

# LETTERS FROM THE MILITANTS

## THE NOOSE ON THE "NEW LINE" PHILADELPHIA, Pa.

Dear Comrades:

That the sounding of a personal opinion within earshot of the caricature Communist Party of the U. S. A. has become, to the American agents of the Stalinist bureaucracy, a bugle call for loosing the terror upon the dissident voice, is surely no longer news. Nor does the unanswerable charge, levelled against the "third period" Bolsheviks, Foster, Minor, Browder and Co., of having delivered the death-blow to the International Labor Defense as a broad, non-partisan workers' organization any longer retain the ring of novelty.

But that personal initiative in the class struggle, no less than personal opinion, now opens the most "loyal" of Party members to persecution, and that the services of the I. L. D., such as they are, are refused to the worker who has displeased the Centrist drill-master, is not yet very widely known.

A sympathetic and morally exhilarating incident showing to what lengths that twoling power revolutionist, Engdahl has "Bolshevized" his Party bureau has just been brought to our attention by the victim himself, a Philadelphia comrade. It is superfluous to state that neither the Daily Worker nor the Labor Defender has ever been moved to "Bolshevik self-criticism" of the crime perpetrated against him; nor have the responsible machine-people been taken to heel.

### An Active Party Rank and Filer

Thomas Dunn, the young worker involved, was admitted to the Party two years ago and from the first was marked out as a loyal, courageous, active comrade, heart and soul in the movement. Shortly after being assigned to a unit, he took part in a Washington, D. C. demonstration, was arrested with 25 other Communists and served a 30 day sentence in a Virginian dungeon. He had been back in Philadelphia less than a week when the demonstration of solidarity with the Colombia banana strikers was staged before the United Fruit Co. pier in that city; and numbered among those who refused to break ranks despite police "persuasion", he was again hauled in and slapped with a 30 day sentence to Moyamensing, the notorious Mellon-Vare shambles.

Between vacations in the capitalist jails, comrade Dunn gave virtually all of his time to rank and file Party work, serving on half a dozen committees, distributing leaflets, assisting at open-air meetings, doing clerical jobs in the district office when unemployed, etc. Finally, he was elected secretary-organizer of his unit, located in the proletarian Kensington area.

### A Strike Is Called

At this time he got a job as a food-handler in a certain warehouse and almost immediately he set about organizing a strike of the ruthlessly exploited clerks and truckmen, who had long been nursing their grievances and lacked only leadership to plunge into struggle. When the walk-out was called, Dunn found that a snk had prepared the boss for a counter-action—the "ringleaders", with himself at their head were summarily fired, notwithstanding which, a picket line was formed outside the warehouse. Running into the same snk later in the day, the young strike leader demanded an accounting. He was attacked at first with curses and, since these proved ineffective, with fists. The stoolpigeon's blows were returned in kind and with interest, whereupon the boss, probably prompting the attack from ambush, sent in a hurry call for the bulls.

Dunn was clapped into jail. Charges of conspiracy, assault and battery, inciting to riot and divers assorted crimes were lodged against him. All this occurred in April, the case coming to trial on the first of November, when the International Labor Defense covered itself with "glory" by refusing to lift a hand in the young militant's defense. So Dunn, with a state lawyer "defending" him was railroaded to Moyamensing for a six months stretch.

### The Failure of the I. L. D. to Aid the Arrested Striker

What was the principal reason for this indubitably class-conscious, this laudably Leninist, this utterly revolutionary act on the part of the now thoroughly Stalinized I. L. D.? Was the comrade in question tainted with the concepts of the Left Bol-

shevik Opposition? On the contrary, he was a loyalist of the loyalists, against whom not a breath of suspicion had been directed. Even allowing for this insane "Third Period" ideology, under which no class-war prisoner with political beliefs running afoul of the Stalinist corkscrew "line" can expect aught but contumely from the bureaucrats; even supposing that Engdahl and his fellow jumping-jacks fight the capitalist courts only on behalf of yes-yapping Party automatons, the International Labor Defense was in duty bound to put up a struggle for comrade Dunn. It failed ignominiously.

Let it go on record that the Trotsky-eating Herbert Benjamin, then Philadelphia district organizer, and his wife, Jennie Cooper, as district head of the I. L. D., formulated the truly new Bolshevik tactic which helped to railroad a Party member in good standing to prison. The contribution of this precious pair to Stalinist "strategy", though not up to Stalin's own achievements along this line, exemplified in the cold-blooded murder of Blumkin, yet deserves signal mention.

The strike broke out so suddenly that Dunn had no time to inform Benjamin or Murdock, the T. U. U. L. organizer, even if they could have been located at the district office. Before he knew what had happened, the strike leader was in prison. He was bailed out, but not by the I. L. D. When the time for trial arrived, Cooper made it clear, that so far as the Party and I. L. D. were concerned, he could go up the river for life—because he had called the strike without orders from the Communist Party or the T. U. U. L.! Consider the political implications of such a stand by these comrades.

His family got the comrade out on parole after he had spent nearly three months behind the bars. Later he brought charges against Cooper, but nothing resulted from them except a genteel vote of censure, which was hushed up at the source by the hand-picked "control-commission". The commission also "ruled" that the money expended by Dunn's fatherless family on the lawyer who obtained his release was to be replaced by the I. L. D. This little reparation has still to be made.

Isolationism is being carried out to its logical, albeit grotesque, conclusion. The American Party bureaucracy more and more isolates itself from what small measure of sanity it retains in the "third period."

—J. ARCHIPENKO



## COMMUNISM AND THE AMERICAN NEGRO

— III.

