

LETTERS FROM THE MILITANTS

A Food Worker Writes About His Union

NEW YORK, N. Y. The situation in the Foodworkers' Industrial Union is very bad. To put it more correctly, it is going from bad to worse. This is the result of the ruinous policy the party bureaucrats have imposed upon the organization...

MILITANT BUILDERS

Our reiterated appeals for subs and for a staff of Militant builders continue to bear fruit. Comrades and sympathizers are responding with subs and expressions of their esteem for our Militant. A comrade from Kansas sends us a dollar with the encouraging words: "—and must say the Militant is absolutely right..."

In last week's issue we made a mistake which we want to correct. We offered a free copy of the bound volume of comrade Trotsky's pamphlets to each comrade who raised \$10 in subs and donations. It should have read: a free copy of the bound volume to each comrade who raises \$4 in subs. But these must be subs which he gets from workers other than himself...

- C. R. Hedlund 4
O. Coover 4
M. Beardslee 3
M. Koehler 3
A. Basky 2 1-2
P. Basu 2
F. Vovmas 2
J. Elchma 2
C. Curtis 2
A. Ehrlich 2
M. Reinal 2
J. Booth 1-2
T. Halligan 1-4

to approach as many bosses as possible and to ask them to allow their workers to join the union without having any conditions in mind. As it was reported by one of the organizers "when they sign up plenty of shops, they'll declare a strike for conditions." A fine policy! It seems they have learned a good lesson from the fakers in the A. F. of L., who with just such a policy and with the aid of the Bosses Association organized local 302 of the countermen, used as a scab agency and as injunction servers against the BWIU.

On the Financial Question

The financial expenses of the union are extremely high, not due to its activities (because for more than a year, outside of the famous mass strike of fish workers, no other activities have been conducted), but because of the heavy staff of organizers. It is almost unbelievable that 7 full and 3 part-time organizers with 3 office girls should have to make up the staff of a union that has no more than 450 to 500 members in good standing. Of course, in a period of organization drives, even a bigger staff is necessary, but in this case, it is a matter of a permanent staff.

—A FOODWORKER.

* A programmatic statement on the situation in Foodworkers Industrial Union will appear in The Militant shortly. —Ed.

Pioneer Publishers Notes

With the publication of Problems of the Chinese Revolution announced elsewhere in this issue, we add another weapon to the arsenal of revolutionary internationalism. The Chinese Revolution of 1925-1927 will be as decisive for us today as the revolution of 1905 was for the movement of the last decade. This new work by comrade Trotsky is indispensable to an understanding of the present situation in the Far East. It is a fundamental contribution to the colonial question.

We have been inexcusably late in getting it out. Now that it is on sale let us make every effort to give it the widest distribution possible. Get orders for it now, at once. Place it in book stores and in libraries. The cloth cover copies should make this fairly easy. And remember that a free copy goes with each one year sub to The Militant.

With each day our stock of literature is getting lower. Some of the pamphlets are already out of print. Others are running out of print.

Those that are out of print can still be had in the bound volumes. There are only about ninety of these. When these are gone they will be unavailable except for chance copies picked up here and there. And they are going. Orders are coming in for them. We are filling these as they come in. None are put aside for future sale. Comrades who want them should order them at once.

Trotsky Greets 'Unser Kampf'

To the Editorial Committee of the Jewish Paper UNSER KAMF (Organ of the Communist League of America).

Dear Comrades: The appearance of your paper was of itself a very important step forward. The first successes of the paper show that it was a necessity. Yes, and could it have been doubted even for a minute? The Jewish workers in the United States are a large and important part of the whole proletariat of the country. Historical conditions have made the Jewish workers susceptible to the ideas of scientific Communism. The very fact of the dispersion of the Jewish workers in a number of countries should instill in them and does instill in them the ideas of internationalism. In view of just this alone the Communist Left Opposition has every reason to count upon a big influence among the Jewish proletarians in the United States. What characterizes the Left Opposition primarily is its profound international character. Precisely because of this it must speak in every national language. The existence of an independent Jewish publication serves not in order to separate the Jewish workers, but on the contrary in order to make those ideas which combine all the workers in one international revolutionary family available to them. You, it is understood, reject decisively and intransigently the old Bundist principle of federation of the national organizations. We stand entirely on the grounds of democratic centralism. The Jewish workers won over by your paper must struggle in the general ranks of the Communist League and the mass organizations of the American proletariat. In so far as your paper will develop and strengthen, it may also assume significance beyond the boundaries of the United States and Canada: in South America the bureaucratized Comintern reflects its link of the proletariat. The policy of rights, the Jewish workers are a weak economic sense and in the sense of civilica, in Europe and Palestine. In the self most disastrously on the most op-

pressed and disfranchised part of the proletariat: in Poland, in the Baltic regions, in France, evidently also in Palestine. The working class cannot march towards its liberation by command. Revolutionary courage and political will can be strengthened only with the aid of creative ideas which the workers must learn independently through criticism, deliberation and examination by experience. Without this, the very sources of the movement inevitably dry up. And we see in actuality how the largest national sections of the Comintern, in spite of the exceptionally favorable circumstances, suffer defeat after defeat.

