

# Red International Appeals to I. W. W.

After being denied the floor at the I. W. W. convention, the following communication was delivered in writing to the convention by the representative of the Red International of Labor Unions (the R. I. L. U.).

To the delegates assembled at the 16th General Convention of the I. W. W., and to the membership of the I. W. W.

**FELLOW WORKERS:**—The Red International of Labor Unions greets with fraternal good will the revolutionary workers organized in the I. W. W. and expresses its pleasure that the I. W. W. united after overcoming the recent danger, faces with stout heart the power of capital.

The Red International of Labor Unions regrets that its message of May 8, addressed to the whole I. W. W. through your then general officers, remains without other reply than an acknowledgement of its receipt. The acknowledgment dated May 9—stated that our communication was turned over to the general executive board. Perhaps internal difficulties interfered with or prevented executive consideration. In any event we hope the convention will hear from the officials upon the matter, as not only has later inquiry gone unanswered, but we note that our communication, or even the notice of its receipt, has never been given to the membership.

## Misunderstanding Has Arisen

It naturally follows, by reason of the membership not being permitted access to this or any other communication to them from the R. I. L. U. in explanation of its principles and its invitation to affiliate, that the members are scarcely in a position to act. The convention is consequently handicapped, however, informed its personnel may be. But as the convention does have both the power and the duty of providing the members with full information on both sides of any question so vital as international affiliation, the executive bureau of the R. I. L. U. asks your consideration of some important points, briefly stated, upon which we feel that misunderstanding has arisen that can be and should be removed.

It is an inevitable result of the international organization of capitalist production that the working class seeks, in fact is compelled, to organize itself internationally. Nevertheless, some members of the I. W. W. taking too limited a view, have questioned the necessity of international affiliation. This would be comprehensible if it came from workers with no revolutionary tradition, or from the traitorous labor fakery of the Gompers type who teach submission to capitalist interests. But we are astonished when such expression comes from workers whose foundation reason for organization is summed up in the words of Marx—"Workers of the world, unite!" Nor does international affiliation exclude intensive organization in the national field, in fact it would immensely assist the I. W. W. to greater organization.

Granted, then, that there should be the closest possible international organization of revolutionary industrial unionists, there has been some question as to the method of attaining it.

## Affiliation Healthy Move

Labor union centers on a national scale naturally united sectional unions. The I. W. W. itself was formed by the amalgamation and affiliation of existing organizations. Just so, on the international field, the healthy and natural method of extending organization is by affiliation. But some voices in the I. W. W. say: "Let the world come to us. Unions across the seas, the I. W. W. will not unite with you, but will fight you, and take away your members one by one and absorb the ruins of your once proud organizations." This is the policy of absorption advocated by some who have held general administrative office.

This method is even being put to trial. And what is the verdict? The verdict is written in the "Open Letter to the Membership of the I. W. W." dated from Hamburg, Germany, on August 30, 1924, and signed by eleven members of the I. W. W. And from the verdict of these members the lesson is drawn that the policy of affiliation should prevail instead of the policy which is politely termed "absorption," and which is proven to be both shameful to attempt and impossible to accomplish.

There remains the question as to what existing international center best represents the cardinal principles of the I. W. W. Is there one which approximates the I. W. W. in structure, method and revolutionary spirit and goal? Yes, there is only one, although there are three internationals.

## Internationals Analyzed

The first, the International Federation of Trade Unions, the Amsterdam International, is the property of the social-reformists—although a fighting left wing is beginning to challenge their title. But Amsterdam as organized at present is completely dissimilar and unattractive to the I. W. W.

There is an anarcho-syndicalist international at Berlin, which all honest anarchists and syndicalists have need to blush for. The first principles of the I. W. W. admitted of neither anarchism nor syndicalism, but as these theories have been from time to time imposed upon the I. W. W. it would be well for the convention and for the

membership, in view of the fact that the war and the Russian revolution have upset all the blue prints of revolutionary theory, to stand all anarchist and syndicalist theory up in the light of working class experience and examine them thoroughly and objectively.

The result would show what an examination of the anarcho-syndicalist international shows, namely, that it has nothing in common with revolutionary industrial unionism—does not believe in that structure, that Berlin is a Tolstolian, utopian, pacifist group, impotent to oppose imperialist capitalism, and lives solely for no nobler purpose than to slander and attack the revolutionary Soviet Government of the Russian workers and peasants. Beside this broader aspect, the character of Berlin's anarcho-syndicalist group may be shown by the facts cited in recent months by the English and Spanish I. W. W. papers.

## R. I. L. U. Misrepresented

But some fellow workers will exclaim that there are also differences between the I. W. W. and the Red International of Labor Unions. And we will agree. Yes, there are differences. But they are not basic. Above all, there are far more important principles we have in common. Moreover, the differences are those which the I. W. W. itself at present recognizes as allowable differences of opinion existing among its own membership. And if it be asked if the workers in the R. I. L. U. are permitted to have these differences, we reply, certainly. The I. W. W. is asked to affiliate with the R. I. L. U. upon the basis of active revolutionary class struggle against capitalism, and if it will fight together with us upon that program, then the basis of cooperation will be established.

