

WORKERS
OF THE
WORLD.
UNITE

THE MILITANT



Weekly Organ of the Communist League of America [Opposition]

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Marine Defense Work Grows

New Forces Come to the Assistance of the Defendants

The Marine Workers Defense Committee which has been formed to conduct the defense of Soderberg, Bunker and Trajer, selected as victims in the New York "Dynamite Plot" against the Tidewater Boatmen's Union, recorded big progress in its work all along the line this last week. A number of new affiliations of various organizations have been secured and the committee is beginning to take on the proportions of a genuine united front movement.

At the meeting held Wednesday, December 7, at the headquarters, 82 East Tenth Street a number of practical measures to further the defense were decided upon, with the enlarged committee participating. In addition to those who have been conducting the work up to now the following representatives of other organizations were present: William Baker from the I. W. W.; Sidney Cohn from the General Defense Committee; A. J. Muste from the C. P. U. A.; S. A. Benson and C. F. Hogan from the I. L. D.; V. Lionetti from the International Libertarian Defense Committee; Forest Edwards and Walter Starrett.

The I. L. D. delegates presented a letter from J. Louis Engdahl, General Secretary, stating that it would be glad to give assistance to the persecuted members of the Independent Tidewater Boatmen's Union and that their attorney had been instructed to get in touch with the prisoners to offer them assistance. After a discussion of the contents of the letter the committee decided by motion that cooperation from the I. L. D. in the defense of the comrades would be welcome, but that any cooperation in the case should take the form of cooperation with the existing committee which had been formed at the express request of the defendants and which had already retained counsel for them.

Indicating the support which the committee is mobilizing are letters of support received by the committee from the Intercollegiate Student Council of the League for Industrial Democracy and

also from the Marxian Youth Club. A mass meeting in behalf of the imprisoned marine workers will be held on Thursday, January 7, at Webster Hall. Among the speakers will be Carter Hudson, chairman, Carlo Tresca, J. P. Cannon, Ben Gitlow, A. J. Muste, and Walter Starrett.

It was decided to organize a women's group to carry on special work for the defense among women and to organize a number of affairs for the purpose of raising funds. Comrade Rose Karsner was placed in charge of this work. Ten thousand leaflets giving an account of the case and an appeal for labor solidarity have been printed and are now being distributed among the various affiliated groups.

Youth Organizations Support Marine Defense

The Marine Workers' Defense Committee, with headquarters at 82 East 10th Street, has made public the following letters from two youth organizations which have taken a stand for the defense of Soderberg, Bunker and Trajer:

December 12, 1931.

Marine Workers Defense Committee, 82 East 10th Street, New York City.

Comrades:

From newspaper accounts, and on the basis of information which has come to us from other sources, we feel convinced that the arrest of John Soderberg, Secretary of the Independent Tidewater Boatmen's Union, of Thomas Bunker and William Trajer, members of that union, is a palpable frame-up.

The charge of dynamiting, we know, is one of the old standbys of the authorities when they wish to punish class conscious workers for attempting to organize. In this case all the marks of (Continued on page 2)

Christmas Eve. Affair

RED CHRISTMAS ENTERTAINMENT IN NEW YORK FOR BENEFIT OF THE MILITANT

On Christmas Eve, Thursday, December 24, 1931, beginning at 8 P. M., there will be an entertainment for the benefit of *The Militant* at the New York League headquarters, 84 East 10th Street. The New York Branch is sponsoring the affair and has arranged for many features, as well as the serving of excellent refreshments.

The entertainments of the League have always been pleasing, lively and entertaining to all who have attended them, and for Christmas Eve, the Committee has gone to extra efforts to assure a good time to all.

Supporters and sympathizers of the Left Opposition are asked to give their full support to the Christmas Eve gathering. With an evening of fun and diversions assured, the comrades will also be giving a necessary assistance to the maintenance of the weekly *Militant*. Remember the time: Saturday, December 24, Christmas Eve. Place: League headquarters, 84 East 10th Street, N. Y. C.

WRITE TO THE PRISONERS

Readers of the *Militant* are requested to send letters to the imprisoned members of the Independent Tidewater Boatmen's Union. These workers are shut away from active participation in the labor movement, and communications from the outside with messages of solidarity are very important to them. Those who can afford to enclose a dollar with their letter will thereby help provide the prisoners with tobacco and other jail necessities. The names of the prisoners are John G. Soderberg, Thomas Bunker and William Trajer. The address is: City Prison, 101 Center St., New York City.

