the revolutionary unions, while ignoring entirely the parallel reformist unions. Wherever there are parallel organisations, the Communist Parties must be particularly active, with a view to the creation of nuclei in these reformist organisations. By neglecting to do this, we voluntarily circumscribe the scope of our action and retard the restoration of unity. It is equally irrational to urge the workers to quit the reformist unions in order to get them to join the revolutionary unions. The communists should stay in the reformist unions in order to defend the communist ideas from within.

It is necessary to work out a trade union platform for the movement in general and for the various industries. It is a common mistake of all the parties to fail to take advantage of the big economic fights for the purpose of creating representative working class organs at the height of the struggle. The election of a strike committee or of a committee of action by strikers is an excellent opportunity.

Certain Parties are not yet fully alive to the fact that the natural ground for the united front is the factory, the factory committee and the trade union. It is on this ground that we could show in practice, on everyday questions, the difference there is between us and the reformists. It is on this ground that we must be untiring in proposing the unity of action, the creation of mixed committees etc. Only by considering the factory, the factory committee and the trade unions as the battle-ground of the united front, only by taking advantage of economic conflicts to urge the workers to back our demand for unity, can we achieve results in the shape of detaching the workers from the influence of the reformists. While acting in this manner, our parties must endeavour to attract to the platform of the R.I.L.U. the greatest number of non-party or left social democratic workers.

All this activity must have a practical basis depending on the country and on the industry in question. Advantage must be taken of the discontent created by the treacherous acts of trade union officials. These must be systematically exposed. All their doings during and after the war should be unmasked. We must get the masses to realise the need of chasing the traitors from the trade unions. This need should be made into a popular slogan. The more that we popularise this slogan, the better shall we succeed in chasing the bureaucrats out of the unions.

By far the greatest drawback in our trade union activities is the absence of communist nuclei in the factories. As long as we shall not create them, we shall not be in a position to take over the leadership of the trade union movement. It is a question of prime importance. Without the basic organs of the factory nuclei we cannot hope to draw the masses into the fight.

The centre of our trade unionist activity must be transported into the masses, that is to say into the factories. Hence arises the need for the creation of factory committees, while combatting all attempts at creating sham-committees in the factories.

In the countries where the movement was not split, small unions were formed, which are most of the time led by communists. Such we have in Germany, in the United States, in Belgium, in Holland etc. While continuing our work in the old reformist organisations, while developing our activity for creation of factions and minorities, we must bring unity between them and independent organisations and try to promote solidarity between them and the minorities in one way or another.

Withdrawal from the unions is a great danger to the communist movement, which should be most resolutely opposed.

In order to prepare for common actions in the different countries, in order to counteract the chauvinist propaganda of the bourgeois press, we must proceed to the formation of industrial committees between two countries; for instance, the Franco-German committee of miners, the Franco-Polish committee of railwaymen, etc. We must also create committees uniting the workers of all the industries: the Anglo-Russian

committee, the Russo-Polish, etc. The Frankfurt conference of March, 1923, has already foreseen this type of committee. Unfortunately, the communist parties have done nothing in this sense. We must not lose sight of the fact that only by extending and consolidating this circle of committees, shall we succeed in preventing international conflicts and in organising the simultaneous action on both sides of the frontier.

The influence over the trade union movement in the colonies is a question which should not be neglected.

There is hardly any propagandist literature for the colonies to speak of. If our parties persist in their passive attitude, there will be nothing to distinguish them from the social democrats. They must watch attentively the growing trade union movement of the colonies and oppose the bourgeoisie which tries to stifle the workers' movement in the colonies.

There are still countries where the principle of trade union autonomy enjoys some credit. This principle is now the rallying cry against the Communist International, the R.I.L.U. and the Russian revolution. This principle is particularly widespread in France and in Spain, where the anarchists, allies of the fascists, are waging a furious fight against the Communist Party. To the cry of trade union autonomy, the party must reply by approaching in practical fashion the masses and organisations which are subject to anarcho-syndicalist influence.

On the other hand, we are too little familiar with the ways of our enemies. We know their politics, but we do not know their organisations. And yet the fighting organisations of the bosses are of particular interest to us. The bosses have their agents paid or voluntary in our own midst. They maintain a whole series of institutions, of which we know neither the structure nor the activity. It is only at a time of conflict that we learn about these activities. To know the enemy is an essential means to success. We must not only study the enemy, but also create in the parties and in the unions a service of economic counter-espionage. Only by being in a position to determine the forces of the enemy shall we have the chance to succeed.

Finally, the last question worthy of your attention is that of maintaining an intercourse with mobilised trade unionists. In the French unions there used to exist the "sou du soldat" (the pennies levied from trade unionists towards the dues of mobilised members). This was a means for the trade unions to maintain their influence over the mobilised members. This kind of link no longer exists in the unions. It should be re-established with the aid of the young communists and the unions. Every mobilised worker must remain a member of his union, and the union should see to it that its members who are called to the colours should not be separated from the working class.

These are the tasks which confront the Communist International and its parties. The question naturally arises: has the C.I. to change its policy or not? To this we can reply with a decided "no". The Fifth Congress should approve all the decisions of the preceding congresses. We must frankly declare that the line which was followed was right, that the work accomplished, in spite of all its imperfections, has brought big results, that if we have grown in many countries, if we have become mass organisations, it was thanks to our trade union tactics. These tactics we should not change, but rather make them more perfect, more effective and more supple. All this cannot be done unless the communist parties understand the enormous importance of the trade unions to the struggle of the working class. The trade unions occupy a fixed place in the class struggle, they are destined to play a still greater part on the morrow after the revolution. It is for this reason that we do not withdraw one iota from the decisions which we have taken, and we shall continue so until the final conquest of the trade unions, that is to say the conquest of the masses.

