

Chicago Replies to Moscow

Industrial Workers of the World

1945

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The 1945 January 27th issue of the *Industrial Worker* carried a letter sent by the Editor to Russia in reply to a request for a free copy of the paper. It was not intended as an indictment of the Communist policy—that would need volumes—but merely mentioned a few cases of Communist murders of members of the I.W.W.

The letter has been translated into Italian, Spanish, Hungarian, Swedish, Dutch and French by labor editors all over the world. The Lumber Workers Bulletin which reprinted the letter has sold out. Therefore, this fourth reprint in leaflet form.

A gent who signs himself "Director of Library of Social Sciences of the Academy of Social Science of the U.S.S.R." has recently written a letter to the *Industrial Worker*.

We believe that such a gent should be taught some social science! And History is one of them.

We believe he should be taught that the present is the child of the past, and the father of the future!

We believe that this gent should be taught some of the facts of life!

And who better able to teach these things than the INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD?

We give here his letter and our reply to the same. Not that we hope to teach him anything — but we do hope that the working people of America will read — and reading, remember — the truths we speak.

To—INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD, 555 West Lake St., Chicago, Ill.

From—Library of Social Sciences of the Academy of Sciences of the U. S. S. R.,
Moscow 19, 171 Frunze 11.

Gentlemen:

With reference to our previous correspondence interrupted on account of the present mailing and shipping conditions we would like to resume our exchange relations with your organization.

In checking over our file of your periodical "Industrial Worker," we find that we failed to receive the following numbers of it for the previous years.

[Here follows year by year from 1933, index numbers of the Industrial Worker of which they are short. The paragraph ends "1943, all numbers."]

We would be very much grateful to you if you found it possible to send us all the missing numbers and place our library on your mailing list for the current and next years to continue receiving it regularly from now on.

We are also interested in your other publications in the field of social and political problems, and particularly the contemporary labor movement and World War II.

In return we can offer you some of the publications of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., both current and periodical. Kindly let us know what subjects are of

special interest to you, and we shall be glad to supply you with some of our latest publications.

Yours very truly,

(Signed) D. Ivanov, Director.

DEAR MR. IVANOV

Hanging round an Academy of Social Science, you may be aware of a platitude of science which is well known to the mujiki of America: that "what is bred in the blood comes out in the bone." We can assure you that this is a pragmatic truth, the kind of truth which your govt. professes to like.

We come from a long line of Yankee horse traders who married Xtian females. The maternal teaching was to "Return Good for Evil," while the old man used to believe: "'Tisn't much good to give things away. When a guy needs something bad make a dicker and swap with him for something you need good. That way, you keep his friendship and show a profit on your generosity."

Being the result of our breeding and upbringing, we wouldn't want to negate the truth of the American mujiki. Hence though we feel like ignoring you and your kind, it behooves us to act true to our breeding; to return the Good of the *Industrial Worker* for all the Evil you have done, and to try and make a dicker with you to our mutual advantage.

WE WILL SWAP

Do you, Mr. Ivanov, remember the days when the shipyard workers of the Kronstadt pulled a strike for one of the noblest and most unselfish causes in the history of the labor movement? Do you remember how these workers, comparatively well-fed themselves, noticed that Communist bigshots were living on the fat of the land while women and kids in Leningrad and Moscow were dying of starvation—even those who were eating out of the garbage cans outside of Communist party headquarters?

It was a time, you remember, when all people (even us poor suckers) believed in the professed aims of the Revolution. Believed that at long last, Liberty, EQUALITY and Fraternity had become the bedrock of the new era. These workers pulled the pin in order to draw the attention of the Commissars to their stand on social science and to the misery of women and kids of their class.

And—you can read your Lenin on this—two vile rats named Djugashvilli and Bronstein took to the Kronstadt a large army of gunmen and two lying tongues. They induced the strikers to "arbitrate the issues" and when the strikers, believing in their honor, were willing to arbitrate, the gunmen put them up against the wall and machine-gunned them.

Do you remember a period when the name of Thiers caused nausea among decent people of all kinds because he did these things in Paris after the fall of the Paris Commune? Do you know that the infamy of Thiers is buried in the minds of decent people beneath the much greater infamy of the two men who were YOUR governors at the time?

These rats are known to the world under aliases. Stalin and Trotsky they called themselves. But in our social science, rats are still rats, no matter what they call themselves.

