

on American Workers and Russian Needs

By ISRAEL AMTER.

There is no doubt that American workers who contemplate emigrating to Soviet Russia consider the welfare of Soviet Russia first. They act, or believe they are acting, in the interest of Soviet Russia. Hence, even tho many mistakes have been made in sending workers to Soviet Russia, there is no doubt that most of the workers who have emigrated have been impelled by the thought primarily of helping the land of the first Proletarian Revolution.

Nobody is better able to tell of the needs of Soviet Russia than trade union officials or those in direct touch with the Soviet authorities. Information from them, therefore, must be regarded as OFFICIAL, and must be taken to heart by every well-wisher of the young Workers Republic.

Soviet Russia is in great need of experts of every description—skilled mechanics, technicians etc. These workers are badly needed as is machinery. There is no question that Soviet Russia can use a large number of them, even tho the supply of technical personnel should be undertaken only with the "knowledge and approval of the Russian trade unions", as was provided in a resolution passed at the Fourth Congress of the Communist International. This latter fact must not be overlooked, since there are localities unable to employ any men at the present time.

Thus, the Secretary of the All-Russian Mine Workers Union on November 11, 1922, wrote as follows: "To the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions, Economic Department,

Dear Comrades:—In reply to your inquiry regarding the procurement of 1880 men for work in the Don Basin, we wish to state that the Central Committee of the All-Russian Mine Workers Union considers this step inadvisable for the following reasons:

1. There is an acute building crisis in the Don Basin.
2. There is but meagre application of machinery in production and extensive application of manual labor, as compared with American conditions. This will constitute an unfavorable condition for American workers.
3. The Don Basin workers are living under hard material conditions.
4. There is unemployment in the country."

This is authoritative information, such as must be obtained whenever emigration or the supply of technical help is intended.

Speaking in the name of the Executive Committee of the Communist International at the Fourth Congress, Comrade Muenzenberg said, among other things:

"In America there is the Friends of Soviet Russia which has already supplied considerable economic help, for instance, the twenty tractors which are now at work in the Perm District. There is also the Society for Technical Aid to Soviet Russia, which also sent several tractors to Russia; this organization has several branches and several thousand members. Then we have Comrade Hillman's plan which proposes to raise a loan of one million dollars for Russia and who has arranged with the Amalgamated Clothing Workers to found large-scale clothing factories in Russia.

"In the last few days, the Russian Government has established a special

commission, under the control of Comrades Eiduck and Martens, which will bring over 8000 American workers to Russia next spring.

"I believe it is the duty of the Communist International to define its position with regard to these matters. In America there are at least 20,000 people who are interested in these enterprises; in Europe perhaps an equal number. We must know how to deal with these things. Perhaps they are not good—then they must be changed into large-scale campaigns for economic help. Among most of the workers in Europe and America who are inclined to emigrate to Russia, the desire to aid Russia is mingled with the desire to aid themselves. They have the idea that, within the next few years, there will be great political crises in America or Europe. Russia, however, is at present in a state of improvement. Therefore, they think, let us shoulder our bundles and start for Russia. So far, the Communist International has failed to take a position on this matter; but it must now assume a very definite attitude. In the face of such a plan, the bringing of eight to ten thousand emigrants to Russia, we of the Communist International are in duty bound to tell our Russian comrades that we have given our best thought to this subject, not only to the work which these emigrants will do here, but to the consequent weakening of the revolutionary movement in the country which they leave, as a result of their withdrawal. There is no reason why we should mitigate the tremendous economic crises in France and Czecho-Slovakia by bringing a great mass of unemployed to Soviet Russia. I believe that we should unconditionally take the stand that, as a Communist Party, we are strictly opposed to any mass emigration of European and American workers to Russia. Such emigration implies no farther support for Russia but only a relieving of the crisis in the Western capitalist countries.

"It is quite different, however, when for certain factories, certain skilled specialists are needed who cannot be found in Russia. In such cases, the bringing over of European or American workers, under the control and with the consent of the Russian trade unions, might be advisable."

No mass emigration—experts and skilled technicians with the consent and under the control of the Russian trade unions! That is Soviet Russia's need and wish.

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