

LEAGUE ACTIVITIES

Swaback Meetings Minneapolis

Minneapolis.—An interesting series of meetings was held in Minneapolis during comrade Swaback's stay from Thursday, November 2, to Sunday, November 5 inclusive.

On Thursday evening a semi-public meeting was arranged for a group of trade unionists at which comrade Swaback explained the trade union policy of the Communist League. The meeting was advertised only by means of personal contact. About 25 people were present and everybody showed a high degree of interest in the subject as the meeting progressed. This was distinctly demonstrated in the interesting question period, following Swaback's talk, that lasted until after 11 o'clock.

Swaback began his talk by reviewing briefly the present world crisis and gave a picture of the economic forces that are responsible for the crisis. He showed how capitalism, if it is to live, must continue to expand and how this expansion is dependent upon being able to conquer ever wider markets for the goods it produces. He pointed out how world capitalism had already entered its stage of decay and was now on its downward curve. He showed how every capitalist country is striving to conquer world markets for itself and how, in the present era of capitalist decay, it can only result in the further exploitation of wage workers and a further lowering of their standard of living.

Basics of A. F. of L. Unions

The history of the trade union movement in America was reviewed to some extent. The basis on which the A. F. of L. unions are organized was examined in detail and it was shown to rest on the aristocracy of the American workers, namely, the skilled crafts; but due to the further division of labor and the continuous introduction of intricate machinery into modern industry, craft lines are rapidly being destroyed and the bases for organizing unions along such lines are rapidly disappearing.

The American workers, Swaback continued, will be forced to organize in the immediate coming period to make a struggle against the onslaught of capitalist on their standard of living. They are already knocking into the A. F. of L. unions by the thousands in spite of its conservative leadership. Under such circumstances it is highly important how the militant revolutionary workers react to the conservative mass unions. Swaback pointed out that the peace for militants is in the conservative A. F. of L. unions where the masses are. It is their place to be where they can propose their tactics and ideas directly to the workers and where they can work side by side with them in their daily struggles. It is only by this method that militants can hope to convert the masses to their ideas and be able to win leadership.

False Policy of Stalinists

He severely condemned the Trade Union Unity League policy of the official Communist Party for having pursued the very opposite course by pulling all the Left wingers out of the conservative unions and organizing them into separate, so-called, revolutionary unions. This only isolated the militants and left the masses more firmly in the control of their reactionary leaders. The masses, not being revolutionary minded, will not join the T. U. U. L. When the masses become conscious of the need for organization they will stream into the conservative unions as they are streaming into the A. F. of L. at the present time. Swaback said that the militants should be "in on the ground floor" to organize the masses now, and that the militants must lend a constant ear to the needs of the masses and be on deck when they are ready for struggle.

In the question period that followed it was brought out more fully how a revolutionary worker should act in the labor movement generally; how it is necessary to work not only with conservative and reactionary workers, but even with their conservative and reactionary leaders through the medium of the united front, etc. Most of the workers seemed to be very much pleased with the meeting and registered further interest by attending subsequent meetings at which comrade Swaback spoke.

"The Future of International Communism"

On Friday evening, comrade Swaback spoke to a crowd of 85 or 90 people at Pythian Hall on the subject "The Future of International Communism". Several Socialists, Farmer-Laborites and trade unionists were present at the meeting. A few outspoken Stalinist sympathizers were also present which added considerably to the liveliness of the question and discussion period. However, none of the leading lights in the official Communist party were present to attempt to defend the party position.

The world war openly exposed the weakness of the Second International and brought it crashing to the ground. But out of the Second International was rescued the Marxian kernel that, under the leadership of Lenin, made the proletarian revolution in backward Russia and set up the first workers' state. It was the new revolutionary leadership that set itself the task of gathering up the Marxian elements from the wreckage of the Second International to build the Third (Communist) International. Lenin knew that if the workers' state is to survive the revolution will have

to spread to other countries.

The New Revisionism

Swaback explained how, after the death of Lenin, revisionism again crept into the workers' International. He showed how the Stalinist theory of "socialism in one country" was gradually substituted for the Marxian theory of the World Revolution. He reviewed the record of the Third International under its present leadership in the Chinese situation from 1925 to 1927, in the British General Strike in 1926, and in the German situation in 1933. He showed how the real revolutionists (Trotsky, Rakovsky, etc.) have been suppressed, persecuted and exiled, and how the present Soviet regime has become thoroughly bureaucratized. A World Congress has not been held since the 6th Congress in 1928, and there is no sign that the 7th will ever be called. But worst of all was the criminal silence of the Communist International when the Nazis brought the iron heel of Fascism down upon the German workers. All this, said Swaback, is unmistakable evidence that the working class of the world can no longer depend on the Third International to lead it in struggle against its enemy, the capitalist class. It is time for the workers to build a new international (the Fourth International) and new Communist parties.

