

Letters from the Militants

FROM A MINNESOTA "RENEGADE"

Minneapolis, Minn. March 7, 1929

Dear Comrades:

The writer, together with ten other comrades, was expelled from the Worker's (Communist) Party on November 18th, last year, for signing a Statement protesting against an expulsion policy, which we contended, was sponsored by bureaucrats who feared discussion and, therefore, feared the masses.

Since that time the party press has been steadily utilized by the Lovestone bureaucracy to brand me, together with the other expelled comrades, as a counter-revolutionary, pessimist, right winger, opportunist, non-proletarian and a renegade. In order words, according to the Lovestone group, I could hardly gravitate much lower in the gutter of workingclass betrayal.

There is nothing that I know of, that speaks clearer than facts. I will cite a few of those facts concerning myself, from which the readers of this article may draw their own conclusions as to what I am and what I am not.

As the oldest of seven children I was forced to leave the little farm, on which I had worked so hard, in 1899, at the age of twenty, to seek work elsewhere. I walked to the nearest railroad station (13 miles) and got a job in a Great Northern extra gang, afterwards as section hand, then as Round House laborer on the Soo Line, then as machinist helper in the general shops of the M. & St. L. Ry., which place I left in July 1901, to get a job as Locomotive fireman on the C. St. P. M. & O. Ry., and for the last 27 years I have earned my living in a locomotive cab as fireman and engineer, a calling in which neither rest nor meals are regular and where the dead and mangled bodies of fellow workers are quite often dragged from wrecks and overturned locomotives. Have myself had several hair-breadth escapes from death and in 1921 was injured in a collision which laid me up for exactly six months.

Have held continuous membership in one or the other of the two Enginemen's Brotherhoods for 27 years, the sole exception being when I was expelled from the B. of L. E. in 1919, by order of Grand Chief W. S. Stone because I advocated amalgamation of the Railroad Crafts and wrote a pamphlet and a leaflet on that subject. I appealed my case to the rank and file and was reinstated, whilst Stone the bureaucrat has passed into oblivion, the natural landing place of all bureaucrats.

Whilst temporarily out of the B. of L. E. I joined the railroad "Out Law Movement" in 1920, where we tried to organize a new Industrial Union of railroad workers over the heads of the Brotherhood officials. I wrote a good part of the U.A. of R.E. Constitution and many of the leaflets and pamphlets issued by that organization.

As delegate to the Firemen's Convention at Washington, D. C. in 1913 I fought almost single handed against salary increases of officials and delegates.

I am a pioneer in the movement for amalgamation, reduction of labor official's salaries, abolition of gag laws in labor constitutions, free discussion by members in the Labor Journals, a Labor Party instead of a Labor Lobby and many other proposals of a militant and left wing character.

Have been active as member and officer of the Minnesota Farmer-Labor political movement since its inception in 1919, and since I became a member of the Workers' Party in 1923 I have carried out the Party policy and instructions in the Farmer-Labor political movement as well as its Trade Union policy without one single exception.

Since I joined the Workers' (Communist) Party in 1923, I have taken a most active part in promoting the growth, development and influence of the Communist Movement amongst the proletarian workers.

During the Party's political campaign of last fall I personally sold 72 copies of the Party Platform, 25 copies of the acceptance speeches of Foster and Gitlow. I had sold hundreds of T.U.E.L. pamphlets to railroad workers and others. Have sent in at least 25 subscriptions to the Amalgamation Advocate and about the same number of subscriptions to the Daily Worker, many of them yearly.

I, with the rest of the expelled comrades, have been accused regularly in the party press by the Lovestone outfit of refusing to fight Shipstead and holding Labor Party discipline over that of the Party discipline. Every friend and foe of the Farmer-Labor and Communist Movement, of any prominence, in the State of Minnesota knows this is not true. I personally submitted the minority report asking for the endorsement of Wm. Watkins at the St. Paul Convention in March, 1928, and fought

against the endorsement of Shipstead by that same F.L.A. Convention. I spoke in Halls and on the Street corners for Watkins in the Primaries and for V. R. Dunne, in the general election of 1928, and I openly and notoriously fought Shipstead in both campaigns as every Party member in the Twin Cities knows.