After the speech of Comrade Losovsky, a delegation from the 10th Defence Division of the Red Army appeared on the platform. In the name of the delegation, Comrade Gutmann, amid the stormy applause of the delegates, presented the Congress with a banner for the Hamburg workers. The greetings of Comrade Gutmann were replied to by Comrade Koeppen on behalf of the Hamburg workers and by Comrades Thaelmann and Losovsky on behalf of the Congress.

Comrade Roy congratulated Comrade Zetkin on the occasion of her 67th birthday. The delegates arose and gave Comrade Zetkin a stormy ovation which lasted several minutes.

In her reply Comrade Zetkin said that she desired to direct the feelings of the Congress to the comrades who had

died in the service of the revolution and the comrades who were fighting in the service of the revolution.

Comrade Herzog was then called upon to speak as the second reporter on the trade union question.

Comrade Herzog:

Comrade Losovsky says that the characteristic feature of the present year is the fact that the general retreat of the working class has been stayed, and that, moreover, the connection between the trade union bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie has become perfectly clear.

I regret to say that as regards the first point, namely, that the general retreat of the working class has been stayed, we cannot agree unconditionally. In several countries it is true we find a halt, which perhaps may be only apparent. We also find that economic struggles are going on in many countries. But on the whole, the capitalist offensive against the working class is continuing. The acceptance of the Experts' Plan means that the attack of the employers upon the working class is successfully continuing. The nine-hour day will be extended to a ten- and even an eleven-hour day; wages will be depressed still further. This cannot but react upon the conditions of labour in other countries.

This fact has compelled us German communists, to pay attention to the reparations question. There has not been a serious response to the Experts' Plan either among the British or the French working class. Why not? Because the workers of these countries believe that the Experts' Plan means peace. The pacifist wave is growing among the proletariat, at least at present, and in Germany is strengthening the position of reformism.

Comrade Losovsky further says that one of the characteristic features of the present time is, that the influence of the R.I.L.U. has considerably increased in all countries. I sincerely hope this is true, although I am unable to assert it definitely. I have the feeling that we have suffered a distinct check in this respect owing to the wave of pacifism.

Losovsky said that in Germany the necessity for conquering the trade unions was not properly understood. We know that very well, but we cannot explain the fluctuations in our country quite so simply.

Last year, when the German proletariat saw the conditions of labour becoming steadily worse under the policy of the trade union leaders, a very strong feeling of animosity grew up against the trade union bureaucracy and even in part against the trade unions in general.

In 1923, however, an intensification of the revolutionary movement took place, which resulted in the fact that during the Cuno strike the German trade union bureaucracy had practically lost all influence over the masses. But after August, owing to many causes, our position became worse and our strength declined. It declined still further after the October defeat. The trade union bureaucracy took advantage of the situation in order to pass over completely to the side of the bourgeoisie. They voted for a state of siege. They voted for the law granting extraordinary powers which gave the bourgeoisie enormous powers and opportunities for arranging the conditions of labour according to their own discretion. Thereupon a tremendous exodus from the German trade unions began such as we have never seen in Germany before. An explanation for this exodus can also be found, however, in the tremendous crisis, in the inflation crisis.

During this period of crisis we attempted at the Weimar Conference to wrench the trade unions from the hands of the trade union bureaucracy. Since the conditions were not existent, we reached a cul de sac at Weimar. Under the changed conditions, our programme could no longer be put into effect.

Still further vacillation was caused by the decision of the German General Federation of Trade Unions to expell all communists from the trade unions who formed fractions, carried on revolutionary work in the trade unions, and spread communist ideas.

We openly confess that we went to the Frankfurt party congress with a certain feeling of hopelessness regarding the trade union question, for when at about this time we took a vote, the majority of our members declared that the right slogan was: leave the trade unions. But the decision of the Frankfurt Party Congress helped us considerably out of the crisis. We are assisted not merely by a good resolution, but also by the experiences we have had in our country of independent organisations, partly the product of revolutionary impatient persons, but to a large extent of the expulsion tactics of Amsterdam.

What organisations have we in Germany and what are the ideas they represent?

First the Union of Hand and Brain Workers. We conducted a determined struggle in this organisation against its theoreticians. To-day, after five years of bitter experience, we have succeeded in getting order in this organisation.

There is an important organisation in Germany called the Expelled Building workers' Union. It gave rise to great illusions among many revolutionary workers, who thought that an organisation like the Chemnitz Building Workers' Union was a type of organisation which by strategy could lead the workers better than the large trade unions. Practically all such independent organisations are the product of the fight against the Amsterdamers and their expulsion tactics. It is these organisations which have issued the call for quitting the trade unions. When treating of these independent organisations, we must note a peculiar phenomenon viz., the appearance of small groups of labour aristocrats, as for instance with the Turners' Union in Berlin. There are at the head of this organisation people who failed to understand that the creation of such groups of labour aristocrats simply splits the workers and is playing into the hands of the capitalist.

What is then the general lesson we have to learn from the existence of these independent organisations? Such organisations can defend the interests of their members only under distinctly favourable circumstances. They as a rule have the Amsterdam trust behind them and their members are very soon flung out of work. They are not organisations leading the revolutionary movement, but in spite of themselves they follow in the tail of the movement.

