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The International Co-operative Day.

Reformist Nonsense and Proletarian Sense of the Co-operative Day on the 4th July.

By Algo.

The International Cooperative Alliance (London) comprises not only the whole of the workers' cooperatives in the world, but numerous small holders' cooperatives, making a total of 50 million members. This mighty army, forming the "International Cooperative Alliance", cannot boast of an activity proportionate to its size. It is scarcely credible that this International should have developed so little force in the 30 years of its existence. The utter futility of the international relations between the cooperatives was evidenced with particular distinctness during the war; these relations could not even be "ruptured", for the simple reason that they did not exist at all. The Alliance was thus enabled to issue its bulletin as usual during the war, since it was merely a bulletin of entirely unimportant items.

After the war the Cooperative Alliance became painfully aware of its insignificance and weakness. Its headquarters therefore resolved to fix upon one day in the year upon which they would celebrate the: "1st of May of the Cooperatives", for the purpose of drawing the attention of the

broad masses to the Cooperatives. This international co-operative anniversary, fixed for the first Saturday in July, was celebrated for the first time in 1923. On that occasion the official proclamation sent forth into the world ran as follows:

"The object of this anniversary celebration is to demonstrate the unity of the cooperative members, and the efficiency of their organisation, as a means towards economic emancipation, and as a guarantee for international peace."

These unworldly illusionists! In the 'nineties they founded their Cooperative International, in order to erect a bulwark against the class conscious labour movement. Their idea was to substitute for class warfare a "cooperative class reconciliation", by a collaboration of all classes of society. After the proletariat of the whole world had been driven into international massacre, their confused imaginations still conjured up visions of their:

"First systematic attempt to proclaim on a wide scale our joy (!), our ideals (?), our successes (), and our aims, in order to approach nearer to our final goal . . . The field of your activity is ready for the harvest . . . the opportunity is favourable, and the magnificent harvest awaiting us is a world of peace and amity among the peoples, based upon the cooperative movement."

This proclamation with its fantastic phrases was spread abroad all over the globe in thousands of copies. But now came the amazing part: millions of proletarian cooperative members accepted these empty phrases without rising in indignation against this clique of leaders, here openly carrying on their dirty work of deceiving the masses. It is an actual fact that petty bourgeois and proletarian gathered at meetings and demonstrations convened under these slogans.

This deceptive manoeuvre thus practised by cooperative bureaucracy was possible at a moment when the proletariat was plunged into an unheard of material impoverishment, broad masses of the population were reduced to despair by unemployment and starvation, class antagonisms clashed with unexampled intensity, civil war raged in many countries, and the Fascisti in Italy were destroying not only the revolutionary cooperatives, but reformist as well. It is characteristic of the situation in the Cooperative International, that at such a moment its leaders could find nothing to say beyond futile and hypocritical phrases.

The proceedings at the cooperative anniversary celebration in 1923 showed plainly to all countries the utter degeneration of the post bellum cooperatives, though they still boast of their descent from the brave **proletarian pioneers** of the English workers' cooperative movement in Rochdale. The July celebration was reduced to an absurdity by being brought down to the level of the most superficial **business advertisement**. In Germany, for instance, the Cooperative Association (GEG) could think of nothing better than to have an illustration made, advertising GEG articles, and to distribute this on the anniversary day. Upon this the simple verse was inscribed:

"If you want to be economically free
Join the Cooperative Society."

One group of cooperative societies in the industrial districts of Central Germany, where the proletariat has the severest struggle for bare existence, issued the slogan:

"Members of the Cooperative Society, follow the appeal issued by the Cooperative Alliance, and celebrate this year's first recruiting day for the Cooperatives in all quietness!"
(Zeit Purchasers' Association.)

It was likewise in the other countries. Where it was ventured to convocate the members, mostly hostile to the bureaucracy, in meetings and demonstrations, they were fobbed off with cheap speechifying, Philistine music, beer drinking, coffee and cake, and theatrical performances. At best an advertising procession was organised with the aid of the cooperative society's motor cars and a few children's flags.

Thus the first international cooperative anniversary in 1923, whose purport for the proletariat should have been a rallying the masses of cooperative members for the proletarian struggle, was converted into sheer reformist nonsense, and was used by the business managers for cheap business advertisement. The celebration would have possessed a real import if it had been the beginning of a gathering together of the masses of the consumers, if it had aimed at uniting them with their cooperative as their class institution, at calling upon them to convert their cooperative into a real weapon for their struggle for life and emancipation, into an additional class factor reinforcing the Party and the Trade Unions.

After this fiasco in 1923, the cooperative International expressed itself more moderately in its appeal for the cooperative anniversary in 1924. The extravagant phraseology of 1923 was reduced to one single sentence:

"Our appeal goes forth to the cooperatives of the whole world to unite for the realisation of the idea of the cooperative state (?)."

The cooperative movement, having utterly failed in developing its influence into any description of politically or economically determinative factor during the last few years, and having on the contrary suffered severe setbacks as a result of the capitalist offensive, can again offer nothing more than hackneyed and hypocritical phrases in its proclamation for the coming 4th of July. Here are two passages from this piece of botching:

"The Alliance is the germ cell of the United States of the world, and the international cooperative day is the symbolical expression of that highest of human virtues (!) which alone is capable of welding together humanity for the peaceful building up of a happier state of society and for the realisation of the cooperative commonwealth . . . On this day the international cooperative flag, representing the **rainbow** (!) the sign of promise for the whole world, will wave for the first time."

"Cooperators of the world! Raise your banner! May the rich colours of this **celestial** (!!) symbol be a promise to the whole world that the principles and actions of the cooperative movement will lead us finally out of the **chaos of civilisation** into the kingdom of pure humanity."

These are the confused phantasies and religious ecstasies which we are called upon to hear at a moment when capital — having arrived at an international understanding — is dealing the severest blows at the workers of all countries, and especially of Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia; at a moment when the frightful impoverishment and misery of the masses of proletarian consumers demand the most energetic struggle against the terror and profiteering, against war danger, militarism, the White Terror and Fascism (which, it need not be said, have swept away the cooperatives in their work of destruction in Italy and Bulgaria). Even at this moment the Cooperative International has still nothing further to offer than a re-dishing up of its old stupid drivel. It is plain enough that the Cooperative International has transformed its "day" into arrant nonsense.

But the masses can lend purport to the 4th July! They must ask themselves whether the cooperative movement, which they themselves have built up in every country as part of the modern labour movement, at the cost of infinite pains and material sacrifices, is really not worthy of something better than the empty chatter of its leaders. The masses of the cooperative members must ask themselves if there is really nothing more to be made of their **organisation of millions of proletarian consumers** than a "beautiful and celestial rainbow flag"? If this whole **accumulation of organised masses of consumers**, of economic means, warehouses, bakeries, factories, motor cars, etc. cannot be used for something beyond a business enterprise capable of competition with the firm of Smith & Co.? If there is not some proletarian force at the back of this cooperative movement, a force which can be employed as a factor in the proletarian struggle?

When the question of the cooperatives is put in this form, the answer comes of itself. For there can be no doubt that the cooperative organisation can and must be, alongside the political and trade union organisation of the working class, a weapon in the hands of the class conscious proletariat. All that is required is to gather together and concentrate this force with clear consciousness of the aim in view, in order to range this gigantic movement into the fighting front, in order to develop the cooperatives into controlling organs and economic functionaries of the organised proletariat, and to strengthen by them the fighting forces of the proletariat.

