

Is the Unity of the International Trade Union Movement Possible?

By A. Lozovsky.

That unity is a very beautiful thing and therefore desirable is not disputed for a moment by the bitterest disrupters. We are not faced with the question of unity "in general", or of unity in "principle" or of unity in a very remote future, but with the question whether at the present time, in view of the actual international situation, of the existence of divided, parallel organisations etc. it is possible to attain unity and how it is to be brought about.

We must remark at the outset that the split does not exist in every country. In many countries the followers of the R. I. L. U. are within the organisations affiliated to Amsterdam. In these countries the followers of the R. I. L. U. and the followers of the Amsterdam International are organisatorily united. On the other hand there are a number of countries where parallel organisations exist, and finally, a fairly large number of countries, the trade union movements of which are wholly affiliated to the Red International of Labour Unions.

What obstacles stand in the way of unity? These obstacles can be divided into two groups: 1. organisatory, 2. political obstacles. The existence of parallel organisations inevitably leads to organisatory conservatism and to the effort to retain at all costs the existing forms of organisation. The reformist trade union movement clings with great tenacity to the old traditions and only adapts itself very painfully to the new forms of the class struggle. In the reformist trade union movement the narrow

craft interests come before the interests of the workers of the country as a whole and the interests of the fatherland come before the interests of the international proletariat. It would, however, be a mistake to assume that organisatory conservatism is only confined to the reformists. There are revolutionary workers who suffer from organisatory conservatism and believe that it is best to follow the old road, not to make any sharp turns, not to unite the workers of different tendencies, as this could destroy the organisatory structure.

The organisatory obstacles are, of course, of secondary importance in comparison with the political obstacles. Many comrades ask: "Can we unite with the reformists when they are even against the class struggle?" These comrades desire to lay down conditions regarding unity (break with the bourgeois coalition, fight against the Dawes Plan etc.). To demand from the reformists that they abandon the coalition with the bourgeoisie is to demand the impossible. To make unity dependent upon this implies a breach of unity, for the abandonment of the coalition with the bourgeoisie means the end of reformism.

On the other hand, the most bitter opponents of unity on the side of the reformists submit their conditions to the left wing of the trade union movement. This specially applies to the "Vorwärts", the organ of the German social-fascists. The "Vorwärts" spits poison and gall against unity. It is of course in favour of unity, but desires that the communists shall not organise

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any nuclei, that they shall not incite the workers against the leaders of the trade union movement, that they shall not "calumniate", but faithfully carry out the policy of the black hundred which is conducted by the German social democracy along with the German General Federation of Trade Unions. In this respect the "Vorwärts" fully reflects the view regarding unity which exists in the right wing of the Amsterdam International.

The meaning of all this talk over this theme is that they turn to us and say: "Become reformists and then we shall unite with you!" This astute solution of the problem of unity is typical of the II. International, which leads, ideologically and politically, the reactionary portion of the Amsterdam International. It must be said that all this kind of talk is mere waste of time. The communists have not the least reason for transforming themselves into reformist corpses, and whoever believes that the communists will deviate even a hair's breadth from their principles in arriving at unity does not understand anything of communism or of the problem of unity.

If, however, the reformists maintain their position and the communists theirs, then the unity of the trade union movement is impossible! — the reader will say. No, this would be a thoroughly erroneous conclusion. In fact we do not submit demands to the reformists in order that they shall become communists, and we do not propose to the reformists that they shall occupy themselves with the futile task of debolshevizing the bolsheviks. The revolutionary trade unions of all countries which are in the R. I. L. U. propose, in full agreement with the Communist International, a way which is acceptable to the most bitter opponents of communism in the Amsterdam International, if they will only adopt a somewhat conscientious attitude regarding the interests of the working class.

"We will not submit conditions to one another" says the R. I. L. U. "We will convene a conference of representatives of both Internationals, we will jointly decide the time and place of the **International Unity Congress**, at which the organisations affiliated to the R. I. L. U. and to the Amsterdam International, as well as those trade union organisations which are outside both Internationals, shall be represented. We will discuss at the International Congress the concrete tasks of the struggle against the capitalist offensive and against the fascist reaction. At this congress we will create the **United Trade Union International**.