The R. I. L. U. has been misrepresented to the I. W. W. in many ways. The European custom of calling any labor union, either craft or industrial in form, a "trade" union, has been seized upon by enemies and confusionists. Yet from its very beginning the R. I. L. U. has based its organization upon industrial unionism. At its first congress it declared:

"The chief problem of organization consists in passing from the system of craft unionism to industrial. The slogan, 'One Union for One Industry' should become the slogan of the militant revolutionary unions."

Again at the second congress it asserted: "The most important task is the creation of centralized industrial unions." While the third congress, during July this year, said: "The trade unions should be welded into industrial unions and the industrial unions of the various countries should be united on an international scale." It warned however, as the experience of the I. W. W. with the danger of job unionism and federalism also warns, that—"The form itself does not possess any mysterious power which might take the place of our revolutionary activity and struggle."

## R. I. L. U. for Industrial Unions

All of these provisions are known to the detractors of the R. I. L. U. But we have not been permitted to see them set forth to the I. W. W. membership. These quotations show that the R. I. L. U. not only favors industrial unionism as a theory, but fights to realize it by amalgamation of the craft unions.

Against this argument, false analogy has been opposed. The craft unions, composed of living, thinking, dynamic workingmen, are compared to out-of-date sailing vessels, composed of insensate, inanimate timbers. Yet the R. I. L. U. points to the storm of rank and file revolt inside the craft unions, compelled by the conditions of capitalism and stimulated and organized by

R. I. L. U. adherents. We interpret it as indicating that the spirit of the workers will not much longer brook the restraining bonds of the craft system. The R. I. L. U. asks merely that the I. W. W. members who are also members of craft unions, unite with the R. I. L. U. adherents to organize the growth of that spirit and give it revolutionary expression. At the same time the greatest efforts of the I. W. W. should be to organize the industries that it has by experience found to be its most fruitful field. This has been suggested by many I. W. W. among them Fellow Worker George Williams in the General Office Bulletin for June.

## For One Front of All Labor

The Red International believes in unity. It holds that the goal to be aimed at in this respect is the complete unity in one great fighting organization of every labor union in America. But it is pure fiction to assert that the R. I. L. U. wishes to "liquidate" the I. W. W. and "drive" its members into craft unions. Yet this tale has been circulated, in spite of the fact that no document adopted by the Red International of Labor Unions in its whole existence has every intimated such a thing. Moreover, in practice it should be noted that other independent industrial unions in America which have been affiliated with the R. I. L. U. not only remain, but are strengthened. In addition, considering the loyal activity of R. I. L. U. adherents in the I. W. W. in fighting for unity and against the danger of disruption and injunction, anyone who questions the R. I. L. U. desire for unity of the I. W. W. merely reveals himself as completely uninformed or entirely mendacious.

There should be no mistake as to the origin of the R. I. L. U., in view of the publication twice, once in February and again in April 1920 issues of the "One Big Union Monthly" of the very first call, which was issued by the industrial unions of Russia and which reads as follows:

"The Central All-Russian Council of Industrial Unions invites all economic organizations based on the real and revolutionary class struggle for the liberation of labor through the proletarian dictatorship, to solidify anew their ranks against the international league of brigands, to break with the international of conciliators, and to proceed in unison with the Central All-Russian Council of Industrial Unions toward the organization of a truly international conference of all socialist labor unions and veritable revolutionary workers' syndicates. We beg of all economic labor organizations that accept the program of the revolutionary class struggle, to respond to our call and enter into direct touch with us." This was signed by nine officials of the Russian industrial unions, including Tomsky and Losovsky. That was the beginning of the R. I. L. U.

The R. I. L. U. does believe, none the less, that the formal "non-political" and actual anti-political attitude of the I. W. W. is harmful to itself and to the working class. The R. I. L. U. believes that this attitude would be discarded if the membership fully understood the distinction between a Communist Party and the reformist socialist party from which, quite naturally, the I. W. W. members derived their conception of a workers' political party. The two are so different, however, that they cannot be compared. Your disagreement with this view is no bar to affiliation, of course, but we merely assert important facts which, being known, should guide you.

A revolutionary Communist Party is not territorially based, but is founded upon shop nuclei organized at the point of production. It does not accept the permanence of capitalist parliamentary forms, nor does it deceive the workers with the hopes and promises that by voting in capitalist

elections and by passage of laws in capitalist congresses they can by peaceful means supersede capitalist rule with their free workers' commonwealth. A Communist Party teaches nothing of the kind. It does, nevertheless, when possible, utilize the wide interest in elections and legislative bodies, to point out to the exploited masses that all history shows that the ruling capitalist class will not surrender power without a desperate struggle, and that, in order to win, the workers must destroy capitalist parliamentary forms and substitute—until the need no longer exists—a form of government completely different in form and content, a proletarian dictatorship thru a Soviet government of workers' delegates to wipe out resistance of backward and capitalist elements.

