

FOR THE UNITY OF THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

Finnish Social Democrats Preparing to Split the Trade Unions.

By A. Lozovsky.

In spite of the throttling of the revolution, of the incredible Terror and the illegality of the Communist Party, Finland has a firmly welded, militant and united trade union movement. And, notwithstanding their full support of all the White Guard governments, the influence of the social democrats in the trade unions is not very great, for which reason they have begun a planned campaign aimed at splitting the unions by accusing the Left Wing leadership of submitting to the communists (this in Finland being equal to an order for arrest), and of systematically humiliating the feelings and lowering the dignity of the social democratic workers. As the next Finnish T. U. congress is due to be held shortly, the social democrats have bestirred themselves and begun to elaborate a platform for the split. On December 30th there was held in Helsingfors a meeting of social democrats, mostly politicians and not trade unionists, who discussed the question of what was further to be done. The said meeting decided to present the forthcoming T. U. C. with the following unconditional demands:

- 1) All connections with the Red International of Labour Unions to be broken off, and a break made with the policy of the R. I. L. U.;
- 2) The all-Finnish T. U. Federation shall affiliate organisationally to the Amsterdam International;
- 3) Joint work with the Labour Office of the League of Nations;
- 4) The T. U. C. must elect the whole of the Central Committee and disallow the representation of the individual industrial unions on the directing body;
- 5) For the purpose of directing the T. U. Federation, the Congress shall elect such persons as do not lend an ear to the Communists;
- 6) In the event of the Congress not accepting these demands, the social democratic members of the trade unions shall consider the question of forming a new Federation of the Finnish trade unions.

Such are the six points of the ultimatum which an insignificant minority standing on the platform of democracy presents to a majority of the organised working class. These 'democrats' desire to introduce the rule that the majority should submit to the minority, and to bring this about they publicly charge the Finnish T. U. Federation with belonging to the R. I. L. U., knowing that in Finland any organisational connections with the R. I. L. U. constitute a crime in law. The Finnish T. U. Federation is not affiliated to the R. I. L. U. This the social democrats know. But they demand that a break be made with the policy of the R. I. L. U. as well. Now, this is altogether a much broader conception. The social democrats are demanding that the Federation repudiate all support of the Anglo-Russian Unity Committee, repudiate the struggle for unity, repudiate any class policy, and in order that the change of policy should be quite clear, they there and then set up Amsterdam and the Labour Office of the League of Nations as against the Red International of Labour Unions.

The social-democratic press and social-democratic propaganda and agitation had been working up feeling beforehand for the reception of this ultimatum, and we find the Finnish "Social Democrat" in its issue of December 12th., coming out with an article under the proud title of "Enough of Such Humiliation!" There we read:

"The social democratic workers are going to be inevitably confronted with the question of founding their own federation of trade unions independent of the Communists. The Finnish social democracy must bring forward its own trade union organisation, at the head of which must be placed our own social-democratic responsible persons. Two single independent trade union federations would be able, in the form of a united front, under present conditions to present to the employer and Capital stronger and more

categorical demands than such a trade union organisation, the impotence of which is to be found precisely in the fact that the social democratic worker element are 'swept off the political board' of the Finnish T. U. Federation by reason of the intolerable Communist dictatorship. The activities of the Communists grew in the Federation with a rapidity equal to the passivity of the social democrats. In consequence of the development of such a tendency complete bankruptcy awaits the social democrats. For some time past, we have been politically sick in the trade union movement as well. Today, this 'infirmity of passivity' has gone to such lengths that only a bold operation can save independent social democratic trade union activities from death. And such an operation must therefore be performed as speedily as possible. We must present the Trade Union Congress with such demands as will secure for the social democracy, the biggest political party in the country, its corresponding influence in the trade union movement. And that without any indefinite compromises. Should this not be done, the social democratic workers must immediately leave the Communist Federation and found one of their own, which would enter the Amsterdam International and would at once receive from it both moral and material support."

We have quoted this lengthy extract from this most impudent and shameless article in order to show these supporters of Amsterdam in their true light. The six above-mentioned demands are entirely in accord with the tone of this provocateur's article, and any comments thereon would only detract from the pristine charm of such social democratic cynicism. What do they care what the majority of the Finnish proletariat think on the matter? They want to have their own trade union federation, and to do this they are prepared to split a firmly welded organisation and thereby weaken the Finnish working class' powers of resistance. And all this for the glory of Democracy, Amsterdam and the League of Nations!

