

Organization Notes

Active Militant builders we have but entirely too few. If there were more, it would soon tell in a serious way on our subscription list. As it is, only the efforts of the few keeps it growing, but growing very slowly. Yet we have no doubt that there will soon be more comrades joining the ranks of the Militant builders.

For a couple of months there has been no account in these columns of this phase of our activities. That is not due to a standstill but merely to the absence of the Secretary on a national tour. Henceforth, we shall again render a regular account. We include among the builders none of these readers who merely send in the subscriptions or renewals for themselves but only such who make sufficient efforts to secure subscriptions besides their own. Such are those listed below with the number of subscriptions turned in since January 15, 1932:

- V. R. Dunne, Minneapolis 2
- A. Koulikov, Boston 1
- C. Shechet, Boston 1
- C. R. Hedlund, Minneapolis 5
- Leon Goodman, Philadelphia 2

BUFFALO P. P. OPPOSITION INDORSERS LEFT

By invitation of the Buffalo Proletarian Party Opposition' comrade Swabcock spoke at a Lenin memorial meeting arranged by its members on Jan. 24th. The meeting was held under the auspices of the Workers League of Buffalo. It had a fairly good attendance, listening attentively to the speaker's elucidation of the historical role of the great world revolutionary leader. Quite a few members of the official Communist party were among the audience.

As could be expected, this latter fact very much helped to enliven the discussion which followed the lecture. Not so much by virtue of the arguments presented by the party members who took the floor, as they presented only the old-time slanders and condemnation of the

Left Opposition with the Workers' League coming in for a good share. No, the enlightening part was attained rather in the opportunity this gave to the speaker to further clarify for the audience many of the disputed issues within the Communist movement.

On the following evening comrade Swabcock spoke before the branch membership. Due to its recent expulsion from the Proletarian Party, it naturally faces a number of problems in common with the rest of their expelled Opposition comrades. On these problems, the whole of the discussion centered until late in the night. The members present asked numerous questions from comrade Swabcock which together with the answers given helped considerably in making the Left Opposition views clear to them. From the inception of their opposition to the Proletarian Party regime these Buffalo comrades have recognized that they cannot remain isolated or independent of the main currents of the Communist movement today. Their sympathies very early and pronouncedly turned toward the Left wing. They are now making a serious effort to get away from the stale sectarian attitude which prevailed in the Proletarian Party, but they have no illusions that the mere orientation toward mass work can substitute for the real task of building of the revolutionary cadres. While they have taken active part, in common with the efforts of their opposition center to help in the creation of an unemployment movement' it is their intention to press on for a definite orientation of revolutionary views. They fully recognize the validity of the question: "Whose views—Left, Center or Right—will the Proletarian Party Opposition accept and to which of these currents will it adhere? They agree that this question must be put first on the agenda and their answer was already given unequivocally in this meeting—to the Left Opposition.

On Sunday, January 31, comrade Albert Glotzer spoke at an open meeting held by the Philadelphia branch of the Communist League of America (Opposition), on his visit to Trotsky, and the present international situation. There were fifty workers present who listened to an account of Trotsky's famous and illegal deportation, and his exile in Turkey. Comrade Glotzer spoke at some length on the present international political situation. He dealt par-

KANSAS CITY, MO'

Our second forum was even better than the first. More than seventy people were present. The majority of them were party members and sympathizers. Comrade Clarke spoke for an hour and a half in an exposition on the causes of war; the conflict between the imperialists in the Far East; the danger of a war against the Soviet Union; and the problems of the Chinese revolution. Not one person left the hall before the lecture was concluded and there was very little uneasiness noticeable. The Stalinists were evidently impressed with our program—not once in the whole course of the presentation and summary did they heckle or interrupt. Although they dissipated themselves in slander, calling Clarke a "skunk" and other very high-minded commendations, and one worker proclaimed in a hysterical voice that made the windows tremble, that he was with the C. I. right or wrong, first, last and always, our program seems to have sunk in. After the meeting they eagerly took the Militant and there is no doubt but that they will be present next Monday.

Last Thursday comrade Clarke also spoke on invitation, before one of the unemployment councils. He was very favorably received—in fact he has been invited to another council. It appears that the local Stalinists, through blundering negligence and arrogant bureaucracy have alienated and antagonized these councils in which there are several party members, who feel the same way about the abuse of the bureaucrats. There seem to be excellent opportunities for us' but nothing can be said definitely about the outcome.

PHILADELPHIA, PA.