The workers are capable of withstanding the harshest political blows if they have the possibility of thinking through the reasons for failure and independently to extract from it all the necessary conclusions for the future. But the curse lies in the fact that the bureaucracy of the Comintern is not only incapable of leading the workers to victory, but cannot even permit them to think through the reasons for defeat. After each new blow of the enemies, the Centrist bureaucracy on its part hits the workers over the skull, prohibiting them from thinking, criticizing and learning. This criminal regime becomes the chief source of disappointment and apathy. The first victims of the blows from the class enemy as well as from the Centrist bureaucracy fall, as already said, are the weakest links of the working class.

Your paper is the organ of the Communist League. Its immediate task is to gather the Jewish workers in America under the banner of Marx and Lenin. The more successfully this work is carried out the sooner it will rise to an international height, the more the ideas of the Left Opposition will penetrate into the midst of the Jewish workers of the Old World, the U. S. S. R. included.

With my whole heart I greet your paper and I shall try to be useful in your work with everything I can.

Yours, —L. TROTSKY. Prinkipo, May 9, 1932.

The Crisis, Unemployment and the Workers

(Continued from page 1)

zation of capital. It caused an enormous extension of the scale of production and of overproduction of capital. The general process of capitalist production brings forward ever more its antagonisms of monopoly, developed productive forces and the poverty and restricted consumption of the masses. In this process, the credit system accelerates the violent eruptions of these antagonisms, the crisis.

"The stupendous productive power developing under the capitalist mode of production relatively to population, and the increase, though not in the same proportion, of capital values (not their material substance), which grow much more rapidly than the population, contradict the basis, which, compared to the expanding wealth, is ever narrowing and for which this immense productive power works, and the conditions, under which capital augments its value. This is the cause of crises." (Marx, Capital, Vol. III, page 313.)

In the light of the above it should now prove interesting to examine the present level of percentages of capacity production reached after two and a half years duration of the crisis. The New York Times index for the first quarter of 1932 gives the following results:

Table with 4 columns: Industry, February, March, April. Rows include Steel Iron production, Steel Ingot, Electric Power, Bituminous Coal, Automobile, Boot and Shoe, Zinc, Cotton consumption, Freight car loadings, and Combined business.

Truly, the stupendous productive power developed under the capitalist mode of production contradicts the basis, and the conditions under which capital augments its value. And it is not altogether unnatural that the New York Times comments cynically in an editorial, of Sunday, June 5th, entitled—This Crisis and Others—"The break-down is permanent. The sharply curtailed consumption today is not primarily a reflex of a distress cut in income but a return to the 'natural' level (sic!). The unemployment figures of today are not emergency figures. They register the permanent effect of our triumphs in industrial efficiency, in methods and machines (hear, hear). Taking care of perhaps 8,000,000 persons out of work is a big problem, but one that can be solved if it is a temporary problem. But what the country must now look forward to is this huge mass of idle workers as a permanent feature of our economic life. Such is the fatal difference 'in kind' today."

Yes, this is the salient point of the crisis today and for the future prospects. The New York Times wants to warn its bourgeois readers. We must similarly warn the working class to draw its own conclusions. We would not accept the above unemployment figure as accurate. In reality it is surely a good deal larger than that. Exact figures are not available. The bourgeois government fears to have such a computation made. But the index figures published by the Department of Labor give us somewhat of an idea. Its index figures are based upon returns from eighty-nine industries since the

end of 1930 and on fifty-four for the earlier dates given. They compare as follows for April this year with April of previous years, with the average for the full year 1926 reckoned as 100:

Table with 2 columns: Year, Index. Rows include April 1932, April 1931, April 1930, April 1929, April 1928, April 1927, April 1926, April 1925, April 1924, April 1923.

There is shown here an ominous disparity in the much greater drop in total payroll when compared to the drop in employment. This is indicative for the future working class prospects. A permanent, huge unemployed army and a reduced standard of living. But what the working class will do in this situation still remains the decisive question.

The return to the "natural" level, as the New York Times so cynically puts it, embodies these prospects for the American working class. The return aims to restore confidence, within capitalism, in the continuity of the process of reproduction, to extend the market and to restore a rate of profit on existing capital on this "natural" basis. But capitalism produces for an unknown market. And, the contradictions between the expansion of capital and the market limitations leads to ever deeper crises.

Capitalist production, as a continuous connected process, first of all reproduces and reproduces the capitalist relations. Henceforth these will be the relations of yet greater concentration of capital—means of production which serve as capital, serve for the exploitation of labor—with greater intensity of exploitation and with an ever growing section of the workers in enforced idleness.