Comrade Swaback pointed out that the International Left Opposition does not consider itself the Fourth International, nor does the Communist League of America declare that it is the new American party. Instead it will take the initiative to bring together the various, independent, revolutionary groups who agree that a new International must be built and who agree with the first four congresses of the Third International. Out of this closer connection the Left Opposition hopes to be able to take joint steps with other groups toward the formation of a new International. By this method, the great task of building the new International and the new parties can be undertaken on the broadest possible basis.

The question and discussion period lasted until 11:30 P. M. Several Stalinist sympathizers took the floor and argued from the point of view that the Soviet Union would be attacked if the Communist International should continue to espouse the theory of the World Revolution.

A substantial collection was taken up at the meeting and considerable literature was sold, including three copies of "Germany—What Next?", by comrade Trotsky.

The Banquet

A banquet was arranged in the Labor Lyceum for Saturday evening. In a speech that lasted perhaps an hour at this banquet, comrade Swaback gave us an intimate picture of comrade Trotsky. About 45 people were present including several who had had little or no contact with the revolutionary movement. Swaback's talk made a profound impression on some of these people. As a matter of fact it impressed the League comrades no less.

In comrade Swaback's speech at the banquet, he related several of his experiences while in Europe and pointed out some of the extreme sacrifices that the European comrades have to make in order to carry on the work of the movement.

Preliminary speeches were made

The Flames of the Class War In Yakima, Washington

The tranquil quiet of Yakima Valley, Washington, where the hops are grown, later to be dispensed over a brass rail as foaming New Deal beer, is raging with bitter class war. For some time now the slaves who pick the essence of your refreshing drink have been in full revolt against their profit-lusting masters under the auspices of the Agricultural Workers Union No. 110 of the I. W. W.

Harvesting Ceases

The hop pickers organized and presented their demands to the farmers. The farmers laughed at them. 35 to 50 cents an hour? The eight-hour day? The abolition of child labor in the field under the age of 18? Never! The strike was on.

The hop pickers left the fields. The harvesting of this golden crop came to a standstill. The picket line was formed. The rich farmers took this little "spree" of the workers jocularly. At first. But when inundation failed, when appeals to "Americanism" and race prejudice were ignored, when all their elaborate stratagems came to naught and the workers remained firm, the farmers became desperate at the sight of their golden crop rotting on the ground.

The Beer Ballyhoo

You remember the ballyhoo that attended the propaganda that the return of legal beer would make millions of jobs and bring prosperity in its wake. If your pockets are empty and your eyes open then the Great Delusion must be apparent to you. But what of that? Prosperity did come—to the brewery owners and the big farmers who grow the hops on their ranches.

These ranchers saw the vision of gain, of making their pile. The brewers needed their hops. Their damaged fortunes would be repaired, they would get rich again. But one thing stood in their way. They had not reckoned with this. The workers were demanding consideration. Downright unreasonable! Yes,

earlier in the evening by some of the branch members. There were followed with a banquet lunch immediately preceding comrade Swaback's talk.

At Workers' Circle Open Forum

The Workers' Circle branches scheduled comrade Swaback to speak at their open forum at the Labor Lyceum on Sunday morning. The title of his address was "The Roosevelt Program". In his address he pointed out how monopoly capitalism has been strengthened by the reconstruction Finance Corporation and by the closing of the bank last year. This was part of the re-adjustment of capitalism to the crisis. He showed how the NIRA is designed to make further re-adjustments in American capitalism to further enable it to penetrate the world market. He showed where the workers cannot hope to get any benefits except through their own organizations.

About 50 workers were present at the meeting and among them were quite a number of socialists. Several questions about trade union matters and the tactic of the united front were asked of the speaker. One member of the audience wanted to know how it was possible for Left wingers to work on the same united front with reactionary labor leaders who had already betrayed the working class. Swaback said that this is the best method of exposing their betrayals.