The masses of cooperative members who recognise all this, and who are anxious to attain this object, should make use of the 4th July 1925 for propagating this clear proletarian sense in place of the reformist nonsense. The leaders of the international class conscious proletariat — **the Communist International** — call upon them to make of the 4th of July a field day of the millions of organised consumers among every class of the exploited, and to gather together this fighting force, to-day latent and set aside, for the proletarian struggle. This means that cooperative reformism is to be called to account for shunting the cooperative movement on to the wrong track. It means a decla-

ration of war on the part of the cooperative movement against capitalism! It means solidarity in the proletarian struggle!

The masses of cooperative society members are called upon to demonstrate on 4th July, without and against their leaders, for the enlistment of themselves and their cooperatives in the mighty army of proletarian class fighters, in the mighty army of labour solidarity.

In the **trade union movement** the proletariat has at last set its feet on the path leading to unity and to powerful solidarity. The frightful impoverishment crushing the proletariat of all countries has awakened the trade unions. The opposition made by cooperative bureaucracy against drawing the cooperatives into the broad class front must be broken

down in precisely the same manner as the opposition still being made within trade union bureaucracy against the unity of the international proletariat.

The 4th July will possess great proletarian import if it brings with it in all countries a mass pressure of **organised cooperative members**, declaring unitedly that the cooperative is to be used as an additional weapon against the capitalist and Fascist offensives, and against the fresh preparations for war. It is the task of the cooperative members to gather together for the struggle in **defence of the vital interests of the broad masses**, for the international fighting alliance between cooperatives and trade unions, and for the preparation and victory of the proletarian revolution.

Communist Work in the Co-operative Mass Organisations.

By W. Hanka.

For the communist **cooperative work** of the Comintern sections there are two conclusions to be drawn from the estimate made of the political situation, and from the lines laid down for the development of Bolshevik mass parties, by the Enlarged Executive of the Comintern (April 1925). First of all it is of the utmost importance to recognise the necessity of devoting intense attention, in the Communist Parties, to the work of the cooperatives. All communists, without exception, must become members of the cooperatives, and must take active part, and in an organised manner, in all events relating to the cooperatives, and in the solution of the daily questions arising in cooperative life. A second and no less important aspect of the question relates to the methods and starting points of our practical activities in the cooperatives, the tactics by which we are to win over the millions, organised in the cooperatives for revolutionary class warfare. At the III., IV., and V. World Congresses it was already pointed out that it is the duty of the Communist Parties to devote adequate attention to the cooperatives, and during the present period of Bolshevisation, and of systematic building up of our Parties as real leaders of the masses, this duty is placed more emphatically in the foreground.

In the theses issued by the Executive, work among the existing mass organisations is designated as the most essential prerequisite of Bolshevisation. Besides the trade unions, with regard to which the Enlarged Executive categorically declares that the communists have to work in them, even when they are in the hands of arch-reactionary leaders, there are in all countries huge cooperative organisations, again mass organisations of the proletariat. The "International Cooperative Alliance" (London) alone comprises 100,000 cooperative organisations belonging to 32 countries, affiliated to the Alliance through their central unions. This involves the enormous number of 50 million members. We must wrest these many millions from the hands of the reformist leaders! The slogan: "To the masses!" must be realised in the cooperative movement with our maximum of intensity, energy, and perseverance. We must endeavour to enlist this gigantic organisation of the exploited, created in the course of decades, in the united proletarian fighting front against capital.

An intense fractional activity within the cooperative organisations gives us communists the opportunity of contact with strata of the working class which we encounter neither in the trade unions nor in the factories. Thus, for instance, work in the cooperatives offers the best possibility, or may even be regarded as the first premise, for really useful Party work among the **proletarian housewives**.

Many proletarian housewives, having learned by bitter personal experience the necessity of organised opposition against the profiteering in food practised by the capitalists, against high prices and speculation, join the co-operatives. But the social reformist managers of the co-operative societies exert their utmost endeavours to paralyse the fighting will of these masses by the propagation of illusions as to the possibility of overcoming capitalism on peaceful lines with the aid of the co-operatives only, without the necessity of the revolutionary class struggle. To bring light into this obscurity with the torch of Leninism, to show the proletarian housewives, gathered together in these organisations in com-

pact masses and who are otherwise inaccessible to us, the real task and means in the struggle against capitalism, and to lead them forward in this struggle — this is a duty imperatively incumbent on the Bolshevik parties, and one which can no longer be postponed.

Besides the main masses of proletarian members, we find in the co-operative societies of today various groups from those strata of the petty bourgeoisie which may be regarded as possible allies of the proletariat in the revolutionary struggle, though at the moment they may still be vacillating irresolutely to and fro. The Leninist tactics of recruiting allies for the decisive revolutionary struggle of the proletariat, culminating in the Soviet Union in the magnificent success of the unshakeable alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry, will have to be applied in a much higher degree to the city population in countries where this is of greater decisive importance. We find all these **petty state and municipal officials, private employees, artisans, technicians, etc.**, in the co-operatives.

Starting with their most primitive needs, with their daily cares, we find here the opportunity of gaining for the first time the ear of these strata of the population for the voice of the revolutionary proletariat, and of convincing them that, in the struggle between capital and labour, it is to their own interest not to take part against the proletariat, but to support the working class, or at least not to place obstacles in the way of the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism.

Conditions are similar with respect to the small farmers. The wide-spread network of farmers' co-operatives is the main type of those economic organisations of the peasantry to which the Enlarged Executive has directed the attention of the Communist Parties. The setting up of concrete communist demands regarding questions of taxes and credits, in questions relating to the regulation of land ownership, and in all questions dealing with the daily vital interests of the peasantry — questions which are invariably on the agenda of these peasants co-operative organisations or can be placed on it — forms the best possible opportunity of proving to the largest strata of the rural population the imminence of the antagonism between their real interests and the policy pursued by the capitalist big agrarian State. Here too a consistently carried out co-operative activity affords the suitable opportunity, and is the suitable medium, for emancipating the great masses of backward peasantry from the influence of the big land owners and the priests, and for converting them into the conscious allies of the proletariat.

The first pre-requisite for the thorough utilisation of the whole of these advantageous possibilities for our proletarian class struggle offered by the co-operative societies is, it need scarcely be said, for us to have access to the co-operative meetings, conferences, etc. The entry of communists into the co-operative societies, and the formation of fractions within these societies, is thus an urgent duty.

With regard to the **methods** to be pursued in communist co-operative work, the decisions of the Enlarged Executive show the fundamental lines laid down by the resolutions passed by the Organisation Bureau, and by the Co-

operative Section of the ECCI, in October 1924, to be entirely correct and in no need of alteration. The conditions of the present general political situation, and the prospects adduced by the Enlarged Executive of a diminished speed of revolutionary development, render it the more urgently incumbent on the Communist Parties to apply the principle of devoting attention to the current questions of practical daily life to work in the co-operatives.

If we put forward definite communist demands and propositions with reference to the daily questions arising in the co-operative movement, and in its local, national and international organisations, we shall be able to make use of the immediate interests of the co-operative societies for showing the masses of the members how the gigantic apparatus of the co-operatives could be developed into an effective means of defence against the exploitation and starvation practices of capital, and how the organisation of the workers' consumers must work hand in hand with the other organs of revolutionary class war towards the overthrow of the capitalist system, if this organisation is actually to fulfil its purpose: The raising of the standard of living among the people, and the bridling of the greed of the usurious capitalists, who force up prices.

Basing our criticism on an accurate knowledge and analysis of the general economic situation, and of the practical business conditions in the co-operatives, we must, in our criticism of the leadership, show the members that the reformist co-operative bureaucracy betray even those narrow co-operative society interests which they profess to represent; that this bureaucracy, by working together with the bourgeoisie during and after the world war, is driving the

co-operatives to ruin, and delivering them over into the hands of banking capital.

