

Letters from the Militants

NEW HAVEN

New Haven, Conn.,
November, 27, 1928.

Dear Comrade:

I received your bundle of 25 copies of the No. 1 of The Militant and it was just in time. Everyone of our comrades was anxious to find out what you comrades have to say about the Trotsky Opposition. The sentiment is prevalent that no matter what their attitude toward Trotsky and his followers in U.S.S.R. is, it was a great blunder to expel you three comrades here in this country.

Well, I have done my duty. I distributed The Militant among the comrades. I have been waiting for just such a turn in our Party life since the expulsion of Comrade Trotsky from the Communist Party. I was sure that sooner or later some of our leading comrades would awake to the realization what such a policy of ruthless suppression of the most militant comrades in U.S.S.R. means and where it leads to. I am sure that many comrades had the same attitude as I had. We were powerless to do anything lacking leadership. Now with your declaration in favor of the Trotsky Opposition all the supporters within the Party will be able to unite demanding the reinstatement of the expelled comrades of the Opposition in U.S.S.R. as well as in other countries.

I suppose you will not be surprised to learn that our good "loyal" D.O. of District No. 15—comrade George Siskind—distinguished himself by expelling me from the Party two days after I showed up at the Labor Lyceum with the bundle of the Militant. I was on probation all the time since last year after I failed to endorse the C.E.C. of our Party after the expulsion of Trotsky. But he went further—it is not enough for him to expel me—he is trying to give me a "black eye"—expel me "for not taking enough interest in the Party activities". First they removed me from the District Polcom, D.E.C. and all responsible Party positions and then they have the audacity to complain that I am not active enough in Party life. But this is their high diplomacy. They cannot deceive anybody here. The comrades here know me and my record since 1918 when I was the first to organize the original group of the left wing of the S.P., being the secretary in the Party for many years and in the D.E.C.

SAMUEL GENDELMAN

A REACTION TO GANGSTERISM

New York, Dec. 20, 1928.

Dear Comrades:

While standing in front of the Workers Center on Saturday, December 15, I saw a group of girl League members, followed by a larger group of men party members descend from the Center and begin attacking those selling The Militant.

They began tearing The Militant from the comrades selling it. While girl comrades were provoking the Opposition comrades by calling them "renegades", "counter-revolutionaries" and similar names, pushing, slapping and tearing their papers, the men attacked the Opposition from behind, who of course resisted and fought back. A group surrounded Shachtman, threatening him. I saw one Opposition comrade knocked down with a black-jack* and saw Aberg struck from behind.

A very large crowd gathered and it seemed as if this would become very serious. I, with the help of a few more thinking comrades tried to get in between the two groups and intercede. I tried to show them how harmful this was for the party and sought to prevent the fight from going any further. The police arrived and this brought the fight to an end.

I then went up to the District office where Fannie Gordon, director of the Young Pioneers of New York district, called me over and said:

"I am surprised at you, comrade Justin, for your behavior downstairs. You are defending traitors."

"I am not defending the platform of the Trotsky Opposition," I said, "I thought this to be a personal fight and I tried to stop it."

"You know quite well that this was not a personal fight," she said, "you should know that they were sent down by the office."

I was astounded that our Workers Party should resort to the tactics of the arch-reactionaries to stifle the voice of the Opposition in our Party and League. I then sent a letter to the District Committee of the Young Workers League, resigning from the League, as well as Director of the Harlem Section of Young Pioneers. Of course I realize that this was a mistake and have recalled my resignation, but this was my reaction to the things I saw. Such fascist methods are a disgrace for communists.

Your for Communism,

JOHN JUSTIN

A WORKER TALKS TO THE BUREAUCRATS

Dear Comrades:

The following is a copy of my statement to the District Executive Council of the New York District in reply to charges:

November 12, 1928.

Comrades:

In the first place I wish to protest against the irregular procedure of denying my unit the right to try the charges against me. Instead of this the D.E.C. takes over the whole question, puts the unit aside altogether, and conducts a star-chamber proceeding. Every member of the District Executive Council conducting the trial

* This was comrade Refugee, a fighter against the Fascists in Italy and in America. In 1922 he was a Communist member of the Municipal Council of Trieste, Italy. He is a member of the Executive Committee of the Anti-Fascist Alliance of North America and is financial secretary of the Italian Workers Club of Harlem. He was a member of the Italian Bureau of the Workers (Communist) Party until his expulsion a short time ago for his support of the Opposition.—Ed.

is a party functionary. There is not a single worker from the shops among them. All of this is completely in line with the bureaucratic methods of the party leadership and its disregard of the principle of strong representation of workers from the shops in all committees. This proceeding is another act in the campaign of the party bureaucrats to expel the best proletarian fighters behind the back of the party members, giving them no opportunity to know the facts.