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For A Fighting Unity of the New York Food Workers

What is the situation in the Food Workers' Industrial Union? Was it in the interest of the Left wing movement to split away from the A. F. W. U.? Are there any results in organizing the unorganized? All the same time the membership of the union must ask themselves why the third year of the crisis the union finds itself totally incapable of defending the interests of the starving unemployed of the industry. Why the union is unable to give any advice as to what to do with those hundreds who are coming here for it? Why it is equally

incapable of defending even those insignificant few who accept its leadership and go on strike, as in the Crusader Cafeteria? At the last convention of the union, Obermerer, its national secretary, said: "We must recognize the fact that we should not have been so much in a hurry to split away from A. F. W. U."

I. L. D. In Boston

BOSTON, MASS.

Three months after the Mooney Conference in Boston, what are the achievements of the committee organized at the conference? What has been done to rouse the broad masses to tear open the gates of San Quentin and liberate Tom Mooney?

Without a doubt, the significance of the case together with its recent developments presented the Left wing with golden opportunities. Has the Left wing availed itself of these opportunities? So far as Boston is concerned we can say emphatically, no.

The October 25th conference called by the I. L. D. blew up like a bubble in the air. At the conference our delegates correctly pointed out the necessity of broadened activity and warned against the dangers of being satisfied with merely calling conferences. The assembled delegates received our remarks well while the apparatus-men tried to distort those remarks and prepared to fall into their usual state of lethargy.

Despite the fact that a number of the delegates pledged their utmost activity which, if carried on with the sincere cooperation, from the leaders, could have developed a strong movement, the "leaders" found no time to call meetings for several weeks after the conference. In all the three months of its existence only three meetings were called and those were very poorly attended. At each meeting, the delegate of the Boston Left Opposition stressed the importance of reaching the workers and organizing them, of visiting organizations on behalf of Mooney. A number of organizations were visited by our delegate. But what was the result? After the third meeting of our committee one had no organization to bring a report to.

Weeks have passed since the last meeting of the Mooney Committee. The executive committee does not function at all, or at least the present writer, who is a member of the executive, does not know of its activity. Not a single mass meeting was called to organize the masses for the release of Mooney. Not a leaflet was printed to bring Mooney before the eyes of the masses. And all this in the face of the greatest opportunities present!

With the significance of the case, with the latest developments in the case, with the Walkers and Rolphs once again unmasking the face of the master class, the Left wing should be able to rally the workers to its banner. Yet when an official of the I. L. D. is asked why no meetings are being called, she tries to get out of a difficulty by answering that no one can be gotten to come to meetings. Such an answer, however, calls for another question. Why?—The answer is that the true reason for such a lamentable situation is that the I. L. D. instead of carrying on as a mass organization, has isolated itself from the masses. The Stalinist machine is satisfied to limit the I. L. D. to a handful of selected Stalinists and blind followers who, right or wrong, will carry out their master's will. The next must follow. The few "true worthy" I. L. D. members are already so overburdened with the many tasks of the other Left wing organizations that they simply cannot attend all of the meetings—with the results described above.

How much longer can this go on? Is Tom Mooney to suffer the consequences of Stalinist stupidity practiced by the I. L. D. or are its leaders going to wake up to the sense of genuine united action for his release? Can the leaders of the I. L. D. who called the conference be satisfied that they have now fulfilled their duty as representatives of the revolutionary movement? If there is a red spark in their hearts and minds these leaders will say with determination, "No, not until we have organized a genuine united front as called for by Mooney in his August 20th appeal will we have fulfilled our revolutionary duty and carried out the will of Tom Mooney!"

—C. SHECHET.

is the only way that one can prevent the reformists and above all their Left wing agents from opposing to the practical slogan of unity. And precisely if the policy of the genuine united front is one of the means of liberating the workers from reformist influence by confronting the reformist leadership with concrete task of struggle for immediate demands, then the revolutionary significance of that struggle if initiated by the Communists and Left wing under their influence can serve at the same time as a basis for the slogan of unity, for amalgamation, for creating one union in the industry. As comrade Trotsky in the same article points out "it would be a thorough mistake to oppose the policy of the united front to that of the unity of the trade union organizations."