The problem of the unorganised is a very important one. Their number has grown considerably in Germany during the last few years. Our comrades conclude therefore that we must organise these workers in new dual organisations. But we now already know that the dual organisations lead to no good. Comrade Losovsky says we must organise them in the factory councils; this is already embodied in the January resolution. We have already made the attempt, but the successes achieved have so far been negligible. After every strike the factory councils are thrown out of the factories.

A word on the question of the industrial unions. The industrial unions have become the slogan in Germany. As I already said, more and more workers are collected into a small split-off organisation, and out of them arise the industrial union. But if you ask the comrades what is the difference between the industrial unions and the craft unions of the Amsterdamers, they have no answer. It must be clearly stated that the industrial unions cannot arise out of such experiments. They can arise only out of mighty conflicts conducted by the proletariat and in which the old form of organisation predominates.

It was very difficult in Germany to organise an opposition which was partly in the trade unions; and especially because there was no common idea as to what we should do.

The fight for the eight-hour day forms a central point of the whole revolutionary trade union movement. We must regain the position we lost. In December of last year after the great defeat of the proletariat the employers lengthened the hours of the Ruhr workers. Without asking the workers the trade union leaders simply abolished the seven-hour day in the mines. We have now organised the opposition in Germany. We have found a platform for its work and with this organised opposition which is inside and outside the trade unions and in the factory councils we can manoeuvre and operate and institute movements.

The industrial proletariat of the Rhine showed us in January, February and March in a fight that lasted several weeks and which embraced 700,000 workers that the workers were both willing to fight and able to fight. We must take proper advantage of the willingness and the capacity of the workers to fight, but in order to do so we must make proper preparation for the fight so that it does not come to naught.

We have the same experience with regard to the heroic fight in Ludwigshafen and the fight of the Rhine-Westphalian miners.

We tried to extend the movement in Germany to the most important trades, the railwaymen and the engineers. In this however, we did not succeed. The workers failed to understand the meaning of the movement. We wanted to summon an international conference of miners with the help of the R.I.L.U. This broke down however, owing to passivity of the Czech and French comrades.

In this fight we saw that the unorganised are no longer the same as the unorganised of former times they fought as heroically as the organised workers.

Has the anti-trade union spirit grown? I say no. In spite of the betrayal of the trade-union bureaucracy the workers, even in Upper Silesia, where the workers fought most heroically, have come to recognise that they must return to the Amsterdam trade-unions so that the bureaucracy should not be able to make them into strike-breaking organisations.

We must work out a strike-strategy which will embrace all the experiences of the individual countries.

We saw that the workers even in the present situation are prepared for a direct attack on the employers.

Moreover, we saw that the women play a different role from that they did formerly. Formerly during a strike the women attacked the men in the rear, they were ballast, a lump of lead. But now the women in Germany march before the men, they tell them that they must not work for a dog's pay. The women have stood on picket-duty. In Ludwigshafen where a state of siege prevailed, they won back the streets for us. The women have conducted armed fights against the strike-breakers. We must therefore mobilise the women. Another important experience was the setting up of educational groups during the strikes which went from house to house to explain to the men and women what the fight was about, how it was being fought, and how the strike-breakers were being opposed.

I want to refer to the International Workers' Relief and the Co-operatives. Closer contact than hitherto must be set up with these organisations.

The contact between the fighting proletariat of the towns with the rural population must be established. In the strikes, in Upper Silesia, Saxony and the Rhine we saw that the small peasants and the agricultural workers were prepared to associate themselves with the fighters in the town by delivering large consignments of food. This must be our "smitchka" in Germany as long as we have not won power.

It is said that on the Vienna Congress an Amsterdam Left wing crystallised out. But I must emphatically warn you against possible illusions. We had such a Left movement in the German trade unions in Dissmann, Auffhauser, etc. and it was a stronger movement than the British. We have seen however that this "Left" is more dangerous to the development of the revolutionary ideology than the Right trade union leaders. We must not make this great mistake again, or else we shall get into a very dangerous situation. If this does not happen, we hope to create a revolutionary tactic in Germany which for firmness, clarity and energy will be an example in the fight against the Amsterdamers by the revolutionary elements organised in the R. I. L. U. and the C. I.

Twenty-Eighth Session. Schultze (Germany):

The resolution on the immediate tasks of the Party adopted unanimously in Frankfurt contains the following statement: "The German Communist Party desires to mobilise the revolutionary factory councils and to establish revolutionary industrial unions, in order to have at its disposal economic fighting organisations before the seizure of power and mass organs of proletarian economic construction after the seizure of power."

Thus, if comrade Losovsky declares to day that industrial unions are not necessary, he goes against the decision of the Frankfurt Party Congress.

It further remains to be proved that the independent unions have offended against the resolution of the Frankfurt Party Congress. I have before me the resolution on the trade union question and should like to remind you of a passage of it:

"Therefore the Party must at the same time begin to carry on in connection with its trade union work energetic and useful activities in the factories with the object of organising the unorganised and those who have left the union. This preparatory work of the organisation of the unorganised and of all those who were expelled by the Amsterdamers must be carried on on a national scale."

This paragraph shows that the Frankfurt Party Congress made decisions which are binding, at least up to the Comintern Congress, not only as far as fundamental questions, but also as far as the question of those who were either expelled from the unions or left them on their own accord, are concerned.

I maintain that the victory of our left at the Frankfurt Party Congress over Brandler was not only due to the exposure of the sins committed by the latter in October, but also by concessions made in connection with the trade union question.

Here is another proof. A meeting of officials of the Berlin branch of the German Communist Party, which was attended by about 1000 people, adopted a resolution which contains the following paragraph:

"After laying down the political lines of action, the trade union congress must immediately take in hand the organisational construction of industrial organisations with a uniform leadership for all questions."

