

# ON THE WORKERS' FRONT

## The Morgenstern-Goodman Case and the I.L.D.

### The Defendants Present a Statement of the Facts

The Morgenstern-Goodman Defense Committee has recently sent to *The Militant* a statement of facts and information regarding the case of Goodman and Morgenstern. It is a declaration by the defendants themselves.

The Committee points out that Goodman and Morgenstern were convicted of violation of the Flynn Sedition Act of Pennsylvania, at Philadelphia on June 18, 1931. It welcomes communications from organizations and individuals relative to the case. The declaration of the defendants has the complete endorsement of *The Militant*. The Committee further requests that workers and sympathizers everywhere shall give publicity and support to the defendants. Letters and news should be sent to the Morgenstern-Goodman Defense Committee, 327 South 11th Street, Philadelphia, Pa. The statement follows:

"On Monday, February 23, Bernard Morgenstern and Leon Goodman, members of the Communist League of America (Opposition) in Philadelphia, were arrested while distributing leaflets entitled: 'Unite the Masses in Struggle for the Unemployed'—an open letter to the Communist Party of America, issued by the National Committee of the Communist League of America (Opposition). The leaflet presents the program of the Communist Left Opposition toward the present unemployed situation. To this leaflet was pasted a sticker calling upon the workers employed and unemployed to attend a demonstration on February 25, at City Hall; this demonstration was called by the Unemployed Councils of the T. U. U. L.

When arrested, we were booked for "blocking the highway and disorderly conduct". That night our branch secretary, who knew of the intended distribution, got in touch with the International Labor Defense. They would have nothing to do with Left Oppositionists. In order to have a lawyer at the hearing the following morning, he then called the American Civil Liberties Union. At the hearing the charge was changed by the district attorney's office to "disorderly conduct and distributing seditious literature"—the latter charge based on the entire leaflet, and particularly on the following passages: "There can be no solution to the unemployment problem under capitalism. The solution can be found only in the socialist revolution, and finally only on a world scale. . . . 'Our principle object is and remains the proletarian revolution'. Further, the official Communist Party must revive and apply the united front as Lenin taught us." The hearing was postponed to the following day to await further action from the prosecutors' office. The A. C. L. U. attorney was unable to get the case squashed. On the same day comrade Goodman saw the district organizer of the I. L. D., Jack Ross, and tried to interest him in the case. He was told that it would have to be "considered" by the National Office of the I. L. D.

The hearing resulted in dropping the charge of "disorderly conduct" and holding us on \$1,000 bail each for court on the charge of sedition (being members of a Communist organization) and distributing seditious literature, these commencing under violations of the notorious Flynn Sedition Act of Pennsylvania. Bail was furnished by relatives.

### I. L. D. Refuses to Aid Class War Victims

On Sunday, April 1st, the I. L. D. held an Anti-Flynn Sedition Conference, supposedly a "united front" conference, J. Louis Engdahl was present as national secretary of the I. L. D. Our branch sent two of our comrades as delegates. We were also present. Ross promised to give us an answer to our request for defense by the I. L. D. This is the "answer" we received: the conference, a closed family affair, did not even mention the case (only a few days old, and the news of which appeared in all local papers.) One of our delegates "reminded" the conference of it. Our delegates were denied a seat, and we were all requested, after being denounced as counter-revolutionists, to leave the hall. We did so without making any further ado.

This shameful conduct on the part of the I. L. D. bureaucrats created quite a stir, not only locally but nationally as well. *The Militant* rendered invaluable service in giving publicity to the whole affair. We on our part kept asking the I. L. D. to take up our defense as two class-war victims. To this date not a single word has appeared, even in mention of the arrests, in any of the Communist Party controlled organs. This despite rumors outside of Philadelphia to the contrary. We all well know how important publicity is in such cases. The July 18 issue of *The Militant* contains many letters passed between the I. L. D. and those who had our defense at heart. These letters expose the corrupt maneuvers by means of which the bureaucrats of the I. L. D. try to avoid the issue of class defense of two Left Oppositionists.

