

FOR THE UNITED FRONT, FOR THE UNITY OF THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

THROUGHOUT the world the working masses are watching with the greatest anxiety the Bacchanalia of the fascist hooligans who are converting the factories and mills into barracks, are watching the activities of the grasping herd of capitalists who are trying to throw all the burdens of the crisis on to the toilers. Two years of the transition of the economic crisis into a depression have not only not improved the material conditions of the toilers, but on the contrary have turned whole sections of the proletariat into serfs in bondage to the brutal fascist dictatorship. The bourgeoisie are utilising the split in the working class to take away from the workers their means of defence, namely, the right to strike and organisation. The fascist gangs are smashing up the trade unions which were founded on the hard-earned money of the workers and built up by a whole series of proletarian generations.

All the measures of international capitalism are directed primarily towards bringing about a reduction in the standard of living of the toiling masses at frantic speed, and towards preparing for a new imperialist slaughter with a view to a new redivision of the globe. With a cynicism as yet unaparalleled, German fascism is trampling down the last barriers on the path towards the preparations of a robber war directed primarily against the Soviet Union. The whole world smells the suffocating smoke rising from the camp of the fascist bandits.

The hour for bringing about the united front of the proletariat and the unity of the trade union movement is more than ripe. "The working class has sufficient forces in order to repulse an attack, to protect its interests and prevent a new world slaughter." The Red Trade Union International bases itself on this undoubted premise in making the proposal to the leaders of the Amsterdam International that joint demonstrations be held on May First, and that a start be made concretely in respect to the restoration of the free trade unions in Germany, and of the unity of the trade unions in France and Spain. In order to beat back the onslaught of capitalism and fascism, what is needed is the united efforts of the organisations of the proletariat, what is required is the unification of the split trade union movement.

The establishment of the united front in France and Spain, in Austria and the Saar, has already shown to the very broadest masses of the workers what a force is represented by the united action of the working class, and what could be achieved

in the struggle against fascism and the capitalist offensive, if the united front of the proletariat were carried out in good time and if all who participate in it carry on the struggle to the finish. This is why we are aware in advance that the appeal made by the Executive Bureau of the R.I.L.U. to the Amsterdam International, which is the most important document issued in the international trade union movement during recent years, will meet with full approval and will arouse a mighty echo among all the workers organised in the trade unions.

The Red Trade Union International was formed 15 years ago to do away with the split in the working-class movement caused by the policy of class collaboration pursued in the Amsterdam International. It should not be forgotten that the R.I.L.U. was formed only four years after the October Revolution, during which period Communists throughout the world exerted tremendous efforts to transform the trade unions into genuine weapons of struggle for the class interests of the workers. Long before the foundation of the R.I.L.U., the 2nd Congress of the Communist International in 1920 demanded that the Communists in all countries should

"enter the trade unions in order to make them into conscious organs of struggle for the overthrow of capitalism and for Communism . . . Any voluntary abandonment of the trade union movement, any artificial attempt to form special unions unless this is rendered essential by exceptional acts of violence on the part of the trade union bureaucracy . . . or by their narrow aristocratic policy of preventing the broad masses of unskilled workers from becoming members of the organisation—is a tremendous danger for the Communist movement."

Only the mass expulsion of revolutionary elements and of whole trade union organisations, only the splitting policy of class collaboration pursued by the reformist leaders of the trade unions, led to the establishment of Red trade unions and to the formation of the R.I.L.U.

The R.I.L.U. was formed in order to ensure that the trade unions would be converted from bodies which shirked and hindered the struggle against the capitalists into bodies fighting for the defence of the everyday interests of the masses, and into levers for the destruction of wage slavery. The entire history of the R.I.L.U. is a history of the struggle to bring about the unity of the trade union organisations so as to carry on active class struggle.

In face of the offensive of capital and fascism, the masses of the workers in the trade unions, and the trade union organisations in the localities are

themselves proceeding to bring about the unity of the T.U. movement. In France three-quarters of the railwaymen organised in both trade unions have united. In Spain, the unity of action of the Asturian miners, rendered firm by the blood shed in the heroic October battles, has led to the immediate unification of the miners' unions in Asturias. The R.I.L.U. has declared its readiness to give full

support to all such efforts made to bring about the unity of the trade union movement. The R.I.L.U. has declared its readiness to discuss any proposals made in this direction that come from the leaders of the Amsterdam Trade Union International.

FOR THE UNITED WORKING-CLASS FRONT!

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