

(1) — The anarcho-syndicalist movement itself requires to act according to a political line that, each time, must be the result of a collective analysis of the general effect of the political and national and international social situation.

The tactic "All or Nothing" is impossible in the anti-fascist struggle as well as in the periods of declared revolution, there must be adjustment with the possibility of partial realizations and partial syndicalist intervention in the life of one or many countries. For such an attitude two things must be prepared: a gradual tactic must be elaborated which will have reference to the obtaining of those partial realizations and interventions, to their defense, and to methods of collaboration with other sections and official organizations of bourgeois society which remain. Such a tactic, elaborated collectively, on the other hand, must be applied equally by all, based on an organic discipline that, up to the present, has not been possible due to the exaggerated influence of individualism upon anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism.

(2) — Notwithstanding the tension existing between the numerically important anarcho-syndicalist organizations, obliged to have an attitude of collective responsibility, and the weaker organizations that are devoted solely to propaganda, international anarcho-syndicalism must bring about a reorganization and a unification for its international activity.

The C.N.T. in a manner of legitimate defense before the world or all the world and also before the incomprehension or a large number of its own foreign comrades, and under the inspiration of certain others who had an interest in that propaganda, thought it ought to create its own international propaganda apart from that of the I.W.M.A., which has, in certain cases, harmed the interests of the international anarcho-syndicalist movement. That interested eyes see now understanding and it was only after the Special Congress of the I.W.M.A. in December, 1937, that a favourable change began to operate for a real collaboration between the C.N.T. and the I.W.M.A. and vice versa. But only an objective and systematic mutual penetration will be able to guarantee a work that, in all its plans, will be truly fertile. That does not prevent the C.N.T. — within the I.W.M.A. and in accord with it always — from maintaining or creating a network of international propaganda which will be wholly and completely C.N.T. or even C.N.T. I.G.T. in place of that of definite anarcho-syndicalism. But all this must be organized (as I have indicated accordingly in paragraph 1), upon the basis of a political line common to all the anarcho-syndicalist sections.

(3) — The fact that responsible intervention by one of our sections in a revolutionary war which, because of the tension of the inter-

critical proletariat, took the aspect of a war for national independence, become necessary, obliges us, after the absolutely necessary revision of certain anti-imperialist conceptions, to prescribe the principles of anti-imperialism and anti-nationalism of the I.W.M.A. and all its sections, in new forms. This is necessary in order to avoid one of these sections or the I.W.M.A. itself, through lack of historical foresight, from being used as an instrument in the hands of some imperialist power.

This necessity imposes itself without there being any need to add details. Besides, I have no wish to speak again of certain symptoms due to the fact that I have already drawn attention to them in my report given at the Special Congress of the I.W.M.A.

We can be sure then, dear that the social and political development up to 1906, have justified a thousand times the fundamental ideas expressed in the Congress of the formation of the I.W.M.A. (December 1902 — January 1903). We are sure also that the Spanish experience has confirmed once more the worthy principles of anarcho-syndicalism in its methods of struggle and in its constructive principles. It is only necessary that at the same time, we recognize the mistakes made.

Only a dogmatic spirit, completely incapable of occupying itself with the practical side of life can pretend that it is able to have a theory that, without ever having had the occasion to apply it, is confirmed integrally in its first attempt at total or partial accomplishment. It is impossible. The theory is abstract, esthetic, it is merely an intellectual construction. But in life there are many irrational factors. The psychology of the masses is not the same as that of a man of advanced ideas who in his spiritual isolation reflects upon the best methods for social emancipation. A practical conception, such as that of revolutionary syndicalism, born of the struggle for daily bread within capitalist society, contains within itself the inspiration of social ideas that still advance and correct forces all the necessities of a period of collective responsibility of organization and of profound social separations and revolutionary possibilities. These must be understood.

If we understand the immediate necessities, if we try to learn something of the sufferings and the sacrifices of our Spanish comrades, these sufferings and sacrifices will not have been in vain. We will remain faithful to the spirit that inspired the founders of the I.W.M.A. and those that went before them. Anarcho-syndicalism is faced with a decision: whether it will stagnate into some kind of

sectarianism and cease to be a factor in the struggle — which would mean the total isolation of our Spanish comrades — or whether it will begin to be a real force that will collect and collaborate efficiently in the bringing together of a new working-class movement in all lands, a movement that will be in the position to realise the aspirations of liberty and justice of the first International which have been so cruelly injured by traditional socialism.

