

Organization Notes

PHILADELPHIA—On April 12 comrade Cannon spoke at a very well attended meeting of the Liberal League open forum on the subject. "Prospects of the American Revolution". The discussion following gave comrade Cannon the opportunity to make clear our position as an integral part of the Communist movement and to present a criticism of the bureaucrats as a necessary means of defense of Communism as against those holding the view of the degeneracy of the Communist party beyond regeneration.

In the afternoon comrade Cannon had an opportunity to attend a branch meeting and work out further plans particularly for taking up effectively the defense of our two comrades, Goodman and Morgenstern, now under indictment for sedition. The local I. L. D. under orders from its "higher-ups", despite its expressed character of an organization for defense of all class war prisoners, is attempting to get away with complete sabotage of this case. It openly refuses to furnish the same defense accorded other class war prisoners, thus endangering the position of the revolutionary movement as a whole. It does make vague promises to provide purely legal aid. That promise came about only after severe protest had been made by workers in several parts of the country. Such protests were made, for example, by Gerry Allard of Illinois, a member of the National Committee of the I. L. D., by workers in Boston, New Haven, and elsewhere. Our Philadelphia branch is preparing to do its utmost to compel the I. L. D. actually to function as a defense organization of class war prisoners. Meanwhile all of our comrades, including those under indictment, are continuing the work of building the Left Opposition in the most active manner possible.

MINNEAPOLIS—In this city our branch is now thoroughly taking up the leadership in organizing a broad working class united front for defense of the right of free speech. That is the burning issue in Minneapolis now and our branch has very correctly raised this slogan. City authorities, reinforced by extra policemen's clubs, are continuing their efforts to break up working class gatherings, to attempt to outlaw workers' revolutionary organizations, and are thus making an attack upon the working class as a whole. The local fakers of the A. F. of L. unions are trailing in behind as closely as possible and making all sorts of maneuvers for expulsion of our members. The active campaign of our branch has so far prevented this.

A call for a conference has been issued around the slogan of "Fight for the right of free speech". The prestige and following our members have already attained due to their splendid militant record within the Minneapolis labor movement is sufficient guarantee that this united front conference will develop into a real effective movement. One of its tasks will be to focus the issue of the defense of the rights of workers during the campaign in the coming city elections. Thus the branch of the Left Opposition is already definitely the leading force in the fight for the right of the Communists to speak to the workers. It is carrying the Communist standard forward. The branch is following up energetically every step made forward with wide distribution of Communist literature.

OTHER CITIES—Our Chicago branch is organizing special Sunday drives in which all members participate in an organized manner to establish new contacts, circularize literature, and gather subscriptions to the *Militant*. The branch is dividing its forces into two competing teams. The results so far are quite gratifying, as will be noticed from the report in this issue of our subscription drive. The St. Louis branch has overcome its period of inactivity which

has existed for some time. It is now proceeding to plan active work and to function better in a collective sense. Comrade Oehler spoke at a public meeting in St. Louis on April 16 during the time of the miners' convention, and also attended meetings of the branch, helping in planning future activities. We are sure we can expect better results from the St. Louis membership as a whole in the future. The Boston branch is becoming one of our liveliest groups. Some of our members there are both active and influential forces in the trade unions. Others carry on active work in labor fraternal organizations and the unemployment movement. Compared to the size of membership, Boston has been doing about the best recently of all the branches in the disposing of literature. The New York branch, while not yet so very active in subscription hunting, is still the one having some of the best accomplishments to its record. Being the biggest unit, it naturally has better possibilities. This is one of the reasons why it has by far outstripped all the other branches in pushing forward our Program of Expansion. In financing contributions, the New York branch is the standard bearer.

HOW ABOUT THOSE SUBS.?

The drive for 500 new subscriptions and renewals will be extended for another three months, upon the request of some of the branches who haven't completed their quotas. They realize the importance of increasing the circulation of *The Militant* and ask for an opportunity to do their share, in this phase of our work.

