

Organization Notes

KANSAS CITY, MO.

Our small branch in Kansas City has stepped into the lead. Its pledge of \$20.00 monthly for the sustaining fund to secure the regular appearance of the *Militant* and to help build up the Left Opposition is being met on the dot. Not content with this accomplishment these comrades decided to sponsor the publication of the coming pamphlet "Communism and Syndicalism" and already forwarded \$30.00 for this purpose.

Comrade Buehler reports that the members are very actively disposing of our excellent propaganda literature and reaching many workers. The branch has sent in its order for our unemployment leaflet.

MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

Our branch here has engaged most actively in an election campaign in the sixth ward, Minneapolis. Upon the failure of the official party to file a candidate, our comrade John Brinda was entered to utilize the opportunity for Communist propaganda. Our branch held meetings and issued a leaflet containing our unemployment demands and clearly emphasizing the proletarian revolution as the only solution.

Our Minneapolis branch members have been very active for years within the trade union movement in building up Communist influence. Recently they have become the live forces within the city-wide trade union committee of organization and education. This committee has carried on quite a broad campaign for unemployment relief. Our members have made it a special point, and with some success, to push it forward closer toward a realistic and correct program of unemployment demands. The conference called by this committee on Jan. 18 to adopt an unemployment program had an attendance of 175 trade union delegates.

Our Minneapolis branch is now distributing 5,000 of our unemployment leaflets.

TORONTO, CANADA

From across the border we have also received the kind of support which actually makes the publication of more Communist literature possible. Our Toronto branch decided to sponsor a new pamphlet and forwarded a check for \$32.00 for this purpose. They tell us if it is not sufficient they will send more.

During the last provincial elections the official Canadian party failed to really increase its vote despite the economic crisis. It naturally reflects a failure of growth, due mainly to mistaken policies. Our branch did its part by issuing a leaflet of Communist propaganda. It was given good distribution.

PHILADELPHIA, PA.

Our branch here, after being strengthened by the return to the city of a couple of active comrades, is now functioning well. The members are availing themselves of the opportunity to speak at a working class forum in the city, with good effect. They have started out on real literature distribution ordering our unemployment leaflet and a good supply of pamphlets. Needless to say they are also beginning to make prompt returns for material received.

OUR SUBSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN

Although it is as yet a little early to report concrete results we already have nevertheless news from various points of first steps being taken to increase the *Militant* circulation. The national office has proposed to the branches to organize competing teams to gather new subscriptions, new contacts and also paid renewals. For the three months period up to March First, the special trial sub. offer for three months at 25c holds good. Also for each regularly paid yearly sub. of \$2.00 we offer during this period in addition, and for the same price, the choice of either of the following pamphlets: "Criticism of the Draft Program of the Communist International", or "The Strategy of the World Revolution", both by Trotsky, or "Since Lenin Died" (paper bound) by Eastman.

The best individual sub. getters will return prizes, upon return of sufficient number of our subs., of either the book "My Life" by Trotsky, or "The Real Situation in Russia".

CHICAGO, ILL.

Following right upon the heels of the increasing unemployment situation our branch in Chicago has suffered further depletion of its ranks by several of its active members leaving the city. But efforts are being made to regain what is thus lost by building up new contacts. The branch contemplates several public meetings during the month of March more effectively to bring the Left Opposition viewpoint forward.

Our New Propaganda Literature

In addition to the books and pamphlets already on hand we can now announce ready

for shipment one new pamphlet "World Unemployment and the Five Year Plan" by L. D. Trotsky with an introduction by Arne Swaback. It sells at 10c, bundle lots 7c. Our unemployment leaflet is off the press and the branches are already being supplied. Those who have not yet placed their orders should hurry before the supply is exhausted.

We have also just received from comrade Trotsky a new manuscript for a pamphlet entitled "The Revolt in Spain". Within about 10 days it will be out in pamphlet form selling at 10c. Our pamphlets on "The Communists and the Trade Unions" by Trotsky, with an introduction by James

Resolution on Program of Expanded Activities for 1931

After a thorough consideration of the situation in the League, the resources and most pressing tasks—to which two meetings of the committee have been devoted in addition to a number of sub-committee meetings—the National Committee makes the following decisions:

The present resources of the organization, even without any substantial gains in membership in the next future, make possible and realizable a program of organizational expansion of our work during the coming year. With the full cooperation of the membership the National Committee will undertake to execute the following plan in progressive stages:

1. To prepare the Second National Conference of the League early in the summer.
2. To organize a publishing company which will insure the regular and systematic publication of Marxist classics at prices which will put them within the reach of workers.
3. To return the *Militant* to weekly publication on a sound basis.

