

Workers' Education--or Mis-Education?

By Earl Browder

A NNOUNCEMENT of conferences on labor problems at the Brookwood summer school, at Katonah, N. Y., raises again for revolutionary workers the question—what is workers' education?

Brookwood was organized as a working-class college. It was launched and is supported by a group of well-intentioned middle-class and intellectual elements. It has the endorsement of several unions, and makes much propaganda in the labor press. It is becoming of some importance to enquire into the nature of the education Brookwood is giving.

Vivid light is thrown on this question by the program for the conference of the summer school. Thruout the list of subjects and the leaders of discussion it is made plain that Brookwood is fast committing itself, lock, stock, and barrel, to the propaganda of class collaboration.

A special course is given, for example, to the study of the infamous "B. & O." plan in the railroad industry, a scheme that is being used to poison and maim the railroad unions. The leader of discussion on this subject is Otto Beyer, technical expert who is credited with originating the plan. Such a course can be nothing but a school for methods in suppressing the class struggle.

Study of the amalgamation movement is under the direction of Ben Stolberg. Whatever his other qualifications may be, Stolberg is certainly not qualified to expound the amalgamation movement from its dynamic working-class angle. His knowledge of it is confined to reading, and his approach to the matter is that of the middle-class intellectual, having found expression principally in special articles for capitalist or liberal newspapers and magazines. The amalgamation movement is nothing of consequence to the working class, not worth studying at all, unless it is seen as one small, tho important, part of the great upsurging will of the working class to power. To teach it from the dry-as-dust, intellectualist, middle-class point of view is to suck the revolutionary life out of it, and reduce amalgamation to an organizational expedient, indifferently valuable to the revolutionary worker or the reactionary class-collaborationist.

The whole outline of the summer school courses would indicate that Brookwood is becoming the center of a crystallized philosophy

of class collaboration, and an institution for its systematic propaganda.

Class collaboration has long been the official policy of the American labor movement. But in the past it has been of a rough, rule-of-thumb nature, based upon temporary expedients. Thus it has been possible for the unions, in spite of the character of their leadership, to develop tremendous mass struggles against the capitalists, by the simple pressure of mass demands. The old bureaucrats, with their crude and unintelligent methods, could not organize their betrayal on a long-time and systematic basis. They were too stupid to be able to completely choke the unions.

What we see now, however, in such institutions as Brookwood, is the combination of a keen intellectualism with the old-line bureaucracy of the trade unions, that threatens to render the new class collaborationism much more deadly than the old.

An American Fabianism is being born. In such institutions as Brookwood, the League for Industrial Democracy, and the like, a system of "workers' education" is being developed that runs directly counter to the interests of the workers as a class, which is calculated in all its aspects to confuse class lines, to dull class antagonisms, to instill a bourgeois attitude toward life, and to weed out and destroy the healthy proletarian instincts of antagonism and struggle against capitalism. Where it takes effect it means death to all genuine working-class spirit and action.

Gompers has, in the past, symbolized the most evil influence upon the working class of America. His day will soon be gone. But the American Fabians are preparing to take his place with a philosophy, an "educational" system, a method of thought, which will perform the same services to capitalism, and which will require even more earnest efforts to destroy.

The Stenographic Ad Verbatim Report of
THE INTERNATIONAL DEBATE of the DAY!
BERTRAND RUSSELL versus **SCOTT NEARING**
 Subject—Can the Soviet Form of Government
 take hold of America, England and
 France? \$1.00 Postpaid
 Mr. Russell says NO. Mr. Nearing Says YES.
 Held in New York City, May 25, 1924
THE LEAGUE FOR PUBLIC DISCUSSION,
 500 Fifth Avenue, Dept. L., New York

"Socialist" Union Wreckers

By Harrison George

THE International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union has been made the private property of the Sigman-Cahan "socialist" reactionaries. It is an absolute monarchy, a perfect picture of despotism. In many particulars it duplicates the "socialist" dictatorship of Germany under Ebert and Von Seeckt and parallels the unprincipled, union-wrecking leadership of the German trade unions.

It will be noted that the German unions under similar leadership have been nearly ruined and are being deserted by their betrayed membership. But just as conditions force the German workers to organized resistance, and the Communists to continue and redouble their efforts to win the rank and file of the unions to left wing leadership, so the vital needs of the workers in the ladies' garment industry are compelling resistance by the union in spite of all the obstacles to effective action placed in the way of the membership by the Sigman monarchy. And just as in Germany, so do the Communists and all left wing elements in the I. L. G. W. U. fight against the impulse of the masses to leave the union; they continue and redouble their work to win the rank and file.

