

Enormous Profits in Southern Tobacco

Enormous profits for the companies contrast with the bitterest exploitation of the workers—Negro and white—in the South's second biggest manufacturing industry—tobacco, in which opportunities for labor organization and struggle are ripened by the sharpened class distinction. Annual financial reports of the big cigarette companies, just released, are very instructive.

Leading in profits is the R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. which has attached to Winston-Salem, N. C. the sobriquet of Camel City. Its profits for 1929 reached the amazing total of \$32,210,000 compared with \$29,080,000 in 1927. No question here of an over-expanded industry "profitless" for capitalists, as the textile barons claim.

Enormous Company Profits

The tremendous net earnings, built on the sale of Camels and Prince Albert, come from workers suffering under an even lower scale of wages than cotton mill operatives, and from tobacco growers, many of whom are reported famine-stricken in eastern North Carolina. Unionism is tolerated even less in tobacco factories than in cotton mills. The Tobacco Workers Intl. Union reports the negligible membership of 3,200 based on a few small, but friendly firms in Kentucky manufacturing cigarettes for the union label trade.

R.J. Reynold's net earnings of \$32,210,000 for 1929 are computed after "deducting all charges and expenses of management, and after making provision for interest, taxes, depreciation, advertising, etc." From this sum \$25,500,000 was paid to stockholders and \$6,710,000 transferred to the undivided profits account, which now totals \$51,579,000.

These tremendous earnings are based on the labor of 12,000 Winston-Salem workers, more than half of them negroes. Wages run from \$7 to \$11 a week, with a maximum of 48 cents an hour.

The Winston-Salem tobacco factories are strongly protected against union inroads. R. J. Reynolds answered the activities of E. L. Crouch, vice president of the Tobacco Workers Intl. Union, stationed in the Camel city, by wholesale discharges of unionists. Last year 800 were fired in one batch, many of them negroes. But back in 1920 the union was strong and covered the 14,000 workers then employed in an industry where speedup has since taken its toll in displaced workers. No one got less than 32 cents an hour and the maximum was 64 cents. The Machinists Union had separate contracts covering their men.

The industrial depression of 1921 afforded an excellent opportunity to drive out unionism, which was crushed under militant anti-union tactics and unemployment.

Virtual Famine for Workers

The other side of the R. J. Reynolds exploitation is seen in eastern North Carolina, where the Raleigh News and Observer reveals hunger prevalent and conditions closely approaching a real famine. This is in the tobacco country. At the mercy of the Big Five tobacco corporations, which set the price to be paid the grower at the start of each harvest season, the bright leaf growers, who supply the cigarette trade, find no open market in which to sell. This year with partial crop failure and a price of 24 cents a pound, they find themselves at the mercy of the big cigarette companies, the landlords and the bankers.

TORONTO MILITANTS, ATTENTION!

A class in the fundamentals of Marxism and Leninism, under the direction of Maurice Spector, is being organized by the Communist League (Opposition) branch in Toronto. If interested, get in immediately with M. Quarter by telephone: Unity 5783J. All workers invited.

If the number on your wrapper is

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on your subscription to the Militant has expired. Renew immediately in order to avoid missing any issues.

A Step Down by the International Right

The Right wing, which still employs some Communist phraseology purely out of years of habit, has taken another step away from Communism and towards the social democracy. This time the action is laid in Czecho-Slovakia. The Right wing there has been divided into three camps: the Jilek-Bolen group of Right wingers with some Centrist leanings, the Right wing organization in Brunn, and the trade union opportunists (Hais et al) who are now in control of the Left wing unions. On December 15, the Action Committee of the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia (Opposition)—the Jilek-Bolen-Houser group recently removed from Party leadership and expelled—held a plenary meeting at which the question of unity in the Right wing camp was discussed.