L. Cannon will be ready for shipment shortly thereafter.

Another big step ahead in organizational expansion is contemplated and, the first splendid response is already beginning to become a reality. It can be epitomized in the slogan "A Marxist Library at a price workers can afford". Its realization step by step will mean simultaneous strengthening of our movement. The actual steps to be taken are clearly explained in the National Committee resolution appearing below and really needs no further comment.

Suffice only to add that in presenting this resolution before our New York branch the response immediately turned it into a live reality. \$450.00 became the actual starting point. The branch further pledged itself to raise a total of \$1,000.00. With such splendid response duplicated by other sections of the country the contemplated steps will follow in rapid succession.

4. To begin the publication of a theoretical magazine.

5. To strengthen the staff of the National organization by making further additions to the office and editorial forces and by providing for a field organizer.

6. To organize at least two national lecture tours.

7. To publish the International Bulletin in English regularly.

The financial phase of the program centers around the decision to provide the means for extended publication of literature. It is to be done on such a basis that it will create new sources for the sale of literature as well as the distribution of it through the channels of the League.

The amount necessary to be raised is \$2,000. The financial phase of the whole program outlined above will be concentrated in the campaign to raise the fund for the establishment of extended publishing activities. The profits from this in addition to our regular revenues will release the necessary funds for the financing of the other

features of the general program.

The funds are to be raised in two ways:

1. Flat contributions of substantial amounts from comrades or sympathizers in a position to make them.

2. Soliciting regular ten dollar contributions for which receipts will entitle holders to a discount of one-third on all publications of the publishing company. In view of the fact that this is one major financial campaign of the year on which the whole program depends every member of the organization will be expected to make at least one such contribution.

Smaller contributions and payments on the pledge fund will not be applied to the publishing fund. The pledge fund and the other regular financial revenues of the organization must be continued as before separately. The publishing fund is an EXTRA campaign to make possible the program of expansion. It requires a little extra effort and sacrifice from the membership, and in view of the real forward steps in all fields it will make possible, we believe the comrades will all respond to it with enthusiasm.

The whole program will be developed and realized in sections. As soon as the first five hundred dollars is raised for the project the publishing activity will be immediately increased. When the first thousand dollars is realized in the campaign the *Militant* will return to weekly publication. When we reach the fifteen hundred mark the National Conference will be held. With the raising of the last five hundred the theoretical magazine will be launched and the further strengthening of the staff will take place.

Adopted by the National Committee
Communist League of America

If the number on your wrapper is

63

then your subscription to the *Militant* has expired. Renew immediately.

The Legend of the Public Works Panacea

No sooner are all the indications of the crisis so visible that none but the completely blind can fail to admit their existence, than assurances begin to flow from all official sources that an increase in public works construction will be initiated and the crisis, ipso facto, done away with. Almost every day we are given to understand that so many and so many millions of dollars have been appropriated by this or that legislature for public works and the alleviation of unemployment.

Let us, however, pry from the mass of trash with which we are fed daily, the information as to whether there has been an increase in expenditures for public works construction or not.

The matter of public works is important as a branch of the building trades and a substantial increase in the former would to a certain extent aid in the rehabilitation of that industry. The total of public works construction (including roads) averaged, for the years 1925-1930, about 40 percent of all construction, according to a report of the *Engineering News Record* (January 1, 1931). Its importance should therefore not be minimized. It is of course foolish to believe that increased government expenditures can eliminate unemployment, but at the same time it is also foolish to ignore an item that composes 40 percent of the building trade totals.

No Gains Asked

Now we begin to ask: Was there in 1930, and will there be in 1931, a substantial gain in public works construction, as the government executives would have us believe? The answer is, No—emphatically no. The increase, wherever there has been an increase, is negligible when compared to the totals expended and when adjusted for long time trends, we can say definitely that rather than an increase in most public construction programs there has been a decided drop.

From articles appearing in the *Engineering News Record* (January 1-2, 1931) we learn that if we are to take 1928 as 100, the index for total public works expenditures would be as follows:

| Year | 1928 | 1929 | 1930 | Average 1925-30 |
|-------|------|------|------|-----------------|
| Index | 100 | 95 | 97.8 | 89 |

What do the above figures show? That while the general trend from 1925 through 1928 was on the decrease, since then the total volume has gone down. During the year when most noise was made about increased public works expenditures (1930) the actual volume was only 3 percent higher than in 1929 and was 2.2 percent lower than in 1928.