CHINESE LABOR FEDERATION BLOCKED

SHANGHAI Nov. 15. (Fenprecop)—All attempts on the part of the labor unions of this city to form a central body is being blocked by the Chinese authorities on the grounds that "it represents an attempt on the part of the Reds to gain control of Shanghai labor organizations."

At the head of some 60 unions of various sizes, shapes and policies, the Shanghai Postal Workers' Union and the Printers' Union—both militant organizations, although not especially distinguished by any revolutionary character, attempted this week to organize a "General Labor Federation", along the lines of the Shanghai General Labor Union. This latter was the actively revolutionary labor organ which existed here in 1927 and which was stamped out with every other vestige of the Revolution when Chiang Kai Shek won control of the Nationalist movement in that year.

Although no evidence was produced to show the alleged "Red" character of the proposed Federation, the Kuo Min Tang authorities, fearful of any unity of any kind among the workers in China's largest industrial center, are closing down hard on the proposition and it is expected to die unborn.

Minneapolis Attention!

MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.—A number of lectures, meetings and banquet have been arranged for comrade Arne Swaback, now on tour for the Communist League of America (Opposition) during his stay in the Twin Cities. The following lists some of the affairs arranged:

FIRST LECTURE

"The Rise and Fall of the MacDonald Government in England, and the Role of the Farmer-Labor Party in Minnesota," by Arne Swaback. TIME: Sunday, December 27, 1931, at 8 P. M. PLACE: Hall, 1539 East Franklin Ave., Minneapolis.

SECOND LECTURE

"The Left Opposition and the Economic Crisis" by Arne Swaback. TIME: Monday, December 28, 1931, at 8 P. M. PLACE: Labor Lyceum, 1426 Sixth Avenue No., Minneapolis.

The admission for both lectures is 25 cents. There will be questions and discussions. All workers are cordially invited. The lectures are under the auspices of the Communist League of America (Opposition), Minneapolis Branch.

A BANQUET

For Saturday, December 26, 1931, at 9 P. M., the Minneapolis Branch of the League has arranged a JOINT BANQUET to take place at *Hoberman's Home*, 1326 Queen Avenue No. for the benefit of *The Militant* and the forthcoming Jewish paper of the Left Opposition. Everyone is invited to attend. Elaborate preparations have been made to assure everyone a lively and pleasing time. The admission is 25 cents.

Hoover's Message to Congress Demonstrates Capitalist Bankruptcy

On December 8, President Hoover delivered his annual message to Congress. Every worker should be acquainted with its contents. It ought to prove to every intelligent and thinking worker that in Hoover and the ruling capitalist system, of which he is the official spokesman, there is nothing but contempt for the working class and an insistence to continue the exploitation of the mass of people, no matter by what extreme means. The capitalist class has laid down its law: maintain profits; for the workers there will be the crumbs from the laden tables of the rich. Hoover, as the leading executive and governmental expression of the capitalist class, makes public the law of his class.

A Bankrupt Capitalism

While Hoover's message is a salvo to capitalism and a hope for its preservation, nevertheless, the speech demonstrates the bankruptcy of capitalist society and its eventual break-up. American capitalism, pride and leader of the world's imperialist nations, is no longer, as is already even more clear in the case of the other capitalist nations, an historically progressive force. It cannot any further guarantee to the mass of wage workers, from whom it must extract its profits, a minimum of subsistence and existence.

The economic crisis, with its outstanding effect, permanent mass unemployment, has deepened capitalism's contradictions. It has reduced the standard of living of the employed workers, and it has taken away any standard at all for the unemployed, whom it is pushing toward slum proletarianism, dependent upon local relief, charity, etc. Bourbon

American capitalism, of course, is not yet ready to accept the "dole" or unemployment insurance even as an aid to its own continued existence. But working class pressure will achieve that as a demand and gain of a militant working class. Albeit, when a ruling class cannot ensure the existence of those whom it needs for exploitation, that class is historically outlived. A change is due and is being prepared, in this instance, by the only force that has nothing to lose but its chains and everything to gain—namely, the modern industrial proletariat.