On Wednesday, April 15, Goodman and Morgenstern met with the I. L. D. organizer, Jack Ross, and had a lengthy discussion with him. He was evasive but we put him to the wall. We forced a definite stand on the part of International Labor Defense. He was asked what the policy of the I. L. D. here was on the Flynn Sedition Act, arrests, etc. He replied that they were collecting signatures on petitions for repeal. We asked

if they would call any demonstration or mass meetings. He said, No; they were engaged in too many outdoor meetings; it was inadvisable to have any more until June 5, when the petition campaign would be completed and a delegation sent to the Governor. Indoor meetings would not be a success, he said, since it was too warm. What they intended to do, instead, was to have open air neighborhood meetings.

We asked Ross if the I. L. D. speakers will mention our cases at such meetings. He said they would (this he later refuted). Would the *Daily Worker* mention the case? "No." Would the *Labor Defender*? Also "No." Would he have one of us speak at the I. L. D. neighborhood meetings? No, they could not permit that.

We proposed the following: 1. the holding of an open-air meeting or a mass meeting at which one of us should speak; 2. a united front conference.

The first proposal he answered as reported above. The second he ignored. Finally he was forced to come out openly and tell us that the I. L. D. would give us "legal defense only" and no propaganda of any kind.

"Is this what you meant," we asked, "when you told us at a previous meeting that we would receive the same defense from the I. L. D. as the other labor cases, Ryder, Lynn and Lawrence?"

"Yes, the same legal defense only."

We then told Ross that our Communist League (Opposition) branch would send the I. L. D. a letter giving the points we proposed, and request an answer. Ross told us we would get an answer—the same he just gave us. This letter was sent and no answer ever received. Indeed, never at any time did we receive a letter, visit or telephone call from the I. L. D., this despite their promise and the necessity for them to do so.

### Convicted on Sedition Charges

Even the promise to furnish legal defense was a lie. On June 18 we were in court before Judge Reed and were represented by two lawyers from the Civil Liberties Union. We were quickly found guilty of sedition. The I. L. D. was not represented, nor were any of its officials even in court. This was complete sabotage on the part of the factionally blind and corrupt bureaucrats of the officialdom of the Communist Party and I. L. D. Before the trial, and upon getting notice of it, we again paid a visit to the I. L. D. Again no response. "They would see" (?). They refused not only to give us a working class defense, but even to have a lawyer in court. This is the absolute truth. Please refute all statements to the contrary. They are lies with which the wreckers try to cover themselves and their treachery to the cause of class-war prisoners. Similarly the statements of these same people that we gave them "no chance". Why then no mention in their press of our case?

On May 25 the International Labor Defense and the League of Struggle for Negro Rights held a Scottsboro United Front Conference. Bernard Morgenstern was one of the delegates of the Communist League of America (Opposition). He, together with all our comrades, including Goodman, were forcibly ejected—despite the cries of worker-delegates that Morgenstern be permitted to speak. Forty delegates walked out of the hall after us.

### Rally to Defendants

In regard to our independent line of defense. It became early evident to ourselves and sympathizers that the I. L. D. officialdom intended to do, or rather not to do, on our case; we began to propagandize here the idea an independent working class defense for us. The C. L. U., be it remembered, is furnishing legal talent only. We, communists, well aware of the capitalist class role of the courts, are not going to pin our faith in their plea to the court's "fairness". We know well that only the protest of masses of workers can defeat the attacks of the bosses on the vanguard section of the workers. It is necessary that we explain our case, as well as all similar labor cases, to the workers.

Locally we have a "Morgenstern-Goodman Defense Committee". It is to do the work the I. L. D. is not doing: the working class defense of two victims of capitalist class justice—Goodman and Morgenstern. At the same time, we constantly advocate the necessity of united action on the part of the I. L. D. We have gotten out collection lists to raise money for the proper functioning of the

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defense work. We propose to develop the work of the Committee locally to the calling of a conference to support the Committee. We will print leaflets popularizing the case, call meetings, speak before forums on labor defense, appeal to trade unions and fraternal labor organizations for support, arrange speaking tours, etc. All this will concern itself with the problems of working class defense, linking up our case with others.

We appeal for the support of all workers.

Rally to the defense of ALL class war victims!

(Signed) Leon Goodman  
Bernard Morgenstern

## Penn. Sedition Victim Dies in Cell

Milan Resetar, Croatian baker and communist, who was serving five years for sedition against the commonwealth of Pennsylvania because he had Communist literature in his possession, died of tuberculosis in the Alleghany county workhouse October 19, after all efforts to obtain adequate medical treatment for him had failed. Appeals in Resetar's behalf were made to judges, parole board members, the workhouse superintendent and Governor Gifford Pinchot, according to the International Labor Defense, but no action resulted.