Everybody at this meeting seemed to be pleased with the answers Swaback gave to the numerous questions asked. —GEO. KAY.

Shachtman Lectures in Boston

Boston.—Comrade Max Shachtman at a well-attended forum meeting in Social Science Hall, Sunday evening, November 12th, recalled for the benefit of the audience, the events in the early life of Lenin's Third International, its internationalist ideology, its robust growth, followed after Lenin's death by its alliance with the disease of Stalinism, to the progressively shriveled effect of which were added, cinematically, three staggering blows: the Chinese workers' defeat of 1927, the debacle of the Anglo-Russian Committee 1926-1927, and the German defeat of 1933; the German defeat crushed and mutilated beyond recovery, a body whose internal vital organs had been litany, all but consumed by the unchecked rotting process of a decade of Stalinism.

The speaker drew several parallels in events and in principles between the historic period of Leninism as contrasted with those in the subsequent period of Stalinism. The inspiring events of the Leninist period flowed inevitably from the Marxian principles of revolutionary internationalism which was the guiding ideology of the Third International; and so also did the catastrophic events of the Stalinist period flow inevitably from the non-Marxian principle of "socialism in one country."

The composition of the audience represented practically all of the tendencies in the socialist and Communist movement including some advancing elements still adhering to the Party. The result was a lively and instructive period of questions and discussion in the period that followed the lecture.

Mob Fury

They precipitated a fight with the pickets. A night outnumbering the strikers six to one, armed with pickaxes, gaspines and rocks they sailed into this peaceful, unarmied group of workers and found an outlet for their crazed, uncontrolled fury by cracking their bones and skulls, beating them into insensibility. The pickets fought valiantly but the odds were too great. When the smoke of the slaughter had cleared they marched those workers who still could walk into town.

Unspeaking Conditions

Conditions among the imprisoned workers are unspeaking. A mild description is contained in this letter received by the General Defense Committee: "All the fellow workers in the care are in a very bad shape—one blanket each in a chicken house. All need clothes bad. A cold wave hit this section, snow 18 inches 70 miles from here; at present a cold rain is falling. The fellow workers are dressed for July in Florida, without coats many of them. If anything can be done about this it should be done right now, as all of the fellow workers have colds, etc. W. I. Fischer spends half his time in the county hospital."

Meanwhile these strikers are to stand trial where the boss class justice will endeavor to railroad them from five to twenty-five years. They are to be tried in the city of Yakima where mob law prevails and the respectable citizens are howling for blood, where the slightest sympathy for the imprisoned men is a crime punished by lynching.

This is a class battle of the first water. Action from the organized, militant workers are the only effective instruments in this fight which is the fight of every wage slave.

—GEO. CLARKE.

Contributions for the defense of the Yakima strikers should be sent to Harry J. Clark, Yakima Defense Committee, Box 365, Seattle, Washington, or to the General Defense Committee, 2422 N. Halsted St., Chicago, Ill.

FROM THE MILITANTS

Statement on Expulsion from Party

The Western Worker of October 17th issued a vicious, lying and unwarranted attack upon myself and certain other comrades whom I had not seen for months and with whom at that time I had no connections. In this article the bureaucracy branded me as a servant of the police, as a stool pigeon, whom I protested against this slander, they remained silent. They have refused me the columns of the Western Worker to reply and defend myself and have excluded me from the meetings of the party.

They force me to throw this lie back into their teeth. I challenge them to offer facts to prove their accusations. I demand of Sam Lucas or any of his sycophants that they name even one police agent with which I am or ever have been associated. They cannot do it. They will not admit their lie. They can only remain silent, which is in itself an admission that their accusation is pure slander.

Six months ago I withdrew from all Communist party activities convinced that I could no longer function under the insufferable bureaucratic clique which dominates the party and destroys all concrete organizational activity.

In this six months I carefully refrained from any activity which could in any way be construed as attacking the party. On the contrary, I have supported the party, against my better judgment, before comrades who like myself were smarting under the lash of the bureaucracy.

The Party bureaucracy of District No. 13 have dragged me out of the obscurity where I was content to remain and have endeavored to use me as a scapegoat to cover their own misdeeds which have disrupted and destroyed the mass work and which stand as a wall of stone between the working masses and the Communist party.

There remains only the Left Opposition to point the correct Leninist road. I call upon all honest members of the Communist party to repudiate the careerist elements now in control of the Party and to join hands with the working masses of America. To march forward together in one mighty mass united front against the common foe.