I have been a continuous subscriber of The Worker, The Daily Worker, The Labor Herald, The Workers' Monthly, The Communist, The United Farmer and The Railroad Amalgamation Advocate ever since they started to come out in print. Subscribed for stock to get the Daily Worker started. Up until the first of this year I had never destroyed one single copy of the Daily Worker, but every copy that I did not file was either mailed or delivered to some industrial worker. I obtained a number of subscriptions by this method besides the spreading of communism.

I have never disobeyed nor knowingly violated one single official instruction of the Party nor party discipline, yet in spite of this and in spite of the aid and support I have tried to render the Communist Movement I was unceremoniously and contemptuously pushed out of the Party for casting my vote against the expulsion of certain comrades.

I have written these lines, not for the purpose of trying to make anyone believe that I have rendered some unusual service, or made any unusual sacrifices to the Party, but merely to show, in a concrete way, the kind and type of workers which

NEW EXPULSIONS

Now that the convention is over and "unity" has been established between the two Stalinite factions, they have joined in rolling up their sleeves to expel more comrades for supporting the Leninist Opposition or for opposing their expulsion. Below we give the names of a new batch of comrades who have had the axe of "internal consolidation" and the "ideological campaign" applied to them.

NEW YORK CITY

IRVING SPREIREGEN, vice-president, American Association of Plumbers Helpers.
MAC KUDLER, member of Executive Board, American Association of Plumbers Helpers.
JOE BURTON, member of Executive Board, American Association of Plumbers Helpers.
JOSEPH FOX, League unit Industrial Committee.
JEAN TISHMAN, Young Workers League.
PAUL GREEN, Bath Beach Party unit.
BEN GROSS, Bath Beach Party unit.

SPRINGFIELD, ILL.

GEORGE VOYZEY, President, Illinois Miners Union.
CLEVELAND

JOHN BRAHTIN

WHO ARE THE EXPELLED COMMUNISTS
ARNE SWABECK—Joined Painters Union in Denmark, 1909. Joined Social Democratic Party of Germany in 1912. Helped organize building trades union in Bucharest, Roumania, in 1914. Arrested by police, receiving 20 lashes. Joined Socialist Party immediately on arriving in United States in 1916. Joined I.W.W. in 1918, remaining till 1920. Delegate to Seattle Central Labor Council from December 1918 to April 1920. Delegate to General Strike Committee in 1919. Member Executive Committee of Seattle Workers and Soldiers Council, and associate editor of its official organ *The Forge*. Organizer for Seattle Central Labor Council in Pacific Coast territory for Mooney general strike in 1919. Editor of *Social Democrats* (1920-21), organ of independent Scandinavian Federation till it joined Workers Party; it later became English organ of Party under name of *New Age*, then *Voice of Labor*, in Chicago. Left Wing delegate from Seattle to Socialist Party convention in 1919; expelled by police, and helped found the Communist Labor Party, being elected on its national trade union committee. Party organizer from April 1921 to October 1927, chiefly as District Organizer in Chicago. Member of Executive Committee of Red International of Labor Unions in 1922. Delegate to 2nd Congress of R.I.L.U. and 4th Congress of Comintern. Delegate from Painters Union to Chicago Federation of Labor since 1921, leader of left wing and Communist forces there. Twice delegate to Illinois State Federation of Labor convention. Delegate to Chicago Building Trades Publicity Committee which led the fight against notorious Landis Award in 1921. One of leaders in huge mass demonstration of 150,000 Chicago workers against this award in April 1921. Member of C.E.C. of Workers (Communist) Party practically continuously since its formation. Arrested four times for working class activities in this country. Expelled November 24, 1928 from the Party.