The question of **combatting usury and high prices**, acute in almost every country at the present time, should be specially raised in the co-operatives. In place of co-operation with the bourgeoisie— we must demand a fighting alliance with the trade unions and factory councils. For in the first place the economic power of the co-operative is directly dependent upon the purchasing powers of the working class, and in the second place help from the trade unions and factory councils is necessary if the co-operative societies are to succeed in having their demands (freedom from taxation, credit-control of private trade) acceded to in a capitalist state.

The necessary conclusions to be drawn for communist co-operative work from the decisions of the Executive are therefore as follows:

Join the co-operative societies!

To the masses of co-operative society members!

Organise participation in the daily life of the co-operatives!

Exercise expert criticism and make definite demands!

Use the fight against high prices and the struggle for existence as starting points!

Get into contact with the trade unions and factory councils!

Go forward from the current demands of the co-operatives to the revolutionary mass struggle.

Co-operative Societies and Socialist Parties.

By G. Baryschnik.

The assertion that the **communists** desire to make the co-operatives subservient to their aims, and that it is only the social democrats who defend the "purity and independence" of the co-operative movement, has already become a social reformist platitude. An impartial analysis of the attitude of the communist and social democratic parties to the co-operative movement will, however lead to a very different conclusion.

The social democrats over-estimate the significance of the co-operative movement in two directions: They regard the co-operative as an instrument for the "peaceful" revolutionary improvement of the position of the proletariat, and besides this they attribute to the co-operatives an independent significance as "germ cells of social ownership", as the starting point of a new order of society. The co-operative societies are to raise the standard of life in the working class by cheapening the most important necessities of life. The co-operative societies are to form a model of a new state of society by foregoing trading profits and distributing these among the consumers.

These assertions are repeated in all manner of variations by every nuance of social democracy. It is true that before the imperialist war this over-estimate of the significance of the co-operatives, among the social democrats belonging to the extreme reformist group, caused the revolutionary Marxists (the Guesdists and a part of the German social democrats) to deny that the co-operatives were of any use whatever to the working class, and even to assert that these organisations injured the interests of the workers. But the war obliterated most of the different shades of social democracy (the real revolutionists gathering together as Communist Parties). Social democracy now accepts the co-operatives without reservation, and uses the co-operative societies as an instrument for its policy of social betrayal.

The experiences gained during the period of modern imperialism have demonstrated conclusively that the social democratic conception of the tasks and significance of the co-operative movement are entirely wrong. Even if it be granted that the co-operatives, under the conditions caused by the revival of capitalism, and assuming that wage rates

remain unaltered, are capable of improving the workers' standard of life, it is none the less a fact that the independent economic significance of the co-operatives sinks to zero during the period of imperialist reorganisation of capitalism, the period of monopolist banking concerns and trusts. It is sheer hypocrisy and deception of the working masses to speak today of an improvement of the position of the workers by means of a "peacefully" developing co-operative movement. Today not only the productive co-operative, but the consumers' co-operative societies, are alike completely entangled in the system of capitalist economic, and are entirely dependent on bank credits, monopolist trusts, and cartels. Their fate is indivisibly bound up with the policy of the ruling class.

It is equally absurd to maintain that the co-operatives do away with trading profits, and thus lay the foundation stone for a new state of society. Profit in general — and thus trade profit as a part of this — is a portion of the surplus value created during the process of production as result of the exploitation of labour. The distribution of the trade profit in the form of dividends does not in any way alter the capitalist character of the pre-requisites of a non-capitalist state of society. The working masses must become clearly conscious of this, and must make use of the positions won by them in the sphere of distribution to aid them in their conflict against the capitalist forms of production, against capitalism itself.

The co-operatives being thus hopelessly entangled in capitalism, the slogans of "neutrality" and "Independence" mean nothing more nor less than an abstention on the part of the co-operatives from all revolutionary struggle, and the erection of barricades between the co-operatives and the influence of the Communist Party. Neutrality is being preached by those same Mensheviks who in Austria have bound the workers' co-operatives by organisatory fetters to the social democratic party, who in Belgium employ the co-operatives as milch cows for the purposes of party propaganda, who in all countries agitate violently against the communist co-operators, and expel the communists from the co-operative societies, and who, in a word, give us constant

object lessons on the impossibility of neutrality on the part of workers' organisations during the period of acutest class warfare, a period in which the true character of all political parties, including those calling themselves socialist parties, is revealed.

In consideration of the importance of the co-operative societies for the working masses, the Communist International has emphasised, in a number of resolutions passed at its World Congresses, the necessity of combatting reformism in the co-operatives as energetically as everywhere else, and of inducing the masses organised in the co-operatives to join the class army of the proletariat, by showing these masses that their immediate interests are defended by the communists in the co-operatives. The cheapening of the necessities of life (one of the tasks of the co-operative) cannot possibly be carried out under present conditions unless accompanied by a struggle against the taxing of co-operatives,

against the monopolist rule of trusts and cartels, or without a struggle for the workers' control of production and commerce, for the state monopoly of foreign trade, etc.

But all this means **fighting against the fundamentals of the capitalist Order**. These tasks will only be accomplished when the co-operative society members are enlisted in the ranks of the revolutionary struggle the possibility of a further secured by revolutionary struggle the possibility of a further development and of a real protection of their own interests.

Nothing short of this real protection of the interests of the workers will transform the co-operatives, into a medium for the improvement of the position of the working class, into one of the instruments for the final emancipation of the proletariat. These are the tasks which the Communist Parties, on the occasion of the International Co-operative Propaganda Day, call upon the organised masses of co-operative society members to perform.

What does the Co-operative Society mean to the Housewife?

By Clara Zetkin (Moscow).

Might we not expect every mother of a family to reply to this question with a paean of praise regarding the economic advantages and the ideal social significance of the co-operative societies? Those who cherish this opinion forget that in countries where the large property owners rule over and exploit the small owners and the penniless, the interests of various classes of women in the social conditions and institutions vary greatly and are even entirely opposed, the decisive question is: whether the women belong to the possessing and dominating class, and keep house from a well filled purse, without themselves performing any useful work for society at large, or whether they belong to the class who have to contrive to make both ends meet on the wages or salary of their husbands, or on their own wages or salary.

The purchase of food, linen, shoes, clothing, coal, etc., through the co-operative society, means a saving of money. It means a saving even when the prices are the same as those of the private shops. It is a well known fact that the co-operatives supply goods of good quality, and that the weights and measures are accurate; these points in themselves render the goods cheaper. And how important all this is for the mother of a family, spending sleepless nights and care-racked days over the vain attempt to stretch her house-keeping money beyond its utmost limits, and turning every penny over ten times before she spends it. Often much time is saved by buying at the co-operative store. The housewife organised in the co-operative society is well aware of where she buys to the best advantage, and every co-operative society strives to open as many branches as possible, in order that the members need not go long distances. The proletarian housewife is spared the necessity of visiting distant market places and shops, an advantage valuable indeed to the worried and overworked housewife who grudges herself every moment of rest, and whose working day none the less often enough stretches far into the night!

The material advantages of the co-operative society will be of special benefit to the housewife in times of social distress and struggle. The co-operative society does not take advantage of scarcity goods and economic emergencies for the purpose of gaining speculative profits. Under certain conditions it can temporarily keep bread and other urgent necessities of life below the high prices ruling at the moment, and it can grant credit in cases of unemployment, without any concealed pocketing of interest and compound interest. It can lend material support to striking or locked-out workers and political fighters, out of its profits and surpluses; it can contribute to the war funds of these fighters, can provide food, clothing, etc., from its stores, for the children of those thus struggling with the bourgeois class enemy and with blackest misery and poverty; it can lend them strong moral support, agitate for them, etc.

