

873 Broadway  
2nd floor south  
New York, N.Y. 10003

June 3, 1968

TO ALL ORGANIZERS AND AT-LARGE MEMBERS

Dear Comrades,

CAMPAIGN ON FRENCH EVENTS

Enclosed are some items put out by different branches as part of the Militant propaganda campaign around the French events. We thought they would be of interest to organizers to give some ideas of what can be done with the campaign.

We haven't heard anything from several locals on the Militant campaign. It is important that comrades send in reports so that we can make accurate projections as the campaign continues. We also want to get out to all branches information on ideas that work in expanding the campaign.

During this campaign it is more important than ever for branches to send meeting and forum announcements in to the Militant both for the practical value of letting readers in your area know of these meetings and for the political value of letting the entire readership of the paper know the scope of the American Trotskyist movement's response to the French events. We have received leaflets from several locals announcing speeches by party and youth leaders on the events in France which were not advertised in the Militant.

This week's issue of the Militant will again be a 12-pager focused around the French events. It will contain among other things the first series of eyewitness reports and photos from Joe Hansen, Mary Alice Waters and Helena Hermes as well as reports on Paul Boutelle's tour in Britain.

Remember, the deadline to change bundle size is Wednesday evening.

Comradely,

*Jack Barnes*

Jack Barnes  
Organization Secretary, SWP

## Full Support to the Workers and Students of France

Dear Fellow Workers,

Why have the working people of France gone on strike closing down every industry in France? Why is it necessary for the workers to negotiate when the strikers and their families constitute the overwhelming majority of France's 50 million people?

The problem besetting French workers which led to the present situation is not peculiar at all. France has been hit by the same problems facing American labor today, but has simply been hit harder and sooner. In France, as in the United States, rising inflation is cutting into and wiping out wage raises each year. Corporation after corporation is attempting speed-ups in the plants in order to increase productivity at the expense of the workers. Automation and innovations are used to eliminate workers rather than to reduce working hours. Unemployment has begun to rise in France.

All this has come during a prolonged period of gigantic profits for French big business, profits almost as large as those made in this country. The workers in France are simply fed up. Their economy is run on the basis of what will benefit the owning minority, not the working majority. Why should the French workers tolerate decisions made by a tiny minority on automation, working conditions, investment and production? That is the question the working people of France are posing by their strike and by their demands for a whole series of economic changes, including a sliding wage scale pegged to the cost of living and workers' control of the factories.

The French economy was once bolstered by exploitation of workers in its colonies throughout Africa, Asia and Latin America. But France has lost almost all its colonies. It wasted endless lives and money in trying to subjugate the Vietnamese and Algerian people as well as many other nations. The French tried to do the same thing the United States is now doing in Vietnam. The free enterprise system finds it hard to maintain itself without wars and colonies. That is part of the reason why France is having such economic instability.

The French workers discovered over a period of time that economic problems are directly inter-related with the over-all political problems. They found out that they could not control inflation, economic mis-planning, automation, taxation, government spending, etc. at the factory level. That is why they have combined their economic struggles with a political struggle through a general strike against the government. They have carried out this strike through direct action by taking over more than 2,000 factories in a wave of sit-ins. A similar wave of only one million workers took place in France in the spring and summer of 1936. Following the French sit-ins, similar actions broke out throughout the United States starting in November of 1936. It was this most successful labor tactic of all which built unions such as the United Auto Workers and established the industrial unions of the C.I.O.

The general strike, backing the demands of the students, farmers and workers of France, poses another direct question: Why not a government of, by and for working people? Why should millionaires and politicians representing management control the government? Why not a government which will organize production according to human needs rather than defend a profit-oriented, private enterprise mis-management of the nation's resources?

The French government and management will undoubtedly make sizeable concessions for fear that the workers might simply take over and establish a worker's government.

Unfortunately American workers have attempted to fight only at the economic level. The trade unions have permitted the two parties of big business, the Democrats and Republicans, to control all political power.

In order for the unions to protect the standard of living of American workers against inflation, it is crucial to win escalator clauses which will raise wages with any rise in the cost of living. And labor must fight for a shorter work week to prevent automation and mechanization from leading to unemployment.

To assist the fight for both these demands the unions must develop political power. Unlike the AFL-CIO bureaucrats who support Johnson and other Democratic and Republican politicians, we socialists favor forming a new political party organized by the unions and minority groups. Through such a party, working people would have political power to protect their rights as the majority in our society. The events in France are a preview of problems we will soon face in America and a striking confirmation of the power of working people when they choose to fight both economically and politically.

For further information read our weekly paper the Militant which will feature direct reports from workers and students in France; write to the Socialist Campaign Committee: San Francisco, 2338 Market St. (phone 552-1266), Berkeley, 2519A Telegraph Ave. (phone 849-1032).

(The above is an open letter to trade unionists from Peter Camejo, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for the United States Senate.)