

A Page of Letters from the Militants

An Illinois Coal Miner

Springfield, Ill.

Dear Comrade Cannon:

First, I want to congratulate you for the Militant. I look forward for each issue. I am going to do all I can and see to it that the miners of Illinois help to make the Militant a weekly as soon as possible. I think that the article by comrade Swebeck on the mining situation several issues back was a very important one—an article that will greatly help the work in the National Miners Union.

Now a few words on the convention of the Illinois Miners just ended in Peoria.

Realizing that the miners of Illinois are beginning to revolt against his bankrupt policies and that the National Miners Union is making inroads in the district, Fishwick (miners call him Weakish) convened the 32nd consecutive and 7th biennial convention in Peoria, five weeks ahead of time, on March 26th which ended on April 13th. The convention was in session 14 days costing over \$170,000 of the miners' hard-earned dollars which the Fishwick machine robbed them of through the check-off system. And the results of the convention will cause no rejoicing among the miners. On the contrary some of the miners call it the "Lewy-Fishwick Funeral Convention," while other miners wouldn't say out loud with women around what they think about the convention and what they think in private wouldn't be fit to print.

Fishwick was forced to call this convention because the last few months has witnessed a significant increase in the struggles of the Illinois miners—an upward surge in the strike wave against wage cuts, the speed-up system, rationalization, and general worsening of working conditions. This is a sign that the miners' struggle in Illinois is being intensified by the increased antagonisms arising out of the last treacherous wage-cut agreement that was forced down the throats of the miners by Fishwick-Lewis-Company. The fact that mine after mine is closing down all over the state proves that even the last wage cut is not yet satisfactory to either the coal operators or their flunkies in the U. M. W.

Fishwick's purpose in calling the convention was to lull the militancy of the miners to sleep, to get an endorsement of the last treacherous wage cut agreement, to prepare the way for a fake fight against Lewis by first making J. H. Walker an official of the Illinois miners and then running him against Lewis and finally to defeat the growing National Miners Union.

To a certain extent Fishwick's plans were successful and this because the Party made no preparations toward an efficient struggle. Kruse, the so-called district organizer, is responsible more than anyone for the failure of the Peoria convention. No efforts were made to get delegates through the local unions for the convention and at Peoria no efforts were made to organize the delegates that came to the convention in opposition to the Fishwick-Lewis machine.

Now Fishwick was so sure of this convention with unemployment getting worse all the time, with mines closing down every day, with spontaneous strikes throughout the state occurring more and more against the wage-cuts, the last agreement, loading-machines, etc. Fishwick and his machine quaked in their shoes.

The fact that Fishwick called the convention five weeks ahead of time shows that he was afraid of what the future might do to him and his machine with the situation getting worse all the time. The fact that Fishwick called the convention in Peoria instead of East St. Louis as it was decided upon at the last convention held in 1928, shows that Fishwick was afraid of what the rank and file members might do to him. Peoria is an old camping ground of the Fishwick machine, while East St. Louis and the territory around it employs over one half of the Illinois miners. Fishwick was afraid of the rank and file members marching on the convention and taking away the organizational machinery from him. And this would in all probability have happened if the convention had been held in East St. Louis and that is the reason why Fishwick changed to Peoria. With the existing conditions prevalent among the miners, thousands of miners could have been organized for the purpose of marching to Peoria.

But of course Kruse is too busy organizing gangs to break up Trotsky meetings and expelling Communists to pay any attention to the miners situation or building the National Miners Union.

Give my greetings to Max and Macey, and I press your hand warmly,

Yours for ours,
JOSEPH ANGELO

A Worker on an Oppositionist

Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Comrades:

I have received a copy of your paper, where I observed the list of expelled Communists, among them Joseph Keller, whom I have known for some time. Although I am not a member of the Party, my sympathy for Communism is the same as that of the said comrades. I work at various jobs and am compelled to move frequently from one place to another, and this was one of the main reasons that I could not join Communist Party. However, I have contributed according to my meagre income toward radical movement in America, and could boldly claim that as far as material help is concerned, I have never been shy in digging into my pocketbook. The object of this letter however is not to brag about financial help rendered therein, but to enlighten your readers as to the past activity of comrade Keller.

