

Throughout the World of Labor

From Moscow

At Moscow, political work is carried on principally in a disorganized fashion. A dull and apathetic discontent pervades the workers. At present it is difficult to obtain food even. Manufactured goods are rationed. The lowering of the cost prices, if achieved, will be entirely through increased speed-up. Living expenses not only do not decrease, but, in fact, generally increase. If anyone shows signs of discontent—"the workers demand the discharge of the class enemy". It is thus that the competition and enthusiasm of the masses is assured.

For example: A worker, overcome by exhaustion, is refused permission to leave by the factory manager. In order not to be charged with ill-will, and in order not to incur the consequences of a "fraudulent leave", she continues working until she collapses. Then the workers carry her to the ambulance where it appears that instant medical attention is necessary. Similar occurrences are not rare.

At Solomichino (in the Urals), a place of deportation one of our deported comrades, Ikanevsky, was wounded at night, while asleep, by a shot through the window. He was struck in both hands, the bones of the right hand being broken. Despite the fact that the wound, although dressed by the doctor, became infected, he was not permitted, for two weeks, to go to Guralak for necessary surgical attention. They even attempted to make this appear faked. But they were finally forced to admit the reality of the criminal attack.

Another example: one of our comrades, deported to the Urals, was refused necessary succour for three months (since all work is forbidden). His demands were met with the taunts, "Go get it in Moscow". (The deportees who leave the town are exposed to imprisonment.—N. D. L. R.) Unable to provide for his wants he had to request incarceration.

The administration resorts to the most despot and frightful measures toward our deported comrades. The infraction of any arbitrary rule of the G. P. U. (for example, the ban against telephoning) carries with it the menace: "Narim or the convict prison". (Narim is a place of deportation in Siberia, notorious for the hardships which the deportees suffer there.—N. D. L. R.)

Recently I had the opportunity to speak to a sympathizer who is a member in the management of a factory. I give his words briefly: "It is difficult to characterize the attitude in the circles of economic administration except as confusion and uncertainty. Very seldom does someone rise up against the five year plan. Yet none is convinced of its possibilities, mainly on account of the successive modifications of the plan. The last time, when we made modifications involving the reduction of costs and the increase in wages, we warned the Supreme Economic Council that their figures were delusive. They replied, 'Do as you are told', and we obeyed."

The masses are silent. We are in a period of stagnation despite the indisputable progress of industry. There is no real growth in proletarian initiative. It is no mistake to say that this period reminds one in many respects of the one following the reaction after 1905. They stay away, they do not attend meetings, or they arrive in time for the motion picture. (Many political meetings make use of motion pictures.—N. D. L. R.) When six hundred are expected at a meeting, only two hundred show up. If the worker is asked, "Why don't you come?" he answers: "They won't tell anything new. It's all right, I won't be missed."

At workers' meetings numerous written demands come to the committee: "Where is Trotsky? What is Trotsky doing?" etc.

Many workers do not come to meetings except for renewing their contracts with the cooperatives. The appeals in the pa-

per reach only a small upper strata of the working class and then not for long.

This year should see vast reorganizations in the factories and shops. Under the present conditions of the regime and of the Party, the system of individual management cannot but worsen the already difficult situation.

January.

—R. R.

The Struggle Against Unemployment in Europe and Its Conduct

The bureau of the C. I. for western Europe—the organization created for action on a set date and on a world scale—has launched an appeal for "powerful demonstrations" which will bring together workers, employed and unemployed, in all countries. Certainly we should rejoice over the fact that the strategists of the new line have, in these last months, discovered the problem of unemployment. But what is less heartening is that they do not consider the problem of unemployment in its relation to the concrete situation in each country, but handle it in that ridiculously mechanical fashion, the failure of which we have already seen on August 1st, the first day of international struggle.

Since the Sixth World Congress it has become customary with the C. I. to discover from time to time a "central problem" which, to conform to the "revolutionary rise" in the entire planet, is thereupon proclaimed a "central problem" for all countries.

Last summer and fall it was the international strike movement being transformed into political mass strikes—if not in actuality, at least in the theses of the Executive; now it is from the supposed revolutionary movement among the unemployed the whole world over that the E.C.C.I. awaits the destruction of the very foundations of capitalism.

Tomorrow it will doubtlessly be the revolutionary peasants who will embark on a revolutionary movement in honor of the international peasant congress which will be held about March 15. It seems that the bureau for western Europe with its wise foresight of this "next higher step in the revolutionary rise", has advanced the day for the world-wide struggle against unemployment from February 26 to March 6—no doubt in order that there may be a somewhat greater interval from one step to the other.

That kind of display, with "great days of struggle", has clearly nothing in common with the need for bringing the mass of unemployed to the general front of working class struggle. Some of the slogans given out by the bureau for western Europe for the day of struggle, such as "creation of organizations of unemployed", are, as a matter of fact dangerous.

If there is any sense to this slogan—that is, if it is less stupid than the one, "unemployment aid equivalent to full wages"—it can mean only the creation of organizations of unemployed, or unions of unemployed.

This slogan alone, reveals the complete lack of seriousness and the extreme ignorance of the phrase-slugging bureaucrats who are now discrediting communism.