E.




The possibilities of the I.W.M.A.

It is true that the I.W.M.A. has not achieved all that which it set out to do at its foundation. Almost a whole series of countries have fallen victims to fascism and the movements in these countries were eliminated from public life. Everywhere, the Russian propaganda has created numerous obstacles to our activity. These obstacles were particularly noticeable in the years that followed the coming to power of bolshevism. If the I.W.M.A. had done nothing more than oppose a barrier to actual communism and prevented its influx into the Electoral and anarcho-syndicalist centres, that would have been an effect worthy of its work.

But the events of Spain have, without doubt, contributed very much to draw the public attention of the entire world upon our movement in such a manner that, today, the time seems to have come when the I.W.M.A. will find better than ever before, a favourable field for its activities.

(Extract from a letter of Rudolph Becker, dated 23 October, 1937.)



Regarding the Boycott and Embargo Plan elaborated by the I.W.M.A.

Conforming to the decision taken at the Special Congress of the I. W. M. A., held in Paris from the 6th to the 17th December 1937, the newly appointed Secretariat appealed to the International Syndicalist Federation (F. S. I.) to bring about the united action of the international syndicalist forces with a view to organising the universal boycott of merchant ships, produce, merchandise and other goods from the fascist countries. However, the I. W. M. A. did not receive a favourable reply from the F. S. I.

Therefore it remained for the Secretariat of the I. W. M. A., faithful to the mandate it had been given by the Congress, to work out the means for putting into practice the measures of economic restraint decided upon by the Special Congress. The Secretariat did so, and no doubt by the time these lines appear in print, all the I. W. M. A. centres will have received copies of the Plan. Consequently, they will be in the position to study it and to give it, each in his own sphere, the details necessary for its rapid and rational application.

I think the Plan speaks for itself and does not require much further commentary on my part. Nevertheless I think it will serve a useful purpose if I point out here the sentiments that guided the Secretariat in the development of the Plan, if I give the reasons for our choice, and if I explain what moved us to develop the decision taken by the Congress in such a natural fashion.

CONCEPTION AND ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PLAN

Above everything else, the Secretariat agreed to give a solid legal base to the Plan. It desired essentially that the Plan rest, not only on the decision of the Congress, but on an incontestable course with which public opinion was familiar and which could not be disputed by our adversaries. In our opinion, it was impossible to discover a more solid basis than that which was supplied to us in Article 16 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, the most important part of the International Pact of Geneva.

Moreover, the knowledge of this particular Article—and this implies the knowledge of the complete text—is popular among the workers, public opinion in general, political parties and economic, pacifist and philosophical groups of all kinds. And it was absolutely certain that neither the governments nor the so-called anti-fascist parties and groups

could be opposed to the provisions of this Article. Those provisions are such that if they had been put into force—under the conditions for which they provided—there could have been no doubt that neither Italy, Germany, nor Japan would have been able to continue their brigand and exterminating operations for one hour more either in Spain or China; and that France himself, deprived of all assistance, would have been conquered within a few weeks as he could have been.

We sought and exposed the reasons why Article 16, contrary to the solemn agreements taken by the Powers assembled at Geneva, was not applied. To give an insupportable base to the Plan of the I.W.M.A., to demonstrate the cause of the total bankruptcy of the governments, was a primordial and indispensable need and with such a base, we stood on firm ground.

By thus giving a legal base with regard to the application of Art. 16, the execution of acts so deplorable and so prejudicial to the cause of peace and the interests of those people menaced by fascism or those made the object of its present lust for power, would be made impossible. And as it was necessary to interpretate in a just, intelligent and business fashion, the provisions of the Covenant with the purpose of mobilizing the masses on a firm basis in order to force their governments and all those who maintain them, to act in conformity with their pledged agreements and in accordance with the demands of a situation that became more formidable each day.