We will trade you whole files of the *Industrial Worker* for the lives of the men your govt. murdered in the Kronstadt. Many of them were our boys; they had Wobbly cards and Wobbly buttons on them when they died. And even though most of the others didn't belong they were still our kind of people. Workers with hearts; with guts; with thinking, rational minds, and with a hope of the future. Can we dicker with YOU for their lives?

WE WILL TRADE

Do You, Mr. Ivanov, remember the Kuzbas Colonies? Do you know that hundreds of our boys went to Russia in the hope of helping build a "Workers Fatherland?" Do you know, that seeing Russia with her life blood pouring from the wounds of civil war; seeing the country without rail transport, without minerals, without any of the raw materials of modern industry, these boys pooled their money, bought tools, and forming themselves into co-operative groups, left the semi-civilized USA to go to the uncivilized USSR? Your govt. welcomed them, it offered them 50 % of the product of their labor; it lauded them for their sacrifice and solidarity. And then—it cheated them of food and wages; it lied about them—and finally—murdered them in cold blood!

We will trade you many a file of the *Industrial Worker* for their lives. But can you deliver?

Can you give us back the lives of Shatoff and Andreychine—men whose competence and services your govt. lauded so highly, but who were murdered because they foolishly believed they had the right to their own thoughts? We'd rather have some of the Jimmie Higginses you have murdered, but we'll trade for the lives of these two boys.

We will trade you many a volume of the *Industrial Worker* for the diaries of William D. Haywood which your govt. burned, lest the wage workers of the U.S. learn something of the truth of the tyranny then in birth, but now in full maturity in your Communist heaven. Would YOU dare send it out to us, knowing that willingly, we would print it?

WE WILL BARTER

Do you remember that the workers of Vienna put up a brave struggle against the clerical fascism of Dollfuss and the Germanic national socialism of Prince von Starhemberg? You know of course, that your govt. offered these workers a haven in your country. And you know that every last one of them were murdered by your govt., lest their independence have beneficial effect on the slavish servility of the mujiki of Moscow. You know of course, that your govt. added the last final insult by calling them "Trotskyites." Some of these were our boys, men who learned the social science of unionism in the ranks of the I.W.W. Not even the dirtiest rats of Commercial America ever defamed these boys with the last insult of "Trotskyism."

Can you give us the lives of one of these victims? Just one, and gladly we will send you the *Industrial Worker*. Even until the day it becomes the official organ of the Industrial Democracy of America!

MORE TRADE-BAIT

Does your social science encompass the knowledge that when the Jehovah-screaming Browder of Kansas, the ineffable Cant of London, and the cowardly Tom Mann of ignominious memory were living in luxury in the foreign city of Shanghai, uplifting the downpressed and uprodden masses of China, (whom they knew as thirteen lackeys they hired in their mansion) the Marine Transport Workers of the I.W.W. were doing a magnificent job for democracy on the waterfront stretching from Stettin in Germany, through Hamburg, Antwerp and on to Le Havre?

Do you know that many of these 510 boys were murdered and slugged on the direct orders of your gang? A guy named Kreb, alias Jan Valtin has admitted some of his part in these murders. Don't tell us that he is a liar—we know that if he wasn't your govt. would not have hired him. Don't tell us that he is a "no-good." How could he be otherwise after mixing so long with your kind of people?

Do you know that the local Nazis regarded the red-card men of Hamburg and Stettin as their most courageous and competent enemies. And do you know that members of YOUR communist party put the finger on these red-card men so that Hitler's mob could finish off the murders your mob had begun?

Can you trade us the lives of one of these members? Name your price and we'll meet it!

DO YOU REMEMBER?

Does your library have the facts on the Revolt of the Generals in Spain in 1936? Can you read there, that after the Socialist Party of France had conceived the idea of International Brigades of wage workers to help our Spanish fellow-workers, your govt. demanded full control under threat of refusal to sell arms to the legal govt. of the country?

Can you read in your library of the deliberate campaign of lies and treachery the members of your International waged against the union men of Spain? Do you know that your mobsters insisted that the industries and transport system being operated so efficiently by the C.N.T. be turned over to "public" control—the public being the kind of political lice who would accept the bribes so freely offered in the name of Holy Russia?

Do you know that this campaign culminated in a deliberate murder by govt. troops of the wage workers of Barcelona on—of all days—MAY DAY of 1937? Your chief of military espionage, General Krevitsky, says that they only wanted to murder POUMISTS. But do you know that there were more decent union men murdered than the cretins of your bastard child of POUM??