My position on the question under consideration is no secret as I have taken an open stand since it first arose.

THE EXPELLED

NEW EXPULSIONS

In the last issue we published the names of 50 comrades who have been expelled from the Party directly for their support of the platform of the Opposition or—as in the case of the Cleveland Comrades—on trumped-up charges arising out of their opposition to the Lovestone-Pepper leadership. We print herewith the names of 12 more comrades all of whom have taken an open stand for the Opposition. Many other comrades have also been expelled or suspended who are omitted from the list for lack of necessary specific information. Additional names will be published in the next issue.

CANADA

JIM BLUGERMAN.

NEW YORK

T. J. O'FLAHERTY, well-known Party journalist.
ANTHONY REFUGEE, member National Italian Bureau.

JOHN MENELLA, member unit executive committee
ANTHONY MILLETTI, Harlem Italian Unit Organizer.

BERNARDO GODINA, Harlem Italian Workers Club Secretary.

C. NONVENUTO, member Italian District Bureau.

L. PROTI, Harlem Italian Workers Club Organizer.

O. ZADRA, West Side Italian Fraction secretary.

CLARA FABIANI, member left wing ladies garment workers union.

PHILADELPHIA

MAURICE GOMBERG, Secretary nucleus B, Section 3.

CLEVELAND

JOS. KELLER, leader in Czech-Slovak fraction.

CHICAGO

JOHN EDWARDS, brick-makers union.

SPRINGFIELD, ILL.

JOE ANGELO, leader of National Miners Union.

WHO ARE THE EXPELLED COMMUNISTS

(We begin publishing here the revolutionary and party records of the expelled communists. We had received this information from a large number of expelled comrades in the various districts and had prepared it for publication in this issue of The Militant when the robbery of our home took place and the material was stolen. We have asked the comrades for new copies and expect to be able to print a large number, of them in the next issue.)

JAMES P. CANNON—Member of the Central Executive Committee and Political Committee. Joined Socialist Party at Kansas City in 1908. Joined I. W. W. in 1911. Took part in the organization of Left Wing group in Kansas City in 1918. Editor of local Left Wing weekly paper, The Workers' World, in 1919. Delegate to National Left Wing Conference, New York City in June 1919 and was elected member of Labor Committee of National Left Wing. Foundation member of Communist Labor Party. First District Organizer, St. Louis-Kansas City District, 1919-1920. Organized first underground Communist groups in mine field of Kansas and Southern Illinois. Elected to the Central Executive Committee at first underground convention at Bridgman, Michigan, May 1920 and re-elected at every subsequent convention of the Party. Editor of Party legal paper, The Toiler, 1920. Delegate to Fourth and Sixth World Congresses of the Communist International and also to a number of the Sessions of the Enlarged Executive Committee of the Communist International. National Secretary of International Labor Defense from foundation, June 1925 to October 1928.

Organizer in Akron Rubber Strike in 1913, Peoria Metal Workers Strike, Duluth and Superior Ore Dock Strike, and many others. Indicted for conspiracy in the Peoria metal workers strike in 1913 and also indicted by Federal Government for activity in strike of the Kansas Coal miners in 1919. No conviction in either case. Numerous arrests and short jail terms.

MARTIN ABERN—Member of Central Executive Committee. Joined Young Peoples Socialist League at Minneapolis in 1912 and Socialist Party in 1915. Joined I. W. W. in 1916. Served as Local Secretary Socialist Party, Minneapolis. Took part in organization of Left Wing of S. P. in Minnesota. Foundation member of Communist Party. District Organizer Communist Party of Minnesota, 1919-1920. Organizer-speaker for Friends of Soviet Russia. Elected to Central Executive Committee at first underground convention, Bridgman, Mich., May, 1920 and member of C.E.C. almost continuously since and various times served on Political Committee. First National Secretary, Young Workers League of America, till 1923. District Organizer and Organization Secretary, Workers (Communist) Party, Chicago District, 1924-1925-1926. Assistant National Secretary, International Labor Defense, 1928. Delegate to Third Congress of Young Communist International and Fourth Congress of Communist International. Indicted twice by Federal Government during War. Served prison term, in Minnesota for refusal to register for war. Also minor jail terms.

