

## Moscow-Amsterdam "Unity:" A Diplomatic Maneuver

Comments on the Agreement between the I.F.T.U. and the Soviet "Trade Unions" in an Interview Granted to "El Universal"

By Leon Trotsky

The unification of the world trade union organization, in the present case the adherence of the Soviet Union to the Amsterdam International, could bring great advantages to the working class—under only one condition: that there are actually unions in the U.S.S.R. But there are none there. There is a trade union apparatus totally dependent upon the ruling clique and dominating the working masses. Thus, during the last bloody purge, which is, moreover, far from being ended, the central Council of Trade Unions was totally reorganized without the so-called unionized masses knowing more than what appeared in the official press. The purge of the trade union apparatus was done by the G.P.U. upon the direct order of Stalin.

The former trade union leader, the old revolutionary, Tomsky, was driven into suicide by a campaign of calumnies and vicious persecution. His place was taken, without the least consultation with the membership, by Shvernik, who was never and is nothing more than a bell-hop in the personal service of Stalin. The renovated apparatus occupies itself in its turn with purging the factories and the offices, in hunting and trapping whoever is discontented, critical, or makes demands. Thus the so-called unions represent an organization of industrial police, an appendage of the G.P.U. and not at all an autonomous organization of workers.

### Unification? No — Diplomatic Accord!

It is not a question then of the unification of the working masses, but of a diplomatic accord between the Amsterdam apparatus, decently conservative, and the police apparatus of Moscow.

The heads of the British trade unions would like well enough to orient the external policy of their country toward a rapprochement with France, the United States, and the U.S.S.R. The French policy, that of the People's Front, is based upon the support of Moscow. Jouhaux, the head of the French union, while proclaiming the "independence" of his trade unions, belongs in reality to the People's Front. It is this political conjuncture, nationally and internationally, which has determined the rapprochement of the Amsterdam trade union bureaucracy with the pseudo-trade union bureaucracy of Moscow.

We must add still another element which is not without importance. Already for some years, practically since 1924, Stalin has purchased precisely through the intermediary of the so-called trade union apparatus the "sympathies" of various trade union leaders abroad, commencing with England. We are able to cite some cases of British trade union heads on the regular Moscow payroll. Others have benefitted through exceptional privileges, or their wives have received presents in gold or in platinum. This practice of demoralizing the workers' leaders was, be it said in passing, one of the principal points of my struggle against Stalin's clique.

When I become aware of this practice, in the spring of 1925, I protested vigorously. "But why?" Stalin countered, "Do not the bourgeoisie buy the workers'

leaders?" "One can buy," I answered, "somebody in order to corrupt him, but not in order to make him a fighter for the emancipation of the oppressed." This practice has since that time taken on gigantic proportions. We must not forget that the gold industry has made great progress in the U.S.S.R. The industry of bribery and of corruption has made still greater progress.

Many of the so-called "friends" of the U.S.S.R. who have nothing in common with the Russian people, its revolutionary traditions, its sufferings, and its aspirations are not more than interested friends of the ruling clique of the Kremlin. Some of them are paid directly with gold. Others depend in their personal

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political aims upon the aid of the powerful international apparatus of Moscow.

I do not doubt that Stalin, Yezhov, and Shvernik will utilize the so-called trade union unification in order to enlarge their hold upon the number of leaders with a supple spine and conscience. What will be the reaction of the working class against these practices? We shall see in the coming years.

Coyoacan, D. F., Nov. 29, 1937.

## Militant Executive Of Hosiery Union Slugged in Minneapolis

MINNEAPOLIS, DEC. 3. — Vern Simonson, Minneapolis Socialist party member and Executive Member leading an opposition group in Local 38 of the American Federation of Hosiery Workers, was brutally attacked and injured by a gang who seized him at 7:30 P. M., Thursday night, Dec. 2, as he was returning from supper to his job on the night shift at the Strutwear Hosiery plant.

Dr. H. P. McCrimmon, of 601 Medical Arts Building, stated that he had, "a severe brain concussion, two broken ribs on the left side, and the abdominal region badly swollen from kicks."

Half conscious and in extreme pain, Simonson labored to give an account of the attack and his opinion concerning the reasons for it. Pieced together his story was:

On 6th Street, between 8th and 9th Avenue South, on the south side of the street, a group of men seized him and dragged him behind a building, striking him on the head and kicking him in the ribs and stomach. They fled when a car approached and its driver stopped and came over to see what was happening. The driver helped Simonson into the car and took him to Simonson's home, at 6500-15 Avenue South, where his sister immediately called Dr. McCrimmon. After examining him, Dr. McCrimmon reported the attack to the police.

### Fought Splitters

As a Socialist party member associated with Vincent R. Dunne and other labor leaders in a fight to prevent the splitting of unions and to maintain the unity of the labor movement of Minneapolis, Simonson had come into sharp

conflict with the group dominating the local union to which he belonged.

V. R. Dunne, Socialist Party Organizer and associate of Pat Corcoran in the leadership of the Drivers' Union said:

"Vern Simonson is the second victim of violence against labor, employed by open and disguised enemies of labor. He is associated with the same group of labor officials as was Pat Corcoran. Whether in or out of the A.F. of L., this group has always stood for a united labor movement and against union-splitting.

