

University of Penna. Fires a Teacher

By SOL AUERBACH.

(Continued From Previous Issue.)

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THERE are many workers who still have faith in the "higher learning" and "impartiality" of the universities. They naively believe that no matter how rotten the rest of the system is the universities are alright and that somehow higher education will solve their problems. But the universities are only some of the many prostitutes that are kept by the same capitalists who exploit and reap profits. Take the University of Pennsylvania as an example and see how it works.

The department of philosophy receives its orders from the administration. And the administration receives its orders from the Board of Trustees. On the board there are the biggest capitalists in Philadelphia—presidents and vice-presidents of the Reading R. R., the Pennsylvania R. R., the General Electric company, the largest banks in the city, Senator Pepper their messenger-boy to congress. The reason that the U. of P. puts such big financial guns on their board is that these men contribute large funds to the endowment fund. An institution like the U. of P. lives by contributions from rich men. Do you think that these men will allow their university to degenerate? Do you think that they will allow a man on their teaching staff to talk favorably about the Soviet Union? Not on your life. They would be fools if they did. To let the workers whom they exploit in their mills, railroads, transportation, office, by mortgaging and finance, know the truth about the Soviet Union, the ideals and aims of the international Communist movement would be like suicide. It would mean the early death of capitalist society. So as soon as they hear of anyone on their teaching staff who misbehaves, who will not turn out students to order to fill pigeonholes in the capitalist desk, who insists on telling about the only workers' and peasants' government, who persists in telling of some of the realities of the present social system they will complain to the administration, the administration will talk to the department and the "poor" department will have to do the dirty work. "By no means will we allow," say the capitalists, "the cog-wheels of our perfect university machine to become rusty or be put out of commission by the steel bar of pernicious agitators who, crazy fanatics, insist on saying what they should not say."

A university is a class institution, and its aims and ideals are those of capitalist society. That institution will not be allowed to foster any critical elements.

Just at this time capitalist society has been good enough to throw up some more evidence that runs perfectly according to form. In the investigation of the Federal Trade Commission into the activities of a committee which represents \$17,500,000,000 worth of privately owned public utilities it is found that about fifty educators in institutions of higher learning are participating in spreading propaganda against public ownership and for private ownership of public utilities. These professors in the pay of the corporations and under the cloak of academic learning and impartiality, in a very convincing and professional style, write textbooks and learned researches spreading propaganda for the capitalists.

"Gifts."

Ruggles, dean of the School of Commerce of Ohio State University, received \$15,000 annually from the National Electric Light Association. The Harvard School of Business Administration gets an annual subsidy of \$30,000 from the same organization "to produce an adequate textbook on public utilities corporations, it being obvious that such literature bearing the imprint of Harvard University would be quite generally adopted by other institutions." Professor Richard T. Ely's Institute of Research in Land Economics and Public Utilities gets an annual gift of \$25,000. Iowa and Illinois high school textbooks are specially prepared by the Utilities Corporation.

And at our own U. of P., Theodore Grayson, dean of the night school and extension school, and until recently assistant professor of finance has been receiving \$250 per lecture from the N. E. L. A. and his own course at the university is partly subsidized by the association. When this came out in the press the U. of P. said nothing about it. He was on the side of the capitalists, I against them: Assistant professor Grayson was promoted to a professorship and I was promoted out. Just exactly what was to be expected.

BUT the University of Pennsylvania could not afford to be frank about it since they had to save their face and at least leave some semblance of academic freedom. So the university used the department of philosophy as a carpet to hide the rough floor of the actual facts. There are two tender

designs on the carpet to please the eye and divert the mind. The first design that the Public was invited to gaze upon was that bit of academic thoroughness, "it is incompatible for a teacher to take a stand, etc. . . ." Curiously enough, the professor who formulated this as the policy of the department at the last moment's notice was a little too frank. Whether he realized it or not he had formulated the only conditions under which a university could exist in the present society. For a university, class institution that it is, can not actually do research work in social problems nor interest its students in matters that are embarrassing to the bosses. It either must abdicate entirely or become an intellectual hermitage.

The "Floor Design."

The second pretty little design on the carpet about irregularities in meeting my classes as the reason for my dismissal is so falsely colored and so evidently an unfortunate afterthought that I will say no more about it.

We are, however, interested in the basic floor design—the design under the carpet. The simplest reality that comes out of the matter is that there is no freedom of speech at the U. of P.—which is not news to many of us. The greater one is that the university must remain a class institution, financed by the capitalists, as long as our present system of society exists. As such, the financial masters are also the moral and educational masters. Students must be cautiously guarded and the faculty must always report to the confessional cage of finance. The process of education must be a twofold one: first the process of doping. The fumes of bourgeois impartiality close the eyes of the students to the most important issues of today. The second stage is comparatively simple—it is easy to fill a doped brain.

Organize, Slaves!

I sympathize with those faculty men who are conscious of the conditions and must suffer them. There is one way out—organization. Why don't you form a union?

Students should take their lesson from the students of the Soviet Union and South America where the students participate in the revolutionary movement of the world.

Apparently, the University of Pennsylvania made a mistake by putting me on their faculty and the Philadelphia press made a similar mistake in giving two days' publicity to a Communist.