The report was delivered by Houser, with a co-report by Bolen. The subject of the controversy was the political and organizational resolution worked out by the C. P. C. (Opposition) at a joint conference with the Brunn Opposition on November 25. The resolution was adopted at the Plenary session by a vote of 18 to 4, with Jilek, Bolen, Lipina and Kolzer voting in the negative. While adequate details are not yet at hand, the character of the resolution that forms the basis of the unification of the Czech Right wing groups may be judged from the following illuminating excerpt:

"The proletarian united front is not just a maneuver for the purpose of exposure, but it is a serious policy which has as its task the approachment (annäherung) and collaboration of all class conscious socialist parties that are ready to fight against the bourgeoisie..."

A Break with Communism

Gegen den Strom, the central organ of the German Right wing (Brandier-Thalheimer) quite correctly remarks that this paragraph is incompatible with the Leninist tactic of the united front. It may be added that it breaks not only with some specific tactic of the Communists—which should or should not be applied, according to the conditions of the struggle—but with the fundamental principles of the Communist movement. We know of no socialist parties outside of the Communist Parties that is ready to fight against the bourgeoisie. We know only that all shades of the social democracy, Right as well as "Left", are the decoys of the bourgeoisie in the proletarian movement, that their role in the struggle is essentially one of diverting, confusing and strangling every genuine movement of struggle against capitalism.

To the so-called Left socialists falls the specific task of deceiving the workers into the belief that there are "bad socialists" who collaborate with the bourgeoisie, and "good socialists" who are against the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the working class but still "ready to fight against the bourgeoisie". Their names are A. A. Purcell, James Maxton, Paul Levi, Georg Ledebour, Otto Bauer and Company. Their ranks are wide open to receive the new recruits to national socialism of the "Left" variety—Hauser, Hais, Brandier, Hueber, Sellier and Lovestone. The above-mentioned Czech resolution is an indication that the Right wing of the Communist movement is more than ready to meet Bauer and Co. half way.

It is true that Gegen den Strom very formally records its disagreement with the resolution of its Czech colleagues. But it is purely a matter of record with Brandier. Let the archives bear testimony for the future historian that Brandier once recorded his opposition to the crude opportunism of his Czech comrades, and thereby cleared his "international" conscience. (It might be added, of course, that Brandier's policy in Germany, while a bit more refined, is neither better nor worse than Houser's in Czecho-Slovakia.)

But no sooner has Brandier so devoutly "fulfilled his international obligations", than he turns around in the very next issue of his paper (Vol. 3, No. 1), and gives a glowing and unrestrained account of the "Unification of the Three Communist Opposition groups in Czecho-Slovakia". And lo and behold! there is not as much as a syllable whispered about the resolution so formally and unobtrusively criticized a week before. It is not against this vulgar piece of Menshevism that Brandier now directs his shafts, but against the timid souls,

Jilek and Bolen, who presumed to oppose the unification on the basis of the submitted resolution! Brandier suddenly discovers—after having lavished praise upon them for months—that Jilek and Bolen are "the two representatives of the Ruth Fischer-Maslow era in Czecho-Slovakia"—the worse thing Brandier can say about anyone.

That is the contemptible way in which the Right wing "criticize" each other's new strides away from Communism. "You must understand, dear Houser," says Brandier, "that I will have to say an embarrassed word or two in Gegen den Strom. But please do not feel hurt. We are really for a Hands Off policy, and in our next issue I will write a full page eulogizing you in such unmeasured and uncritical terms that nobody will remember the petty criticism I made the week before."

The Right Wing Doesn't "Intervene"

Thus proceeds the occupation of new social democratic territory by the Right wing in every country and the ever greater distance it puts between itself and its former Communist base. Every group knows there is no danger of any serious "intervention" by the other.

A similar case may be found in the United States. With a simplicity and ease that does no credit to his followers, Lovestone has succeeded in allying his group with the Brandier group in Germany. The completeness of this reversal may be judged from the fact that there has not been a national or international party congress or plenum since 1924 where Lovestone did not condemn Brandier and Co. from hell to breakfast as the outstanding representative of social democracy in the Communist movement. Lovestone prided himself on being the most prominent antagonist of Brandierism, and made this antagonism one of his principal claims to leadership in the American party. Inside of six months, Lovestone erased five years of his record. The two Right wing groups have agreed to let each other traverse its own specific path of national reformism without molestation or "petty criticism".