Yet another proof. The Commission, elected by the Berlin-Brandenburg workers' district congress for the purpose of deciding on uniform lines for the congress, resolved unanimously:

"Wherever independent unions adhering to the National Workers' Committee (R.A.A.) exist, they have, according to the lines to be laid down by the R.A.A., freedom of action and movement on a national scale among the unorganised of their vocational or industrial group."

It has been asserted that the independent unions' attitude is: leave the trade unions and form immediately industrial unions on a national scale.

I declare that all the unions adhering to the independent Berlin cartel, have repeatedly stated that nothing is further from their minds than withdrawing their members from the old unions. But on the strength of the Frankfurt resolution, they consider themselves not only justified but even under the obligation to take into the cartel the unorganised, as well as those who were expelled or left the unions on their own accord, for the purpose of making this cartel an industrial organisation. If Losovsky comes here with the assertion that industrial unions are not necessary and that we do not stand in need of new forms of struggle, we say that this is wrong. We do stand in need of new forms for our fight, for there is nothing to show that the Amsterdamers will not continue their measures with increased vigour.

I should like to dispel another notion. A decision was made at the Frankfurt Party Congress which is erroneous, namely that it is possible to carry on mass struggles in time of actions without a solid organisation and only with the help of factory councils. In countries with a well-trained and organised working class, political fights can only be won if one has developed organisational forms wherever they exist and bringing new forms into existence where there are none.

Neither are factory nuclei organisations capable of conducting long strikes of an economic and political nature.

Our task and our demands are: to do our utmost that the masses are brought into motion and into our fight. And if we use for this purpose the means and methods created by the Frankfurt Party Congress, we shall be following the lines which were proposed not only by the German Communist Party but also by the Comintern.

There is one point on which I agree with Heckert. He demanded under any circumstances whatever the formation of a cartel of workers engaged in the fight. This is a thing which in Germany, and I believe also in other countries is absolutely necessary. We welcome such a statement, but we would also like comrade Heckert to apply the same standard to other organisations, and not to condemn the cartel of the independent Berlin organisations as a menace to our movement.

The position of the independent unions in Germany is: we do not advocate: leave the trade unions, but we say distinctly: the unorganised must not be amalgamated through factory councils, the expelled and those who have left the unions must not be amalgamated through all kinds of loose formations. They must be formed into unions in order to be developed into industrial organisations.

A few more words on conditions outside. The negotiations between the Russian and the British trade unions are continued to day and have a bearing on all trade union actions throughout the world. If these negotiations were to end in successful re-union of all workers in uniform trade unions with a uniform leadership of the proletarian fight and with the preservation of communist control, the action of the Russian comrades will have had good results. But if, as we are afraid, the opposite were to happen, it would mean an enormous set-back for the trade union movement throughout the world.

In conclusion: what I said here was not an expression of my personal opinions. It is the opinion of the independent unions of the 20,000 workers amalgamated in the Berlin cartel.

Twenty-Ninth Session.

Comrade Seelig (Germany):

Comrade Losovsky is mistaken when he says that the capitalist offensive has come to a standstill and that the workers had taken up the offensive. There is much more truth in what Heckert said, namely, that the capitalist offensive has come only to a temporary standstill. The Experts' Report will induce the German bourgeoisie to initiate an even more acute offensive against the workers than ever before. And the more acute the class struggle, the more acute will be the fight in the trade unions between the revolutionary masses and the reformist leaders. Our fight cannot be successful unless we capture the trade unions and therefore we must do our utmost to remain in the trade unions. It is self-evident that the expulsionist tactics of the reformist bureaucrats will grow more acute as communists increase their activity and influence. On our part, it would be the greatest mistake possible to form parallel organisations. Even the last unity congress of Hand and Brain Workers recognised this. There are big and serious fights ahead of us in Germany. Therefore it is incomprehensible to us that there can be comrades who expect to find in the British trade-union movement a left wing, with which it would be possible to follow another line of action. We are therefore very glad that our Russian comrades have not encouraged this idea. They will thereby make our work in the trade unions and also our opposition to comrade Schultze's conception easier.

Kohn (Czecho-Slovakia):

Although we consider the statement, that the general retreat of the workers has come to a standstill, an exaggeration, we say, at least for our country, where we had to resist a very strong capitalist offensive, that during the last twelve months, the workers seem inclined to extend the offensive against the capitalists. We would be bad strategists if we did not attempt to co-ordinate in good time these sporadic attempts and if we did not prepare a general workers' offensive. As to tactics within the trade unions, one is not far wrong in saying that the unity slogan is the best to approach the masses with. But it would be wrong to deny the fact that a proper application of the tactics of capture would subject large sections of workers who are under our influence to expulsion from the trade unions by the reformists. As soon as this happens we must begin to organise these workers. In Czecho-slovakia, we have already our own trade unions, which came into being through the split tactics of the reformists. But our Party insists that our comrades, who are still in the reformist unions, should remain there, with the object of carrying on and to bring into the revolutionary unions not individuals but groups. I admit that on this subject, there are differences of opinion among us. We have trade unionists who demand that all communists leave reformist trade unions, and enter into red unions. Our Party fights very energetically against this tendency. On the other hand, we have comrades who take the tactics of capture literally, and do not take into account that we have already our own organisational basis for the revolutionary trade unions. We must know what is the attitude of the Comintern to the decisions of our Bruenner National Conference on the question of trade-union tactics. In Germany, we think that the question of the organisation of the unorganised and expelled is very pressing. It is not a solution if we group the unorganised around the factory councils. Heckert is also right when he says that the unification of the unorganised in small unions, is not of much avail. But Heckert does not say which way he wants to go. In our opinion, it is absolutely necessary to organise the unorganised and expelled from the centre, and on a national scale. Another very important question, is that of International coordination of action. During the miners' strike in the Ruhr district, we waited impatiently for unification with our German comrades. It is absolutely necessary to have permanent international committees of action for the most important branches of industry. We have in our country a factory councils' movement. We brought it into being during the German October events. After the German defeat, the movement went down, but we revived it during the Ruhr strike. We will do our utmost for this movement, for we know that it means the realisation of united-front tactics from below.

