

What Is the Workers International Relief?

By BERTRAM D. WOLFE.

TWO outstanding needs of the American working class are the development of greater solidarity between the diverse elements, crafts, races, etc., that compose it, and the development of greater international solidarity.

The Workers' International Relief (W. I. R.) is a splendid instrument for the developing of these two forms of solidarity.

The WIR is an international relief organization on a class basis, with a section in the U. S. When the strikers of New Bedford or of the Pennsylvania-Ohio coal fields enter into a struggle, they find lined up against them the entire power of the highly centralized capitalist class, with its interlocking directorates, chambers of commerce, gigantic monopolies, etc. The WIR steps into such cases with an appeal to the workers throughout the industry in other parts of the country and in all industries throughout the country to rally to the aid of the strikers and their families with relief funds. It is a living realization of the old working class motto, "All for one and one for all." When the strikes are on a large enough scale, the WIR calls upon the workers of the entire world for aid.

Catastrophes and accidents also have their class aspects. In the Mississippi floods, relief was denied by the Red Cross and government agencies to the hundreds of thousands of Negro workers and poor Negro farmers. This is typical of every catastrophe. It is a brazen lie of the bourgeoisie that in the face of great tragic events class differ-

"Is Living Realization of Old Working Class Motto: 'All for One and One for All'. . . Shield of Toiling, Suffering Masses"

ences are forgotten. They come out more clearly than ever under such circumstances. Here again the Workers' International Relief stands out as the champion of solidarity of the oppressed masses. Just as the Red Cross and the government agencies step in on behalf of the master class, so the WIR steps in on behalf of the workers and toiling poor.

Every great revolutionary struggle finds the agencies of the imperialists at work bolstering up the counter-revolution with aid of funds and food, with such "charitable" intervention as Hoover exhibited in the overthrow of the Hungarian Soviet government. Thus, the ruling class gathers its funds for Chinese famine relief, which it uses to aid the militaristic, feudal reaction, the agents of imperialism and their tools, thereby intensifying the causes of the famine by strengthening the hand of imperialism and reaction, which preys upon and impoverishes the Chinese masses. The WIR steps forward as the shield of the toiling, suffering masses.

Achievements of the WIR.

It was the WIR that mobilized the moral and financial support of the laboring masses of the world at the time of the Russian famine, that came to the support of the German masses in 1923, that rallied support

for the British General Strike, and the long miners' struggle that followed, that helped the victims of the Irish famine in 1925. Out of these and other important international actions, the WIR grew into the organization that it is today. Organized at first in many countries in the form of temporary relief bodies for a particular catastrophe or struggle, the conviction soon grew upon those engaged in the work that the organization must be made permanent and powerful and ready for any emergency. It soon became evident that one cannot form powerful organizations swiftly enough after catastrophes have occurred or struggles have begun.

Our experience in America with strike relief, with the Mississippi flood, and the tornado victims, has demonstrated to the American workers that they must build a powerful section of the WIR in America, to be prepared to help all sections of the American masses in any emergency and to do their working class duty on an international scale as well.

As the WIR has grown into a strong and permanent organization abroad, it has gradually extended the scope of its work and the spheres of its influence. It carries on today a varied cultural activity,

tending to develop solidarity and internationalism. It puts out films, publishes working class literature, illustrated papers such as the "Illustrierte Arbeiter Zeitung," "Nos Regards," and now is beginning to publish a similar illustrated paper in English. In many sections of the world it is developing working class theatre associations, "Proletfoto" movements, radio groups, etc. It has established children's homes for the children of strikers, and summer camps. Its cultural activities go far toward letting the workers of one country know how the workers of other countries live and suffer and struggle. It carries pictures of struggles, of picket lines, of disasters, etc., throughout the world.

The new wave of strikes in various countries, the leftward swing of the masses under the pressure of rationalization, and war preparations, all require a strengthening of the WIR. It is carrying on an important work for the sake of working class solidarity, for the strengthening of the forces of the toiling struggling masses, for the development of greater internationalism. We must build a more powerful section of the Workers International Relief in the United States.

At the Shop Delegate Conference called by local New York, WIR, December 20th at Bryant Hall, 42nd St. and Sixth Ave., at 6 p. m., the program will be presented for developing a powerful and permanent American section of Workers International Relief. Workers of all trades are urged to attend.