—F. CREQUE.

The Blight of Stalinism in Mass Work

Oakland Calif.—The blight of Stalinism in the mass organizations is shown once again in the experience of a comrade who carried on activity among the unemployed in a place near here.

"The Brotherhood for the betterment of the Unemployed" (B. B. U.) was organized by a single comrade in the little farming center of Hayward. The majority of the population around Hayward are semi-proletarians, eking out their living on small chicken ranches or fruit farms and, in good times, also working on jobs in Oakland or San Francisco. The crisis caught thousands of this element with their little ranches unpaid for and undeveloped. They were forced to work for the County which gave them one week of road work each month or \$24. They were intensely dissatisfied and anxious to fight, and in their ranks numbered many splendid, though not as yet class-conscious, proletarian elements.

Comrade Steele undertook to organize these elements over a year ago. Fifteen attended the first meeting, consisting of 3 Portuguese field workers, one carpenter, (American, A. F. of L. trade unionist), one painter, two laborers, one brewer worker (Brewery workers union) two Spanish field workers (railroad), one truck driver, one civil engineer (formerly of the K. of L.) and 3 more American laborers. An organization was formed. Comrade Steele was elected secretary.

Comrade Steele reported the results of his meeting to the Party Section and was reprimanded for not affiliating to the Unemployed Councils. However, as comrade Steele brought a Portuguese worker into the party he was permitted to continue work with the organization.

At the second meeting the organization drew up a petition calling for support from all workers, farmers, and small tax-payers organizations for unemployed insurance, a higher standard of relief for the unemployed in the County and end of discrimination in its administration.

In the territory surrounding Hayward are some 30 old communities with a system of granges, community clubs, farm bureaus which are widely attended by the poor farmers, semi-proletarians and workers. In these communities are a saw works, a sugar refinery, six canneries a pickle works, 3 gravel pits and similar industries as fruit dryers, etc. Among these workers in the enumerated industries are members of these organizations. The B. B. U. prepared to send committees to these clubs with their petition.

The second meeting was attended

by 32 workers and a petition was drawn up to get the privileges of a school to meet in. When comrade Steele made his report to the Party Section, he was censured heavily for approaching granges and small community improvement clubs with any sort of a petition. He was accused of hiding the face of the party and of sabotaging the work of the Unemployed Councils.

The section appointed a comrade of three weeks standing as unit organizer in his place. Even so Steele continued to guide the unit, particularly in its work on the unemployed traction, and to draw new proletarian elements into the party from the B. B. U. as fast as they proved their development and readiness to join. Although the petition of the N. N. U. did not gain support from any substantial number of improvement clubs or granges, it did accomplish its main purpose. It started labor controversy in these organizations which has grown steadily since it created a wedge, splitting the proletarian elements away from their petty bourgeois leaders, and began to rally these elements around the banners of the class struggle, so that today, one year later, these organizations are breaking apart over wage and labor controversies which were unknown until the advent of the B. B. U. Also, the petition did win considerable support both directly and indirectly for the unemployed.

Twice in this time Steele was arrested for "inciting to riot"—once at the outset of the organization for addressing a mass meeting; the second time when the anger march came through Hayward.

In the B. B. U. two tendencies were evidenced almost from the first. The most exploited workers, the Portuguese and the Portuguese, were for a political fight and mass action. The second faction, primarily Americans, worked to turn the organization into a co-operative movement.

In November road work ended and the unemployed were deprived of any cash money. All through the Fall months numerous unemployed groups had been organizing, growing and banding together. There were 3 principal groups; the Unemployed Cooperative Relief Association, with 18 affiliated units and around 3,000 members; the Natural Development Company, a smaller outfit; and Unemployed Councils with a questionable 200 total membership. In addition there were a number of independent organizations such as the B. B. U.

Leavitt and Sherr, leaders of the conservative faction of the B. B. U., proposed that the organization affiliate with the Unemployment Cooperative Relief Association as it would leave the organization free to pursue its independent course and would have the additional advantage of a large central commissary to draw from. The Party faction had twice brought forward the matter of affiliation with the Unemployed Councils but had twice been voted down due to the arbitrary conditions laid down by the U. C. Leavitt's proposal was accepted and the B. B. U. became unit No. 10 of the U. C. K. A. with Steele, Leavitt and one other as delegates.