"The real barrier of capitalist production is capital itself. It is the fact that capital and its self-expansion appear as the starting and closing point, as the motive and aim of production; that production is merely production for capital, and not vice versa, the means of production mere means for an ever expanding system of the life process for the benefit of the society of producers." (Marx, Capital, Vol. III, page 203.)

(Note: Another article on the Crisis, Unemployment and the Working Class, particularly dealing with the present efforts for expansion of credits, will appear in the next issue of The Militant.—Ed.)

BOUND VOLUMES OF THE MILITANT 71 Issues of the Old Format From Vol. 1, No. 1 to Vol. 4, No. 12, October 15, 1928 to June 15, 1931, Bound in One Volume. The Number on Hand is Limited. Orders Will be Filled in the Order in Which They are Received. Checks or Money Orders Must Accompany the Orders. Make Sure of Your Copy. Order at Once! PRICE FIVE DOLLARS

RUSSIA: MARKET OR MENACE?

By Thomas D. Campbell Longmans, Green and Co., New York, Toronto and London 1932. 148 pages.

The appearance of this book urging American business men to develop trade with the Soviet Union by the extension of long-term credits, and eventual legal recognition, makes it instructive to draw a balance of the present state of this question in the ranks of the working class and its vanguard.

Mr. Campbell is a large scale agricultural capitalist, owner of a 95,000 acre farm at Hardin, Montana, a Mechanical and Agricultural Engineer, special expert and adviser to the Soviet Government in 1929-1930 in the development of large scale Soviet farm organization.

He marshals arguments convincing if only from the purely business point of view; for extension of credits: (1) "It has, during the past fourteen years paid all its obligations promptly and in full"; (2) "For many years to come Russia will be the world's greatest consumers market for all kinds of manufactured goods"; (3) "Will relieve American depression"; (4) "American banking and financial institutions... have sold to the American public since the war, two and a half billion dollars of German securities, a portion of which have been used by the Germans to extend credit to Russia." (5) "Germany has received \$75,000,000 worth of industrial equipment since April 15, 1931." (6) Stable Government. "It is my opinion that Russia would not now be the important nation she is, if Joseph Stalin and his supporters had not succeeded in displacing the more violent revolutionists of the Trotsky type... Stalin is a strategist of another sort, a man who can advance or retreat, thrust or parry, denounce or defend, and still advancing towards his ultimate goal." The American bourgeoisie will agree with him.

These arguments and others are advanced by Campbell to assure timid business men that trade with Russia is a good business proposition, repeating again and again that he is firmly opposed to Communism in any form.

That Campbell represents a live view among certain strata of American manufacturers is attested to by the recent resolutions of the Toledo and Cleveland Chambers of Commerce, basing themselves on a three million dollar loss of orders from the Soviet Union due to the "short-sighted diplomatic policy" of the government, they want an immediate cessation of playing with this question, and demand recognition of the Soviet Union as a basis for revival of certain American industries.

The cry has been taken up by the Democrats in their anti-administration propaganda and proposals have come before congress. It may become a substantial secondary campaign issue in the coming elections.

The slogan of long-term credits and trade with the Soviet Union has a powerful political appeal to workers suffering unemployment in the present crisis. There is no question of the response that the Communist party and its auxiliaries got, after they reluctantly adopted this "counter-revolutionary" slogan. Because of their hesitant, "tongue-in-the-cheek" policy, however, there has been no real effort to build on this key slogan. Abstract and pacifist slogans of "Defend the Soviet Union" type have been substituted.

In spite of the obvious effectiveness of this slogan in connecting up the fight against capitalist misery directly with the cause of the Workers Republic, little progress has been made in the ranks of the American workers. It still remains for certain business men's groups to take the lead in this question, motivated by real loss of orders, shut-down of their plants, and panic at the extent of the crisis. How silly the bureaucratic "arguments" about this slogan lending aid to the capitalists in stabilizing their industry. As if credits for the Five Year Plan program would eliminate the gigantic contradictions of chaos and glut in the capitalist market.

A most astounding revelation in this book is the lengths to which Stalin has gone in his false "strategy" of "deceiving the bourgeoisie." While secret negotiations take place with capitalist magnates and diplomats for recognition and extension of credits as, for example, behind the scenes at Geneva, Sokolnikov in London and Bogdanov of the Amtorg in New York, in these manipulations behind the backs of the workers, the principles of the movement are bartered for a possible recognition or a possible extension of credits. That explains Litvinov's defection in signing the Kellogg Pact. Not the bourgeoisie but the workers are thus deceived as to the aims of the Workers Republic in the international class war.