What does Hoover's message tell us about the world economic crisis? That the crisis exists—what every worker knows and feels. Unemployment is heavy and burdensome—he endorses charity methods to alleviate the situation. And wages—must go down! We take up here some of the more outstanding points in the message.

The World We Live In

We are living in an epoch of wars and revolutions. Economic crises only hasten the development of imperialist war or its development on a higher scale, that is, the proletarian revolution. Hoover cites as a fear, and we as a sign of hope, the fact that "within two years there have been revolutions or acute social disorders in nineteen countries, embracing more than half the population of the world."

Though "the economic depression," says Hoover, "has continued and deepened in every part of the world"; "ten countries have been unable to meet their external obligations; and in fourteen countries, embracing a quarter of the world's population, the former monetary

standards have been temporarily abandoned." Hoover explains it all away by saying that "business depressions have been recurrent in the life of our country and are but transitory."

Marx and Engels Corroborated

But Hoover does not explain why these cycles of depression, of economic crises, occur and recur at greater frequency, at greater depth, with sharper dislocation of the productive forces and at such tremendously greater sacrifices and misery upon the part of the working masses. The reasons do not concern him and his kind, so long as the profit system itself, continues.

Marx and Engels, however, decades ago pointed out the inevitability of these very developments of today, and proved that the contradictions inherent in mass production and individual distribution, of production not for use, but for profit, would finally bring about a collapse of capitalist economy; and that only the proletariat, through the organization of its economic and political forces, could reconcile this capitalist contradiction by the establishment of an economic system of social ownership and management of the means of production and distribution.

Hoover's Internationalism

Hoover's concern, nevertheless, is with a possible destruction of capitalist society. For this reason, the great nationalist and American, Herbert Hoover, becomes international-minded long enough to point out that unless America intervenes in Central Europe, particularly in Germany, "it was apparent that without assistance these nations must collapse."

But of Soviet Russia, first fortress of the international proletarian revolution, there is not even a mention. There is therefore, the continuation of the policy of bitter hostility, toward, and encouragement of a unity of the forces of reaction against, the Soviet Republic.

And what about so-called domestic policy? What of unemployment, of wages, of working conditions of the mass of people, of the exploited and persecuted Negroes, of the Mexicans?

The Facts and Results of Mass Unemployment

We are told that "the emergencies of unemployment have been met by action in many directions; that public and private agencies were successfully mobilized last winter to provide employment and other measures against distress. Similar organizations gives assurance against suffering during the coming winter."

But the claims are even greater. "The Public Health Service," maintains Hoover, "shows an actual decrease of sickness and infant general mortality below normal years. No greater proof could be adduced that our people have been protected from hunger and cold. . . ."

These statements are appalling. What are the facts? Has anyone disproved the existence of ten or more millions of unemployed in the United States? How does Hoover explain away the fact that, particularly in the industrial centers, hunger and want are apparent everywhere, that men, women and children dig in garbage cans to find something to eat? It is a fact that millions, under the best of capitalist circumstances, remain permanently in the army of unemployed, due to elimination from industry by the machine and technical development. Starvation and poverty while granaries overflow; overproduction of other commodities is overwhelming. That is the social economy of capitalism. How are these to be cared for?

The concern of Hoover over the children is enough to cause one to shed tears. But evidently president Hoover does not bother himself with the facts. The United States Health Service has recently declared that more than six millions of the school children are suffering from mal-nutrition, making them easy victims of many serious diseases. Hospital report an alarming rise in types of physical trouble due to under-nourishment, and all schools are reporting a marked decline of mental alertness among the pupils and a marked appearance of physical lassitude. Is this what Hoover means by "proof of protection from hunger and cold?"

But of course, this representative of Wall Street declares himself "opposed to any direct or indirect government dole" or unemployment insurance. Insurance and protection are only for the bosses.

Hoover Is For Wage Reductions

On the questions of wages, Hoover now openly espouses the wage-cutting campaign and forgets his verbiage of some time ago for the maintenance of the existing wage standard. He says, in apology for the employers, that "a large majority of them have maintained wages at as high a level as the safe conduct of their business would permit." There is now full sanction to proceed with wage cuts in all directions, and the railroad barons are acting rapidly to effect such wage cuts.