Comrade Semard:

There is an important point to which the French delegation desires to call the attention of the Congress, to the question of organic unity. We would like, however, to reply to a few criticisms raised by our Comrade Losovsky in regard to the trade-union commissions of our Party. It is evident that the trade union commissions in France are weak. Nevertheless we may say that the Party has accomplished a vast amount of work in this respect.

In regard to the activity of communists within the reformist trade-unions, we admit it to be feeble, but this is due to the feeble position of communists within the reformist unions. The only unions in which we carry on this activity are the textile unions of the North.

I am surprised at the attitude taken by the German comrades on the question of international unity. We think that the tactics of unity are the means of winning over the reformist masses which still follow their leaders, and that by penetrating to these masses, we shall be able to expose the treachery of their leaders. We could not do so by isolating ourselves as comrade Bordiga does.

Bordiga tells us that the basis of the united front can be found in organisations of the working class other than the political parties, that is in the organisations that may be captured by trade-unionist propaganda.

We have the experiences of scission in France. We know its detrimental effects to the revolutionary movement. The working class is against the reformist leaders, but it is for unity with the masses of the workers, and it thinks that negotiations may be carried on with the reformist leaders.

We do not follow our German comrades when they declare their repugnance at meeting the reformist leaders. We are told that the masses in Germany are disgusted with the reformists as a result of the October movement. Nevertheless the situation in Germany today is not the same as it was.

At the Vienna Congress the chief question was that of the relations with the national professional federations. In view of the left position taken by certain of these federations within the Amsterdam International, it is our duty to support these industrial federations which are tactically with us for the achievement of unity in the trade unions.

We feel sure that the reformist bloc of Amsterdam has its cracks. We may say that into these cracks we have driven the wedge of our tactics of the united front. Today we must drive in the wedge of organic international unity, and we are in agreement with the theses presented by comrade Losovsky, because we think they will permit the communist parties to extend their influence among the proletarian masses.

We are told that the Russian Communist Party is of the opinion that the present movement would be most propitious for a re-union of all the trade-union forces. On the other hand, the German delegation thinks the present stage of the revolutionary movement unpropitious for such an action. We fail to see the reason for the assertion that the international workers' movement is not right for the tactics of unity.

I am convinced that all the workers, without the distinction of tendencies are in favour of unity in the trade unions, and we would commit a grave mistake by failing to take advantage of this tendency and of this desire for unity which manifest itself among the large masses of the workers.

In France, although we were slow in applying the tactics of the united front at the outset, we started on this work as soon as we were able to. We urge our German comrades as well as our Italian comrades, to accept the theses of our comrade Losovsky, and to work in common for the integral application of the tactics of the united front and of the tactics of organic unity.

Comrade Kucher (America):

I doubt whether what comrade Losovsky said about the slackening of the offensive of capital is applicable to the United States, for we find that in the basis industries the drive has intensified and we expect the employers to take full advantage of the coming crisis to increase hours and decrease wages.

We have a different situation to meet in America than have our European comrades who must combat the social democratic reformist trade-unions. The A. F. of L. is not affiliated with Amsterdam, and although it is more reactionary than the European organisations, our problem is probably more simple.

I am opposed to the proposals of the Russian trade-unions to attempt affiliation with Amsterdam, but on the other hand

I cannot support the position taken by Comrade Schultze, I maintain that if there is to be any break in the unions, we must leave it to the reformists to bring about the break. We must maintain unity as long as possible; but we must be careful not to make a fetish of unity and carry it to an extreme.

If properly approached, the workers will welcome organisation after the last two years of economic oppression. It is impossible to bring the masses into the A. F. of L. because of the latter's own policy of refusing to organise the unskilled workers.

We intend submitting several proposals to Profintern, including the following: That the tendency to form independent unions in America be left to develop; to make an effort to bring the large number of independent unions in America into some sort of organisation which will serve as a center of common action; that the Committee of Action be definitely known as the representative of the R. I. L. U. and serve to correlate the efforts being made within the craft unions and the industrial unions.

The policy of the Profintern towards the I. W. W. in the past has been wrong. The I. W. W. have splendid revolutionary elements among them who are open to communist propaganda. They are not a purely anarcho-syndicalist group, and, if properly approached, could be won over.

There is great unrest among the workers at present because of the economic pressure of the last 2 or 3 years, and this must be taken advantage of by the communists to organise the workers into communist-controlled unions, otherwise some other group, hostile to communism, will take the initiative.

We have two alternatives: 1) to form independent unions, and 2) to strengthen the industrial unions.

The danger of dualism is not great in America. The first task is to organise the workers, and the danger of splits will be met as it arises.

Bordiga:

I wanted to limit myself today to a very brief declaration, but comrade Semard's speech compels me to deal a little more fully with the very delicate question of international unity. First of all, I wish to make it perfectly clear that the Left Wing of the Italian Communist Party has always been opposed to the tactics of leaving reformist trade-unions. There is a new question before the Congress—the question of trade union unity. Bordiga is against it. This is a sufficient reason why the whole Congress should decide for international unity.