ALBERT M. GLOTZER—Joined Young Workers League in 1923. Member Chicago District Executive Committee 1924. Delegate first Chicago district convention at Springfield in 1925. Member of D. E. C., Bureau, and Secretariat in Chicago. Delegate League National Convention in New York, 1927. Member of National Executive Committee from 1927 until expulsion. Party and League organizer in Illinois coal fields during miners' strike. Director of League school in New England in 1928, and instructor in Chicago Workers School in same year. District Pioneer director, 1925-6; anti-militarist work director, 1926; agit-prop work director, 1926-7; industrial work director, 1927-8. Secretary of Chicago Youth Relief Committee, 1928. In charge of factory and shop nucleus work prior to expulsion, issuing first printed youth shop bulletin in United States.

are being expelled for the sole offense of holding opinions which are contrary to the personal interest of an incompetent and bureaucratic leadership.

It was a hard blow for an honest, sincere and revolutionary worker, which I believe I am, to receive notice that I had been expelled, in my absence at work, from the Communist Party. Yes, it was a hard blow alright, when I consider the many hard earned dollars I have donated, the thousands of steps I have taken, the many meetings I have attended until late at night, the many thousands of pieces of Communist literature which I have sold and peddled during my five years' membership in the Party. And what I have said here about myself applies even in an added degree, to such sterling revolutionaries as Dunne, Skoglund, Coover, Votaw, Roseland and others.

But far from being crushed, I can assure our comrades and friends, both inside and outside the Party, that the kick in the face we as proletarian workers received from Lovestone, only served to close our jaws that much tighter in the grim determination to rid the revolutionary movement of the working class of self-seekers and cheap politicians of the Lovestone type. The Minnesota comrades of the opposition group are taking energetic steps, on a growing scale, with this end in view.

C. R. HEDLUND.

THE "ORGANIZERS" WHO DISORGANIZE

St. Louis, Mo.

Dear Comrades:

In the past few weeks, St. Louis has had a lot of paid organizers—Leon Plott, Wm. Kruse, Harry Brown, Fisher (South-Slav Org.) Joe Plotkin and Billy Matheson—running pell-mell about town trying to "save" the membership from becoming acquainted with and understanding the entire "Trotsky question." Thus far six "spies" from Constantino have been suspended and expelled. They include the party candidate for mayor, the organizer of the City I.L.D., and the following League members—subdistrict organizer, sub-district publicity director, sub-dist agit-prop, and South Side Industrial organizer. Besides these frantic removals, suspensions and expulsions, they have passed various resolutions condemning us and made other idiotic decisions that no one shall see us or talk with us. And slander! Ye Gods, we have done everything but murder! We have been even sent out ILLEGAL letters!

Money and time that could have been used in building up the League and Party, in building up the National Miners' Union, has been spent in calling general membership meetings for the purpose of slandering, expelling active comrades and creating a typical lynching atmosphere.

The bureaucratic leadership, the ORGANIZERS WHO DISORGANIZE, are now preparing an ideological campaign against Geo Voyzey, President of the Illinois District, National Miners' Union, because he has, (as a matter of fact, the entire Springfield nucleus has) protested against this blind expulsion policy. They are intent upon removing Voyzey even tho it means the break-up of the National Miners' Union. And it will mean that, if they go ahead with their present removal and expulsion policy. The miners in this locality will fight bitterly against Voyzey's removal. They have expressed themselves: "No house from St. Louis or Chicago is going to remove Voyzey if we have something to say about it."

Wires from Chicago turned the recent League membership campaign into an expulsion campaign, the effects of which are now apparent. The wreckage of wreckers, of the organizers who disorganize (and get paid for it!) is everywhere:

The newly organized SouthSide League, which had good prospects—14 enthusiastic young workers, has been completely smashed.

The carefully planned Anti-War demonstration around the Federal Bldg. does not materialize.

There is no distribution of the already mimeographed Anti-Militarist leaflets to the soldiers and national guardsmen. (Last distribution was by a Trotskyist a few days before suspension, who had his leaflets taken away, and was given a beating by three of the national guardsmen). The Open Youth Forum is dead.

The Northside League which had exceptional promises of doing Negro work, delegates it to a Pioneer committee. They also "postpone" their Anti-War, Lincoln and Washington Day mass-meetings.

The City Election campaign has been "forgotten about" because the chosen candidate for mayor, Elmer McMillan, is a Trotskyist.

MARTIN C. PAYER.
Sec'y. Local Opposition.