Does your library contain the facts of the English speaking Brigade, called the XVth by the Spanish govt., but called a different name by the commies of English speaking countries (Lincoln in U.S.; MacKenzie-Papineau, Canada; Saklatvala, England). Do you know that your mob insisted on nominating the commanders of this brigade — that your gang shot three of these commanders as "fascists." Your mob named four commanders of this outfit until the Spanish govt. stepped in. If 75% of your pets are fascist as you say—why should any decent man maintain relations with you?

Do you know that we have it from your own sources that of the "military experts" sent by your govt. to Spain, EVERY ONE OF THEM WERE SHOT WHEN THEY WENT BACK TO RUSSIA. We don't blame you for that! But why didn't you shoot these experts before you sent them to

Spain? Do you know how many good guys lost their lives because of these experts? And do you know that Copec (Jugo-Slav) the only XVth Brigade Commander you didn't shoot was the most cowardly, most contemptible rat ever to sneak into a soldier's uniform? Is that the reason why you saved him, after shooting Lavelle, (French), Klaus (German), and Tchevedeu (Russian)?

The I.W.W. lost many good members because of your control of the International Brigades. We lost many members and thousands of good friends to the murder lust of your LISTER—the rat whose sadism would entitle him to high rank in your ogpooeys.

Can you trade back any of these lives?

OR TRY THIS

Your armies invaded Hungary and Poland, They have shown themselves to be just as intolerant of thinking among Workers as were the German armies. Do you know that your mob have murdered as many members of the I.W.W. in these countries as have the American Capitalist class in the U.S.? Men who learned something of SCIENTIFIC unionism here in the U.S. and who returned as missionaries to spread the light among the more benighted people of Europe?

Sure—we'll send you the *Industrial Worker* for your files IF. Will you see that your murder gang allows us to send our paper BERMUNKAS to the Hungarian workers? Can you guarantee the right to read a working class paper to those workers who are now being amgotted by Stalin's armies in Hungary?

You want some of our publications? Do you know that we have a daily newspaper published in the Finnish language?

We'd like to get it in the hands of the workers in Finland. Will your govt. agree that the Finnish workers have the right—the freedom to read—INDUSTRIALISTI if we honor you by sending the *Industrial Worker* into your despicable Academy?

OH MR. IVANOV

You have some issues of the *Industrial Worker* on your files. IF you will read them you will note that the I.W.W. have never had a great amount of respect for the petty-boogers of the SOCIAL LEFT. We have always regarded them as naive children who hadn't grown up. Occasionally, we meet one among them who is worth saving—generally a worker or a worker's kid.

You will note that we have a large amount of no-use for the substitutes for unionism which sprout from adolescent minds as incapable of understanding social science as any student of your Academy.

But—believe it or not—there was a time when we could trust these people in matters and causes common to us all. There was a time when we could collaborate with socialists and with other union-forms for specific causes and on specific issues. Not respecting their intelligence, but trusting to their integrity.

Do you know that this trust among workers and among working class organizations has been murdered and betrayed by the stooges of the govt. which hires you? Do you know that the faith in our fellow man has been replaced by suspicion and mistrust—due directly to the habit of forming United Fronts contracted by comrats an direct orders from your govt.?

Can YOU give a rebirth to the elementary solidarity which used to exist in working class organizations? Can you revive that shining faith in men with whom we differ that was, at one time, the glory of the working class movement? Do this—and we'll give you a better education in social science than you ever dreamed possible. We will send you every copy of the two "language" papers and every copy of the *Industrial Worker*, the *Railroad Worker*, the *Lumber Worker* and the *Metal Worker*.

ARE WE TOO TOUGH?

Mr. Ivanov, you may believe that these dickers we offer are too tough to take. You may tell us that dead men cannot be revived—even by the Russian govt. You may tell us that faith in mankind, once ruined can never be reborn. And yet, because you have the good taste to want to read the *Industrial Worker*, you may still be anxious to trade.

So we'll deal with you for cash!

We know of at least 5 million dollars which you have spent on the Communist Party of America for the purpose of dividing and splitting the forces of labor. We are almost certain your govt. has spent more—but we will stick to what we know.

Are you willing to induce your govt. to spend 5 thousand for the purpose of UNIFYING the American labor movement? One grand for every million you have spent to divide!