Dear Comrades:

One of the most important problems facing the Communist movement in America today is the Negro problem.

The dark-skinned proletarian is destined to play, along with his white comrades, an important part in the world proletarian revolution. The Negro is one of the most brutally exploited of the American proletariat. Along with this goes Jim-Crowism, peonage, concubinage of Negro women and lynching.

The task of the Leninist Opposition in dealing with the Negro problem must be a determined assault upon these evils in particular and the social caste system in general. The Negro masses must be taught that the only way to social, economic and political equality is through the gateway of proletarian revolution, the key to which is scientific communism, as embodied in the Leninist International Opposition.

The Negro "leaders" will only betray the dark masses to their imperialist masters. They are doing that very thing today. Hundreds of Negro workers are awakening to that fact. The Negro workers can now see their sorry economic plight. They can see the fruits of years of "leadership" by Negro preachers, politicians and social workers.

Negro business is falling year after year. It cannot keep pace with the mergers, chain stores and industrial monopoly. It is approaching its doom. Unemployment, that creeping paralysis of capitalist society, mercilessly squeezes and saps the very existence of the Negro workers. White chauvinism is a bed-fellow of Negro unemployment.

Now that the International Left has formed a Provisional International Secretariat, I think that more attention should be given to the Negro question and the special organizational needs and problems dealt with. The Opposition must recruit as many Negro workers and radical students as possible into its ranks; wage a determined fight against white chauvinism both inside and outside the Communist movement.

The Negro's future liberty and salvation are inextricably bound up with international Communism and its inevitable victory over world capitalism.

J. M.



## ON ORGANIZING THE SEAMEN

New York

Dear Comrades:

This fact has been established with all those familiar with the marine industry for years. In 1917 Andy Furuseth, speaking on the possibilities of organizing the Eastern Coast where the backbone of the industry lies, said: that even the Salvation Army, if so minded, could organize seamen. That is basically even more true today.

However, since 1917, a number of things have taken place, among which is the outstanding fact that by 1919, the International Seamen's Union claimed a membership of 115,000 out of a possible 140,000. After succeeding in this almost unprecedented manner, in knitting together this tremendous mass into a labor organization, the organization was almost completely disorganized a year later by the first test which the union was called upon to face.

Two years later, despite the defeat and disillusionment, the I. W. W. succeeded in carrying on organization work to the point where in 1923 they could count 25,000, but only soon to have their organization smashed, not by internal rottenness, as in the case of the I. S. U., but by lack of coordination and perspective. However, the sharp and significant difference between the Marine Transport Workers Union of the I. W. W. and the I. S. U. before the war was the fact that the I. W. W. for the first time brought to life a real rank and file organization. All organization work was done as a result of tremendous effort from below. It seemed as if all the latent militancy in the marine industry centered itself in Industrial Union 510 of the I. W. W.

To go into the detailed reasons for its failure would require more than the allotted space. It is sufficient to say that it was possibly the last time a real working class revolt was wrecked by the machinations of stupid bunglers in the General Office of the I. W. W. With these introductory remarks one can safely approach the convention called by the Marine Workers League.

### The Narrow Line of the Marine Workers League

In the first place, to those familiar with the facts, the strong efforts to force the official Communist Party, in control of the Marine Workers League, really to permit seamen to carry through the organization of a union are, one may say, two years belated. Two years ago, the need for organization in the industry became so forcibly noticed by all members in it that elements who ordinarily would not come within smelling distance of anything remotely related to the Communist movement were drawn into the Marine Workers League or its counter-parts, whatever the names that may have been given to them in the past.

Leading elements who for years had distinguished themselves in the bitter organization battles in the I.S.U. and I.W.W., threw themselves into the organization with the question: "When do we start to organize a union?" They were told to "Wait until the the Party faction fight is over". When these new elements answered that they were not interested in Party factional fights, but interested in organizing a marine union, they found themselves attacked on all sides for being motivated by syndicalist impatience, or whatever the "third period" equivalent is termed.

However, at last the mountain has come to Mahomet or vice versa—after all the "third period" preparation—which first of all made certain that anyone who isn't simon pure in hewing to the Party line to the last degree is eliminated from any po-

sition where he may in any way have any influence. After two years of careful combing, persuading and expelling, we are told that for April 26, 1930 a convention has been called in New York City. Led by those deep-sea seamen, Mink, Sparks, the doughty Hines—there is to be launched a real revolutionary marine union under the sponsorship of and pre-arranged by the T. U. U. L. Of course, it is understood that none of the "disrupters", such as the Russells, McDonalds and many others, will be there.

### Unite All Militants to Build Seamen's Union

There is serious need of a real working class approach to the problem of the marine industry. There is no back industry that is so strategically placed in the working class scheme of struggle, especially with inevitable war developments. In the unquestioned development of the merchant marine as a naval arm, which is provided for by the Jones-White Act, an effective industrial union, having a real base among the workers in the industry, can serve as the most powerful weapon in the coming struggles of the American working class.

Adventurist speculation that may wreck the ground of appeal by militants is criminally inexcusable. Certainly, the revival of I.U. 510 of the I.W.W., though doomed to failure, is an indication that the reaction against cheap adventure has set in. The time for a real marine union is here, provided the militants who through years of struggle have established a claim to leadership, can be utilized. We must remember that in this industry that all militants have gone through the organization of the Marine Transport Workers of the I. W. W. and to imagine that one can build a militant union without these elements is to give birth to one more of the still-born unions of the official Communist Party leadership. There is still time for the genuine Communist elements to realize that there is needed a real united front of all militants in order to organize an effective union in the marine industry.—M. R.



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