I will continue to take this open stand also in the future as I have a full right and duty to do as a communist.

I am absolutely opposed to the expulsion of comrades Cannon, Aberg and Shachtman, of comrade Spector in Canada, of the three members of the Y.W.L. in Philadelphia, Morgenstern, Lankin and Goodman, of the two members of the D.E.C. in Kansas City, Buehler and Kassen, and of the other comrades now under charges in connection with this issue. I consider all these comrades as good and loyal communists and place myself in full solidarity with them.

I have been asked during the course of the proceedings against me whether I also consider the present leadership of the party as bureaucratic. My answer is yes! This is proven particularly by the whole expulsion campaign to silence the opinions of the communist workers in the ranks. In this disruptive course they are only copying the methods used by Lewis and Sigman and it is the duty of every communist militant to fight against it.

I agree in the main with the document on "The Right Danger in the American Party" which brands the present leadership of the party as a right wing leadership and calls on the Comintern to lay the basis for its removal.

I agree with the statement to the Polcom presented by Cannon, Aberg and Shachtman on October 27 in which they declare their support of the Russian Opposition. I consider this a good communist document which should be printed in the party press. Since the statement deals with the principle questions, the refusal to print it in the party press fully justified these comrades in circulating it themselves and I am proud to say that I took part in distributing it to the party members.

I have taken an active part in the Communist work in the Furriers' Union and am now under sentence of 2½ to five years in the Mineola case for this activity. I stood up as an avowed communist in my trial and will continue to take a communist attitude toward my case in court regardless of the action taken by the D.E.C. To cover up the move to expel me from the party, the bureaucrats are whispering the slander that I want to evade my communist responsibility in the Mineola case. Those who have something to conceal in their records in such questions should be the last to spread slanders against those who fought like communists.

In the party fraction of the Furriers and of the Needle Trades as a whole I have been a consistent fighter against the opportunist leaders, Shapiro, Gold, Zimmerman, Wortis and Company. My expulsion from the party will bring joy and added strength to these right wingers just as the expulsion of the other comrades referred to strengthens the right wing throughout the party. The party leadership supports these opportunists in the Needle Trades. It does not expel proven grafters like

I demand the reinstatement of the expelled comrades, Cannon, Aberg, Shachtman, Spector, Morgenstern, Lankin, Goodman, Buehler and Kassen and the restoration of their right to express their views in the party during the party discussion.

I am in favor of the return from exile of Trotsky and the other comrades of the Russian Opposition and their reinstatement into the party.

M. L. MALKEN

THE AFFAIR ON UNION SQUARE

New York, December 14, 1928

Dear Comrade:

For Monday evenings, another woman comrade, Maria Reinl, and myself volunteered to sell The Militant at the Workers Center. Last Monday we came there at 8 o'clock. We took a stand on the sidewalk in front of the building and offered The Militant to the passersby. Presently a crowd of people gathered around us and we were soon encircled and pushed from the sidewalk toward the curb.

"Why, comrade," I said to a pushing fellow, "are you not ashamed of yourself to treat another comrade like this?" "You are not my comrade," he shouted, "you are a prostitute."

"But comrade," I said, "this is a grave insult toward a fellow worker. We can prove it to you that we are not prostitutes but workers at an honest trade, workers and good comrades and always considered as such and treated as such by fellow workers. But you comrade, are acting like the white terrorists acted in Hungary after the Revolution. They too, pushed the workers off the sidewalks in Budapest and called the proletarian workers prostitutes."

While I was thus arguing I saw my young comrade in danger. She was in the midst of a turmoil. Someone tore her newspapers away from her and called her vile names. When she remonstrated, she was hit in the face. I was afraid that she would be thrown down and trampled upon, so I took her by the arm and pulled her out of the crowd. We were then walking away from the Workers Center toward 15th Street. The crowd surging after and pushing us further. We again took a stand at 15th Street, half a block away. We saw two policemen coming towards us. "And you do this!" I called out to a fellow. "You do this against working women, against comrades?" "You are not comrades, you are prostitutes," he shouted again.

"Suppose we were prostitutes as you say, we are only two women, armed with no other weapons but a few newspapers under our arms. What fear must possess your minds that you are so terror-stricken at the sight of 'The Militant'?" We are going home now; not out of any fear but because we do not want to see you disgracing yourself by having us arrested."

But we will come back again and again until we find out who is injecting the poison of fascism into the body of the party. We want to find out who is the author of this organized terrorism against proletarian workers and comrades.

PAULINE GUTRINGER