Summed up in a few words: The co-operative society can be an extremely powerful instrument and auxiliary for

the workers, employees, officials, etc., in their class struggles against the exploiting usurious capitalists and their State. It is a matter of vital interests to housewives that the co-operative society does play this role, actually and energetically. Every victory won by the exploited over the exploiters effects an alleviation of the crushing cares and burdens imposed upon the women of the proletariat and the lower middle class.

But the awakening and thinking woman of today is not content with a mere alleviation of her lot. She seeks **emancipation**. She longs to develop and to act as a complete human being, she demands that the whole social world, with all its duties and rights, is opened out to her as her sphere. The co-operative society performs invaluable service here for the housewife. It has already proved a political and social school for hundreds of thousands of women, and it could be the source of such education, in the highest sense of the term, for millions. Its educative and enlightening influence forms a striking contrast to the influence exercised by the individual household of today, with its complete absorption of woman's time and energy.

The household of today has ceased to be a sphere of multifarious productive activity; it no longer furthers the development of capabilities. It overburdens women with monotonous occupations, scarcely ever brightened by any new idea. It absorbs the whole mentality and activity of the housewife in a never-ending recurrence of humdrum trifles, confines her within a narrow circle, and isolates her from the human beings and events beyond the four walls of one household. The household of today cripples and stifles the receptivity, the thought, and action of woman. The good housewife's capacity for thinking and feeling with others, her whole social consciousness, degenerates into an egoistic care for her own family. She fails to recognise a duty of solidarity towards anyone outside of her own intimate circle. She remains unaware that her personal fate is indivisibly bound up with that of her class.

The co-operative society is a bridge over which many hesitating and timid housewives may find the path from their own narrow homes into the outer world, into social solidarity. It is a link joining the economics of the individual household to the economics, the life, and the strivings of society as a whole. Its literature, its meetings, its propaganda, give the housewife the enlightenment enabling her to understand the daily object lessons of overflowing shops with the contrasting emptiness of the pantry and wardrobe at home. Many women who have never read a political article have learnt through their co-operative society that not the failure of crops has raised the price of bread, but the imposition of a high import duty on cheap foreign grain for the benefit of the large land-owners.

In this manner they learn to recognise the connections between economics and politics, the decisive influence exer-

cised by the class antagonisms between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, between the big bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie, upon the social position and standard of life of the individual. They become conscious of the strength and power which unity brings even among the weak and exploited, for they see that the co-operative society, in its capacity as a large buyer, can obtain better goods at cheaper prices than the small owner of a private shop.

The intimidated and anxious housewife learns even more than all this from the life of the co-operative. She learns that a business enterprise need not necessarily be synonymous with profit, with an advantage gained by a few at the expense of many, and that the welfare of all is more than the profits of the few. She is given the right to co-operate with others in the defence of her opinions, demands, and interests, and to exercise an influence in the control and management of the business. Once this right is given her, the courage to exercise it and the sense of duty compelling her to exercise it awaken of themselves. The enlarged economic, political and social horizon given by the co-operative society activity, furthers the development of class consciousness, of realisation of fraternal solidarity among the exploited and oppressed. The active and consistent woman member of a co-operative society is bound to become a revolutionary fighter against capitalist profit economy and its bourgeois state, or she is untrue to herself and to the ideal of the co-operative. The housewife may begin her co-operative activity for the sake of gaining some advantage for her own little household. But she must end it by joining the struggle against the bourgeois order, by fighting for the seizure of state power as the means of revolutionising economics and society.

The housewife can thus find in the co-operative society that which fills her life with all that is highest and best. The will to fight, the irresistible impetus to fight, for her emancipation; and at the same time the mental and social equipment for the fight. But it is quite another question whether the co-operative society actually does offer the housewife all it should offer, in truth and deed, for her material and mental equipment as a servant of the revolutionary proletarian class struggle. This depends on the spirit permeating and actuating the co-operative society. Is the ruling spirit merely one of despicable, bourgeois, individualist profit and dividend-hunting in favour of a limited group of persons, a spirit of reformist and capital subservient "neutrality", smothering all will to revolution in a cheap syrup, or is it a spirit of **revolutionary proletarian class war**, conscious of its mission as bearer of the true ideal of co-operation? For true co-operation can only be realised when the proletarian revolution has de-

prived the exploiting bourgeoisie of its position as ruler over state and economics, and when the co-operative society has been converted into an apparatus of social development and distribution, serving the transition to and the carrying out of communism.

The housewife should not resignedly accept the spirit which happens to prevail in her co-operative society. She must realise that this spirit is hers, hers and that of her sisters and brothers. The co-operative society is what its members make it. The housewife, as a convinced co-operative worker, is bound in honour to combat, continuously and systematically, the open and concealed **anti-revolutionary bourgeois spirit** finding its way into the co-operatives, and to spread the co-operative ideals and the propaganda for co-operative organisations among ever increasing numbers of men and women ready to fight, class consciously and determinedly, against capitalism. All efforts must be united to haul down the lying **rainbow flag** now floating over the international co-operative movement, the symbol chosen by those who continue to talk rubbish about smoothing away the antagonism between the nations, and about eternal peace among the peoples, without uttering a syllable about the fundamental causes of the hostility between the nations, or about the actual roots of predatory imperialist wars — the irreconcilable class antagonism between possessors and non-possessors. The flag borne by this kind of co-operative society is as deceptive as the wisdom which it represents.

These ladies and gentlemen boast of the influence exercised by 50 million co-operative society members in 31 different countries. They preserve silence regarding the fact that they, as leaders, not only neglected to mobilise these 50 millions against the last great massacre of the peoples, but have done something much worse and more unpardonable: they have driven these millions into the camp of the bourgeoisie which is lusting for power and money. These ladies and gentlemen forget that in the bible legend the rainbow did not appear as a celestial sign of peace until the flood had exterminated every living creature. The sign of socialist peace cannot appear until the proletarian revolution has wiped out class antagonisms. This sign of peace will not, however be the co-operative rainbow flag, symbol of sentimental pacifist drivel and allied bourgeois and reformist reaction. The true sign of peace can only be the glowing red of the banner borne by the Communist International, leading the revolutionary proletarian fighters today to battle, tomorrow to victory. It is around this banner that the housewives must gather in the co-operative societies.

Women's Work in the Co-operatives.

What it is and what it should be.

By Hertha Sturm.

The co-operative society bureaucracy will doubtless discover a warm spot in its heart again for the women, when the International Co-operative Conference once more offers an opportunity of singing the praises of the co-operatives, and of beating the recruiting drum which is to induce more women to enter the co-operative societies. Almost a year has passed since the **founding of the International Women's Co-operatives Guild at the International Women's Conference of the Co-operatives at Geneva in 1924**; but during this time working women have not experienced any benefit from the benevolent effects of the co-operatives in general, or of the women's guild in particular.

It is thus not to be wondered at that the Co-operatives feel themselves impelled to undertake some sort of action likely to give the masses the impression of activity. The 40 million households organised in the Co-operative Alliance cannot be dismissed as a trifle. The 40 million housewives, of the working, peasant, and lower middle class, ruling these households, constitute a factor which even the most ossified bureaucracy has to take into consideration. The women members of the co-operatives should fully realise their power. They should not permit themselves to be deceived in any way, but should call the co-operative societies decidedly and de-

finitely to account, demanding to know what steps these have taken in defence of their members' interests, and beyond this in defence of the interests of the broad working masses.