Facing the New York Strike

From the beginning of the expulsion policy it was recognized that the motive of the officialdom was the desire to conceal their own programless bankruptcy in face of the crisis in the industry. Behind the turmoil and disruption which they created by the expulsion attack on the left wing, they hoped to restore their lost hold on the membership. To maintain a semblance of struggle for union conditions, they could not expel the left wing and ignore the trade demands at the same time. So the ten demands, originally made by the left wing, were taken up by the officials and a pretended fight made to put them into effect.

The result of the disruptive expulsion policy is seen now that the New York cloakmakers, driven by the most crying needs to face the crisis of a great strike, are dependent for official direction upon these black reactionaries, upon Sigman and his gang who are doing all in their power to obstruct, compromise and defeat the efforts of the membership.

Few unions in the world are dominated by such black reaction as the I. L. G. W. This is illustrated by the disgraceful Boston convention the high point of which was a demonstration against Soviet Russia. In the hands of such officials have been and are the negotiations with the New York manufacturers for demands long ago formulated by the left wing.

It must be reiterated that the left wing has long agitated for these demands being made a part of the union program. A forty-hour week, unemployment insurance, guaranteed employment for a minimum number of weeks, increase of the minimum wage scale, limitation of the number of contract workers, etc., have been and remain trade demands of the left wing. It shall continue to fight for them and other demands not yet adopted by the union, and only by the energy of the membership inspired by left wing leadership can they be won. Any victory will be won only by the rank and file smashing all the obstacles laid down by Sigman, and by vigilant punishment of all treachery and compromise.

It is a fact which condemns the officialdom that just as the union is about to face the terrible crisis of a great strike, a strike for demands which are required by the very life needs of the workers yet which the officials have always neglected if not opposed, the left wing, which agitated for these demands, is expelled and the union tragically weakened by provocative tactics of the Sigman bureaucracy. It is a clear case of defeating the demands and helping the bosses disrupt the union.

Premeditated Class Treachery

The rank and file have no reason to trust the officials; they have every reason to be closely vigilant over their conduct in this strike. The provocative expulsion policy, clearly intended to create internal trouble and disrupt the fighting ranks as they approach battle with the bosses, could benefit nobody but these bosses. Moreover, a revolt against the outrageous expulsions at the time the union faced a strike, could be used as an excuse by the official gang for playing traitor and accepting defeat. A settled policy of benefitting the bosses at the expense of the membership is behind all this policy of expulsion. It is the fixed policy of renegade socialists in the unions both here and abroad.

The expulsions are only part of a preme-

ditated policy of class collaboration with the capitalists against the workers. For months it has been known that a fight would have to be made in New York. Weeks passed after the bosses refused to discuss the demands. Yet no adequate preparatory measures were taken at any time, and even the make-shift measures now effective were not taken until days after the old agreement expired. Meanwhile Sigman dilly-dallied with apologetic letters to the State Industrial Commissioner who, in spite of his chatter of how "parties to this controversy should sit around a table and discuss differences" has no rebuke for the bosses that declared the demands "undebatable." Besides, the officials propagate defeatism by cautious talk of the "grave event" and the "honorable means" and "peaceful methods" it uses to dodge a strike against greedy exploiters whom it servilely calls the "virile and living factors" in the cloak industry.

The militants will not allow Sigman's desired disruption to succeed. Neither will they allow him to avoid complete responsibility for the strike situation. They will continue, as in the Boston and Chicago strikes, to fight for the union and union demands. With the backing of the membership they will fight for the New York demands against both the bosses and the treachery of Sigman. They will not allow themselves to be separated from the masses even for a single day.

Officials Renounce Class Struggle

However, stupid and ruthless though the Sigman-Cahan machine was at the Boston convention, it cannot but defeat itself by such means as were used to wipe out the last vestige of workers' democracy in the union. These "socialists" went over to capitalism so completely as to strike out the whole I. L. G. W. preamble, which contained a recognition of the class struggle and an endorsement of a "system of society wherein the workers shall receive the full value of their product."

This renunciation of struggle against capitalism was fittingly accompanied by a typical Fascist-reactionary assault on the left wing. Those who struggle against capitalism and try to realize the society the preamble described, were unseated, and membership in the Trade Union Educational League declared illegal. Moreover, the constitution was so altered that the present officials are self-perpetuated, made absolute despots, and all methods of the membership removing them by constitutional means were carefully

cut out. Like the Supreme Court of the United States, the Sigman gang are practically ruling for life. The I. L. G. W. is, to all intents and purposes, Sigman's private property.

The Lesson of History

But history has proven the failure of such tactics. The Communists in the German unions have shown how to combat such treachery. They have found a way to stay in the unions in spite of expulsions and rapidly win the masses away from just such "socialist" traitors as Sigman. Rickert, in the United Garment Workers, also tried the same game that Sigman is trying, also with the help of Gompers—but he failed miserably. Sigman's failure is only a matter of time.

