

---

# Some Plain Words

by Charles W. Ervin

Published in the *New York Call*, v. 14, no. 253 (Sept. 10, 1921), pg. 2.

We are more than anxious to do everything we can to help swell the Russian Famine Fund now being collected, but we are also determined to protect our readers from giving any money that might be used for any other purpose than to buy things that the Russians must have to keep them from starving.

NOT A CENT OF IT THAT WE HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH SHALL BE SPENT FOR ANY PURPOSE OTHER THAN THIS, AND NOT A CENT SHALL BE DEDUCTED FOR EXPENSES OF ANY KIND.

The fund for Russian famine sufferers, which this paper is collecting, was started because we felt compelled to protect our readers who were not members of labor unions. *The Call* has many readers who are engaged in the professions, as well as many women working in the household.

The board of management of the paper instructed that the funds should not in any way merge with any of the funds of this paper, and that a separate treasurer should be named, who should call for skilled volunteer help to administer the funds. These instructions have been carried out to the letter, and every penny sent to this paper will be spent for the purpose for which it has been given.

We issued a notice on the front page of *The Call* giving our reason for this step, but certain incidents, which have happened since we gave these reasons, compel us to set forth plainly the position of this paper.

First: We have no interest as to where the money is sent for help for Russian sufferers, provided every cent of it is used only for that purpose.

Second: if you are a member of a labor union or of the Socialist Party, you can be sure that, if you give money through the channels of your industrial or political organization, it will all go, without any extra

expense, for the purpose for which it is given.

Third: There is an organization which has informed us that it has a "maintenance fund" for the collecting and administering of the money it collects for the Russian famine sufferers. The representative of that body (the Friends of Soviet Russia) appeared before the board of management of this paper in regard to an announcement which he wished to have inserted in the paper, advertising a house-to-house collection. When we explained the position we had taken regarding the utter elimination of expense from any collection activity, and told him that we had advised our readers who were union members to give their money through their unions, he informed the board that some of the unions could not be trusted to see that the help to Russia went through the channels it should go through.

Astonished at this reply, we named two of the great international unions, the Amalgamated Clothing workers of America and the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, and asked if he thought that for one moment these organizations could not be trusted to see that their help went through no reactionary channels, and he replied that he was not sure that they could be trusted.

• • • • •

The attitude of this organization was proof positive to us of a desire to sabotage other funds being collected, and a total disinclination to really unify the activities taking place among the working class, looking toward the collection of such funds. This was confirmed by their attitude in refusing to cooperate with other bodies in the city of Baltimore. A statement which came into our hands, showing a direct

attempt of a group to interfere with the work of collecting funds from members of one of the great labor unions through the formation of a dual collecting organization within its ranks, further justified our judgment in refusing our support to this and similar operations.

We now find this group sending a letter to the labor unions denouncing *The Call* for having turned down their announcement. Therefore we are setting forth these facts that all our readers may know the truth about the matter.

We have treated everybody alike in this matter of collecting funds. Readers of *The Call* will notice that we waited until the Socialist Party took action in the NEC and appointed a committee to collect funds without any extra expense before we gave any publicity to the activities of our own party in this matter.

• • • • •

The unions of this city know the services rendered by *The Call* in their struggles; know the services which we have rendered to the struggling Russian people; know that we have been subjected to a bitter financial fight for existence by rendering such service. They will, therefore, know that, when we took the step complained of, we did it to protect as far as we could the interests both of the Russian famine sufferers and of the workers in this country who wished to help them in the most efficient way.

We are used to the abuse of the Communists in this country. All the energies that in Russia go to the doing of constructive work seem to be employed by the Communists in America in factional strife. Not content with going their own way and attacking capitalism, they spend much of their time in a vain effort to destroy the existing labor unions by intriguing within their ranks and by seeking to interfere in every way possible with the activity of other groups of work-

ers who do not happen to believe in their tactics.

This papers has been very patient with them, and, in view of some recent happenings, we think we have been far too patient. We have opened our columns and published their letters even when they denounced us. We have done this because we really believe in free speech and free press which they continually sneer at. Believing that the Communists have a right to champion their principles the same as we have, we have never hesitated for a moment to do what we could to give publicity to the persecutions to which they have been subjected by those in authority. We take no credit for this because we try to put into practice the principles of freedom we were founded to stand for.

This does not mean, however, that we will allow these Communists to bully us nor that we will stand helplessly by while they engage in a campaign of character assassination. When we find them lying about ourselves or others, we will show them up as thoroughly as we know how. When we find them working under false colors, or posing like some cheap detective in ridiculous disguise, we shall have no hesitancy in stripping off this disguise.

How these people expect to get anywhere by sneering at all the decencies as "bourgeois morality," in place of understanding that the working class should act on a higher plane in their relations with each other than any other class in the community, we fail to understand.

The sleuths of black reaction were not able to terrorize this paper or its editor during the stormy days of the war. Neither can a bunch of long-distance revolutionists whose antics are as ridiculous as those of the Ku Klux Klan do what the legal lackeys of capitalism have failed to do.

*Charles W. Ervin,*  
Editor-Manager.

*Edited by Tim Davenport.*

*Published by 1000 Flowers Publishing, Corvallis, OR, 2007. • Non-commercial reproduction permitted.*