At its inaugural conference, the International Women's Guild boasted that it was going to create an internationally comprehensive organisation of the broadest masses of women, a "**mothers' international**". It was going to fight against war. It was going to protect the interests of the "market basket", the symbol of the new women's organisation, it was going to develop social consciousness among women, and many other desirable things. But even the most credulous of the members must now recognise that the whole conference was nothing more than a theatrical performance for misleading the masses. Nobody has stirred a finger towards converting these fine phrases into action.

"Mother's international!" But where have the co-operatives been whilst the governments of all countries have been arming for war against each other, against the colonial peoples, and against Soviet Russia? Where have they taken action, or even uttered a protest, against the raging of Fascism and White Terror in Italy, in Esthonia, and in the Balkans? What are they doing for the release of the hundreds of thousands of political prisoners all over the world?

The leaders of this gigantic international organisation share the responsibility for the shedding of the blood of every mother's son who has fallen on the battlefield of imperialist or class war, and for the starvation of every worker's or peasant's child whose father pines behind prison walls.

"The interests of the market basket!" A huge wave of high prices is sweeping across the whole world, taking the bread out of the mouths of the worker's families. In **Czechoslovakia** masses of women crowded the market places and streets, desperate and helpless, for weeks at a time; in **Italy** the starving women storm the bakers' shops; in **England** the "imperial government" finds itself compelled by the pressure from the masses to appoint a pseudo-commission for inquiring into the prices of food, and even to call upon a few real housewives out of the working and middle classes to report to this commission. There is a universal outcry for energetic action on the part of organised labour, for the confiscation, price fixing, and distribution of food through the agency of the workers' control organs in association with the co-operatives in town and country.

But all this does not affect the co-operatives. They are waiting to see if the capitalist governments will not perhaps help the working women, and meanwhile these governments all over the world are tacitly agreeing among themselves to further reduce the working class standard of life by the introduction of protective tariffs, by the increase of indirect taxation on articles of mass consumption, by the raising of rents, by the restriction of tenants' protection, and by reducing social welfare measures.

The leaders of the co-operative societies share the responsibility for the fact that, week after week, the working class housewife brings home worse and fewer goods in her shopping basket.

"Education of the women to social consciousness?" Truly an excellent aim! No doubt it was in pursuance of this aim that the co-operatives in **France** and **Belgium** kept at such a safe distance from the question of women's suffrage, since this was likely to free women from the narrow confines of the four walls of the home, and to lead them into the broad daylight of public life. And no doubt this is the reason why the working women and peasants have never seen or heard anything of co-operative society help towards an alleviation of their burden of toil in home and factory, towards the organisation of co-operative kitchens, laundries, creches, etc., enabling women to develop from beasts of burden into thinking and acting fellow fighters for their own class. And where has the women's guild of the co-operative societies ever organised any systematic work of enlightenment and education among its women members?

The leaders of the co-operative societies share the responsibility for the fact that millions of women of the suppressed class are still unenlightened, still stand aside from the class struggle, and strengthen the position of the enemy in every conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, from Parliamentary elections to strikes and lock-outs.

All this must be changed. But the present leaders of the co-operatives do not want the masses of the women to be mobilised in defence of their claims, for this would mean a rupture of the alliance between the co-operatives and the bourgeoisie. The leaders prefer that the women remain politically unenlightened, for this enlightenment means the loss of the strongest auxiliary forces of these leaders. The revolutionary vanguard of the working class, the communists, must thus work the more systematically and tenaciously for the political enlightenment of the masses of women in the co-operatives, and for the enlistment of these women in the class front of the proletariat.

The co-operative bureaucracy hopes to attain the object of its swindling manoeuvres on one single day, on the 4. July. The communists can hold out longer than this. They will work for weeks, months, and years; but they really will attain their object. Every opportunity must be taken for obtaining access to the masses of women, every public meeting held by women, every trade union, factory council, or co-operative meeting, every factory nucleus newspaper, every co-operative society or labour party periodical, must be utilised by the communists for opening the eyes of the women to their own interests, to the real tasks of the co-operative societies, and to the disgraceful failure of the co-operatives to perform these tasks.

But mere agitation does not suffice. The Communist Party must at the same time teach the masses not only to understand the world, but to change it. Every concrete fighting situation arising in any place or in any country must be made to serve as a starting point for showing the women members of the co-operative societies, and with them the co-operatives themselves, the plain duties lying before them, whether these consist of mobilising for the material support of the starving families of strikers, of safeguarding against corn duties and usurious taxation by means of proletarian mass action, or of organising political, moral, and material help for the victims of the White Terror. In all such situations special tasks fall to the women. We only need to remember the control committees against rising prices, the organisation of collections, the distribution of food in cases of mass need etc. And all these actions will be carried out by women with the utmost enthusiasm as soon as they have grasped the import of this solidarity.

Above all, these is a task of burning importance which must not be so neglected in the future as it has been in the past. Our best agitation, our best conducted action with the participation of the masses of the women, will be but temporarily successful if we are not capable of creating firm strongholds among the masses of the women in the co-operatives themselves, these to form a constant connecting link between the staff of leaders, the Communist Party, and the masses. For this two things are necessary: Every co-operative fraction of the Party must have its organiser, conducting work among the women in accordance with a definite plan. Further, every co-operative society must have a women's committee consisting of women co-operative society members representing different tendencies. This committee has to enlighten the women members of the co-operatives as to the tasks incumbent on the co-operatives in class warfare, and to school and stimulate them for these tasks; besides this it has to awaken the interest of the broad unorganised masses of women outside of the co-operatives, to induce them to participate in co-operative action, and to become members of the co-operative societies.

This work demands an extensive staff of class conscious working women. Therefore, every revolutionary woman, every woman communist, must join the co-operative society! A complete system of meetings, courses of instruction, and discussion evenings, is required, if all confused heads are to be enlightened, all indifferent minds interested, and all passive elements mobilised. We may thus form an elite troop of women co-operative society members, fully realising why they are members, and capable of explaining this to the broad masses within and without the co-operatives. And it is only thus that we can finally wrest the minds and hearts of the broad masses of the women out of the clutches of the treacherous co-operative society bureaucracy.

The international co-operative day is a great fighting day in this wrestling contest.

The International Co-operative Day among the Neutralists.

By M . . . n.

"All the methods of co-operative propaganda hitherto employed" — so wrote the chairman of the Alliance on the occasion of the founding of the International Co-operative Propaganda Day — have only reached those strata which were already, in some way or another, connected with the movement. The broad masses of the population, and even

a considerable section of the members, have not been touched by this propaganda.

The International Co-operative Day is thus to be made a medium for reaching the masses. When it was first celebrated in July 1923, the proclamation issued by the Alliance announced the object to be: "to demonstrate to the whole

world the unity of the co-operatives, and the efficiency of their organisations as a means towards economic emancipation and as a guarantee for the world's peace".

The economic year 1922/23 was a year of acute crisis for the co-operatives. The capitalist offensive had disastrous effects upon the economic organisations of the working class. The Fascist wave in Italy annihilated the once flourishing workers' co-operative movement. In Bulgaria the bourgeoisie set about exterminating the largest workers' cooperative organisation, the "Osvoboshdenje". The occupation of the Ruhr and its consequences brought the German co-operative movement to the verge of bankruptcy. In Czechoslovakia and Poland the co-operative societies could barely keep their heads above water. And even in the so-called victorious countries the co-operative movement suffered severely under the general economic crisis. A few figures will serve to give a survey of the turnover per member under the circumstances described. These returns have been as follows:

Turnover per member

Country	1913/14	1921	
England	£ 29.05	£ 20.67	according to retail trade index figures
France	425 frcs	837 frcs,	rise in prices 335%
Germany	405 gold marks	132.4	gold marks
Austria	296 gold crowns	120.63	gold crowns

This decline continued in the following economic year. The depreciation of currency, and the reduced real wages of the workers forming the majority of the co-operative society members, threatened the whole existence of the co-operative movement. Even the bureaucracy shrieked that the co-operatives must be "saved". But the sole possible way of salvation, that of a working class struggle against the exploiters, was unacceptable to the neutralists in the Alliance.