Semard said to us: As you are in favour of united-front tactics in the trade unions, you must also be in favour of unity on the field of organisation. These are two utterly different problems. We cannot defend here a thesis which says: If you accept the united front, you must accept unity. For if that were so, comrades who accept the united front between political parties should accept also the principle of organic unity of political parties.

As to the question of fusion of the Profintern with the Amsterdam International I will say only that this is a resolution which can be made by only the Congress of the Communist International. This problem cannot be solved by any other organ, not by the Profintern, nor by the Enlarged Executive or by any special Commission. If this problem is to be discussed here, we will oppose this idea which tends to bring about the union of the two existing trade union organisations.

The conditions advanced for the realisation of this union are such that they must inevitably meet with a refusal on the part of the Amsterdam International. You say: All he better! We shall bring forward the proposal: Amsterdam will refuse, and this will be one more proof for the workers that we are for unity. But what will be really the impression made by this on the working class? I am afraid that the workers will think that we tried to liquidate our International and that this liquidation has not taken place only because Amsterdam refused our proposals. This will make our work very difficult.

There is much talk about the Amsterdam Left Wing, and one wants to impress us with the importance of the position taken up by it. In our opinion, the proposal of trade union unity is a proposal which shows that there is in reality an extreme Right tendency in the policy of this Congress on the subject of united-front tactics. It is said that there is an intention to liquidate the illusion of a coalition between Communists and left social-democrats, whose political importance is supposed to have been exaggerated. At the same time, by admitting the existence of a left wing in the Amsterdam International we are asked to

throw ourselves into the arms of this left wing about which we are to indulge in the same old illusions.

As Semard's speech brought us forcibly into the forefront, we are compelled to oppose the proposal which was just made in connection with the Red International of Labour Unions. We are compelled to assert once more that of all parties, it is the French Party which, with the help of the other sections of the International, must be driven towards tactics of direct and courageous intervention by Communist Parties in the general mass-movement.

After Comrade Bordiga concluded, Comrade Zinoviev

spoke. His speech will be published later.

Rienzi (Italy):

Comrade Bordiga made use of the expression "liquidation of the Red International of Labour Unions" as a possible and even probable result of the unity proposals. I think that it is very dangerous to use such a term, and to bring such expressions into our unity campaign.

The Red Trade-Union International was established in 1920 because it was generally felt that there must be a revolutionary central organisation for the proletarian trade-union movement. Moreover, the attitude taken up by the Amsterdam leaders during the war, had made the relations of the trade-union movement of the different countries very difficult. The Amsterdam International had become a fancy international, and it is self-evident that the initiation of the Red International of Labour Unions was in the interests of unity.

Is it possible to speak of liquidation? Certainly not. Every communist thinks that unity tactics are the continuation of the struggle inaugurated by the establishment of the Red International of Labour Unions.

For some time, we had a situation which could be called favourable, because we had all the advantages of the defence of unity. Is the position the same today? I think not. I am of the opinion that we must expect an offensive by the Amsterdam reformists who will endeavour to get us out of this position. That is why I think that unity tactics can be looked upon as tactics which will enable us to retain the initiative in the fight against the reformists. For on the domain of unity, as well as on any other, we must always be masters of the situation.

As far as Italy is concerned, we say that the unity campaign will be favourable to the campaign which we must initiate for the return of the masses to the trade unions. This campaign for unity will preserve us from the dilemma before which we are continually placed by the reformists on the national field.

We are convinced that the Communist International and the Red International of Labour Unions will conduct the fight in a manner which will allow us the best possible results on the trade-union as well as on the political field.

Comrade Katayama:

Until the great earthquake in September, the Japanese labour-unions were on the defensive against the general capitalist offensive. Almost all strikes were defeated and the number of members in the trade unions greatly decreased.

But after the earthquake the capitalists tried to put the entire burden of the catastrophe on the shoulders of the workers. The latter finally rebelled and now we find that the strikes are offensive strikes and that the membership of the trade unions is steadily increasing.

We have a united front of labour unions in Japan. The Korean labour-unions are affiliated with the Japanese, and pleasant relations exist between the two.

Until very recently, the Amsterdam International and the Second International had very little influence in the Far East. But now these two organisations are carrying on an intensive propaganda among the Oriental workers and are having some effect. Hitherto the communists had great influence among the trade unions, as there were no social democratic elements to befog the issue. It must be emphasised that although the Amsterdam and Second Internationals may have very little influence in the West, they are becoming increasingly important in the East and must be fought by the communists.

Comrade Dunne (Amerika):

Comrade Losovsky's statement that the capitalist offensive is being checked, holds true for America, for there has been an increase in employment and of wages in the last two years. With regard to fighting the Amsterdam International, it is difficult for the American comrades to do this because the A. F. of L. is even more right than the Amsterdam International. If any understanding is reached with Amsterdam, we hope it will clarify the issue and make the fight a more clear-cut one in America.

With regard to the most important point raised by Comrade Losovsky—that of staying in or leaving the trade unions—I want to state that Schultze is a type, and that we have some Schultzes in America, a small group of which Kucher is the leader. In America there is an old tradition of leaving the trade unions and disrupting them. We had almost succeeded in eradicating this tendency after the Communist International adopted the definite policy of working within the trade unions, until the question arose again in Germany, and called forth an echo in America. I hope this Congress, in taking up this question again, will take a clear-cut, unambiguous stand which will definitely put a stop to the Schultze tendency in all countries.

