

organize their opposition. Moreover, these extra-union organizations act within and without the trade unions, and if they cannot get the unions to act in a crisis these extra-union organizations act independently of the unions and of the bureaucracy—they are the most adequate means of driving the unions to more revolutionary action and of mobilizing the masses for the aggressive struggle against capitalism. In England and in the United States these extra-union organizations have been produced by life itself, by the experience of the struggle of the workers; it is through the creation of such extra-union organizations that the Communists can best become the leaders of the immediate economic struggle of the working class.

What we insist upon is not leaving the old unions, but organizing an aggressive, decisive struggle in the unions and against the bureaucracy

It is also necessary to carry on this struggle outside of the old unions. This is accomplished by the organization of new, independent unions. It is absolutely necessary that the organization of such unions (and secessions from the old unions) be based upon objective conditions, and express the mass struggle itself. But it is equally necessary not to be afraid of new unions. It is just as harmful to act in general against splits and new unions (where these concern masses) as it is to split in small groups thereby isolating ourselves from the masses. But after all, a split is a decisive, aggressive act, and may accomplish more revolutionary agitation than years of peaceful routine work in the unions. Moreover, by uniting the independent industrial unions with the extra-union organizations in the old unions, we perfect a force that will batter from within and without; and which, inspired and dominated by the Communists, will constitute a powerful factor in mobilizing the masses for action. We are in a revolutionary epoch, and our fundamental task is to liberate the masses for action—we cannot depend upon the peaceful prolonged process of capturing the bureaucracy.

Parallel with this problem of extra-union organizations is the problem of industrial unionism as against the craft form of unionism. This problem has three aspects:

1) Industrial unionism is the organization expression of the unorganized unskilled workers (which in the United States comprise the majority of the industrial proletariat). The construction of new generally implies the adaptation of industrial unionism. Industrial unionism is the basis for the development of revolutionary unionism.

2) The agitation for industrial unionism is a necessary part of our work in

the old unions. These unions mostly organized on the antiquated bases of crafts, are, under the pressure of concentrated industry, unable to really unite the workers in the unions and carry on an aggressive struggle. The workers in the old unions revolt against the limitations of the forms as well as the purposes of the trade-unions; and we must urge upon them the industrial union form of organization—an indispensable phase of our struggle to transform and revolutionize the old unions.

3) The unions will, after the conquest of political power, become organs of the administration of industry under the proletarian state. Craft unions cannot, because of their form of organization corresponding to integrated industry, function as means of the management of industry. Industrial unions are necessary, as is proven by the Russian experience. The larger the industrial unions and the understanding of industrial unionism, the easier will be the task of economic reconstruction after the revolutionary conquest of power. This is the conception of unionism developed and formulated by the American movement; and we are convinced that it is an indispensable phase of Communist tactics.

The Second Address

I wonder why comrades Radek and Zinoviev are so wrought up. They insist on emphasizing the necessity of working in the unions—but that is an argument only against the representative of the United Communist Party of America, who is opposed to working in the old unions. But the position of the U. C. P. is emphatically not that of the other comrades who are criticizing comrade Radek's theses. In my opening address I emphasized my acceptance of working in the old unions, not simply because of the arguments made here, but because the whole experience of the American movement imposes that policy upon us. The Shop Stewards—are they against working in the old unions? It would be preposterous to assert that; the Shop Stewards and similar organizations are not a part of the old unions, they are the most adequate expression of the Radek-Zinoviev policy of working in the labor unions. I have said, as concerns the United States, that approximately 80 per cent of the workers are unorganized; but nevertheless it is impossible to abandon the old reactionary unions; and if for no other, because of one particular reason: the majority of the unorganized workers are foreigners, the majority of the organized Americans; we must make our contact with these American workers, since they will necessarily assume the leadership in the Revolution,—not in the theory but in the action of Revolution.

But how are you going to work in the old unions? That is the crucial question—the question of methods and means. When you say, work in the old unions, you say much—and nothing. It is necessary to have Communist groups in the old unions; but what are these to do? Are they simply to preach abstract Communism? Radek answers, no: they must become the leaders of the economic struggle of the workers. Very well; but that requires means; and the means, we insist, do not consist of pacific penetration of the unions, of trying to elect new officials in place of the old, of making a fetish of maintaining the old organizations and forms of unionism; the means consist of aggressive struggle in the unions, of mobilizing the masses against the bureaucracy and liberating them, of the agitation for and construction of extra-union organizations and industrial unions. Comrade Radek recognizes and accepts this, but does not make it a living and pulsing part of his theses; Radek is so absorbed with the problems in Germany, where certain people have issued the slogan "abandon the old unions," that he over-emphasizes the other policy.

And again because of concentration on Germany, Radek treats very gently the problem of organizing new and secession unions. Under certain conditions a split is necessary; it must not be forced; but equally we must not allow a split to be imposed on us, we must not be like lambs, we must possess a policy on new unions that gives us the initiative in the matter and not our enemies. After all, a split is in a measure a revolutionary act; it may accomplish more in driving the masses onward than months and years of ordinary agitation; sometimes it may be necessary, even, to force a split. It is action that we insist upon. It is on the basis of action, and not theoretical divergences, that splits must come.

Moreover, we insist upon recognition of the new forms that are developing in unionism. Particularly in England and America, this development is of the utmost importance. We must objectively study these developments, learn from them, adapt our theory to the peculiar variations and forms of life itself. That is revolutionary practice; that is what is necessary, particularly on problems of unionism.

We must liberate the masses in the unions for action. Through their economic struggles, through understanding and adapting ourselves to the variations they develop in forms of organization and action, we mobilize them for the Revolution. We must not be abstract, or doctrinaire; we must always realize that it is the action of the masses potentially that develops the means and the forms of the final revolutionary struggle.