

# International Organization Problems

By A. Losovsky

**I**N the international trade union movement we are witnessing a continuous, if also only gradual, alteration of the old forms of organization. The old craft unions are dying out and their place is being filled by new forms of associated action, which include all the workers of allied trades. The systematic failure of the old craft unions and their weakness in face of the aggression of strongly organized and concentrated capital has brought this about. But the old forms of organization will not vanish of their own accord. The entire old bureaucratic apparatus has become an end in itself for its beneficiaries. Often the need of a few dozen trade union bureaucrats to make a career for themselves exercises a mighty influence on the form of organization.

One of the first consequences of a consolidation of the trade union movement is the lessening of its bureaucratic apparatus. A whole crowd of presidents, vice-presidents, secretaries, and functionaries become simply unnecessary ballast, and the opposition of these superfluous officials to any changes that would deprive them of their secure jobs plays a large part in holding the unions to outworn forms. It is sufficient to take a look at the notorious Gompers machine in America, the complicated machinery of the English trade unions, or the bureaucratic armament of the German movement,

to see what kind of barnacle the trade union apparatus is upon the industrial action of the workers.

Just in this regard does the whole reactionary spirit, the conservativeness and the narrow-mindedness, of the trade union officialdom put itself coarsely in evidence. But notwithstanding the fact that the trade union machinery forms such a hindrance to the development of new forms of organization, this development is taking place. Very worthy of observation in this connection is the industrial union movement in the United States and in England. Thousands of trade union councils and local branches have declared themselves in favor of industrial unionism.

In this connection the sections of the R. I. L. U. have by no means displayed sufficient initiative. The field of the remodeling of the trade union organization is for the masses the most accessible and the easiest to understand. But only the Trade Union Educational League of America has known how to approach this matter in the proper way. They have found it possible to win the approval of the broad working masses for their proposals. Our sections in other countries have almost entirely passed over this problem. Neither in England nor in Germany was a great campaign for the re-organization of the trade unions undertaken.