The total received to date are 83, as follows:

Chicago	25	Boston	4
Minneapolis	16	Toronto	2
St. Louis	15	Cleveland	1
New York	11	Kansas City	2
Miscellaneous	7		

The Chicago Branch, which leads the drive, has initiated a plan which might well be copied by the other branches. This is how it works. The Branch divided itself into two competing teams. One headed by Rebecca Sacharow and the other by Hugo Oehler.

Each team got an equal number of members for co-operation in the work. Each Sunday morning the teams go visiting with the list of expired subs which was sent to all branches by the national office. Renewals are thus secured, and at the same time new subs. and trials are solicited from door to door. At the end of the drive, the teams securing the largest number will be declared the winner by the Branch.

In this connection we might add that a note in this column, giving comrade Sacharow full credit for the good work of Chicago, was due to the fact that the National Office was not aware of this plan at the time.

Comrade Goldberg of St. Louis who sent in 14 subscriptions in one mail refuses to accept the prize he is entitled to. He says this work was his contribution to the movement. Just the same the National Office is sending him one of Malkin's prison-made watch fobs, as a token of appreciation.

The Chicago Branch will undoubtedly win the copy of Trotsky's "My Life", and Minneapolis will most likely get the bound volume of *The Militant*. That is, unless New York gets busy and challenges these two branches.

Get your subs and renewals in before the inactivity of the summer months begins. Forward to 500 new subscriptions and renewals!

OUR PROGRAM OF EXPANSION

We have now accomplished the first step in bringing this program forward. The Pioneer Publishing Company has been launched and certificates are being forwarded to those having completed their contribu-

tions. There is, of course, plenty of opportunity left for others also to become certificate holders.

The first book to be published by the Pioneer Publishing Company will be the "Permanent Revolution", which is now already well on its way to completion. The price will be \$1 cloth bound, and 50c paper cover. It will contain 210 pages. Certificate holders will receive this book at a discount of 33%. The second book to be published will be comrade Trotsky's work on the Chinese Revolution, and once the financial support flows in more regularly, publication of additional books will follow, including Marxian classics.

The total sum received for the expansion program in April 28 was \$641.75. This represents somewhat of a revised schedule as it credits on this account funds received for expenses in the activities in the mine fields. Those having followed the regular progress of the financial record of the program will note that now comrades from cities throughout the country are becoming active participants. The branches in Minneapolis and Kansas City, however, appear to have done the best so far in organizing collections from sympathetic workers.

Our next steps in the Expansion Program are the convening of the Second National Conference and the Weekly *Militant*. With a little more energy from our members and sympathizers in such a manner that collection of financial contributions takes place much more speedily, we will soon reach the point where the *Militant* will appear regularly every week.

Comrade Trotsky, in a letter to us dated April 4, greets our expansion program in the following words: "The educational work which you are carrying on, and which

you are about to extend further, appears to me to be excellent. We cannot seriously approach the masses without steeling our own cadres theoretically in the process. For my own part, I shall do everything to come to the assistance of your publishing company in its development."

The itemized contributions, including funds received for activities in the mine fields, are as follows:

New York br.		
(mine fund)	75.00	2,000
M. Fisher		
(N. Y.)	3.00	
Boston (Miners' Fund)	15.00	1,750
Geltman (N. Y.)	2.00	
Von Borstel (N. Y.)	8.00	1,500
Minneapolis br.		
(mine fund)	25.00	1,250
M. Lewitt (N. Y.)	5.00	
Cannon (N. Y.)	10.00	
Jacob Capelis (N. Y.)	2.00	1,000
Sol Capelis (N. Y.)	2.00	
A. B. (N. Y.)	10.00	750
George Clarke (N. Y.)	6.00	
Toronto br.		
Toronto br.	12.00	500
Shoe Worker (N. Y.)	2.00	
	\$177.00	
Previously reported	464.75	
To date	\$641.75	250

The Slogan of the Six-Hour Day

DISCUSSION ARTICLE

(Continued from Last Issue)

The adoption of the six hour day slogan has been arrived at without considering thoroughly present or future conditions, the size of the Communist forces, the degree of class consciousness of the workers, etc. It is projected in an abstract visionary manner. Doubtlessly it is influenced by looking backward over the shoulder at the great eight-hour movement of 1886 and confusing the present situation with the conditions prevailing at that time.