Whoever has the majority at this congress will carry through their resolutions and will have the majority on the executive body. The constitution of the new International will be in accordance with the standpoint of the majority. At this unity congress the Red International of Labour Unions and the Amsterdam International will declare that they dissolve their organisations and enter into the United International. We communists and revolutionary workers of all countries declare through the Communist International and the R. I. L. U. that if we find ourselves in a minority, that we shall remain in the new International and submit to the discipline of the movement, whilst we shall carry on our fight for influence among the masses. If the opponents of communism make a similar declaration the question will be quite clear.

Let the masses of the workers pronounce judgment as to whose tactics — those of the communists or those of the reformists — are more consistent with the interests of the working class. We are not afraid of bringing our tactics before the court of the many millions of proletarians. May the opponents of communism come forward in an equally open manner as the followers of the R. I. L. U. do and will continue to do.

We ask, what is there in this proposal which can be unacceptable for an honest proletarian, no matter to what tendency he may belong? If the leaders of the Amsterdam International are convinced that they have behind them the overwhelming majority, why are they afraid to attend a congress of this sort? The majority will be with them, and the will of the majority of the congress will decide the political line of the United International. Everything is clear regarding this proposal. We propose to those who everywhere make a great cry over their democratic principles, the most democratic way conceivable for uniting the divided international trade union movement. Meanwhile, however, the opponents of the R. I. L. U. do not desire this proletarian-democratic solution of the question and hide their fear of proletarian democracy by means of the great outcry over the craftiness of the communists.

To mobilise the masses for unity is the most important task at the present moment. The majority of the leaders of the Amsterdam International believe that they will be able to evade

this problem and to patch up the growing fissure in their own ranks which is consequent upon the inexorable radicalisation of the working masses. If the Amsterdam International does not meet the wish of the majority of its own members it will simply collapse and unity will be restored over the heads of the present leaders. This is the reason why we, although we are quite aware of the enormous difficulties which are lying in our path, reply to the question, whether the unity of the international trade union movement is possible: Yes, it is possible and inevitable. Together with the leaders or without the leaders, the divided international trade union movement will in any event be welded together into a powerful anti-capitalist bloc.

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Special Telegrams to the "Inprecorr".

Moscow, 22nd November 1924.

With regard to the article by Oudegeest, the Secretary of the Amsterdam Trade Union International, which appeared in the Berlin "Vorwärts", comrade Lozovsky declares as follows:

"Oudegeest claims that the Amsterdam International carries on the class struggle. It would be a good thing if he would say what he understands by this term, and if he would explain this question along with Jouhaux, Mertens and Leipart. Oudegeest is undoubtedly confusing the Communist International and its 21 conditions and the Red International of Labour Unions which has never laid down 21 conditions.

Oudegeest speaks of the "entry" of the trade unions of the Soviet Union into the Amsterdam Trade Union International, although as a matter of fact it is solely a question of uniting both Trade Union Internationals by means of a Unity Congress. Oudegeest thinks that the trade unions of the Soviet Union must sever their relations with the Russian Communist Party in order to please the reformists, and asks whether the trade unions of the Soviet Union will abandon the formation of communist nuclei. The formation of communist nuclei, however, is the task of the communist Parties, and not of the trade unions of the Soviet Union. The trade unions of the Soviet Union are not subordinated to the Communist Parties and the Communist International. To put forward a demand of this sort means to sabotage the unity of the trade unions.

The article of Oudegeest shows that the right wing of the Amsterdam Trade Union International wishes to sabotage the unity of the International Trade Union Movement.

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Moscow, 22nd November 1924.

The "Pravda" writes:

The attitude of the English delegation at the Congress of the American Federation of Labour in El Paso reveals the decided turn to the left on the part of the English labour movement. The policy of the English delegation in America was the same as that of the English delegation led by Purcell in Moscow.

On the other hand, the representative of the German General Federation of Trade Unions (A. D. G. B.), Grassman, experienced a defeat on account of his reactionary utterances.

The article by Oudegeest, published in "Vorwärts", shows that the right wing of the Amsterdam Trade Union International is sabotaging the unity of the trade union movement.

