

Not only in Name, But in Actual Life, the International of the World's Working Class

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It is not only in name but in actual life that the Red Trade Union International has become an international of the working class in the full sense of the word. Its adherents are growing in numbers thruout Europe and the oriental countries as well as the American continent, and, whether organized in distinct revolutionary unions or combined as militant minorities within the old unions, these adherents are gradually being welded solidly together into one centralized compact body, all acting according to one definite policy. This was most forcefully demonstrated at the Second World Congress, held at Moscow

last year, where 125 delegates representing 42 countries has responded to the call and gathered to review the past activities and to lay the practical plans for future work.

This gathering reflected the variety of tendencies prevailing even within the militant revolutionary trade union movement, due to different conditions and traditions. But it was real proletarian in character; the drawling, spiritless, mentally bankrupt type of trade union bureaucrat being conspicuously absent. Yet the great fundamental principle of relentless struggle against capitalist exploitation has become the unifying factor which makes a cohesive movement possible. The terrible plight of the trade unions at present under the capitalist offensive and the traitorous conduct of their reactionary leaders, further aggravating the difficulties in order to play into the hands of their

capitalist benefactors and defeat the very purpose of unionism, had proven the correctness of the united front tactic and brought the delegates to unanimous agreement as to its future application.

From the report of the past activities of the Executive Bureau to the congress it became clear that it had not only accepted this united front tactic in theory but on several occasions seriously proposed to the International Federation of Trade Unions of Amsterdam to unite with them in an effective defensive struggle to protect the interests of the working class. The first time in September, 1921, when it called upon that body to organize a joint boycott against the Spanish white terror. Later, at the time of the impending split in the trade unions of France, it again called for a joint conference based upon proportional representa-

tion, to attempt to prevent the split. And again at the time of the lock-out of the metal workers of Great Britain it proposed a united front, pointing to the capitalist offensive and stating its serious desire to fight together with all workers regardless of political conceptions to resist this offensive, making definite proposals for the organization of joint action; and further declare its willingness to accept any proposals by the Amsterdam International which would prove an aid in the struggles of the workers. However, in each case the replies were in the negative. The congress decided to continue the policy of willingness to make common struggle in every fight with other working-class organizations against capitalism.

The period since the first congress which had been characterized by the capitalist offensive had brought ter-

rrible consequences to the organized workers.

In face of this serious situation the assembled delegates, despite their diversity of tendencies, quickly realized that trade union unity had to be restored even at the point of sacrifice or concessions on the part of the militants. It had to be carried further to its ultimate expression of a completely united front for defensive and offensive purposes. How could this united front be established capable of leading the working class onward to a full realization of all of its demands? This was one of the questions to which the congress had to find a practical solution and it set about its task diligently and earnestly.

The policy of secession formerly pursued by the rebels in the trade unions was drastically repudiated, as it would only result in isolation from

the masses. It was made a supreme duty of the militants to remain within the unions. There they must carry on the struggle for the immediate demands of the workers who day by day will be driven by the capitalist oppression toward the position of the revolutionists and ready to accept their leadership. Only in this manner will it be possible to weld the labor union movement into a single fighting unit, capable of carrying on revolutionary struggle. But it must be equally as important for the militants to point out the partial nature of remedies based upon the immediate demands.

In countries where parallel unions exist, if adhering to the Red International, they were instructed to unite, if only one adhered to the Red International, it was instructed to work jointly with the militant minor-

ities in the conservative unions for a complete realization of its program and for a speedy establishment of united front in all actions to defend the workers as a preliminary to obtaining organizational unity.

Not only were slogans proposed, issues upon which the united front proposed, such as active united struggle for the eight-hour day, increase of wages, defense of union rights and union conditions, against the present heavy taxation of the workers; but practical measures were proposed such as organization and development of shop councils, organization and preparations for effective resistance against the onslaughts of the employers and their organized strike-breaking agencies, organizations, special commissions, establishment of workers control of production, an seizure of factories to prevent the growing economic chaos.