

THE RED TRADE UNION INTERNATIONAL

Circular

On the Participation of Women in the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement.

****To all Revolutionary Trade Unions and Adherents of the Red Trade Union International!**

The question of women's work once again occupies the foreground of interest for the proletarian class struggle. The badly paid women workers are used by the bourgeoisie as competitors of the more highly remunerated men in the struggle for the suppression of the whole working class. This competition appears particularly acute where the employers have taken up the general offensive in order to surmount the crisis in which the capitalist system and the whole social order is involved as a consequence of the war, at the expense of the working class.

During the war women were employed in large masses in the industries. The number of women workers in Europe and America increased by millions. Immediately following the conclusion of the war there took place wholesale dismissals of the women from the workshops in order to make room for the demobilised men.

The trade-union organisations affiliated to the Amsterdam Trade Union Federation, who, during the war allied themselves with their national bourgeoisie, have done nothing to secure the simplest human rights for women. They have done nothing to oppose the lower payment of women's labor. They have done nothing against the setting aside and limitation of those measures which were introduced before the war for the protection of women's labor. During and after the war they have done nothing for maternity and child welfare. They have done nothing against the abrogation of the eight-hour day and the reintroduction of night-work. As during the war they did nothing to oppose the frenzied wastage of women labor in the murderous war industries, the reformist trade-unions are now just as little prepared to do anything effective for the protection of women's labor. The Amsterdam trade-unions every where support the lower payment of women's labor and join in mutual conferences with the employers to arrange for the dismissal of those same women workers whom during the war they, in common with the employers, drove into the workshops under the lash of starvation. Yet the reformist trade-unions are now endeavoring to bring the working women under their influence and to use them against the revolutionizing of the trade-unions.

The Executive Bureau of the Red Trade Union International considers it necessary to remind all its affiliated Organisations of the following decision of the First International Congress of Revolutionary Trade Unions on the question of the participation of women in the trade-union movement:

"The adherents of the Red Trade Union International must turn their most earnest attention to the drawing of working women into the revolutionary trade union movement. There must be no separate women's trade union organizations. The proletariat, as a unit, as a class, must shape its organizations not according to the sex of the worker, but according to industry.

The Executive Bureau of the Red Trade Union International calls upon our comrades to work for the carrying out of this decision. An active campaign must be entered into:

1. Against the formation of special women's unions.
2. For the admission of women into those trade-unions where up to now their entrance has not been permitted.
3. Equal pay for equal work.
4. Against the reduction of protection for women's labor.
5. For the extension of measures in regard to maternity and child welfare.

For the realization of these demands we must work among working women to induce them to take part in the revolutionary trade-union movement alongside of their men comrades. Women must take part in the group work in the workshops, in the Shop Councils in the Workers' Protection Committees, in the Propaganda Committees as well as in the work of the revolutionary trade-union movement.

Only to the extent to which we are successful in getting the masses of women proletarians to take part in the systematic

struggle against capital and its lackeys, and to bring them into the ranks of the great proletarian united front against the bourgeoisie, will our fight for the capture and revolutionizing of the trade unions be successful. Only thus will the split between the men and women victims of the exploitation of the capitalist system be avoided and the whole working class form a revolutionary power capable of putting an end to the exploitation of the male wage-earners and in particular of the women wage slaves.

The revolutionary trade-unions and the supporters of the Red Trade Union International must devote more of their attention to activity among the women than hitherto. It is time to begin prepared and systematic organization and propaganda work among the broad masses of proletarian women and to select certain comrades who are to be charged with the task of bringing in the working women into active participation in the organised revolutionary struggle.

The task consists in converting them into active fighters for the Social Revolution and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Only that union is worthy of membership in the Red Trade Union International which frees itself from the old prejudices regarding the women's question, takes up the struggle for the protection of women's labor and sets itself the aim of increasing the army of the Social Revolution by the addition of new and indefatigable fighters from the ranks of the exploited and oppressed working women."

The Executive Bureau of the Red Trade Union International.

General Secretary, *A. Lozovsky.*

Moscow, April 5th, 1922.
