

# Red International of Labor Unions and Soviet Russia

By HARRISON GEORGE

AMONG the many outstanding products of the Bolshevik revolution of eight years ago, not the least important was the surging demand that arose within the trade unions all over the world for a world-wide unity of all trade unions on the basis of the class struggle, for a united fight against capitalism.

The formation and phenomenal growth of the Russian labor union movement, born in the cradle of revolution with arms in hand and the International on its lips, posed the question of this movement's international connections.

BUT the war which had brot the revolution also brot an increase in reaction and its desire, by working thru the agents of the bourgeoisie in the ranks of labor, to prevent the workers of the world, instinctively turning toward the fabulous "Mos-

cow," from doing as the Russian workers had done. The labor unionists of the world were demanding, moreover, some international center that would insure them against a recurrence of the horror thru which they had just passed.

The reformist socialists who had betrayed the masses in war, answered to the call of the ruling class and betrayed the masses again in "peace." While the Russian unions and the new revolutionary unionists of all the world were demanding an international center and the foundation was being laid for the Red International of Labor Unions, the reformists were laying the foundations of an international of class collaboration.

THIS was the Amsterdam International (the International Federation of Trade Unions) formed upon the basis of the "victory" of the allied arms over Germany and, therefore, the victory of the allied social

patriots over those of Germany, Amsterdam took the most reactionary position, identified itself with the Versailles peace and set up organizational connection with capitalism thru the international labor office of the league of nations.

Small wonder, therefore, that those organized workers of the world who felt the urge of class struggle to overthrow capitalism, demanded a center of revolutionary unionism, to clarify and unify the working masses upon a basis of class struggle on an international scale.

AND if the latest developments of this world movement for unity and struggle, which is the establishment of the famous Anglo-Russian Trade Union Unity Commission, has shaken the world and frightened the capitalists into a panic, it must not be forgotten that this latest forward step was built upon years of earlier struggle and arose out of the revolu-

weaker partners in the original pact of unity gave up and did not come to the first congress of the R. I. L. U. Standing with the R. I. L. U. in those dark days, even more than now, was no task of weaklings.

YET from the deliberations and decisions went forth a great rallying cry, and a process of clarification and organization, which brot into existence as a conscious world movement the revolutionary unionism of today.

The Second World Congress held in November, 1922, saw the R. I. L. U. exerting a most powerful influence in Europe, Asia and America for working class unity and struggle against capitalism. The center of revolution was being established for the labor unions of the world.

BY the Third Congress in July, 1924, the movement was prepared to lay down new tasks for completion of the work begun in the first two world gatherings, by reaching out for the working masses in the trade unions still adhering to Amsterdam. To this end proposals for world trade

union unity were set forth, proposing the calling of a unity congress with the Amsterdam unions and pledging all unions to submit to the decisions of the unity congress.

The yellow Amsterdammers rejected the proposal.