But the masses of the members began to rise against the bureaucracy. The influence exercised by communist co-operative propaganda, the readmittance of the Soviet co-operatives into the Alliance, and not last the every growing importance of the role played by the co-operatives in the first workers' state, forced the Alliance to adopt counter measures. The ancient and obsolete slogans of "pure self help", of "independence", and "neutrality" in the co-operative movement were once more brought forward. The masses of the co-operative society members, carefully prevented by the bureaucracy from coming into touch with politics, were to be cheated again. The idea of "peaceful" struggle against capitalism, and the peaceful growth into socialism by which the masses were kept down before the war, were again made use of for checking the growing opposition and discontent.

The first co-operative day faithfully reflected this vague petty bourgeois policy, and was proof of the impotency and insignificance of the Alliance. A number of countries could not celebrate the day at all, owing to the financial position of the movement. Among these were the co-operative societies of Germany, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, and others. In other countries, Roumania and Hungary for instance, the co-operative day was prohibited by the government and the police. But even in England the co-operative demonstrations encountered difficulties thrown in their way by the local municipal authorities. In France the demonstration processions arranged by the co-operative organisations led by communists were also prohibited by the police. In the other countries the International Co-operative day was celebrated for the most part very "quietly".

The attempts made by class-conscious cooperative society members to impart a fighting character to the proceedings were not successful. The workers' opposition in the co-operatives was still in its initial stages as far as organisation was concerned. In spite of this the communists in Germany, France, and Switzerland, brought forward their own slogans, the communist press published articles on the co-operative question and on communist fractional work within the co-operative societies. The societies under the management of communists arranged meetings, demonstration processions, etc.

This communist activity aroused an energetic offensive on the part of the co-operative bureaucracy. In a number of countries the position of the co-operatives became increas-

ingly difficult in the economic year 1923/24. The stabilisation of currency led to enormous losses of working capital (Germany, Poland, Austria); to dependence on the large banks and on financial capital (Roumania, France), or to an accumulation of money for which the bureaucracy could find no possibility of investment (Denmark). "The development of the consumers' and productive co-operatives has been greatly endangered, and much damage has thus been done to the movement in many countries". These words were contained in the proclamation made by the Alliance for the co-operative day in 1924, with reference to the severe co-operative crisis. The International Co-operative Day was to help to alter this, and was to aid towards "realising the economic and social ideals in every country". But the means employed for this realisation were the old ones, and were incapable of arousing the great masses of the co-operative society members. This is proved by the results of the II. international propaganda day.

Participation was small. In England about 200 societies out of a total of 1314 took part in the celebrations; in Germany the celebration was prohibited by the military authorities in the occupied territory, and for the rest the day was merely characterised by a decoration of the shops, and by private celebrations among the members of the co-operative societies. In Horthy Hungary all celebrations were prohibited. In Switzerland the anniversary was observed in the customary manner, to the accompaniment of beer and coffee. In Roumania and Jugoslavia the celebrations were in the hands of the clergy, who called down the blessing of Heaven upon the co-operative societies. And finally, in those countries where the movement is associated with social democracy (Austria, Belgium and France), the parties of the II. International took the opportunity of binding the masses of the co-operative society members to their chariot once more.

Thus the International Co-operative Day in 1924 did not serve to mobilise the masses of the co-operative society members, but rather served the purpose of further subordinating, directly or indirectly, the interests of the co-operatives to the interests of the ruling class. It was made more evident than ever that the co-operative society can only become an important force and economic factor when it permits the great mass of its members to take active part in the work of the society, and when the masses of members themselves are empowered to decide the general outlines of co-operative activity. The II. International Conference of the communist co-operatives, held in Moscow in June 1924, emphasised this most clearly in its anniversary proclamation, issued to all members of co-operative societies, and to all workers in town and country. This manifesto called upon the masses to convert the co-operatives into weapons of class warfare.

The XI. International Congress of the Co-operative Alliance, held at Geneva in September 1924, afforded the communist co-operative society members the opportunity of explaining their programme before the forum of the Congress, that is, before an audience composed of the representatives of 30 countries. The Russian delegation stood for a fundamental repudiation of the policy of neutrality hitherto pursued. It was able to refer to the experiences gained in Soviet Russia, where the co-operatives have developed into a powerful economic factor during the past year. Although the Soviet representatives received no support from the majority of the Congress, still their presence and the expression of their views had the effect of greatly strengthening the communist activity in the co-operatives. In the most important countries — above all in England — the communist members of co-operative societies took up systematic work having a conscious aim within the organisations, and criticised the policy of the national societies from the economic political standpoint, in order to demonstrate to the masses of the members the detrimental effects of the neutrality policy hitherto pursued by the co-operative leaders, a policy signifying nothing more nor less than support given to the capitalist classes.

But the growth of the opposition, the approval won for the communist co-operative work in a number of countries, aroused a relentless struggle on the part of the co-operative bureaucracy against the communist opposition.

This year the Co-operative Alliance again calls upon the members to celebrate the International Co-operative propaganda day on 4. July, and talks of the "symbolic expression of that noblest of human virtues which is alone capable of uniting humanity for the peaceful development of a happier state of society".

We thus see that the co-operative bureaucracy is again endeavouring to make use of the propaganda day for the purpose of pacifying the members, and of claiming for the International Co-operative Alliance the character of a "germ cell of the United States of the World". Again the bureaucracy speaks of free democratic institutions, of control exercised by the masses of members, and of political and religious neutrality. It is thus the duty of all class-conscious co-operative society members to expose the treacherous policy thus being practised by the leaders of the national and international so-

sieties. The means at the disposal of the co-operative organisations, created by the masses of the members themselves at the cost of years of wearisome toil, must be used in the interests of these masses. The co-operatives must make it their aim to aid the exploited to the utmost of their power. The more powerful the pressure exercised by the bourgeoisie, the closer must the alliance and solidarity become among all the organisations of the workers and peasants. The greater the treachery of the leaders, the greater must be the fighting unity among the workers against these leaders.

The International Co-operative Day in Soviet Russia in 1924.

By Karl Bittel.

The International Co-operative Alliance (London) has created, in the international co-operative recruiting day on the first Saturday in July, a means of estimating the forces of the co-operative movement in the various countries. The first co-operative day in 1923 demonstrated the overwhelming superiority of the Soviet co-operatives with regard to the rôle played in the public life of the state. In 1924 this difference was even more striking.

There are **three different positions** held by the co-operatives in relation to public life:

The first of these positions is held in a country where the labour movement is just beginning, and seeks with infinite pains and trouble to gain its first foot holds. The co-operatives, representing under these circumstances a form of organisation of the proletarian strata, are combatted and suppressed by the capitalist powers and their state apparatus, hampered by prohibitions (officials not being permitted to be members of co-operative societies, etc.), and injured by taxation. This pressure lessens till it reaches a point of toleration, the degree of alleviation corresponding to the progress made by the labour movement in general, or by petty bourgeois subordination to the capitalist dictatorship. This can even go so far that the co-operatives receive support from capitalist sources, where they have proved docile tools in the interests of the state (the war furnished many object lesson of this).

The **second** of the positions is held by the co-operatives in a country where the contrary case occurs, and the capitalist dictatorship wages open war against the co-operatives, treats them as revolutionary labour organisations, and prohibits and destroys them as proletarian organisations "hostile to the State" (as for instance in Hungary, Bulgaria, and Italy).