No matter how successful Sigman might think he is in eliminating the organized left wing as a factor in the immediate life of the union, the deep needs of the workers toiling in the sweatshops, the needs of the struggle itself, make inevitable in one form or another an organized expression of opposition to capitalism and its agents in offices of the union. Sigman cannot abolish the class struggle by abolishing mention of it in the preamble, nor can he avoid organizational expression of that struggle by the formation of a left wing. A few militants have been expelled, but two will appear where one appeared before. The left wing is the modern Hydra! . . .

The left wing has been through the battle and reaction is still in the saddle. But one battle is not the whole war—and the war is not over. The left wing is not dismayed by difficulty. History, running swiftly, is on its side. Sigman's tactics of attempting to provoke ill-judged actions will not succeed, neither will the left wing submit to force. For the left wing is not an artificial, arbitrary creation, but the crystallized needs of the industrial workers. When, as is sure to happen, the socialist monarchy succeeds in defeating every effort of the workers against the bosses, the disillusioned membership, however bound under the constitution, will find a way to choose new and left wing leaders to direct their struggle.

The left wing is patient, but not silent. It will continue to point out the responsibility for failure to lead the struggle, and will fight for the demands of the workers in the trade, for amalgamation, a real labor party, unconditional recognition of Soviet Russia, and for a Communist society.

Among the Coal Miners of Canada

By Tom Bell

THE coal diggers of District 18, U. M. W., have been on strike since April 1st, fighting against a wage cut of \$1.17 a day. They are receiving no financial support from the International and have appealed to the labor movement of Canada for money to continue the fight against the operators.

In Nova Scotia the miners have just finished a rank and file convention which demanded the restoration of district autonomy and immediate district elections. It also adopted a policy on the fifty-cent weekly levy placed by Lewis on the men to pay the debts contracted during the strike last January. To explain the situation in the light of these events is the purpose of this article.

Last July the miners of Cape Breton Island, comprising half the miners of District 26, U. M. W., rushed to the assistance of the striking steel workers of Sydney, N. S., by striking in protest over the use of troops by the government against the steel workers. Unsupported by the labor movement, with the exception of the Drumheller sub-district of District 18, faced by the full strength of the British Empire Steel Corporation, the provincial and federal governments with troops and mounted police, and ordered back to work by the reactionary Lewis administration, the miners were forced to abandon the strike. This allowed the steel workers to be beaten. Thus the miners of Nova Scotia had a real demonstration of the function of the capitalist state.

Lewis the Real Strikebreaker

During this strike the Lewis administration acted as a strike breaking agency. At the request of the corporation Lewis deposed the officers of the district, cancelled the district charter and appointed a "provisional government" of men who had been rejected in the previous district election, such as Dalrymple and Houston. The miners were ordered back to work under threat of expulsion from the union.

Knowing the history of Kansas district and District 18, the militants decided that to save their ranks from disruption and to prevent a "reorganization" of locals under Lewis' dictatorship, the best thing to do was to return to work. This was done, and since then the militants have been in the front of the campaign to prevent a split. All attempts at

building dual unions have come to naught owing to the leadership of the rank and file militants having benefitted by the experiences of the mines of District 18, who attempted to organize a dual union in 1919.

The provisional appointees of Lewis confidently predicted that when the contract expired under which the miners then were working, the corporation would raise wages to the 1921 standard, because those who would negotiate with the corporation were recognized as "fair and reasonable" men—not "reds" and advocates of the Red International of Labor Unions, as some of the deposed officers had been.

On January 15, last, the contract expired and the corporation posted notice of a 20 per cent cut in wages. This took place after the Lewis appointees had negotiated for nearly two months, and so flabbergasted the appointees that they were at loss what action to take. However, the miners settled the matter by quitting the job. Later on the "provisional government," afraid to declare a strike outright, compromised between their cowardice and their fear of the miners by declaring a "suspension of work." This was in reality, of course, a strike, but they were fearful of that term lest they lose their reputations as solid conservatives.

Lewis Breaks His Promise

The miners were informed that the policy of Lewis—"no reduction under the 1921 rates" would be applied to the district, and to carry it out the International would support the district to the limit. But in February a contract was signed which, while giving the datal laborers an increase of ten cents a day, and the contract miners an increase of about seven per cent, had an elaborate set of rules and regulations which bound the miners to the corporation like so many chattel slaves.

Prohibition of quitting work in order to force the management to adjust a grievance, forcing the pit committees to supply miners to take the places of those who quit because of grievance, placing the "working force" at the complete disposal of the management, and setting up arbitration machinery with "impartial chairmen"—these were some of the shackles the Lewis administration placed on the miners in the interests of the corporation.