What can be the significance of unions of unemployed? At most, to strengthen, in organized form, the isolation from the factory workers which already characterizes the unemployed. This means that they will be playing the game of the trade union bureaucrats; since the latter in most countries lend support to this isolation (which is, to a certain extent, the inevitable result of the removal of the worker from the productive process) by expelling unemployed members from the unions.

The formula of separate unions for unemployed takes for its point of departure the dangerous delusion that organized masses of unemployed can better their miserable conditions without the aid of the workers in the factories and trade unions. Of all the delusions of the third period that are growing with such speed, there is none as dangerous as this one.

Unemployment and the Workers' Morale

Permanent unemployment, such as exists in Germany, Austria, England, Poland, etc., places upon the Communists in these countries the task of preventing, with all their power, the artificial stirring up of tension and disputes between unemployed and employed workers which the reformists are systematically attempting. Unemployment is not, in general, a factor which strengthens the revolutionary current in the working class movement. On the contrary, it allows reformism to reinforce its position in the factories—the fear of unemployment being one of its best allies. In addition, it makes it possible for reformism to throw out of the factories the most conscientious and revolutionary elements. And lastly, there is no doubt that the longer unemployment lasts, the more it demoralizes and paralyzes the workers.

In order that the great dangers which are created by unemployment are not entirely ruinous, all separation between employed and unemployed workers, as far as organization is concerned, must be avoided; therefore: no separate union for unemployed but active struggle in the unions against the exclusion of unemployed and for recognition of the unemployed by the union.

But we have not yet come to the essential question. It is not the form of organization of the movement of unemployed that is decisive, but the methods of struggle against unemployment. On this depends the question of organization.

If the purely union struggle is extremely restricted in the present period, the struggle for serious reforms in favor of the unemployed has absolutely no chance of succeeding. Only great mass actions can wrest temporarily certain concessions from capitalism; only struggles of determined masses, including unemployed and employed workers can teach them that they will achieve lasting betterment of their situation only by overthrowing the existing capitalist regime.

Is there anyone in the C. I. who questions this elementary truth? Even the bureau for western Europe calls for "united revolutionary action of unemployed and employed workers".

Now we come to the point. The appeal for solidarity will never get the mass of employed workers into the streets beside the unemployed. And neither will this appeal for solidarity prevent the masses of desperate unemployed from countenancing wage reductions. The art of a revolutionary party consists, not in launching these appeals with an abundance of gigantic posters and noisy speeches, but in the act of concentrating the struggle on the questions which affect the self-interest of employed and unemployed workers equally. But this plainly goes beyond the limits of a schema valid for five continents, and it would be necessary for the different parties to adapt the struggle to the concrete circumstances of their own countries. The situation in Germany is special: there the party should direct all its action on the basis of the struggle against the Young plan; with which, as the central action, should be connected the struggle of employed workers against the financial, tariff and social policies of the government. The situation in Austria is again different: here the party should turn the struggle of the unemployed into a central action against fascism, for a proletarian program of immediate demands.

One thing only is valid in a general way for all countries: the struggle cannot be conducted in the manner imagined by

the bureaucrats of the Stalin apparatus—by means of big displays and high-sounding articles and speeches.

Berlin, February 14.

K. L.

LABOR FAKERS ATTACK ALIEN WORKERS

DETROIT—(FP)—Over 1,600 aliens employed by the city of Detroit stand to lose their jobs by the mayor's approval of a resolution just passed by the council providing for the immediate dismissal of all employees not citizens of the United States. Those with first papers are also to be unconditionally fired.

Last week 748 laborers were fired because they had not yet become citizens. Most of the latest group to be fired are also manual workers, although a considerable percentage comes from the hospitals.

The resolution to fire was introduced by Councilman Ewald, president of the city, by Pres. F. X. Martel of the Detroit bricklayers' union and was actively supported by the Federation of Labor.

THE MILITANT

is the only newspaper in the United States that regularly publishes the writing of L. D. Trotsky, Ch. Rakovsky and other leaders of the Left Opposition of the Communist movement based upon the teachings of Marx and Lenin. In addition it is the only periodical in the English language in any part of the world that prints the correct estimation of world events based upon a Leninist conception.

The Militant is the organ of those who want to reestablish the international Communist movement on the basis it was up till the death of Lenin. Published weekly, it is a powerful factor in mobilizing the working class along the correct ideological lines. Without its regular appearance the Left Opposition not only in America but throughout the world would sustain a severe loss.

In a recent letter, comrade Trotsky asserted that *La Verite* the weekly organ of the French Left Opposition and *The Militant* were the two best organs of the movement that is conducting a campaign for a return to Lenin's teachings. To enable *The Militant* to continue publication, the immediate support of all its readers is necessary. A donation to its Sustaining Fund will enable it to continue to exist.

FILL OUT THE BLANK BELOW

DO NOT WAIT! ACT TODAY!

MAIL IMMEDIATELY AND THEN YOU WILL KNOW YOU HAVE DONE YOUR PART FOR THE REGENERATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT.

(Tear here or if you want to save this issue of the Militant copy it on another piece of paper.)

THE MILITANT
25 Third Avenue, Room 4
New York, N. Y.

I am enclosing a donation of \$... for the Militant Sustaining Fund to help maintain the paper and publish the works of L. D. Trotsky
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