The above relates to total expenditures. It would be interesting to examine the figures for what is considered in an editorial of the *Record* as "the largest factor in

public works extension, road building". It is here that it is possible to obtain concrete figures both nationally and for the separate states. At the beginning of each year the estimate for the coming year is released by the state highway departments. In regard to this, one must remember that road construction, as is also true of large buildings, does not begin immediately upon somebody's desire to start. Never does less than six months, and usually over a year, elapse from the time the designs begin until the actual construction is started. Work to be done in 1931 is thus already planned in 1930. Only as much as has been designed will be constructed, and not more. It is with this in mind that we can understand the 1931 estimate.

Little Change Recorded over 1930

Quoting from the *Contractors and Engineers Monthly* (January 1931), we read: "Twenty-four states are increasing their 1931 expenditures (over 1930) seventeen are spending less, and seven remain the same." The total estimated expenditure for the 48 states by the state highway departments (including federal aid), compared to the 1930 figure, is as follows:

| Year | 1930 | 1931 |
|-------|---------------|---------------|
| Total | \$935,000,000 | \$937,000,000 |

This shows the negligible increase of two million in a total of a billion dollars. Combining the figures from the "Statistical Abstract of the United States" (Department of Commerce) with the above, in order to obtain an idea of the long-term trend, we find the percentage increase over the previous year to be the following:

| | |
|---------------------|------------|
| 1927 (over 1926)... | 12 percent |
| 1928 | 18 |
| 1930 | 6 |
| 1931 | 0.2 |

For the year 1931, the year of preparation for which was 1930, we find an increase of only 0.2 percent. And this, mind you, was the year in which most of the bunk was spread concerning increased road expenditures.

As far as New York state is concerned, there is to be an actual decrease in road construction for 1931 as against 1930. According to figures issued by the Commissioner of Highways Brandt, we find the total for the years 1930 and 1931 as follows:

| Year | 1930 | 1931 |
|-------|--------------|--------------|
| Total | \$60,000,000 | \$55,000,000 |

There is to be a drop of five million dollars in total expended. At the same time that Governor Roosevelt was giving newspaper interviews assuring the unemployed of increased public construction, the Commissioner of Highways, S. W. Brandt sent out a letter to all adult engineers (October 28, 1930) in which he says:

Brandt Offers Little Hope

"Without question, the legislature and

the governor will be interested this winter in doing everything possible to relieve unemployment. One of the best means at the disposal of the state government is the construction of highways. I have received most of the reports on the progress of plans for 1931 construction and reconstruction and they indicate that while our plan work is going along about as usual for ordinary conditions, they are not going along fast enough to permit this department to take a leading part in the relief of unemployment."

This was written by the man directly in charge of highway construction throughout the entire state. Yet the papers continue to publish article after article relating the "special road building campaigns".

Figures for federal government expenditures tell exactly the same tale. Quoting from the *Engineering News Record* (January 22, 1931): "This week's estimate of total public works construction in 1929-31 includes federal government figures totaling as follows:

| | |
|------------|---------------|
| 1929 | \$342,370,000 |
| 1930 | 285,068,000 |
| 1931 | 346,974,000 |

plus \$150,000,000 of the emergency fund.

The *Record* considers the "emergency construction fund" item in the 1931 figures for the federal government. In actually analyzing this \$150,000,000 we find that, first, it is not \$150,000,000 but only \$116,000,000 (the former was asked for by Hoover, the latter was appropriated). Secondly, only about \$15,000,000 is really being used for federal government purposes, the rest being advanced to the various states as loans for highway construction. The "increase" in road building has already been discussed. So that we find that while there has been an increase over 1930, compared to 1929 however the increase is trifling. One could continue in this way state by state and department by department. The increase in expenditure is nowhere to be found. Increased expenditures mean increased tax rate and the latter is avoided like the plague.

The Communists must reveal these fraudulent construction campaigns of the politicians. The workers derive no return and cannot be fed by assurances of employment even if these promises emanate from "high authorities". The crisis continues to stare them in the face. Only by united action on the part of the workers and workless can the present miserable conditions be ameliorated and eventually done away with. Together with the capitalist system must go its glib politicians, its unemployment and its wholesale misery. The workers must strive towards this aim.

—H. S.