On the eve of the previous Finnish T. U. Congress, some eighteen months ago, the social democrats made an attempt to split the congress, but their attack was beaten back, with great losses for social democracy. Today, having apparently come to an understanding with the Government, a new attack is being begun which may lead to the secession of part of the workers from the national proletarian organisation of the trade unions. We say: "may lead" to that —if the supporters of unity in Finland, and they form the overwhelming majority, do not frustrate the sinister plans of the Finnish Amsterdammers.

From the example of Finland a good idea may be gained of the Amsterdammers' tactics. Many of the Left friends of unity in Britain think at times that the Communists are to blame for the disruption of the trade unions. The facts of the case show the very reverse. The Communist International and the R. I. L. U. possess a strong minority in all Amsterdam organisations, yet they have never called for disruption, and whenever voices have been raised in favour of disruption they have been at once ruthlessly and severely put in their right places. It is quite different with the Second and Amsterdam Internationals. The Finnish social democrats are promising the workers the moral and material assistance of the Amsterdam International. Now, has this have been done without any preliminary negotiations? Can it be that the opponents of unity heading the Amsterdam International know nothing about this matter? If they know nothing about it, how is it that the Finnish social democrats promise not only moral, but also material support from Amsterdam?

If the Amsterdam leaders were not sympathetic to this split, would they have published the note that appeared in their bulletin of January 5th, regarding the crisis in the Finnish T. U. movement which concludes with the most remarkable (in the sense of disruption) words: "The possibility is not excluded that the disorganising activities of the Communists in the trade unions will finally lead to the disruption of the Trade Union Federation?"

The Finnish social democracy hopes to succeed in Balkanising the Finnish labour movement, i. e., with the assistance of the police, the bourgeois courts, and the passing of sentences of hard labour, to do the same thing that the Social democrats have done in Yugoslavia, Roumania, and Bulgaria — suppress the revolutionary trade unions and set up their own social democratic 'independent' trade union organisation. The

Finnish social democrats, however, have reckoned without their host, in this case the Finnish proletariat; and the Finnish proletariat is so strongly organised and so class conscious that it will be fully able to repel this fresh attack on the part of the Finnish social-provocateurs.

The Red International of Labour Unions to the Congress of Independent Trade Unions of Yugoslavia.

Moscow, 18th January 1920.

The Executive Bureau of the Red International of Labour Unions has sent the following message to the Congress of the Independent Trade Unions of Yugoslavia:

"The Executive Bureau of the R. I. L. U. sends through your Congress its brotherly greetings to the working class of Yugoslavia and greatly regrets that it is unable to send an official delegation in order to present the standpoint of the R. I. L. U. as to how the unity of the trade union movement, both nationally and internationally, can be achieved. We have not applied for a visa to enter your country as we know how the Yugoslavian government treats representatives of the revolutionary trade union movement.

We have repeatedly put forward the standpoint of the R. I. L. U. regarding unity. We are striving for the amalgamation of parallel organisations in every country on the basis of democratic centralism and the submission of the minority to the majority. We supported the Anglo-Russian Unity Committee which is composed of two organisations belonging to two different Internationals, as a practical proof of the possibility of joint actions, and therefore of the possibility of organisatory unity. We are endeavouring to bring about the convocation of an International Unity Congress at which all trade union organisations, including those belonging to the R. I. L. U. or to the Amsterdam International, as well as those standing outside these Internationals, will be represented according to the size of their membership. We are striving to set up a united fighting International for the fight against fascism, against reaction and against the attacks of capitalism.

The Executive Bureau of the R. I. L. U. is firmly convinced that your Congress will adopt every measure in order to establish united, firmly-welded trade union organisations in Yugoslavia and that it will do everything in its power in order, along with the workers of other countries, to establish the unity of the International Trade Union Movement.

Long live the working class of Yugoslavia!

Long live the united, firmly knit trade union movement of Yugoslavia!

Long live the united fighting International of the trade unions!"

THE CHILDREN'S MOVEMENT

Appeal to the Workers' Children of the Whole World.

In all countries in which capitalism still prevails the workers have to endure great hardships, hunger and misery. But the greatest sacrifices in these days are those which the Bulgarian workers' and peasants' children have to make for the cause of the emancipation of the proletariat and its children.

The workers and peasants in Bulgaria have already several times attempted to free themselves from their oppressors. But they have been repeatedly defeated. In the revolt to which the Bulgarian revolutionaries were driven in September 1923, the capitalists were victorious. In the struggles which have been conducted for over three years, 20,000 revolutionary workers and peasants have had to lay down their lives for the revolution. Many workers' and peasants' children have also been ruthlessly murdered by the Bulgarian reactionaries.

At present there are still in Bulgaria over 4000 workers and peasants in prison. The children of the murdered and imprisoned fathers and mothers are compelled to live a terrible life of misery and of the greatest hardships. They are left entirely to their fate.