

THE SOVIET trade unions have recently carried through a gigantic nationwide celebration marking their 50th anniversary. This is young, by our trade union standards. We have a number of international unions that have gone through a century of uninterrupted existence.

The unions of old Russia were first formed into a national center of some 200,000 members in 1907 under the leadership of the Bolsheviks, later known as Communists. But they led a precarious, mostly underground existence until the 1917 revolution. In that year they skyrocketed to a membership of 2,000,000. Then came a steady growth under the Soviet regime so that today they count 47,000,000 members, about three times the membership of the unions in the United States.

In this country, a union that supervises the administration of the industry's welfare fund, as does the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, considers itself at top rating. In the USSR the trade unions control the administration of the entire cradle to the grave insurance, welfare and benefits system.

To indicate the magnitude, in the first five-year plan the unions had supervision over the expenditure of 10.4 billion rubles. In the fifth 5-year plan (completed last year) the distributed fund amounted to 118 billion rubles.

In the fifth 5-year plan 13.8 million persons were placed by unions in sanatoriums and rest-homes, nearly five times the number in the first plan. In 1956 the unions placed 2,650,000 children of unionists in summer camps. There are at present 18,256 libraries of 1,000 or more books each, in union headquarters with a total of 14 million readers, compared with 8,680 such libraries with 6,597 readers in 1940.

For the same period the number of union clubs and "palaces" grew from 66,600 to 11,187. Many of those are structures that would cost several million dollars by American building cost standards.

The sport activities of the trade unions enrolled as of this year, 6,536,000 persons. The unions have now 1,156 stadiums; 1,193 sport halls and hundreds of other facilities for water sports, physical culture and the like. The unions have 11,000 movie projectors.

ONLY A TRADE union movement that is in political power can have such facilities. Surely the Soviet trade unions are not idle. They must have a lot to do with the life of the country with so large a number of participants. But what about their every-day economic life as shop organizations.

A. Shevchenko, secretary of the Soviet trade unions, writing in Izvestia recently, gave us one barometer: in 1956 there were 6,600,000 factory meetings of unions. This must be taken along with the fact that there are at present 416,000 primary trade union units on a factory or other work location level, 96 percent of the total in the country, that are administered on an entirely voluntary basis. This would indicate that there are some 17,000 units that require one or more full timers—fewer than we have in the American unions.

Thus we get a picture of racist influences in the Brotherhoods than if they stayed independent. And they already made promises to wipe out the race clauses.

By what standards, then, is it suggested that the Teamsters be suspended? We are actually back to the old question that came up every time differences inside labor led to "left" or "right" expulsion or secession: can our united labor movement preserve a framework within which differences can be both respected and fought out, without impairing labor's sacred unity? That principle of unity MUST be the rule or labor's future is, indeed, gloomy.

Labor must be united if the current attacks and new anti-union laws, are to be defeated; if the economic objectives and the congressional elections of 1958 are to be won.

World of Labor

by George Morris



USSR Trade Unions Mark Their 50th Year

many millions actively participating. Surely they aren't twiddling their thumbs. Something must attract them.

We in the United States are currently grappling with the problem of getting at least 10 percent of the trade union membership to take an active part.

WHAT STRUCK ME as I read the many articles and editorials from the Soviet press on the 50th Trade Union Anniversary was the emphasis given the 20th Congress directives that the unions must be more militant and persistent in defense of the living and working conditions of their members. The criticism that the unions too often seek to avoid quarrels with the managements was noted in the speeches at celebrations and in the press.

Widely quoted, as in an Izvestia editorial, is a passage from Lenin that says the unions of a Socialist country no longer have the "economic class struggle" for their basis but, Lenin added, "they have far from lost and for many years, unfortunately, will not lose, such a base as the classless 'economic struggle' in the sense that there is a strug-

gle against bureaucracy, distortion of the Soviet apparatus, in the sense of defending the material and the spiritual interests of the working masses along lines and by methods not provided within that apparatus."

Thus the emphasis is on revitalizing the vast trade union machinery of the USSR for "struggle" through means that will conform to a social system in which the members of the unions are themselves the master. But struggle, nevertheless, it is to be.

In 1956 the Soviet trade unions received 168 visiting delegations from 47 countries. Also 133 Soviet labor delegations visited 25 countries. But America is not among them. Our trade union leadership still refuses to accept an invitation of several years standing to send any group it chooses to visit anywhere they choose in the USSR. As I have said many times before, our American trade union leaders are fearful of facing truth lest they might even have to admit that there is a union movement in the USSR and that some 47,000,000 men and women are actively interested in it.

Midwest Shop Talk

CHICAGO.

JUST TWO PENNIES NOT 40 PERCENT

In a fancy and wordy statement the Chicago Daily News announced that it is raising its price by "just two pennies." This is part of the new technique of raising the cost of living gently. Imagine the holler that would go up if the story said that there would be a 40 percent price increase (which is the truth). Does labor get the same gentle treatment by this paper?

The next day the Sun Times very obligingly reprinted a big hunk of the News statement. Here we go again. Before long the price of all Chicago papers will be seven cents, it seems.

DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE WILL RESUME TOMORROW

WASHINGTON, Sept. 1—Disarmament negotiator Harold E. Stassen believes there is a chance the Soviets may have second thoughts about the West's latest arms proposals and may accept some of them, Administration sources said today.

They said Stassen realizes the prospect for continued disarmament negotiations in London is unpromising. But he contends that no one really knows what the Soviets have in mind until they give their "final word." The talks resume on Tuesday.

Stassen will be flying back to London tomorrow after another conference with Secretary of State John Foster Dulles.

Soviet disarmament negotiator Valerian A. Zorin's rejection of the West's position is not being accepted as final by Stassen, these sources said.

The Western plan calls for a two-year nuclear tests ban, tied to a cutoff in production of fissionable materials and to inspection provisions.

Stassen probably will meet with Dulles again tomorrow morning, but officials said the appointment is not final. He is scheduled to leave for London from New York tomorrow afternoon.

The official reason for Stassen's trip home was that he wanted to attend his son's wedding at Charlottesville.



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