Suddenly relief was cut to a miserable diet of tomato puree, beans, rice, flour, and salt pork. Throughout the country the unemployed sent delegations to the board of supervisors in protest, demanding free choice of food, cash, road work, no evictions for non-payment of rent, against water, gas or electric shut-offs. Hundreds crowded the hall and other hundreds overflowed outside in a splendid, militant, spontaneous united front.

Statement on Expulsion from Party

being a police agent, he can then be excused and ostracized from the entire workers' movement and shunned by all organizations. On the other hand, if the accusation is a slander, the slanderers can be called to order, the reputation of the accused restored and the right of any organization to accept him confirmed. One way or the other, mere accusations and denials in matters of this kind must not be allowed to stand. Let the facts be established.)

Statement on Expulsion from Party

NOTE: The accusation made against the writer of the above letter is a matter of interest to all working class organizations in the California East Bay section. No such organization can admit police agents into its ranks. At the same time any individual confronted with such an accusation is entitled to a fair and honest trial. If the Communist party refuses to comply with the demand of the accused for such a trial, then the other working class organizations have the right and the duty to act in the matter. It would be in order, in our opinion, for the local organizations of the Communist League, to arrange a public hearing on the case, invite the Communist party to bring its evidence and invite representations of other organizations in the radical labor movement to participate in the trial with voice and vote. By this method the facts can be clearly and publicly established. If the accused is guilty of

to build a bigger and stronger stockade and \$23,000 for the expenses of the prosecution. Strikers, and those connected only remotely with the strike were slaughtered, tarred and feathered and left lifeless along the road. Incoming freight trains were searched for "agitators". The kept press unleashed a howl of lynch talk. All sorts of ruses were used to find a pretext for frame-up. The workers are indicted under charges ranging from vagrancy to criminal syndicalism.

Unspeaking Conditions

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Militant Builders

THE WINNERS

One change of note in the standing of the highest scoring sub-getters from last week took place in the displacement of S. Jourard of Toronto from third place by A. Caplan of Kansas City. Last week they stood as follows: S. Jourard 8; A. Caplan 7. Since then Caplan sent in four subs and Jourard none.

Koehler of Youngstown tops the list with 27 and S. Hardy of Philadelphia is next with 17. He is a newcomer in this drive.

To Koehler go the three volumes of the History of the Russian Revolution by comrade Trotsky, the first prize; to Hardy—two volumes and to Caplan—one volume, second and third prizes respectively.

The books will be in the mail to them within a week.

SHORTCOMINGS

Thirty-one subs last week brought the total in the drive up to a hundred and sixty-five. With that figure the drive closes. It can not be called a success. Previous drives netted many more subs. And they were conducted in condition that were less favorable for their success.

At the beginning of the drive we pointed out that if we worked toward a new subscriber for every one then on the list we could double our circulation of single subscriptions. We fell below that figure. We fell below half that figure.

It is possible that we set too short a period for the drive and that our comrades and branches took more time than we thought was necessary to swing into line. If that is so it will show up in the next few weeks. We will continue to record them as they continue in. But, of course, they will have no bearing on the drive which is closed above.

And in view of that possibility we suspend judgment. When we know we will offer our explanation for the failure of the drive.

MORE SUBS

The work of building the Militant will continue. Let us see if we cannot at least hold the average we have struck in this drive of about thirty subs a week. That should not be very difficult. If we go to it with a will it will be surprisingly easy.

BOUND VOLUMES OF THE MILITANT

We want to make a standing offer to sub-getters. To every comrade who sends in 20 subs (either half year or year or both) we will give a bound volume of the Militant, series two. Series two is the file that runs from the first issue of the present format, July 4, 1931 to the end of 1932.

Scoring will begin on November 20 and will continue until further notice. Weekly reports will be made in this column.

"WHAT NEXT?" IN RUSSIAN

Pioneer Publishers has just received a number of copies of comrade Trotsky's monumental work "What Next?" in the Russian language. They can be obtained from Pioneer Publishers, 126 East 16th St., N. Y. C. at 75 cents a copy.

MY LIFE

A few copies of comrade Trotsky's brilliant autobiography are on sale at Pioneer Publishers, 84 East 10th Street, N. Y. C. at the reduced price of \$2.50. Avail yourself of this opportunity before it is too late.

IMPORTANT DOCUMENT

"Russia and Germany at Brest-Litovsk" by Judah L. Magnes can be obtained from Pioneer Publishers for twenty-five cents.

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