Kucher tried to give the impression that the American trade-unions are thoroughly reactionary and dominated by the bureaucrats. To him such matters as the coal miners' strike, involving 500,000 militant men, and the railroad workers' strike, involving 400,000 men who defied the government, mean nothing. The Kucher group also maintains that the organised workers will not organise the unorganised, and that the latter are clamouring for organisation. I differ. In America the most intelligent and most militant elements in the labour unions are within the trade unions, and are there because they see that collective action is better than no organisation at all. Communist work in the trade unions is having its effect. The communists have succeeded in influencing several of the recent trade-union conventions. The Communist Party is dominating minority oppositions in the trade unions in the face of the trade-union bureaucrats and the capitalist government. There is no social-democratic group to act as a buffer between the capitalist state and the Communist Party.

The place of the Schultzes is in the unions, where they can get results. Outside the trade unions they are impotent for they are divorced from the masses.

Until this question is definitely settled for America, the American Party will never be a mass party, and until it is thoroughly threshed out in the whole international, we will never be on the high road to word revolution.

Ruth Fischer, Germany:

I have been asked to declare that comrade Schultze did not speak in the name of the party, but in his own name, and that the Central Committee of the German Communist Party, insisted that he should come and state his point of view before the Congress, so that the German workers shall be able to decide either for the standpoint of the World Congress or for the standpoint of comrade Schultze. We have had very serious difficulties with the trade-union question, and we should be fools if we did not admit that we have them still. But we must find a way to overcome them.

As a result of the tactics of the trade-union bureaucracy, which is to a large extent directly responsible for the terrible condition of the working class, a feeling has grown up both among certain sections of the Communist Party and among the masses of the German proletariat, demanding that an end must be made to the reformist trade-unions and believing that a way out of the present misery can be found by creating new industrial-unions. In explaining the situation, I do not in any way do so in order to defend or to give way to this feeling.

We have to remember one very bitter experience: the break with the German Communist Labour Party. This break was essential. And yet it was a great mistake that we were not more patient, and so prevented the loss of thousands of good workers.

Schultze has made a pitiful and cowardly retreat. Whoever heard him speak in Germany knows that he openly advocated the formation of new industrial unions; that he indeed made the senseless proposal that the district committees should form the industrial unions.

The attacks of Comrade Zinoviev compel us to say that on the trade union question we are all guilty. In the past, on the

subject of the Red International of Labour Unions, there were many points with which the leadership of our party was in serious disagreement with Comrade Losovsky.

I should also like to say that in Brandler's Central Committee it was the fashion to come along with the latest news from the court of the German General Federation of Trade Unions to the effect that the latter was about to cause a split within six weeks. I remember January 1923, when we, the Left opposition, came out against these senseless reports, which only served to represent the trade union question in a false light.

Comrades, we should not have brought the subject forward but we did not want the impression to grow up that the present leadership did not always defend the standpoint of the Executive with sufficient energy.

A word or two regarding the situation in the German Party. The Frankfurt Party Congress on the subject of the trade-union question, adopted resolutions which clearly and unmistakably advocated remaining in the trade unions. This was a step forward after the winter crisis, which only those can appreciate who saw the frame of mind of our members at that time. After the Frankfurt Party Congress we made quite definite advances in the trade-union question. We must, however, seriously ask ourselves how we can hasten this advance without endangering it. The proposal made by the Russian comrades for an answer to the proposal of the Amsterdamers is adapted to furthering our trade union work. Not one of us is against this step in principle, but if nothing new in principle crops up, this step should not be taken. The question is: how are we to make propaganda for international unity? No one cherishes the illusion that the unity of the international trade-union movement is possible, however much we may desire it in the interests of the labour movement. The German masses do not believe that it is possible to compel the Amsterdamers to unite the trade-union movement on a revolutionary basis. What we can do is to attempt to show that the Left opposition is not serious, that it is only playing a game and only pretending to invite the Russian trade-unions. If we are to prepare for such a manoeuvre, we must very carefully test the feeling of the masses. It was therefore that the German Party absolutely and energetically opposed the taking of such a decisive step before the masses have got to understand what change had taken place in the trade-union movement and before the "Left" had stated their point of view quite clearly.

In order to carry out this manoeuvre it is essential that those who are responsible for carrying it out understand how the matter lies. It is not merely due to a matter of feeling that all the German comrades are against this step in the present circumstances and that in applying such a tactic certain confused "Right" deviations are possible.

The whole German Party demands that the Congress should come out clearly and decisively against all those in the German Party who refuse to adopt this policy. This however must not be confused with our opinion that at the present moment the question of entering the Amsterdam International may do us more harm than good from the point of view both of Germany and internationally.

Thirtieth Session.

July 7th

Schultze (Germany):

The conflicts are of a profound nature, arising from the tactics and organisation of our Congress and its decisions. And I say: The fault for these vexatious circumstances lies in the whole policy which has been followed in the trade-union question since the formation of the R. I. L. U. I want to draw your attention to the fact that at the first and second Congresses of the Comintern, and at the Inaugural Congress of the R. I. L. U., sentiments were expressed to the effect that under certain circumstances we must not flinch even in the face of a split in the trade unions. I want to draw your attention to the fact that in all countries, after the affiliation and the active participation of our communist sections, new organisations were either formed directly, or indirectly stimulated to organise. It is no easy task to explain to a German worker for five years that the trade-union leaders are rascals and to say at the same time that he must remain in the trade union. You must agree that a reaction to such politics will inevitably set in.

A conflict has arisen on the question of whether the policy adopted by the Executive section in its proposed dealings with the

Amsterdammers is right or wrong. I declare that whoever thinks of liquidating the R. I. L. U. ultimately liquidates the Communist International.