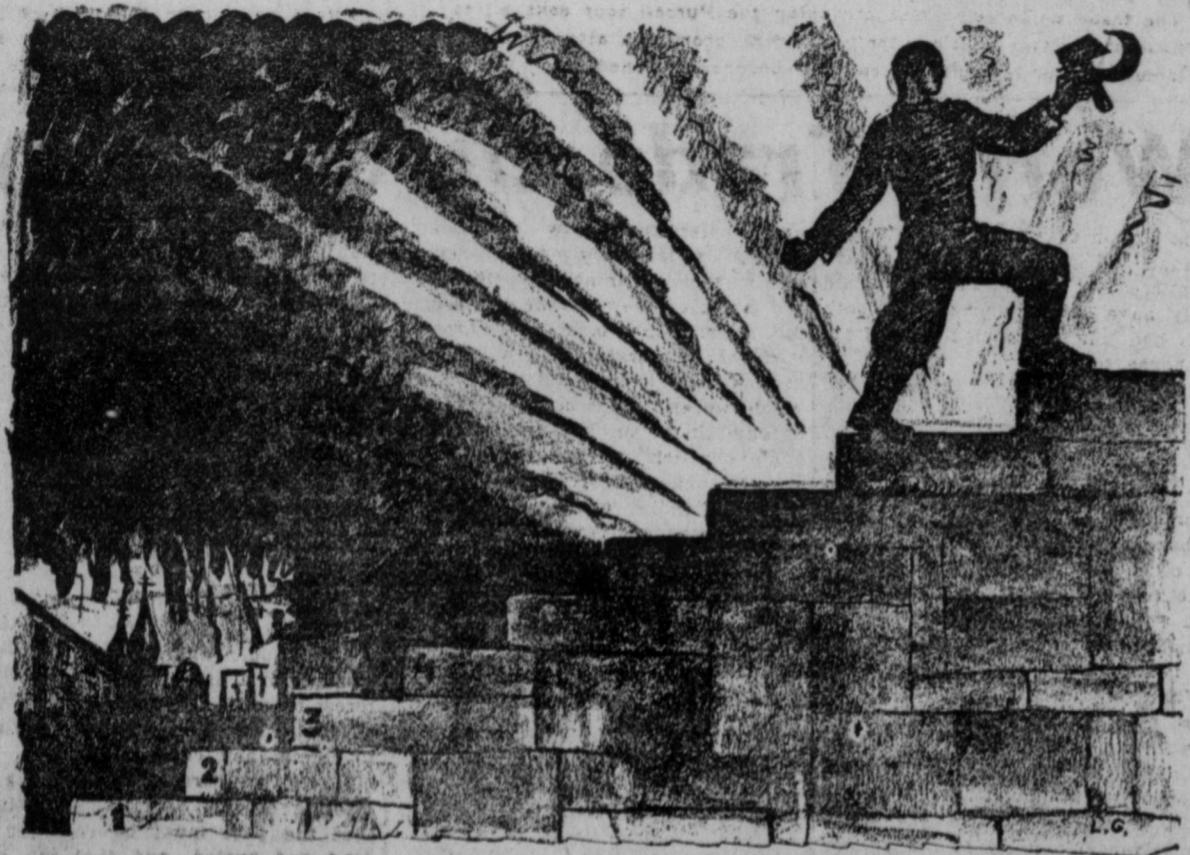
Then followed the growth of relations between the British and Russian unions, which culminated in the recent formation of an official joint committee, approved at the Scarborough congress—the Anglo-Russian Unity Commission. It is in behalf of this commission and its program that A. A. Purcell is speaking in his present tour of America.

UNQUESTIONABLY the growing power of Soviet Russia has aided the unity movement thus begun by the R. I. L. U. The many delegations of trade unionists, of reformist and syndicalist unions for the most part, which have visited Soviet Russia and inspected the conditions of the workers under Soviet power, have brot back such favorable reports that the whole labor movement has been no-

ticeably turned to the left and the revolutionary element strengthened. No instance proves this case better than the report of the British delegation to Russia headed by Purcell as chairman of the British Trade Union Congress.

The great work of uniting the trade unions of the world was thus launched as a result of the Bolshevik revolution of 1917. And this is one of the reasons why the name of Vladimir Lenin, the organizer and leader of the Bolshevik revolution, has been engraved in the hearts of millions of revolutionary unionists who fight under the banner of the Red International of Labor Unions.

IT is one of the reasons why every worker who looks upon the Red International as the leading organization of revolutionary unionism makes his or her most enthusiastic holiday the day on which the ragged Red Guards of Leningrad seized state power in the name of the workers and peasants and lit the fires of world revolution.



Climbing Up with the Sunlight of the New Day.

tion which set up the Soviet power.

In the years from 1921 onward, this struggle had been carried into every land and every union by the Red International of Labor Unions, launched at a provisional conference in July, 1920, of representatives of the unions of Russia, Great Britain, Italy, Spain, Jugo-Slavia, Bulgaria and minorities of the French and Georgian labor unions. The first congress was held in Moscow, July, 1921.

BUT at the first congress the British and Italian unions had already weakened under the tremendous assaults of the bourgeoisie. The Italian unions were in battle and their leaders were surrendering to the fascist. The British workers had just been betrayed in the memorable Black Friday. Russia had just experienced the Kronstadt events, adopted the new economic policy and was facing the problem of famine.

It was seemingly the lowest ebb of the revolutionary labor movement. Under pressure of these events, the



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