THE MISTAKES OF THE PAST

Once for all it must be stated, not in a half way confession, but in a real Communist manner, that the split was a mistake, that without full recognition of the fact and all the devastation it has brought, no correct policy can be adopted, and do way out of an unbearable situation can be found. The truth allowed on the organizational facts only leaves a rat hole for sneaking back into the "company unions" (A. F. W. U.) so that those who are there shall not be called "social fascists" any more, but it is certainly not a starting point for the adoption of a correct policy as to how to reach the unorganized, how to fight for the unemployed. At the same time that policy certainly cannot point out the way how to reach such a unity of action for the workers in the food industry, which would give prestige to the Communist party and Left wing movement. And if the bureaucrats high pressure of the "third period" brought with it the split of the food workers' organization; if that split together in the "united front from below" played havoc with the Left wing movement and at the same time crippled those unions who remained entirely at the mercy of reformist misleaders; then it is all the more the duty of the C. P. and F. W. I. U. to issue the slogan of trade union unity.

Comrade Trotsky, in his article on the question of trade union unity, writes in relation to the united front that this

Without such a revolutionary, Communist policy, all the talk of the bureaucrats of the F. W. I. U. of organizing the hundreds of thousands of slaves in the packing industry, in the food factories, restaurants, bakeries, the grocery clerks—will remain futile talk. And the active members of the union must begin to understand that all the good work that they are trying to do; making the union function according to the departmental system, improving the function of the grievance committee leading small but militant strikes etc. cannot be anything in itself. That alone will not extricate the union from the position it was forced to by the "third period" bureaucrats and by the policy of "united front from below". These activities can only be a necessary improvement of the organization in preparation for the policy advanced by the Left Opposition in the trade union movement as a whole.

There must be put an end to all that kind of stupid talk as that of the representative of the Central Executive Committee at the convention about using two lists, one of the united front of the rank and file, (the "united front from below"), a distortion denying the genuine united front), and the other list of organizing the unorganized. Objectively, (1) means a continuous playing into the hands of all kinds and species of reformists together with the harm that kind of policy brings with it.

—A FOODWORKER

The Struggle of the Railroad Workers

This is the third of a series of articles on the conditions of the Railroad workers. The other two have appeared in previous issues of the Militant. More are to follow in subsequent issues.—Ed.

Already in the early part of 1931, it was becoming clear to even the casual observer of the developments on the railroads that wage cuts were looming up on the industrial horizon for the railroad workers.

Wage cuts always follow in the wake of industrial depressions, which result from the inherent defects in the profit system of production. Even in 1930, production was slowing up and many roads were reducing their working forces. But at any rate, with the beginning of 1931, it should have been clear to any one calling himself a labor leader that unless certain energetic organizational steps were taken to strengthen and solidify the railroad workers, wage reductions and further loss of working conditions would soon be knocking at their doors.

However, the best time to build and strengthen the labor unions is under so-called capitalist "prosperity" or when workers are not losing their jobs by the millions through lack of work. The Brotherhood leaders had a splendid opportunity to do this from 1923 to 1929. During this period there were nearly one million men and women employed on railroads, who did not belong to the Brotherhoods. And, in spite of the enormous resources which these leaders had at their command, practically nothing was done to get these workers into the unions. There were millions of dollars available in the Brotherhood treasury for the printing of handbills, leaflets and circulars, to put periodically into the hands of every railroad worker in the United States and Canada, telling him or her of the importance and necessity of joining the unions. In addition, the leaders had the Brotherhood journals and the weekly paper, "Labor", for their use and control. These publications reach many railroad workers in every railroad terminal in the country.

Brotherhood Officials Too Busy Enjoying their Big Salaries to Organize the Workers

In addition to the printed page with which to reach the workers, the Brotherhood officials had literally thousands of individuals on the Brotherhood payrolls, such as assistant presidents, vice presidents, general and special organizers, general chairmen, (several thousands of them) business agents and legislative representatives who managed to hang on to the payroll most of the time. Then we have B. M. Jewell at the head of the railway department of the A. F. of L., a department which does not exist except on paper.

With all this money and personnel at their disposal, the Brotherhood leaders could have put on a real organizing campaign in every railroad terminal within the jurisdiction of the Brotherhoods. They could have coupled up the organizing campaign with a concerted wage movement to shorten the day without a cut in wages and to raise the minimum wage level in the railroad industry to the Five Dollar a Day mark. This program would have attracted thousands of lowly paid workers and also many of

the higher paid workers who were beginning to lose their jobs on account of labor-saving machinery installed by the railroads.

The Brotherhood officialdom have had and have now at their disposal enough money and men on permanent salaries, to hold union meetings at every railroad center, on a united and concerted scale for the purpose of organizing and amalgamating the railroad workers. The necessity of One Union of railroad workers, instead of twenty-one should be explained and advocated at every meeting. And if the leaders would do this, instead of fighting and obstructing amalgamation at every turn, it would be possible to hold an Amalgamation Convention within one year and there to launch an Industrial Union of Railroad Workers.