"I want to emphasize most emphatically that Vern had no quarrel with the national leadership of his union. When Alex McKeown was stationed here as the representative of the national office of the American Federation of Hosiery Workers, Vern and he were on the best of terms and were in substantial agreement on union policy. Likewise, it must be noted that throughout the country the American Federation of Hosiery Workers maintains cordial relations with the entire labor movement. Only in Minneapolis, under the regime of the Bill Mauseth-Hilliard Smith gang who control Vern's local, is there friction with the labor movement. Vern Simonson opposed this insane union-splitting policy as well as he could as the lone oppositionist on the local's executive board, and as a result was vilified, calumniated and threatened by those pursuing a mad policy of rule or ruin.

### Threatened by Stalin Men

"They hated Vern Simonson, not only for his trade union policy but at least equally for his poli-

## Corcoran Case Analyzed At Minneapolis Meeting

(Continued from page 1)

"Pat Corcoran's assassination is a tragic consequence of a totality of events which have raised Minneapolis from a notorious open shop town to what is probably the best organized city in the United States, as recently attested to by officials of the National Labor Relations Board. The killing of Corcoran is not an isolated instance, but is a link in a chain of events forged by sinister forces, the enemies of the working class. The role of the Associated Industries in this case (the A. I. is the former Citizens Alliance) is that of a pack of jackals, who seek to besmirch the names of the leadership of the local progressive unionists. The bosses have not reconciled themselves to the fact that the labor movement has so materially raised the living standards of the workers, has caused millions of dollars more to go in the pay envelopes of their employees.

"Since 1934, when the drivers' union succeeded in having the bosses operate under signed contracts, the trade union movement of Minneapolis has trebled in size, until there are today over 45,000 workers working under union contracts. There are 50 more local unions in 1937 than there were three years ago, new industries have been organized, better contracts have been secured each year, which mean shorter hours and more pay and yet the Stalinists, with characteristic effrontery, echo the bosses' charges of "gangsterism", and that Pat Corcoran was killed as a result of "inter-union warfare."

"The role of gangsterism in the trade union movement is to terrorize the workers in the unions, to take bribes from the bosses, and to put the quietus

tical program. As a left wing Socialist, Simonson is opposed to the frame-up and murder system perpetrated on an international scale by the Communist parties of Stalin. It is of course a notorious fact that the same Mauseth-Smith-Bean gang who fought him in the unions are also partisans of Stalin. They denounce Vern Simonson as a "Trotskyist-fascist" and declare they will drive all of us out of the labor movement. They try to raise a lynch spirit against us, which can lead to anything.

"These utterly irresponsible people have been attempting to strike at our group by attempting to link us with alleged gangsterism in the labor movement. They have thus created an atmosphere in which any enemy of labor can strike down labor leaders with impunity, for the Mauseth-Smith propaganda has in advance pinned all such crimes on the labor movement itself. The fact is that the bona fide labor movement of Minneapolis, the most progressive in the country, is clean as a hound's tooth. These attacks come from enemies of labor whether open or disguised."

on militant action by the workers. The bosses are not averse to racketeering in the unions—it pays them well. A cinching proof of the worth of the drivers' leadership is the fact that throughout all their strikes, the workers have been led from one victory to another, until the scale for drivers—which was 42½c per hour after the victorious strikes of 1934—is today 70c per hour.

"The revolutionists in the trade union movement—the Dunnes and the Dobbs and the Skoglunds—have always sought the means for cooperation with the other honest but comparatively conservative elements in the trade union movement, have always sought a united front with other progressive forces in joint action against the common enemy, the bosses. It is quite possible to successfully work with conservative trade union forces in furthering the immediate demands of the workers, higher wages and shorter hours and better working conditions. This may be done, as proved by the work of the Dunnes in the drivers' union, despite fundamental differences with conservatives like Corcoran on politics, religion, and the goal of the class struggle. Men like Corcoran, unlike the Stalinists, knew that there was a class struggle, and that the only way to win it was to organize unions which genuinely fought for the interests of the workers.

### Sailing Under False Colors

"The Stalinists sail under false colors. While they are the class-collaborationists and counter-revolutionists, they denounce all honest revolutionists as class-collaborationists and counter-revolutionists, and this in the name of Leninism, of social revolution. They have put the Soviet Union, which is a trade union raised to the highest level, in a precarious condition through their crooked maneuvering and compromise with the capitalist nations of the world.

### Call Police

"The wailing and yelping of the Minneapolis Stalinists for a special police investigator to pry into the records of Local 544, is a case in point; since when do militant workers go to the police for help; since when have the Stalinists forgotten that the police are the agents of the bosses; and that the state is the agent of the bosses; and that the state and the police and the bosses are the enemies of the workers?"

Before the meeting, the Communist Party, not through its own name of course, but through that of one of its members, one Robert Kelly, organizer of the Miscellaneous Workers Union, local 655, asked a series of questions on a mimeographed leaflet. The Socialist Party, in great contrast to the practice of the Communist Party, allowed the leaflet vendors to distribute them even at the very doors of the meeting. (As a matter of fact, one of our leaflet distributors was beaten up by a gang of Stalinist thugs recently at a Stalinist Ralph Bates meeting.) The questions on the leaflet were adequately answered by Cannon; also numerous questions from the floor. Where one questioner asked who beat Vern Simonson, a member of the Minneapolis Socialist Party, who is in active opposition to the Stalinist control of his local union of the American Federation of Hosiery Workers, Cannon asked why this question was not on the list of questions addressed to him in the Kelly leaflet.

## The Stalinist Frame-Ups From Moscow To Minneapolis

Speaker

James P. Cannon

Just Returned from Minneapolis

FRIDAY EVENING, DEC. 17, 1937, 8:00 P. M.  
WEBSTER MANOR, 125 East 11th Street (Near 4th Ave).  
Auspices: Socialist Party (Left Wing), New York Local