

TOWARD WORLD TRADE UNION UNITY

A MOST important step toward world trade union unity is seen in the following two letters, the first sent from the I. W. C. F. T. (International of Working Class Free Thinkers) which unites about 1,000,000 workers, mostly members of European Socialist parties, to both the Amsterdam International and the Red International, on December 17, 1926. Amsterdam rejects unity by its failure even to reply, but the R. I. L. U. shows its sincere desire for unity by its answer printed herewith. The I. W. C. F. T. has its headquarters at Vienna. It wrote both Amsterdam and Moscow as follows:

The I. W. C. F. T. Letter

"Dear Comrades:—The International of Working Class Free Thinkers, whose principles and statutes have already been brought to your notice on its formation, decided at its Prague Executive meeting of December 3, 1926, to approach both Trade Union internationals and submit the following statement:

"The position of the class struggle of the workers has become markedly worse. By concentrating the means at its disposal, capitalism has succeeded in sharpening the class struggle while it is at the same time endeavoring to cripple the fighting will of the working class by applying new methods for its moral enslavement.

"Unfortunately, the workers of all countries organized in the trade unions do not stand united against this strengthened position capitalism enjoys. No one can doubt that the most urgent task of the moment is to rally together all the workers in the trade internationals.

"From the masses of the working class itself in both camps the demand for unity is becoming louder and more insistent. We, proletarian free-thinkers, have opportunities in our big organization, to witness this ardent desire of the workers to see this regrettable split surmounted in some way or other.

An Unprejudiced Mediator

"But it seems there is no honest mediator at hand. The I. W. C. F. T. is prepared to undertake this role. Ours is the only international which includes all socialistic elements irrespective of party and political differences in a common front for common activity. We consider that the stand we take above all parties, coupled with our honest working class will, renders us suited to be the first to try the step indicated with a view to overcoming or lessening the antagonisms of both sides.

"We intend shortly to publish an official memorandum addressed to both trade union internationals; we wish to issue a manifesto to the working class of all countries, calling on it to give up the fratricidal

struggle in the trade union field at least. Before doing so, however, we are anxious to have the views of you and all organizations in the various countries to which we are sending this preliminary letter.

We therefore request you to let us know whether we may count on your support.—(Signed) General Secretary, I. W. C. F. T. and President Hartway, I. W. C. F. T."

R. I. L. U. Replies

"Moscow, Jan. 13, 1927. To the International of Working Class Free Thinkers, Vienna.

"Dear Comrades: Your letter of December 17, 1926, has been considered by the Executive Bureau of the Red International of Labor Unions at its meeting of January 11, 1927. The Executive Bureau of the R. I. L. U. welcomes the initiative shown by your international, and is ready to come to your assistance in this matter in every possible way.

"We stand for the point of view that the unity of the trade union movement is not only necessary, but possible of achievement, the trade union, by its very nature, being an organization embracing workers of various political tendencies.

Unity Essential

"The unity of the trade union movement on a national and international scale is more than ever essential now, when the direct and

indirect attack of capital is increasing, when unemployment is growing.

"We do not conceal the difficulties confronting the supporters of unity, but we maintain that these difficulties can and should be overcome, if we grant the sincere desire to create a united trade union movement in every country and a single trade union international.

"It may be taken as proved, that the success of the onslaughts of capital against the working class is explainable mainly by the disruption and isolation existing in the trade movement. This is precisely why your initiative should meet with every support. If your international is able to assist the progress of the business of unity, you will have performed an enormous service to the world labor movement.

Accepts Offer to Mediate

"We accept your mediation and are ready on your invitation to participate in any sort of meeting of an official or unofficial nature, with the representatives of the International Federation of Trade Unions (Amsterdam), in order, jointly with them and with your assistance, to consider practical ways and means for the organized unification of the world trade union movement in One All-embracing International.—(Signed) A. Losovsky, General Secretary, R. I. L. U."