But instead of using the Brotherhood's money and press to put on an organization and amalgamation campaign, the Brotherhood bureaucracy has been busy "scolding" the useless and expensive Craft System, with its useless and overpaid leadership to the railroad workers. The "Grand" Chiefs have been assisted by general organizers and general chairmen to see to it that nothing took place at local or union meetings which would be against the interests of the bureaucrats. "Lame ducks" have been appointed as special organizers at \$16 per day (the usual rate) to serve mostly as administrative henchmen and stool-pigeons and to help keep the "Reds" out of the unions. Both men in the locomotive cab are now engineers. The man on the Left side has been an engineer for years. Still, two organizations are maintained in the Brotherhood and general organizers are kept on the job by both unions to pull members from one union into the other. As a matter of fact, the only interest that these \$15,000 a year labor skates have in working men is to collect dues from them and to keep them satisfied with things as they are.

While this article is being written, January 28, an extra is appearing in the streets announcing that "Rail Workers Accept: Slush for One Year", as a headline. Although it may require one or more special articles to properly discuss and explain this gross betrayal of the leadership we wish to point out right here and now, that the railroad workers were never given an opportunity to either accept or reject the wage cut. The Brotherhood officials decided this for them. The excuse the bureaucrats advance for accepting this wage cut is as foolish and silly as the one they gave for accepting the last wage cut in 1921.

—A. E.

The Recent Wage Cut

The railroad workers have taken a 10% cut and once more the folly of the bosses is paid for by the workers. Already the effect upon other industries has been felt: wage cuts are the order of the day in all parts of the country. The railroads through their committee informed the workers that the only way out of the impasse was a wage cut, and properly so—from their standpoint, if it is the path of least resistance. And up to the present, with the labor futilities of

capitalism, their contentions have proven correct and will be proven wrong only when the railroad workers take things in their own hands; when the policy of class struggle replaces the policy of class collaboration.

The lack of planned railroad construction, the increased competition from other means of transportation and the turbulence of the present crisis has driven the railroads in a tight corner. This cannot be denied. However, its admittance merely proves our general contention: that the anarchy of capitalist production must be replaced by socialist planned economy which is only possible by establishing a workers' dictatorship in the United States. On the other hand, even if we confined ourselves to the figures presented by the railroad magnates we can show that: they do not stand upon economic foundation but rather upon the foundation of the force of the capitalist dictatorship and its liars and fakers.

Mr. Willard, in the Chicago conference, said that despite the reduction of operating expenses many roads face bankruptcy because they cannot meet the fixed charges of 1931. He says the fixed charges for 1931 are 695 million dollars, but only 784 million dollars is available, which only leaves \$9 million total net income. Because of this, the interest on the founded debt alone was 495 million. This is just some more statistical fakery to whom does the interest go if it does not go to the capitalist class, no matter what section it is. Is not this 49 million, to say nothing of the 784 million, obtained, part of the capitalist surplus robbed from the railroad workers? And further how do they figure this? In relation to the variable capital? No, of course not, they figure their profits in relation to the total watered stock. It is true that in times of crisis much water is squeezed out but this is only partially the case with the big roads.

So long as the workers are not organized properly, are not under class struggle ideology and have the type of railroad leaders they do, the capitalist will find easy pickings. We know the capitalist can sell below value and still make profit and we know the capitalist class in their offensive against us, in the crisis, have been striking at strategic points: the steel workers, the railroad workers, the increase of the number of political prisoners and of deportations. These moves and particularly the railroad workers' wage cut are of vital importance for the living standard of the whole class. The capitalists of America are tightening up on the home base in order to prepare for greater onslaughts on the world market against rival imperialists, in the struggle for the redivision of the earth. Are we going to stand by idly while this tremendous international conflict is in the making. No, all signs point to an increase of class battles in the United States —HUGO OEHLER.

MINNEAPOLIS
WORKERS OPEN FORUM
"Fascism or Communism in Germany?"
A Lecture by Vincent Dunne
at 1530 E. Franklin St.
Sunday, FEBRUARY 14, 1932
ADMISSION FREE Everyone Welcome
Auspices: Communist League of America (Opposition)

ST. LOUIS OPEN FORUM
Friday, FEBRUARY 12, 1932
"The Geneva Disarmament Conference and Soviet Russia"
Speaker: GEOGE ROBERTS
Auspices: St. Louis Branch, Communist League of America (Opposition)

Amter Speaks on the Radio

What can be done by a revolutionary working class leader to develop class consciousness when the capitalist class places its press at his disposal was taught us by Marx—as contributor on the leading Anglo-American newspaper, the "New York Tribune", at which I have now been engaged for eight years— (author's preface to Critique of Political Economy); by Lenin on numerous occasions; and more recently by Trotsky, particularly in his statement in the Manchester Guardian, reprinted in part in the N. Y. Times of April 13, 1931 under the title "TROTSKY SAYS SOVIET POINTS WORLD PATH." How a working class "leader" can misuse the same opportunity to sow confusion in the working class was demonstrated by Stalin in two interviews he gave to representatives of the New York Telegram and New York Times toward the end of 1930.