The **third** position is held by the co-operative when the working class has been victorious, and the proletariat has state power entirely in its own hands. Up to now this has only been the case in the **Union of Soviet Republics**. Here the co-operatives have naturally taken their place among the constituents of the proletarian state apparatus, here they attain their ultimate object of forming a positive and decisive factor in national economics. And that the co-operatives can — and since the seizure of power by the proletariat must — become the decisive factor of a nation's political economy, this was amply demonstrated on 5. July 1924 in the Soviet Union.

Here we witnessed a **powerful demonstration of proletarian co-operative spirit** among the gigantic army of co-operative society members all over the Soviet Union. There was no district, no village, in which meetings, processions, etc. did not take place. The "Zentrosojus" and the "Selskosojus" alone issued millions of leaflets and pamphlets; the theatres played co-operative plays; the cinemas ran co-operative films, the "Petuschka" (marionette theatre) placed itself at the service of the co-operatives, and the whole press was mobilised. The co-operative press issued special illustrated numbers, and the daily newspapers "Pravda", "Izvestija", "Ekonomitscheskaja Shisn", and the trade union and workers' papers published pages of articles in honor of the co-operative day. Placards were posted everywhere, largely with inscriptions, quotations from Lenin. The manner in which the well known Leninist slogan is understood was clearly shown by the title page of an illustrated newspaper, depicting a village co-operative society store, with an inscription over the door: "Workers and peasants, this is the door leading to communism after political power has been captured."

Besides this, the innumerable co-operatives in town and country enjoyed a material advantage from the celebrations. From the 4. to the 6. July a discount of 10% to 15% was given in the co-operative stores, shops, and booksellers' establishments. The shop windows were decorated with exhibitions and pictures. "Cooperative stores on wheels" were driven to the remote villages in which there is as yet no co-operative. A number of new co-operative institutions, children's homes, dining rooms, convalescent homes, etc. were opened on this day, and the unemployed were given a "July dinner" in all co-operative dining rooms. In a word, the whole affair was a powerful demonstration of what the co-operative cause can become after the proletariat has political power in its hands.

Moscow, the capital, was naturally the culmination. On the 4. July great public meetings were held in every district, and addresses delivered by foreign co-operators. On the Sunday there were children's festivals in the forest and on the hills, people's festivals, outdoor theatrical performances, gymnastic performances, etc. On 5. July the chief meeting was held in the Great Theatre at Moscow. The proceedings were both characteristic and instructive. The meeting was first welcomed by the chairman of the executive committee of the workers' and peasants' soviets; comrade **Kellin**, on behalf of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. He pointed out that there is no other country in which the co-operatives play such an eminent rôle as in Soviet Russia. Comrade **Krassin** then welcomed the meeting on behalf of the people's commissaries, and asked if the other governments of the world were thus recognising the co-operatives on this day?

The address of the evening was given by comrade **Bucharin**, his subject being: "Co-operatives and Communism". He pointed out the difference between the rôle which the co-operatives are called upon to play before and after the conquest of power by the proletariat, and described in detail the immense significance of the co-operatives in the fight against private trade during the period through which Soviet Russia is passing at present. Other speakers were **Muna**, for the Comintern, **Semjuschkin** for the trade union central, **Dombal** for the International Peasants' Council, and a large number of foreign co-operators from Germany, China, France, Czechoslovakia, and Italy. In conclusion the chairman of the "Zentrosojus", **Chintschuk**, gave an address on the meaning and history of the International Co-operative day. It need not be said that due honour was accorded to the memory of Lenin, whose enormous services to the co-operative cause cannot be overestimated.

The second part of the evening then followed, in the form of various performances, among which the living co-operative newspaper "Smytschka" earned special applause. This is a troupe of co-operative actors, who travel about the country giving entertainments, mostly of a co-operative character, in the co-operative restaurants.

Is there any other country in the world where such a **display of power** was even approximately possible on the International Co-operative day? Certainly not! This is only possible after political power has been captured by the proletariat; it is only in the proletarian state that the co-operative is the suitable and ruling economic system; in the capitalist economic system the co-operatives are insignificant reformist undertakings, sometimes tolerated, sometimes suppressed, and sometimes, as in Bulgaria and Italy, completely destroyed.

The Co-operatives of the Soviet Union and the Participation of the Working Women.

By Helene Kravtschenko.

"There is actually only one thing left to do: To make our people so civilised that they understand all the advantages of a universal participation in the co-operatives, and put this participation in order. We do not now need any other super-wisdom to pass over to socialism."

W. I. Lenin.

The once hopeless dreams of the old co-operators, aiming at transforming the capitalist world in the course of centuries, and at building up the socialist state of society on peaceful co-operative lines, without revolutionary class struggles, now appear to have become possible since we have completed the socialist revolution, and have established the rule of the workers in our Soviet Union.

If complete inclusion in the co-operatives is to be attained in our culturally backward country, an enormous amount of work has to be accomplished for the education and enlightenment of the backward masses.

The work being done by the Communist Party among working women, the work of bringing the working and peasant women into the cooperatives, is one of the most powerful weapons in the struggle against backwardness and sluggishness of thought.

The numbers of working and peasant women joining the co-operatives is growing rapidly, and our future success in socialist development will doubtless greatly depend on this growth.

On 1. October 1924 there were 986,992 women members in the co-operative societies, on 1. January 1925 there were 1,082,141, and on 1. February there were 1,154,800, or 15% of the total membership. The number of working and peasant women in the managing and controlling organs is also increasing rapidly; in 1924 these numbered 3447, at the present time 4350.

A rough estimation shows about 2500 women to be attending **courses of cooperative instruction** and taking part in the practical work.

The working and peasant women take an intense interest in the co-operative societies. The co-operative is proving the best outlet for the energy and initiative of the advanced peasant women.

In one village the peasant women, having heard of the co-operatives at their meetings, proposed to found a co-operative society. They were only laughed at. The women declared: "Then we shall start the business without you". Fifty housewives gathered together, sent a delegate into the town, informed themselves on everything collected shares, and actually opened a co-operative store. "We shall not take any part in the management", threatened the peasants, "Who is going to manage it for you?" "We shall manage it ourselves", declared the women, and elected the management from among themselves. "But your chairwoman cannot even read or write" scoffed the men. A communist woman teacher lent her aid, and after a month had elapsed the chairwoman of the new co-operative could read and write. The peasant women, now aware of their own strength, began to attend the rural municipal council meetings. The attempt was made to ridicule them, and to drive them away by abuse and tobacco smoke. But the women gathered together, and obtained the majority at the council meeting for the decision that: "The men have not to use abusive language at the council meetings, and have not to smoke in the room where the meeting is held." The astonished peasants submitted to the decision of the majority.

The co-operative society made excellent progress. It carries on a successful business. It has set itself the task of facilitating butter making for those of its members among the women peasants who have milch cows. The men still look on somewhat disapprovingly, but there is no longer any trace of derision or mistrust in their attitude towards their women fellow citizens. The day is not far distant when they

will join the co-operative as members, and this co-operative, a "feminine" one against its own will, will be converted into a normal village co-operative society.

This example shows what the hitherto unused energy of our working and peasant women can accomplish. Thousands of similar reports from every part and corner of our Soviet Union make us confident that the near future will witness a creative boom.

The XIII. Party Conference of the Russian CP drew special attention to the necessity of **inducing the peasant women to participate in the agricultural co-operatives.** At the present time, when the question of the restoration of agriculture, closely bound up as it is with the general firmer establishment of our industry and of state commerce, forms the central point of our work, it is of special importance to use every force of the village, and to call upon the broad masses of the women peasantry to take active and conscious part in the agricultural co-operatives.