The attempt by anarchist elements in the I. W. W. and by capitalist elements outside it, to misrepresent such a proletarian dictatorship in Soviet Russia as being against the interests of the workers, is a preposterous invention. It is known by every intelligent worker, even slightly acquainted with historical materialism, that every political party and every form of government, is a reflection of and is founded upon the material interests of some economic class. What class interests are reflected in the Communist Party, if not those of the working class? These arguments would, of course, have no place here, but opposition to the R. I. L. U. upon them, compels it.

A thorough consideration of the principles and program of the R. I. L. U. would, we believe, result in affiliation. There is allowance made for variation of conditions peculiar to any country. But if differences exist, the I. W. W. could and should contend for its point of view in the international, just as does an industrial union within the I. W. W. Affiliation would mean much benefit to the I. W. W. just as present isolation means much limitation.

Fellow workers, the revolutionary workers of other lands have too long awaited the organic solidarity with them of the I. W. W. The issue of unity is not a problem of mere academic interest. Daily, the contradictions of capitalist imperialism, intensified by the world war, threaten new wars, or on pain of starvation, precipitate great masses of exploited into revolutionary struggle against a ruling class savagely fighting to maintain its supremacy. History compels not only the one class, the capitalist, to fight, but also the workers are driven to bitter struggle.

In America the case is not different until now a more favored economic position has given that illusion. But there is no more security. Unemployment and crisis are becoming chronic as in Europe. By enslaving Europe with the Dawes' plan, American capitalist imperialism openly announces its ability to reduce American standards. The I. W. W. shares with other labor and revolutionary groups the attacks of capitalism. Scores of its members are in prison, and scores more will go if the I. W. W. remains true to its revolutionary goal. The ranks of the industrial unions are weakened by the loss of a few thousand members in the last year. Above all, imperialist rivalry for exploitation of China threatens immediate war with Japan.

Communists and militant workers in the left wing of the craft unions are sharing the attacks of reaction. What argument in favor of sectarian separation can weigh more than the great need for united action? Can veneration for a statute which has outlived the conditions that gave it birth, now justify the I. W. W. before the working class for inaction, disunity and standing aside from the struggle? At any moment we may be called upon by the capitalist government to destroy a workers' Germany or a revolutionary China. At any moment we may be asked to submit like sheep to another world war or to turn such a war into a revolutionary struggle for capitalist overthrow. These are questions which require an unequivocal stand from an organization which speaks of revolution.

Upon all these questions, as well as upon the problems of the daily struggle, the R. I. L. U. trusts that the I. W. W. will find a way to unite, if not organically, at least upon specific points of offensive or defensive struggle with other revolutionary workers in America and throughout the world.

The R. I. L. U. hopes that not only this brief message may find space in the I. W. W. papers which reach the membership, but that a period of free discussion may be opened, and all points of differences with the R. I. L. U. thoroughly aired in published communications to and from both organizations. When this is done, the R. I. L. U. is confident that the revolutionary workers in the I. W. W. will, on their own initiative, unite with those who fight for the overthrow of capitalism under the banner of the Red International of Labor Unions.

## Red International Affiliation Committee

Harrison George, Chairman.  
H. R. Richards.  
Mike Nowak.

## Bronze to Elenora Duse.

VIGEVAND, Italy, October 29.—A bronze statue of Elenora Duse was unveiled today here in the foyer of Cagnoni Theatre. This little town was the great actress' home.

# Hands Off China!

To all followers and sympathizers of the Red International of Labor Unions in the United States of America, France, Germany and Italy:—

## COMRADES!

The present crisis in China and the part played by the foreign powers in this crisis has created an unusually serious situation.

The imperialist intervention in China must be stopped at all costs. The slogan of the revolutionary workers and followers of the Red International of Labor Unions in every country must be: **HANDS-OFF CHINA!** You must meet the intervention of the capitalists of your respective countries in the inner affairs of China, and their support of the reactionary militarist clique against the national revolutionary government of Sun-Yat-Sen, with a solid front of resistance and with a storm of mass protest. You must turn this protest campaign into a comprehensive revolutionary movement directed against the imperialist government of your country.

All revolutionary and national trade union organizations, the revolutionary shop councils and all followers of the Red International of Labor Unions should, together with the revolutionary and political organizations of the working class, take most active part in organizing "Hands-Off China" societies.

The laboring masses should be fully informed about the imperialist intervention in China. The "Hands-Off China" organizations are to maintain the closest contact with the workers, whom they are to inform on their activities.

There will soon be issued a periodical information bulletin on the situation in China and the activities of the "Hands-Off China" societies.

We hope, comrades, that you will proceed with the organization of such societies without delay, and that you will succeed in winning the attention and support of the broad masses, thereby compelling the governments of your respective countries to abandon their imperialist policy towards China.

With fraternal greetings,

A. LOZOVSKY,

General Secretary of the Red International of Labor Unions.