It was in 1915, when due to the rapidly rising prices of food, workers in the Youngstown steel mills were forced to go on strike. Comrade Keller worked then at the Republic Iron and Steel Co., where he occupied a bright spot of militancy. Though he was only 19 years of age, his fellow-workers selected him as a member of the strikers' committee. Since we had several scabs that were employed at the various departments, our duty was to persuade them peacefully if possible from performing such a filthy trade. One evening as we came from the hall, where we met, we noticed that at the very small entrance there were stationed about ten company guardsmen, who appeared as though they were expecting someone to protect. About four hundred of us stopped there for a while and soon we noticed that a certain man, who was employed by the company as a pipefitter got out of an automobile, with the dinner pail in his arm. Workers that were on strike and

who knew this scab, soon began yelling for his scalp. The scab pulled a gun from his pocket with the threat that he will shoot anyone that dares to approach him near enough. Imagine our predicament when four hundred men would not dare to touch this louse. Well, comrade Keller as a very insignificant leader of the strikers certainly done his duty, when he gave the order to follow him as quickly as possible. He asked this scab to go home. The scab screamed something desperate and pointed his gun at Keller. All of us stood there aghast and seemed to be completely helpless. However, we soon waked up, when there was a shot from the pointed gun of this scab. Comrade Keller threw himself upon this scab, because as he told us later, he could never face his fellow-strikers as a confident leader, and he thereby was willing to sacrifice his life merely to prevent one scab from betraying us workers in our struggle for a better living conditions. The bullet from that shot went thru the overcoat sleeve of comrade Keller, and this was our greatest joy, because we were almost sure that he was shot in a more dangerous spot. Ever since that day, I have made Keller my best friend and comrade.

This is not to say any praise about him, but merely to point out that he is an honest worker who could not get along with the dirty practices of King Israel Amter's gang. As I understand, he was always fighting for honesty in dealing with finances, and the King certainly did not like to hear criticism by comrade Keller.

I wish you much success in your scrap with the bureaucratic machine of Lovestone's gang.

M. B.

A Pittsburg Worker

Pittsburgh, Pa.

Dear Comrade Cannon:

Being one of the pioneer members of the Communist Party in Pittsburg and having participated in its organization and

The Expelled

As we go to press we are informed from Chicago by comrade Swaback that ten more comrades have been expelled from the Party by the District Executive Committee on charges of sympathy with or support of the Communist Opposition. We expect to have their names for publication in the next issue of the Militant. Below we print the names of another number of comrades who have been expelled by the Party bureaucrats.

New York City

ROSE KARSNER, former secretary F. S. R., assistant secretary of I. L. D.
SAM GINSBERG, member of Russian C. P. since 1917. Joined W. P. in America in 1925.

Boston

L. LISOVENKO.

Chicago

ELSIE MYERS

Who Are the Expelled Communists

O. R. VOTAW—Joined Machinists Union, 1920 and secretary of his local since 1923. Delegate to St. Paul Central Labor Union, 1922-24, and since 1927. Expelled from C. L. U. for Communist activities in 1924, but re-elected annually by local and refused seceded by Executive Council of A. F. of L. Delegate State Federation of Labor since 1924. Delegate since 1922 to District 77 of Machinists Union and District secretary-treasurer since 1923. Joined Communist Party in 1922. At foundation convention of Farmer-Labor Federation. Delegates to all local and state conventions of Federation and Association, and expelled from latter for Communism in 1925. St. Paul Party city secretary in 1926. On District Party Committee since 1925 and on Polcom since 1926. Expelled from Party, November 14, 1928.

JULIUS ROSEN—Volunteered in Russian Red Army in 1920, at age of 19. Had previously worked with a partisan group in the Ukraine against its occupation by the counter-revolutionary troops of Petlura. Joined Party in U. S. as Detroit branch charter member in 1922. Recently organizer of Street nucleus No. 6 and agit-prop director of section committee. Removed from all office and finally expelled for support to Opposition.

SOL LANKIN—Joined Philadelphia Y. W. L. in 1925, becoming one of first organizers of Strawberry Mansion English branch and member of executive committee. Became member of D. E. C., being at head of Sports Committee, director of work among unemployed, secretary of upholsterer's youth fraction. Arrested numerous times in Philadelphia and once in Chester, Pa., during organizing campaign at Irving Knitting Mills. Carried out League work in C. M. T. C. Expelled in November 1928 for supporting Opposition.

JOSEPH FRIEDMAN—Joined Y. P. S. L. in 1924. Organizer, educational director, etc., of various units of organization and member of City Central and City Executive Committee (New York). Leader of Left wing movement, for unity with Y. W. L. ticket in 1927 elections while on C. E. C. of Y. P. S. L. Suspended from Y. P. S. L. for inviting Communist speaker to Y. P. S. L. mass meeting. Joined Young Workers League in 1928. Leader of Communist fraction at City College (evening session). President of Vote-Communist—Poster for President Club at College. Expelled from Y. W. L. for supporting Opposition in December 1928.

An Appropriate Appointment . . .