Up to now the peasant women have participated only to a small degree in the development of the agricultural co-operative. An approximate estimate shows the number of peasant women possessing shares in the whole of the agricultural co-operatives to be only 4 1/2 to 5%. Here the special conditions obtaining in agricultural co-operatives must of course be taken into consideration. The farming undertaking, and not the individual person, is a member of the co-operative. The authorised representative of the farm taking shares in the co-operative, the owner of the farm, is a man in the overwhelming majority of cases.

There are however a number of branches of agriculture in which women's work takes the upper hand. Dairy farming, poultry keeping, flax growing, fruit growing, and many other lines of agricultural work employ an enormous number of peasant women. Frequently the peasant woman is not only an active co-worker in an agricultural enterprise of this kind, but its organiser. Besides this, the work of collecting and preparing the "gifts of nature" (mushrooms, nuts, berries, medicinal herbs, etc.) falls exclusively to the women.

The poultry reared by the peasantry is able to supply many products for home consumption and for export. This export, if properly regulated, can form an important item of the state budget. In 1913 eggs and poultry to the value of 90 million gold roubles were exported. This year 6000 waggon loads to the value of 30 million roubles were estimated. The export amounted to 15 million roubles. Poultry rearing is carried on exclusively by the women. Even the proceeds from the sale of eggs and poultry fall as a rule to the housewife. We must energetically tackle the task of inducing the greatest possible number of peasant women to enter the productive co-operatives, circles, etc., especially in places where poultry keeping is carried on to a wide extent.

Milk, cheese, and butter are other articles selling excellently both in the home and foreign markets. This year 1,300,000 poods (1 pood = 16 kgs) of butter and cheese have been sent abroad, whilst 1,400,000 poods were supplied to the home markets. The total number of cows in the Soviet Union is 20,149,999 (only 1,932,366 of these are owned by farmers organised in the co-operatives) with a total production of 742,000 poods of milk, corresponding to 39 million poods of butter. There can be no doubt that this branch of agriculture, once completely co-operatively organised, will be of enormous significance for the establishment of the economic power of the state.

All the points mentioned above do not by any means exhaust the total participation of the peasant women in the various branches of the agricultural co-operatives. Here we have only touched upon those branches in which the peasant woman is the chief producer, and in which the increase in the quality of the products, are dependent on the conscious participation of the peasant women.

It is plain that the conscious and active participation of the peasants woman in the agricultural co-operative will be

of the greatest importance for the restoration of our economics. All that is required is to undertake certain measures in the immediate future for the organisation of the peasant women, for their enlightenment on the immediately comprehensible and economically advantageous aspects of the agricultural co-operatives, and for their instruction in agricultural knowledge, enabling newer and better methods to be employed. Such improved methods increase the productivity and the possibilities of markets.

In the primary agricultural co-operatives about one third consists of the collective undertakings, of the communes, productive co-operatives, and co-operatives for the common cultivation of the soil.

Socially, the collective undertakings are of enormous importance. In the majority of cases the most advanced peasantry are gathered together in these, and there are Russian CP and Youth Union nuclei in almost all the communes. Under sound conditions, life in the communes is bound to beat out of the field the obsolete rural economics and customs of the village.

The peasant women take part in the collective enterprises to the number of 50%. In such a collective farming undertaking every member has full judicial rights, so that the peasant woman is here given the full possibility of proving her social and economic capabilities.

The XIV. Party conference of the Russia CP pointed out the importance of the homeworkers' co-operative for the restoration of our economics, and demanded that special attention

should be devoted to the work of organising the homeworkers among the peasant women. 32,000 women homeworkers, mainly lace makers and carpet makers, have already been organised in productive co-operatives.

A very interesting aspect of co-operative work is the splendid development of measures and institutions, which aim at freeing the working women from their fetters.

Dining halls, crèches, infants' welfare centres, etc. spring up rapidly around the co-operative organisations.

Measures which were only hesitatingly approached a year ago, are now a matter of course. And every co-operative hold it to be its duty to create or to support the institutions for the children. It is only natural that the more working women take part in co-operative work, the more rapid the development of women's emancipation.

The masses of working women are thus gradually coming into possession of a broad revolutionary co-operative consciousness. The great building of socialism is being built up stone by stone, boldly and joyfully.

Every endeavour must be directed to impart this revolutionary co-operative consciousness to the women workers of Western Europe, to the workers' wives, to the women employees, to the end that cadres of co-operative co-workers may be rapidly gathered together, ready to aid the working class to take possession of the co-operatives, and to convert them into a weapon in the fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Our Achievements in three Years.

(Women Workers in the Co-operatives).

By Ostrovskaja.

It was not until the year 1921 that special emphasis was laid on the necessity of the participation of working women (working and peasant women) in the co-operatives of the Soviet Union, not only as members, but as members of the managing and auditing committees, and as participators in the courses of co-operative instruction.

By the winter of 1923 there were 1299 working and peasant women in the administration, in the auditing commissions, and as manageresses. 215 women workers were learning the practical work of the co-operatives in co-operative establishments, and 148 working women attended the special courses of instruction. By March 1925 the number of women among the chiefs in the managing and control organs amounted to 4517, whilst the number of practical students had risen to 1015, the number of those attending various courses of instruction to 1621. The number of working and peasant women in the managements and control organs thus increases steadily and women's activity is making itself felt in the co-operatives.

A meeting of the managers of the co-operative central of the Soviet Union (Zentrosojus) was recently held, that is, a congress of the representatives of the co-operative societies of our whole Union. Here again working and peasant women were elected as members of the managing and control organs.

The woman worker Katkov (member of the management of the Central Workers' Co-operative in Nikolajev) was one of the candidates elected to the management. Our woman comrade Jessipov, a Cossack, and president of the co-operative society in her settlement, was elected as one of the members of the control commission of the Zentrosojus.

Three working and peasant women were elected to the council of managers, and three working and peasant women as candidates.

The number of women members is also increasing steadily. Thus for instance there were 7906 women members in the Ukraine in January 1924, a year later 96,706. In March, at the time of the Zentrosojus delegates' meeting, 165,000 working and peasant women had become members of the co-operative societies.

What has aroused this intense interest for the co-operatives among the working women and peasants? How is this increased participation in the managing and control organs to be explained?

The greatest interest is shown by the workers for the shop commissions. Here they learn to distinguish the qualities and prices of the goods, and to aid the co-operative societies in selecting the goods required by the working buyers. 1742 working women may now be counted among the members of our shop commissions.

A total of 13,021 working and peasant women are employed in the managing and control commissions, in the shop committees, as practical learners in co-operative establishments, as participators in co-operative courses of instruction, and in the co-operative departments of the delegates' meetings.

What attracts the working and peasant women to the co-operatives?

The help given to our co-operative development by the work done in the shop commissions, by the work accomplished by the managing and control organs; the help given to the women themselves when they receive the so needful economic enlightenment; it is the consciousness of this help which attracts the awakened working woman, mature for social work, into the ranks of the co-operatives.

The co-operative is the road to emancipation from the kitchen and the cow byre, and our women workers are awakening to the fact! And they know too that the increase in the number of women members means an increase in the number of co-operative shares, and that this again signifies an increase of the capital to be employed for the organisation of common dining rooms, laundries, children's homes, crèches, "mother and child corners", etc. Where there are more women members, it is only natural that more attention is devoted to these questions by the co-operative society managements. Our first task is to deal with these questions of daily life, and through them to go forward to the emancipation of the thought, time, and powers of the working women from the thrall of kitchen and cow byre, to freedom for social life and social work.

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