But the outward forms of "internationalism" must be maintained. Even Otto Bauer will sometimes be found criticizing the more scandalous actions of his British or German colleagues in the Second International. Therefore the current issue of the Revolutionary Age contains a criticism of M. N. Roy that is positively touching in the delicacy of its reproach. In a recent article, Roy condemned not only the pet abomination of the Right wingers, the 10th Plenum of the E. C. C. I., but also the Sixth Congress: the latter was too "Left" for him. In a "critical" article of reply Herberg assures Roy that he is wrong. The Sixth Congress was not a "Left" Congress; its leaders were Bucharin, Lovestone, Jilek, Serra and Humbert-Droz, says Herberg. The only trouble is that its work is being revised now.

Roy's Nationalism

Alas, even the tender criticisms of Herberg are lost on Roy. The latter is a well-known Indian nationalist, who has travelled for the last 4 to 5 years from Moscow to Shanghai to Moscow to the Riviera to Berlin to Moscow and back to Berlin, where he is now the "international" specialist of the Brandierites. All these years he has had to masquerade in a Communist costume. Now he has thrown it off. Even the Sixth Congress was "too radical" for him. With his expulsion from the Comintern, there is no longer even the faintest restraining leash upon him.

He will not lose any sleep over Herberg's criticism. He knows that it means nothing and can accomplish nothing. So long as he doesn't interfere with Lovestone's effort to create a temporary berth between the socialist and Communist movements of this country, Lovestone will not expose the sleight-of-hand tricks by which Roy pulls nationalist policies and theories out of a Bolshevik hat.

DETROIT!—(FP)—Workers in the Motors Products Co. in Detroit are making as low as \$1.25 for a 10-hour day. This is done by returning work done on a piece-work rate as "unfinished". Many workers have left their jobs as this system enters its fourth week.

TROTSKY

The writings of L. D. Trotsky are the richest and most fruitful contributions being made to the labor and revolutionary movements today. There is not a problem that great Bolshevism touches which is not immediately illuminated in all its aspect. And the problems he deals with concern the most vital interests of the whole movement.

The international labor and Communist movements are in a critical situation. Never has the need for clarity been so urgent as it is today. Never has the need for straight Marxist thinking been so pressing. Nobody is doing more in this field than Trotsky.

The situation in the Soviet Union, the fountain-head of the revolutionary movement today, which offers so many complexities to the average observer, is made clear and understandable by Trotsky's writings. In fact, the course of events in the Soviet Union and the Russian Communist Party can be evaluated properly only by a reading of the works of the Russian Opposition which Trotsky speaks for and leads.

In the United States, Trotsky's writing appear regularly in the Militant. Just as the first writings of Lenin in this country became a mighty instrument for the molding of the revolutionary movement years ago, the writings of Trotsky now are playing the same role in the movement at a different stage.

Among the articles by Trotsky that have appeared in the Militant recently are: Disarmament and the United States of Europe. Syndicalism and Communism. The Austrian Crisis and Communism. Who is Leading the Communist International? What is Happening in China? Twelve years of the Russian Revolution. The Defense of the Soviet Union and the Opposition. Etc. Etc. No active worker can afford to be without these contributions which appear only in the Militant.

In 1930, the Militant plans to continue the publication of Trotsky's writing, which will include some of the most brilliant work he has yet done in the course of his years in the revolutionary movement. The best way to insure getting these copies of the Militant regularly, is to subscribe for a year. A yearly subscription is \$2.00 or \$1.00 for six months.

MILITANT

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NO. 7

THE BULLETIN
of the Russian Opposition

The new issue contains articles by L. D. Trotsky on the Twelfth Anniversary of the Russian Revolution, Communism and Syndicalism, Syndicalism's Mistakes in Principle, the Austrian Crisis, China, etc., etc. Articles by Christian Rakovsky on Government Policy and the Party Regime, the Capitulators. Letters from Russian Oppositionists in Exile. An unpublished document of the Petersburg Party Committee on the eve of the uprising, concealed by Stalin. And many other important articles and documents.

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