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Japanese Intrenched in Manchuria Provocation Against Soviet Union Fails; China Protest Grows

Japan has succeeded in her immediate objectives in Manchuria. She remains firmly lodged there, as predicted in *The Militant*. Her steady display and use of military force, her intransigence in achieving her aims in Manchuria, have brought about the capitulation, at present, of China, the League of Nations and the United States.

The League of Nations formulated (12-10-31) an innocuous resolution on the Sino-Japanese conflict in Manchuria which Japan readily accepted, and China accepted because there was no other choice. The resolution does not even mention the decisive question of the control of the Manchurian railways. So far as the moment is concerned, they are Japan's to have and to hold. The much-talked of commission of inquiry into affairs in Manchuria and China has no actual power, will make inquiries over a period of time, and then incorporate them into an official record for time's dusty files. Meanwhile, the Japanese military forces are to evacuate Manchuria "as speedily as possible", a speed which will make a snail's pace look like that of a harrier. China and Japan are to continue direct negotiations for settlement of the disputes.

Nothing Settled

Fundamentally nothing is settled in Manchuria. The last word is yet to be said; and that will be said neither by the Japanese imperialists, the League of Nations, the United States, nor yet by the Chinese bourgeoisie—but by the Chinese and Manchurian masses, the Japanese and all other exploited people. On that day there will real evacuation: of all exploiters.

In one important respect in the day to day events, neither the Japanese nor the other imperialist powers have been successful. They could not provoke the Soviet Republic into the war and thus make easier the aims of the bourgeoisie to unite forces in an onslaught for the overthrow of the first Workers' Republic. That is an evidence of the basic desire of the workers for peace. But it does not mean that continued provocations and attempts against the Soviet Union will always go unchallenged by the outraged working masses of the Soviet Union and the entire world.

Nor is Japan's immediate position at home a rosy one. Despite efforts, among them the steady export of gold to bolster the yen and to maintain the gold standard, Japan on December 13 joined England and other nations and went off the gold standard. Speculation with the yen has been continuous. Trade has been stagnant; the boycott of Japanese goods by China has had sharp effects and there has been a loss of trade in other directions, plus the fact that Japan has

also been involved deeply in the world economic crisis.

Japan's victory in Manchuria will prove a pyrrhic one. It presents itself before capitalist judgment with Manchuria virtually entirely in its possession—and, by capitalist standards, possession is nine-tenths of the law. But the dispossessed will learn how to deal with bourgeois standards.

The Movement in China

In China itself, the rising wrath of the workers and students has been asserting itself in demonstrations against the Nanking government of Chiang Kai-Shek in particular. The students have demonstrated en masse, in a strike of 50,000 participants on one occasion, for a more determined struggle by China against the Japanese invaders of Manchuria. Strikes of workers are suppressed or outlawed by decree. The Chinese government continues the policy of White Terror against the labor movement and especially against the Communists. Recent despatches from China show efforts of the workers to revive and vitalize their labor organizations, so brutally and cruelly destroyed by Chiang Kai-Shek and Co.

The Kuo Min Tang Betrayers

In the face of the attitude of the workers, peasants and students, the Kuo Min Tang has been trying to unite its force. The two main factions, that of Nanking, headed by Chiang Kai-Shek, and Canton, headed by the opportunist Eugene Chen, Sun Fo, Wang Chin wei, have held unification meets, but thus far without success. Both feel the necessity of bourgeois unity to beat down the working masses and to continue with the system of exploitation, but they have not been able to agree on the division of the spoils. As we go to press, there is reported the resignation of President Chiang Kai-Shek as head of Chinese Nationalist government. This does not change anything essentially.

There is of course no principle difference between these two bourgeois factions: both of them capitulate before the imperialists—Japan, United States, Great Britain, etc. Both are alike in their hatred, oppression and exploitation of China's toiling masses; both destroy labor's organizations and forces—both murder, political parties, etc.; both murder labor militants and communists. Both countenance betrayal and traitorous conduct to the foreign enemy, rather than risk the loss of their privileges to the plundered workers. Witness the renegacy of the Chinese general Ma, who, first fighting the Japanese in Manchuria, has now become Japan's puppet there. The Chinese bourgeoisie have said nothing about this, except to deprecate and (Continued on page 4)