

The R. I. L. U. and the U. M. W. A.

By John Dorsey

NOT long ago the militant miners of District 26, comprising the maritime Provinces of Canada, voted overwhelmingly for affiliation to the Red International of Labor Unions. The Executive Board of the United Mine Workers then issued a ukase to District 26, ordering them to quit their affiliation to the R. I. L. U., and supporting their decision with a document of nonsense and misrepresentation. The Nova Scotia miners, under the wise old battler, Jim McLachlan, immediately decided to keep within the U. M. W. A. at all costs, without departing for one moment from their principles. They notified their International officers that they had withdrawn their application, and were appealing the issue to the next convention of the U. M. W. A.

Now comes a communication from the Red International to District 26. After stating that

they have received a copy of the official statement of policy of the United Mine Workers, the letter continues:

The official statement reveals that the members of the International Executive Board Committee either have made no study whatever of the principles and objects of the R. I. L. U., or have wilfully misrepresented them. They state, for instance, that the purpose of the Red International is "first—control, and afterward the destruction of the bona-fide trade union movement." Nothing in the history of the writings of the R. I. L. U. offers any reason for this wild statement. It has always been the object of the R. I. L. U., not merely to preserve the existing trade union movement, but to strengthen it and expand it. We need only refer our critics to our campaign against expulsions and splits in the labor movement, in order to prove this.

The committee also remarks that "the Red International is an outgrowth of the One Big Union, which went through its processes of major development in the Northwestern provinces of Canada in the year 1918." Further on, the report reads "the Red International is an organization similar in character and make-up to

the One Big Union." After having the accusation hurled against us from all quarters that we are a conspiratorial organization founded in, and maintained in, Moscow, it is, indeed, a refreshing change for us to hear that the R. I. L. U. was founded in Northwestern Canada. The committee has at least selected a spot where the climate is not unsimilar to that of Moscow, and where, therefore, Comrade Losovsky would suffer no undue results from weather differences, in the execution of his official duties. As a matter of fact, however, the R. I. L. U. is totally different from the One Big Union in its structure, scope, and principles. Whereas the One Big Union is a dual union which has consistently endeavored to win over to itself sections of the regular labor movement, in order to form new unions alongside the old ones, the Red International of Labor Unions has consistently opposed the tactics of the dual unionists and has not merely advised, but definitely instructed, its adherents to stay within their unions, and to try and influence them to affiliate with the R. I. L. U.

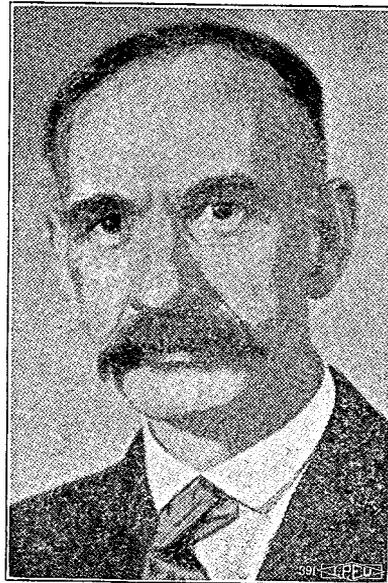
The Red International of Labor Unions is an international organization to which are affiliated entire unions in various countries. For instance, practically all the trade unions in Bulgaria are affiliated to the R. I. L. U., and half the unions in France and Czechoslovakia. Besides the unions in many countries which are affiliated to the R. I. L. U., there are also minorities of certain unions which signify their adherence to us, although their national bodies have not yet joined us. There is the example of the English labor movement, for instance. In the London district alone, thousands of trade unionists support the R. I. L. U. through the adherence of various district Trades and Labor Councils, locals, etc. These bodies are not officially affiliated in the sense that national and international unions are, but formally signify their support of our principles, and constitute within the various unions an organized minority, whose purpose it is, through legitimate educational activity, to acquaint all their fellow members with our principles, in order to secure the affiliation of the whole labor movement to the Red International.

The legal grounds for the decision of the committee of the International Executive Board—when we brush away the cloud of windy vaporings with which they describe an R. I. L. U. which has never existed except in their own fevered imaginations—lies in the fact that Section 2, Article 14, of the U. M. W. A. constitution states that "any member accepting membership in the Industrial Workers of the World, the Working Class Union, the One Big Union, or any other dual organization not affiliated to the American Federation of Labor . . . shall not be permitted to have membership in our union unless they forfeit their membership in the dual organization."

They then proceed to say that "it has come to our knowledge that the Red International is, in the estimation of the American Federation of Labor, a dual organization." This is the whole of their case, from the point of view of their actual constitutional right to exclude District 26. The latter has, however, an excellent weapon of defense in the fact that the Red International, which seeks affiliation to it of national labor movements, can in no way whatever parallel, or be dual to, those national labor movements. For instance, nothing would please the Red International better than to secure the affiliation of the A. F. of L.; although it is true, considering the present leadership of the A. F. of L., such an affiliation does not appear to be an immediate probability . . .

The R. I. L. U., we repeat, as an International organization, does not act in rivalry with national unions, or federations of unions. Therefore the statement that the R. I. L. U. is a dual organization to the American Federation of Labor, is absolutely false, and we challenge the makers of this statement to adduce one word of proof from our Constitution and program, or from any of our official publications. What they will find, however, is that we are an International organization of labor unions based irrevocably upon the class struggle, pledged to support the workers everywhere, and at all times, in their struggles for their immediate demands, and for the final overthrow of capitalism and the inauguration of a new society based upon the rule of the workers.

We do not counsel District 26 to unite formally, as a trade union district, with the R. I. L. U., if such action would cause their expulsion from the U. M. W. A. We do not demand that units of labor organizations, which are not nationally affiliated to us, should affiliate as labor bodies. It is sufficient for minority bodies, within non-affiliated unions, merely to declare their sympathetic adherence to our principles—and for such an expression of opinion expulsion can hardly be applied.



JIM MCLACHLAN,

President, District No. 26, U. M. W. A.

The task of District 26 is to remain steadfastly loyal to the principles of the R. I. L. U., and also to the organization of the United Mine Workers of America . . .

The Red International of Labor Unions fraternally salutes the courageous membership of the United Mine Workers of America, who have fought so often and so well for their class. It extends its heartiest greetings to such valiant warriors in the miners' cause as Alexander Howat, who has become beloved by every member of the union through his magnificent fight against the labor-hating Industrial Court. It salutes the class conscious miners of Illinois, who have ever remained true to the cause of labor, and congratulates

them on the successful outcome of the Herrin trial. It has watched every phase of the long and bitter struggle in West Virginia with close fraternal interest; and it sends a message of solidarity from hundreds of thousands of miners, in many countries, affiliated to the R. I. L. U., to their battling brothers in those far hills. To the coke miners of Fayette County, Pennsylvania, who are struggling not only against the mine-owners but against the betrayal and treachery of their own international leaders, we send assurance of our close interest in their fight, and of the practical support of all our adherents in the United States.

Comrades of District 26: we know that you will not halt nor falter in your great task of rallying the working class of Canada to the banner of the Red Inter-

national of Labor Unions, but will forge on, keeping ever in mind the essential necessity of unity in the labor movement, and the historic revolutionary mission of our class.

The letter is signed by G. Slucky, Secretary, International Propaganda Committee of Revolutionary Miners, and by A. Kalnin, Acting Secretary, Red International of Labor Unions. The communication, comprehensive and clear in raising the great international issue before the membership of the United Mine Workers, will take its place as one of the most important documents of the International labor movement.