The I.W.M.A. Secretariat arrived at the position where it had to state immediately that, on the one hand, the governments must be compelled to ignore certain particular interests that were opposed to the solution of questions and, on the other hand, that the provisions of Art. 16 of the Covenant must be honored. The arguments relative to these two problems are to be found in the Plan itself. We are of the opinion that these arguments cannot be opposed by any person of good faith no matter what his situation and responsibility might be.

PUTTING INTO OPERATION the DECISION of CONGRESS

After a serious examination of the problem which it had to solve, and after having analyzed the text of Article 16 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, the Secretariat was compelled, logically, to approve the idea of developing and completing the decisions of the Special Congress of the I.W.M.A. There is no doubt that if the Congress itself had had the time necessary to study the whole question it would have acted and decided in the same manner as did the Secretariat.

On the other hand, the Secretariat thought—and in my opinion, with reason—that it could not possibly propose a Plan that admitted sanctions that were of less importance than those provided for in the Covenant itself. As a beginning, as has been stated before, these means had to be rendered practicable and they had to be made known and accepted. Thus the Secretariat thought it right to add the embargo to the boycott with the purpose of creating a complete circle round the totalitarian states and this by this double application give all the necessary efficiency to the considered measures.

HUMANISING THE MEASURES DECREED BY THE COVENANT OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

Remembering the miseries sustained by the German people during the war of 1914-18 and the opposition of certain Scandinavians previous to the application of economic sanctions, the Secretariat considered the reasons for this opposition in order that the Covenant might be made applicable.

After a minute examination, it listed the merchandise and products which, above, should be made the object of the boycott and embargo. The Secretariat was guided in its choice by the double consideration of not harming the living conditions of the people existing under fascism, and of striking the fascist states in their vulnerable point in such a way as would force them to cease their criminal activities. The Plan which has been elaborated carries evident signs of these considerations.

PROPAGANDA AROUND THE PLAN

So simple, so clear, so business must it be, it is evident that the Plan of the I.W.M.A. will require an intense and constant propaganda for its total understanding and for its application by all—that is, the workers and the consumers. This propaganda must not only convince people of the necessity of facing up to fascism but also the need to revise thoroughly all the false judgements held and above all the need to force the governments to act in an appropriate manner to fulfil their most elementary duty that results from the agreements solemnly taken by them.

Only by the popularisation of this Plan, only by the clarifying of public opinion in all the interested countries, only the justification for action arising as a result of that public opinion, only by the providing of the means to control the governments and bend their will to that of the people, only in this way can the Plan succeed.

The Plan of the I.W.M.A. contains for indication of all the means to employ to attain the desired result.

CONCLUSIONS

In drawing up this Plan, the Secretariat of the I.W.M.A. had not only the desire to fulfil its duty but also it had the conviction that it was giving the workers a weapon of struggle which up to the present they had lacked. It feels certain that apart from the workers affiliated to the I.W.M.A., all those others, irrespective of their affiliation, will make it their duty to participate in the practical work indicated by the Plan for action against overworking, devastating and destructive lassism.

It also wants to think that the International Syndicalist Federation, in view of the evidence and conscious of his duty, will not persist in its unjust and unjustifiable refusal to participate in such an action against fascism at the very time when, notwithstanding its recent victories, lassism is in the midst of an internal and external crisis which is making its existence very precarious indeed.

Certainly the task undertaken by the I.W.M.A. is a difficult one. But it is not insurmountable. I am convinced that with the assistance of everyone, it will have a happy conclusion.

And so, to work! To work immediately!

FRANK BURNARD



EDITOR'S NOTE

Circumstances over which we had no control, have postponed the publication of the first number of our international review, dated for the month of April. The next issue, then for May, will appear at the beginning of the month. The principal cause of the delay was lack of material. We desired to avoid, and we wish to avoid, having the secretaries of the I.W.M.A. as the sole collaborators. At the last minute, we received numerous articles and a great part of these will be reserved for the second and third numbers. We hope that our militant comrades will continue to collaborate in this review with the aim of it becoming a veritable organ of hostile and positive discussion in favour of the common cause, and a preparation for the next Congress of the I.W.M.A. which will take place in the month of August.