We note that the new secretary of the Jewish Section of the International Labor Defense is N. Schaefer, formerly of Cleveland and Chicago. The same Schaefer was expelled from the Workers Party in 1925 by the unanimous vote of the Political Committee. The reason for his expulsion was that he misused his post in the Party to steal a considerable sum of money entrusted to his care. Some time later he was reinstated into the Party by the Lovestone Central Committee for his loyalty to the faction. He paid his debt to the Party by participating in the gangster attack upon the Opposition meeting in Cleveland a couple of months ago when he cut open the head of our comrade Keller with the leg of a chair. Schaefer's new appointment by his faction to the position in the I. L. D. is therefore highly appropriate.

struggles and always taken a keen interest in its policy up to the present time, my interest was not only concentrated on theoretical discussions but also in the real propaganda and agitation and organization work in the steel mills. The fact that I've been blacklisted from several mills is ample proof of my activity.

I've opposed the Lovestone clique since it was organized, and as usual I was the mark for unjust and particular criticism on the part of the professional factionalist, the district organizer Jakria, which made it impossible for me to retain my standing. Consequently I dropped out of the Party two months before the expulsion of the "Trotskyists" from the Party and the formation of the Opposition Group. Since then I've read several copies of the Militant and I agree 100 per cent with the policy of the Militant and comrade Trotsky and the Opposition. Therefore I pledge myself to do all in my power to help our cause in accord with the policy of the Opposition.

I sincerely make a warm appeal to all the Greek Party members and sympathizers to read the program of the Opposition, for I'm sure that you will agree with it if you analyze thoroughly. Do not believe the untrue rumors against the Opposition spread by the bureaucratic clique.

Down with bureaucracy in every Communist Party in the world!

JAMES SIFAKIS

From a Steel Worker

Youngstown, Ohio

Dear Comrades:

I am sending you ten dollars as a starter. We must have not only a weekly press but a daily press in order to fight these bureaucrats and cowards and bring the Comintern back to Lenin's policy.

DENIS PLARINOS

The Splitters in St. Louis

At a May Day conference called by local 105, Amalgamated Clothing Workers of St. Louis, to which numerous working class organizations sent delegates, W. Matheson, delegate from the Communist Party proposed that the program for the united May Day meeting be based on three points: Fight against imperialist war; Fight against wage-cuts, speed-up, unemployment; Fight against all its enemies. When this program was unanimously accepted, comrade H. L. Goldberg, of the Militant Workers Club proposed that all delegates be seated.

A long discussion ensued, for the Stalinists present, led by Matheson, were ready to do anything to prevent the Communist Opposition delegates present from participating in the united May Day demonstration. Despite the offers of comrades Elmer McMillan, Paul Thomas and H. L. Goldberg, of the Communist Opposition and the Militant Workers Club, to join with any working class organization ready to hold a joint meeting, Matheson finally proposed that each organization hold its own little separate May Day meeting. This was presented in the form of a motion by the Stalinist caucus with the result that the conference broke up. The splitters had won their point, at the cost of the solidarity of the St. Louis workers.

Another form of the campaign against the Opposition was demonstrated when Elmer McMillan and H. L. Goldberg were brought before the District Council of the Painters' Union of which they are members, charged with being members of a Communist organization and threatened with expulsion. As "evidence" the labor fakers produced copies of statements, letters, and marked copies of the Militant to show that the two comrades were Communists endeavoring "to break up the union." The so-called "evidence" was mailed to the secretary of the District Council by an unknown person. But some of the material—such as statements and letters—had been distributed to only a small handful of Party members in the Northside unit, and could have been obtained by the fakers only from that source.

Who invented this new method of fighting "Trotskyism" by denouncing workers to the fakers in the trade unions and involving them with expulsion and loss of a job in the trade?

Trotsky and the Fascisti

We take the following item from the New York Times of April 21, 1929:

"The anti-Semitic journals are taking an active part in the campaign aimed at keeping Leon Trotsky from German soil, even as a patient at a health resort, and their language is fully as violent as that of their temporary comrades-in-arms, the German Communist followers of Stalin. The Volkische Beobachter, organ of Adolf Hitler, is quoted as saying: 'In the city of Germany where this infamous fellow may have the nerve to "take the cure" the National Socialist Labor Party (Fascisti) will look after the necessary enlightenment, so that this scoundrel, who has made a gigantic corpse factory out of Russia, will lose both hearing and sight!'

Der Hammer, another leading anti-Semitic publication, voiced its feeling as follows, according to quotations in other German papers: 'We hope that Bronstein (Trotsky)' in case he dares to come to Germany, will be shot down like a mad dog, as Herr Eisner (head of the short lived Bavarian Soviet Republic) was at a time when more healthy instincts still prevailed.'

The revolutionary worker who can read this one moment, and then read the comments on comrade Trotsky in the Stalinist Party press, which is filled with the same venomous hatred of the exiled Bolshevik as the Fascisti—if this worker can read the two without being overcome by a sense of deepest shame then he has lost all vestige of working class spirit!!