Too much? How about the half million dollars which the Russian govt. gave the rats and renegades of the I.W.W. WRECKING CREW which used to operate on the Pacific Coast? We'll trade you whole volumes of the *Industrial Worker* for your secret files on this matter!

Or—will you give us the inside story of the Marine Workers Industrial Union which you formed to smash the Marine Transport Workers Industrial Union 510 of the I.W.W. Your stooges deliberately formed this—not as a union—but as a union-busting agency. We have the word of men who are still in your party and service for this statement!

Men who were the initiators of this union-busting move!

MOOLA FROM MUJIKS

The millions of dollars you have spent in all countries from America to Afghanistan to smash the working class movement were millions taken from the hide and sweat of the Russian mujiki. May be we wouldn't want that kind of money—even if you offered it to us. We have refused it on the numerous occasions your rats in the U. S. have offered it to us, and we see no reason to change our attitude.

But—today, you have got millions of lent-lost dollars which the Wall St. govt. is taking out of our paychecks weekly. We'd like to have some of these dollars back—even if we have to fumigate them to get rid of the stink of the hands they have passed through.

Here is a trade you might like to make.

For the first time in the history of the world, the standard of living of the American worker is declining in a period of prosperity.

Funny situation, isn't it?

But we cannot appreciate the humor of it! We know the reasons why!

Members of the stooge society of your fuehrer are in control of most of the international unions of the CIO which was born out of the Blue Eagle of the National Assn. of Manufacturers and the desire of Mr. Roosevelt to form a Bismarckian form of labor front.

We quote Mrs. Perkins on this. "The No-Strike pledge was made by 30 or more labor leaders without consulting any of their members."

That No-Strike pledge, Mr. Ivanov, has cost the American wage worker billions of dollars in wages that he should have been paid—and wasn't.

That No-Strike pledge has been the weapon whereby years of effort to erect and maintain standards, and years of heartbreaking toil to improve conditions have been thrown into the lap of the political helots to do with what they will.

That No-Strike pledge, Ivanov, is the bastard child of YOUR GOVT.! Its midwives were the agents of YOUR GOVT. in the American labor movement!

These same agents, Mr. Ivanov, are today, the most despicable strikebreakers and finks in the long, bloody history of American labor. We have had our Pinkertons, our Baldwin Felts, our Jim Farleys, our Pearl Bergdoffs, our American Legionnaires. But—in the last three years, YOUR GOVT. AGENTS have busted more strikes, have fingered more strikers, and have snitched on more workers than all these "honest fink" agencies combined.

Will you trade the honor of reading the *Industrial Workers* for .0001 per cent of the money which the antics of the comrat finks have cost the American worker during this period of prosperity? We promise, that if you will, we will give it to the decent elements of the U.A.W. who, trying to offset the finky record of their international officers find that they are being opposed by money which Coffee-Time Curran is stealing from seamen in order to fasten the chains of the No-Strike pledge on the auto workers!

PUT UP—OR SHUT UP

These are our offers, gent Ivanov, To our Yankee proclivity for trading we will add many a Yankee saying—the easiest of which is Put up or shut up. Make a dicker with us—that will satisfy us both. And if you're not ready to do that, will you please cease bothering us with your letters!

You know, Tovarish, when deciding to answer your plea, we wondered how we could get the answer to you. We could, in the best comrat manner, go hush-hush about it, and could with a lot of abracadabra, have handed this reply to Coffee-Time Curran to take to you when next time, in order to escape fighting for your cause in uniform, he poses as an honest seaman until his draft board forgets him.

If we sent this reply through such devious channels, you might think we were comrats and hence deserving of the contempt which you Russians must feel for the rats who tote your banner and bray your cause in other lands. And if we did use your channels, we would earn your contempt but what is more important, we would forfeit our own self-respect.

You may not know it, but there still exists in this land of Jefferson far more freedom of speech and far more liberty and equality than exists in your country. And that freedom and liberty exists because the I.W.W. have bought and paid for it

We have paid for it with thousands of years in jail. We have bought it with hundreds of lives of good and gallant men. Men whose dust you were not worthy to swallow! And we who are alive and out of jail want that which our brothers have bought so dearly.

We are sending you this through the U. S. mails. We know that censors will look over every line of it—and that if they know anything of your history and ours, they will echo every word we say.

We are sending our reply to you to every city in the U. S. and to wage workers all over the world—that they may know some social science which your mobsters have deliberately tried to bury.