But aside from disastrous consequences of the false theory of national socialism in world politics, you have the petty "deception" of the world bourgeoisie through the medium of Stalin's interviews—the famous "twofold" policy, talking with one face to the workers and another to the bosses, and occasionally getting the faces mixed.

Campbell reports: "He (Stalin) unhesitatingly admitted, with disarming frankness, that under Trotsky there had been an attempt to spread Communism throughout the world. He said that was the primary cause of the break between himself and Trotsky. That Trotsky believed in universal Communism while he wanted to confine his efforts to his own country. He explained that they had neither the time nor the money to try to communize the world, even should they wish to do so, and that his own chief interest was to improve the conditions of the people in Russia, without any interfer-

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ence whatsoever from the government of other countries." That this is an authentic statement can be shown by the following fact: "Upon leaving, he told me that the interpreter would prepare a typewritten copy of our conversation, which I received two weeks later in London, signed 'J. Stalin', and with this note—'Keep this record, it may be a very historical document some day.' (What arrogant conceit!)

Are the bourgeoisie really fooled by these utterances? Note the wave of editorial irony in the capitalist newspapers about Stalin's back to capitalism (sic) movement in the questions of the new decree on individual sale of cattle and grain and the piece work system in the factories. They place a correct evaluation on Stalin's interviews and "twofold" propaganda.

And finally, let us examine the views of the author himself, who so earnestly extols the virtues of Stalinist leadership. "Communism" he says, "Thrives only in dark places, the cesspools of the world... (despite the depression) the producers of America's manufactured goods were loth to deal with Russia. They held aloof during those first years after the revolution WHEN RUSSIA WAS DOMINATED BY RADICALS OF THE MOST FERNICIOUS BREED, who threatened to overthrow our government and those of the other great nations. Years before the financial crash of 1929, the militant advocates of world revolution have been banished from Russia and expelled from the Communist party which rules Russia's 160 million people"

Oh! What a tangled web we weave, "When first we practice to deceive!" —CARL COWL.

FILM REVIEW

NOT "ALONE" COMRADE!

The film, "Alone", produced by Sovkino of the U. S. S. R. and shown at present at the Cameo Theatre, is a significant portrayal of life in Soviet Russia, not in the heroic days of the Revolution, but at the present time, in the days of struggle against the kulaks and nepmen. Briefly told the story depicts the bleak but enlightening experience of an immature girl just out of Normal School who is sent most unwillingly to teach the children of a backward tribe away off at the edge of civilization in the Altai region of Siberia.

Here a village Soviet exists but we are made quickly and convincingly aware that although forms have changed, the underlying reality has not. The rich kulak who has divided his large flock of sheep forming the wealth of this region, among his "poor relatives" (the usual fiction), still wields the power. He uses the very Soviet to exploit the worker-shepherds, helped along by the lazy and inefficient bureaucrat assigned as head of the Soviet.

The young Moscow girl, at first bewildered through lack of experience, comes soon to a realization of actualities, particularly when the nepman-kulak invades the class-room to withdraw the older children to make them tend the flock. She comes into conflict with the crafty kulak and when he attempts to slaughter the sheep, the main source of food supply for the village, for his own private profit, her appeal to the head of the Soviet being unavailing, since he has no "instructions", she decides to appeal to the higher-ups at the provincial center. Here she makes the mistake of accepting the help of the class-enemy who offers to drive her in his sleigh and she finds herself deserted, alone, in the trackless waste of snow. However she is found and against the opposition of the bureaucrat the village poor sent an appeal for help to save her life. An aeroplane does the rest. Meantime the village poor are aroused and force the regeneration of the Soviet by holding elections and casting out the bureaucrat.

We are informed that this picture of conditions as they now exist kindled a heated discussion in Moscow. Criticism was levelled at the playing up of a "star" as against the picturing of the "masses". Nevertheless, after the usual preview before selected workers to decide whether the film should be released to the Russian masses, these workers voted favorably on it as giving a true picture. In spite of which, the Cameo billboards repeat an announcement that this picture will probably never be seen publicly in Russia.

May we not conclude that the criticism as to "star" technique is just a wee bit disingenuous? That actually the bureaucrats felt more than uncomfortable under its too direct exposure of how, although they are not counter-revolutionaries, they play directly into the hands of the class enemies?

Yes, aimed at bureaucracy in Siberia, it struck home in Moscow as the workers could not fail to understand. No, the film must not be allowed to give aid and comfort to the Left Opposition! It is too symbolic of our own struggle for the regeneration of the Soviets. We heartily recommend the film to party comrades.

—J. WEBER. CHICAGO PICNIC for the Benefit of The Militant on SUNDAY, JUNE 19, 1932 at FOREST GLENN PRESERVE Refreshments and Games Directions: Take Elston car to end of station. Use Transfer and take bus to Forest Glenn St. Walk four blocks north. Auspices: Chicago Branch C. L. of A. (Opposition)