We have told the workers that the trade unions are part and parcel of the capitalist State and that it is our conviction that the capitalist State must be eliminated politically by mass struggle and by the revolution. In my opinion we cannot amputate one leg of the communist movement and expect the Communist International to continue to work in the various countries with a wooden leg.

In connection with the points made by Comrade Zinoviev—we formulated the problem as follows: not to leave the trade unions arbitrarily. Whoever issues such a slogan, is wrong, for there are quite a number of trade unions which cannot quit without giving the bureaucracy the opportunity of celebrating a complete victory. And in reply to the comrade who interjected on Saturday, and asked 'what will become of the communists, and where shall they go—I would say: The communists who today are still in the trade unions, are no communists. (Hear, hear!) For if they had fulfilled their duties as laid down by our Communist work, they would have been thrown out of the trade unions long ago. But wherever the trade unions have split, and where the army of the unorganised is growing larger and larger, there unity must be brought about according to the policies laid down at the first and second World Congress: the formation of industrial organisations in order in this manner to support the working class organisationally as well as politically in its struggles. I believe that we can prove that we are not isolated in this conception of the problem. Comrade Losovsky must realise that his articles came like lightning out of a clear sky into the German Party press. The Berlin District Committee and the Central Committee unanimously condemned Comrade Losovsky's article.

In connection with a certain tendency manifesting itself in Berlin, we have still another united-front conception to present here—not to undermine the principle of the C. I., not to dissolve the R. I. L. U., but to develop it to a mighty standard bearer of the world revolution. We know that we are in the minority at this Congress and that we are preaching to deaf ears.

In conclusion I wish to make a declaration in the name of my colleague Schmidtke of the railroad workers, who has the same conception I have, and of the rest of the trade unions: we shall fight the tendency tooth and nail, which has manifested itself this whole week at the Congress. We warn you against the consequences. If, in spite of everything, you make these decisions, we shall personally deem it our duty to carry them out.

Comrade Gebhardt, on behalf of the German delegation, made the following declaration:

"The German delegation unanimously rejects the views represented by comrade Schuhmacher at the Congress. These views contradict the decisions of the Comintern as well as the decision of the Frankfurt Conference of the Party.

The German delegation declares its determination to carry on the fight against all deviations in the trade-union question, with the utmost vigour and with all the consequences involved."

Comrade Herzog thereupon delivered his concluding speech.

Comrade Herzog:

I was asked by the representatives of the independent unions to the Profintern congress, who are present in this hall, to declare that the representatives of the organisations of the Chemnitz Union of the Building Trades, of the Seamen's Union and of the Building Workers' Manual and Brain Workers' organisation, do not under any circumstance identify themselves with the views held by Schultze. In the second place, it should

be stated that Schultze was never commissioned to speak on behalf of the 20 million members of the independent unions. The independent unions of Berlin have formed an amalgamation, led by comrade Ex, who declared at the last meeting of the National Labour Committee that his organisation did not agree with Schumachers views. The sickly tendency represented by Schumacher in our trade-union movement is substantially confined to Berlin, and even there it is on the decrease. Comrade Schultze made much here of a decision by a general meeting at Berlin, without mentioning that this decision was adopted **before** the Frankfurt Conference of the Party.

Our German comrades were utterly amazed at the statements made by comrade Semard.

At the trade-union conference in Paris, where the unfortunate split occurred, the communist comrades took up no earnest fight against this split. We always maintained the view that this split was a mistake, and so we declared at different congresses. But what did the French comrades at the Fourth World Congress of the Comintern do? They merely asked for a dissolution of the close relations between the Profintern and the Comintern. At the same Congress, there was a vigorous fight, because the French and the Russian comrades wanted the International Propaganda Committees to be converted into independent organisations. We fought against these tendencies, because we gained bitter lessons upon the trade-union question. We have learned something from Heidelberg and we were immensely glad that our standpoint was backed by the Comintern.

Comrade Zinoviev told us about the necessity of a Leninist lesson on the trade-union question. I would merely wish that this be done at the proper time and with all due energy. But I will read a few passages from such a lesson ("Resolution on the German Trade-Union Question," January 1924), and I would ask the Congress to decide if that was the proper attitude, and if it tallied with the present standpoint of Zinoviev. The resolution deals with the relations in Germany and makes some quite proper observations, but it goes on talking about organising the expelled and "others" (by "others" are presumably meant those who quit of their own accord or who are unorganised).

It would have been useful the time to tell the German workers to quit this, and to bring these elements back into the unions. Then you would have had no Schultze, a Schultze to score such easy victories. It was certainly not a German, and not a quarter, nor an eighth of a Schultze, who said here at Moscow: It is time to put a black cross over the German trade-unions (cheers).

On the slogan of "Save the Trade-Unions," the resolution goes on to say:

"The trade unions cannot be saved in the old way. To achieve this end, the trade unions must be thoroughly transformed on the basis of factory councils, and with the aims of industrial organisation and the ousting of reformism by thorough-going revolutionary activity." (Zinoviev: "Quite so!")

Yes, the idea is not wrong in itself. But in its content it was water to the mills of Schultze and Co., and they did not neglect to make full use of it.

Substantially we are in agreement with Comrade Zinoviev on the trade-union question, but we thought it necessary to emphasise here that exaggerations have frequently the opposite effect than the one anticipated.

I think that the workers will understand the task if it is stated by the Comintern clearly and unmistakably, and if a vigorous stand is taken against all deviations. But I earnestly warn against taking any steps without preparations.

We do not wish to see another headstrong step taken without sufficient preparation of the proletariat, particularly on the all-important question of the trade unions.