If we thought you had a real Academy of social science, we would applaud your taste in wanting the authentic voice of labor unionism in your liberty. But we have seen some of the crap which you send out under the guise of "science" and we can get better in the gutter press of the U. S. In papers, which no matter how low and degraded, have still more spark than your *Iskra* and still more truth than your *Pravda*.

SOCIAL SCIENCES, EH?

You don't need to read every issue of the *Industrial Worker* in order to learn more than you know. On page 4 of this paper you will see the Preamble to the I.W.W. constitution, and you can pray to your dead Lenin for brains enough to understand and decency enough to comprehend the profound truths therein contained.

That the victims and the beneficiaries of the wages system have nothing in common—not even the Workers Fatherland as you call the hell you have made In Russia.

That as long as the wages system lasts, there can be no EQUALITY among men, and where there is no Equality there can be no Liberty, No Fraternity, No Peace.

That these conditions can be changed, when and only, the workers get wise to their position. organize as a class—in Germany, in Russia, in the U. S. and in Timbuctoo, take possession of the things that workers themselves have made, and put you and your kind in overalls and make you earn an honest living!

(And if YOU can understand and believe that much of social science, we are sure that you are one of the victims of the next "exhibition of justice" which your govt. stages so frequently.)

You know, Mr. Ivanov, that we have a govt. here that occasionally turns one of its Janus faces to us and tells us that we are in a "war against nazism." So we ought to be careful about thus writing you.

We know that your dead fuehrer Lenin was the first to use the term "national socialism;" that he laid down its code of ethics when he married the ideas of Machiavelli to those of Ignatius Loyola; that he laid down the economic basis of it when he promulgated his New Economic Policy in 1924; that he laid the cornerstone of its political corruption when to his "middle class intellectual mind" he added the contempt for people so ably expressed by M. Blanqui of an earlier France.

If we believe the Janus Face of govt. we might hesitate to thus write you. But the I.W.W. might be lots of things—but it has lost its naivete!

Sure, we'd like to put the *Industrial Worker* in your hands. We'd like much better if we could put a million *Industrial Workers* on your neck. But—why should we tell you these things. You can read the back copies of the *Industrial Worker* which you have and find out for yourself.

Here is a final offer—and a titbit of information. You did NOT get the *Industrial Worker* for 1943 and 1944 for a very good reason.

Some of the Russian workers were In the "underground" long before the underground became the plaything of govts. and the pet of propaganda pimps of Hollywood. There were Russian seamen who believed that if the *Industrial Worker* was good enough for your library, it surely must be good enough for the wage workers who were your serfs. They used to pick up many copies in many ports of the world and smuggle them in to your Fatherland.

Where are those boys today? In Siberia? In the Lubianka prison murdered by the OGPOOEYS?

Tell us that and heed our final offer. We will send you back copies of the *Industrial Worker* if you can send us the names of 500 union men in Russia who can read English.

Pretty tough proposition, eh? If you knew the name of ONE UNION man in Russia you would have him shot! If you dared believe that there were five hundred UNION men, your govt. would declare martial law in Russia which it now exercises in Poland. in Finland and in the Balkans.

The only ones in Russia who are allowed to learn English, are the agents who are picked for espionage in the semi-civilized English speaking countries. You couldn't afford to have people reading in the original those English books which your govt. murders in translation. The instructions given your mujiki when they enter a country like Romania is a sure indication of what you fear when people can read English literature direct! You and we know well. that if some mujiki tried to read the *Industrial Worker* in your library, he would be suspected of the great crime of being "politically unreliable." And neither you nor we would like to see that happen!

So, Dear Mr. Ivanov, the answer to your request for the *Industrial Worker* is distinctly in the negative. We have failed to teach any of the social sciences to your stooges and agents in this country, where despite their antics, they still have a little freedom. Why then should we hope to educate the poor suckers who live in your country?

Some day, let us hope, you will be able to read the *Industrial Worker*. Some day, let us hope, you will have brains enough to understand it. Some day, let us hope, you will have decency enough to comprehend the social science arising from the lives of workers and of which the *Industrial Worker* is the foremost exponent. Some day—

Until then, Dear Mr. Ivanov—farewell.

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Industrial Workers of the World
Chicago Replies to Moscow
1945

<https://archive.iww.org/history/library/iww/Chicago-Replies-to-Moscow/>

*This document was transcribed and edited by J. D. Crutchfield, and last updated 21 September 2008.
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