The struggle for a shorter working day does not necessarily arise because of unemployment. It can arise from many other causes. Therefore, it is not always a political struggle. In connection with the practical necessity it must be raised to the level of a political struggle by the class conscious elements. In order to do this it is necessary to begin at the very bottom using every impulse of the working class to struggle. The slogan that focuses the attention on the political aspect of the problem must be drawn in such a way as to link it up securely with this elementary struggle at the bottom so as not to jeopardize it. The slogan should be "The shorter working week with no reduction in pay."

1886 and Today

We can in no way compare conditions with those of 1886. For one thing, the labor movement as a whole, over a period of years, had experienced an unprecedented growth. We do not have anything to compare with the zeal of the labor movement of that time. The struggle itself did not arise from a desire for a shorter working week because of unemployment but was largely guided by the idealistic approach of 8 hours a day for work, 8 hours for play, and 8 hours for sleep. Again, there was a vast army of workers who had already obtained very nearly the 8 hour day and it was only a small step from the number of hours of work previous to the 8-hour day, whereas today the bulk of workers are unorganized and are working in most cases considerably more than 8 hours, let alone six. The gap from 6 hours to the present working hours is very large indeed. In addition, the demand for the five day week is already before the working class thus the six hour day means in actuality a thirty hour week. This makes the demand seem all the more extreme when compared to the conditions that exist in most industries.

In raising the slogan of the six hour day in a general manner we will succeed in nothing but appearing visionary. This would be true even if the Communist forces were completely united (which is not the case and is another drawback) and therefore able to make a more concerted effort. Why make it six hours? Why not four or two? It has more than once been shown that all the work of the world can be done if properly organized by a four-hour day. But we must be governed by actual condi-

tions of the struggle and not by visionary aspirations. We must fight where it is practical for the 8-hour day, the five-day week, or whatever the situation and the industrial conditions make practical. In the mine fields alone where they have for a long time had little more than 30 hours work per week and perhaps in the railroad industry we can at this time begin an uncompromising fight for 6 hours. The purpose of the slogan is mainly to give the whole fight a political character, to assist in raising it to a political level and to link up the political struggle with the elementary no matter from what source it comes. A reduction of the working hours can be won only by direct struggle with each separate set of bosses and not by pressure on the government and in that sense it surely is much different than the fight for social insurance. On the field of direct industrial struggle we should not attempt to distinguish our policy from that of the reformists and others by the arithmetical difference between the amount of our demands. It cannot be stressed too often that we are free at all times to proclaim that in this age of modern machinery and unemployment six hours is more than enough and that we intend to go on fighting until it is achieved. Also that after that is won we will not stop there either but will go on fighting for four hours when the need arises. The slogan of six hours a day sounds Left yet I doubt if it is the proper slogan to be used at this time. History which has its own unimpeachable logic will very likely prove it to be a mistake.

Note: The objections raised by comrade Mihelic to the position taken by the *Militant* in the disputed question will be dealt with in the reply by the editorial board which is to appear in the next issue of the paper. —Ed.

SPRING FESTIVAL OF NEW YORK OPPOSITION BRANCH

The New York branch of the Communist League of America (Opposition) has announced its plan to hold a Spring Festival entertainment and dance at its headquarters, 84 East 10th Street, between 3rd and 4th Avenues. The affair will be held on Saturday, May 16, 1931, at 8 p. m. All rebel workers are cordially invited to attend the Festival to spend an entertaining evening and get acquainted with the New York Oppositionists. A number of special features are being arranged for and a good time is assured for all who come.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

What we really need is a Weekly! Valuable material has to be held over from almost every issue because of the pressure of space in the semi-monthly. The next issue will contain an analysis of the recent events in the miners' movement, by Arne Swabeck; an article by comrade Trotsky on the situation in China and the problems of the Left Opposition there; and a good deal of other important material. Watch for it.

ANNOUNCING

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