A FATAL INTERVIEW

Last week, Amter, faced with a choice between these methods, strove mightily to emulate his master, Stalin. It is true that Amter was not interviewed. He spoke over the radio. It is no less true that Amter is not Marx, nor Lenin, nor Trotsky. This he fully confirmed again by his speech.

The occasion of the broadcast was a dinner given by the Association for Better Citizenship, Inc. attended and addressed in addition to Amter by Rudolph Spreckles, the financier, Chas. Solomon, of the Socialist Party, and Wickersham of the commission bearing his name. To this strange position had life brought Amter; from directing gangs to break up Opposition meetings to speak over the radio at a patriotic dinner together with financiers and a social fascist! We do not wish to be misunderstood. We believe that it is correct to utilize such opportunities to speak to sections of the working class. We have nothing in common with those party supporters, misguided by Amter and Co., who call Trotsky a "counter revolutionary" because he writes for the capitalist press. We base our judgment of the speech or writing not upon the place of its appearance but upon its content. From this point of view Amter's speech spelled confusion.

THE CAPITALIST SOLUTION

Spreckles as his contribution to the Association's program of "systematic enlightenment of better citizenship" proposed, among other things, as a solution for the misery of the working class, a tax on short sales on the stock exchange, a tax on the export of capital to provide an unemployment insurance fund; and prohibition! Solomon gave a polite, innocuous and abstract exposition from the socialist point of view of the class struggle. It could have been given in toto ten years ago so little relation did it have to the realities of the present international and national situation. Nor did Solomon offer any solution except a description of what Socialism is! Wickersham who followed Amter and was the last speaker launched into a eulogy of the physical grandeur of "our country". As he was completing his lyric of pa-

triotism the entire broadcast, having exhausted its allotted time, was cut off. We are therefore unable to comment on Wickersham's proposals for a way out of the crisis.

Against the bankruptcy of Spreckles and the empty abstractions of Solomon, a Communist presentation would have stood out in the listening workers' ears like a clarion call on a dark night. In our opinion Amter should have made a short statement of the extent and depth of the workers' misery in the present crisis, followed by a brief explanation of its causes and a concise outline of the Communist solution. He should have mentioned the various capitalist attempts to solve their crises by wars (what about the war danger and the U. S. S. R.) And then he should have emphasized that the only solution was an international proletarian revolution, that in preparation for it we must fight unitedly against the sweeping capitalist offensive, for immediate demands such as the six-hour day, credits to the Soviet Union, unemployment insurance. His conclusion should have explained the role of the Communist party in this struggle for immediate demands today, and for the overthrow of capitalism tomorrow and how it is distinguished from the socialist party.

AMTER FAILS MISERABLY

But this is precisely what Amter did not do. He began by attacking the diners. Having "vanquished" them, he called upon the unemployed workers to join the Communist party which fights hunger. Similarly he called upon the employed workers to join the Communist party to fight wage cuts and upon the Negro workers to join the C. P. to fight for social, political and economic equality. He denounced "Walker's open, shameful submission to the bankers of Wall Street". At this point he was indistinguishable from a Republican Party demagogue of the type of, let us say—congressman MacFadden. And so on and so forth he rambled without plan.

A non-Communist worker listening to Amter would have come away not a whit enlightened as to what Communism is, what the Communist party stands for, nor how it proposes to fight hunger, wage cuts, lynching, deportation. Nor would we have suspected that the American Communist Party is a brother section of the German C. P., which is facing a critical historical moment, upon whose success or failure in uniting the masses against Fascism depended to a large extent his own fate. Neither would he have dreamed that a war is brewing nor would he have been enlightened on how to fight the war danger.

To the objection that Amter could have in ten or twelve minutes give an exhaustive analysis of the entire world situation, we can reply: Marx, in writing the program of the First International was forced to present his ideas in such a manner that his conclusions, which for political reasons he could not include, would follow inevitably in the mind of the reader. But, as we have already pointed out—Amter is not Marx.

—T. STAMM.