This is the reason for the manoeuvre of Gompers to re-enter the Amsterdam Trade Union International.

The rapprochement of the trade unions of England to those of the Soviet Union renders it necessary that the campaign for the unity of the trade unions shall be carried on with greater energy.

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Moscow, 22nd November 1924.

The Chairman of the American Federation of Labour, Gompers, has entered into negotiations with the trade unions of Mexico, Canada and Great Britain with regard to the re-affiliation of his federation to the Amsterdam Trade Union International.

At the Congress of the Federation of Labour in El Paso, there is present a delegation of the English Labour Party at the head of which is Cramp.

The negotiations have up to now been carried on in private and are not of a binding character.

Comrade Bucharin writes in the "Pravda" under the heading: "A Counter-manoeuve of Gompers" as follows:

The rapprochement between the trade unions of England and those of the Soviet Union has roused the enemies of the revolutionary movement. Hence, the lies of the "Vorwärts" regarding a falsification of the speech of Purcell, the chairman of the English trade union delegation at the Congress of the Trade Unions of the Soviet Union; hence, the Russian mensheviks institute a great campaign against Edo Fimmen; hence, Gompers, following the example of American finance capital, wishes to return to Europe. Gompers wants to rescue the right wing of the example of American finance capital, wishes to return to Europe. Gompers wants to rescue the right wing of the Amsterdam International, which is in a desperate situation, in the same way as Wilson rescued the Entente, and as the

Dawes Plan is to rescue the European bourgeoisie. The American bourgeoisie is afraid that the left wing in the Amsterdam Trade Union International will get the upper hand, and therefore sends Gompers back to Amsterdam. The American Federation of Labour considers even the Amsterdam International as too radical; the former is for political neutrality and against the recognition of the Soviet Union. The revolutionary workers understand this manoeuvre of Gompers against the unity of the trade union movement and energetically reject co-operation with this white guardist."

According to reports received from New-York, the chairman of the English Labour Party, Cramp, and one of the leaders from South Wales emphasised at the congress of the American Federation of Labour in El Paso their opposition to the exclusion of revolutionaries from the trade unions and their support for the recognition of the Soviet Unions, for the unity of the trade union movement and for unity with the trade unions of the Soviet Union. On the other hand, the delegate of the German General Federation of Trade Unions, Grassman, made a series of furious attacks against the Communists and against the unity of the trade union movement.

POLITICS

The Persecution of the Communist Party of Germany during the Election Campaign.

By Ivan Katz (Berlin).

During the last few weeks, at a number of municipal and provincial elections, the Social Democratic Party of Germany has gained an increased vote, whilst on the other hand the communist Party has lost votes. The social democrats of all countries have raised a great shout of triumph over this and have even ventured to write of a "collapse" of the C. P. of Germany and of the Communist International.

What is the reason for the loss of votes by the C. P. of Germany? The proletariat of the whole world knows that for some months past the Communist Party of Germany has been subjected to the severest persecutions and, particularly during the election campaign, is suffering from the sharpest terror of the capitalist state power and its social democratic tools. But this persecution, in itself, is not the deciding factor for the loss of votes by the C. P. of Germany. Persecutions tend rather to rouse increased sympathy for the persecuted and to grant them the martyr's crown of political success. At the beginning of the present year the C. P. of Germany was completely suppressed. Nevertheless, on the 4th of May last it gained an unexampled election victory. Over four million German electors cast their votes for the C. P. of Germany. At present the C. P. of Germany is not prohibited, but in spite of this it has suffered a number of electoral losses compared with its position on the 4th of May last. It is not the persecution in itself that is the cause of the electoral defeats, but the nature of the persecution.

As a matter of fact, the nature of the persecution is the cause for the aversion, or rather the aloofness, of the indifferent masses to the C. P. and the restriction of its influence to a somewhat narrow circle of revolutionary working masses. Immediately after the May elections there took place a conference between the most prominent leaders of the German Republic, comprising Seeckt, Severing, Jarres etc., in which Severing again proposed the suppression of the C. P. of Germany, whilst on the other hand Jarres proposed a more effective fight against the C. P. of Germany by administrative measures. Jarres plan