Resetar was arrested Dec. 13, 1929, with two other Croatian workers—Tom Zima and Peter Muselin—in Woodlawn, Pa. Leaflets had lately been distributed protesting against low wages and bad working conditions in the Jones and Laughlin steel works, which dominate the lives of Woodlawn's working class. Literature found in the homes of the three defendants was the principal evidence. The defendants were convicted of utterances intended to overthrow the government of Pennsylvania.

Efforts to obtain the release of Zima and Muselin are now being made, and a hearing before the parole board is scheduled for November.

It is in Pennsylvania, through the instrument of the infamous Flynn Sedition Act, that numerous working class defendants have been sentenced to long prison terms. There is need for the initiation of a genuine and broad united front movement by the I. L. D. to arouse the masses against the Flynn Sedition Act and for the release of all the working class victims of the Pennsylvania coal and steel barons. The most recent victims, convicted for the distribution of "seditious literature", are Leon Goodman and Bernard Morgenstern of Philadelphia. They are members of the Communist League of America (Opposition) whom the International Labor Defense, in outright violation of its principles, refused to defend, with the result that it was necessary to organize a special Morgenstern-Goodman Defense Committee on behalf of the working class victims of Pennsylvania's capitalist justice.

## DO YOUR SHARE HELP SUPPORT THE MILITANT

## Siskind's Report: Party Failures and New «Plans»

### NEW YORK.—

At the convention of Section Two of the Communist party in New York City, George Siskind reported. He spoke of the necessity for the party to form its base actually in the shops, which is not the case today. The experiences in the furriers' strike must not be passed by. Did the party appear in that strike as an independent leader? In the miners' strike, in the sense the party melted away its identity among the masses. In the furriers' strike, the party absolutely failed, he declared; as a party it had not succeeded in anything.

The party must now turn its face to the shops. Toward the 13th Plenum, it has shown itself capable of independent leadership, as among the coal miners and Paterson, but the party had failed to get results because of isolation from the masses, and because our unions are only skeleton organizations. He said that the masses are assuming a counter-offensive, but he corrected himself by saying that "if that is too much to say, then they are revolting against wage cuts, etc." That, I thought, was saying something else again. 230,000 workers had participated in strikes, one third of whom had been led by the T. U. U. L.

Siskind stated that the main weakness had been the failure to organize the workers on a national scale. We enter strikes unprepared. There is need to organize grievance committees, party shop nuclei, etc. If we fail to lead the workers, others will because the workers are ready. In Paterson we did not succeed to organize a single shop nucleus. Lovestone and Muste took away the workers from us after we had prepared the strike. He failed to explain Workers' Union failure to apply a genuine Party and National Textile line united front policy as advised in *The Militant* toward the Associated Silk Workers Union and the Musteites made it very easy for the outright fakera, Musteites and Lovestoneites to carry through their aims and to isolate the Party and N. T. W. U.

The sentiment that the A. F. of L.

## Serious Unemployment Problems Suffer Because of Stalinist Maneuvers

### Left Opposition Brings Program Before Chicago Conference

CHICAGO.—A few additional words on the Unemployment Conference that took place in Chicago on October 18 might interest readers of *The Militant*. It was grimly humorous, if humor can be associated with unemployment and the struggles of the working class.

### "SLIP UP" OF THE MACHINE

The conference which was to unite the workers for a hunger march in Cook County started at 11 o'clock, an hour late. The attendance was not as large as at the preceding conference. The preliminaries being done away with, the conference proceeded to the election of a credentials committee. The committee elected consisted of five: Rubicki, Brown, Williams, O'Hare and Curtiss, the last being a member of the Left Opposition. It would be too much to say that this was the result of pressure from the ranks; it was evidently a slip-up of the machine, although the Opposition's stand, particularly for unity, had a large following also from the floor.

The credentials committee then convened in a room above. Of course, there was no great difficulty about seating anyone; everyone was seated except the delegates of the Communist League of America (Opposition) whose credentials were taken up when all other business was cleared away.

Rubicki then said, "I move that the delegation of the Communist League of America (Opposition) be not seated" because it was an organization that was against the Communist Party, the only party of the workers, and he drooled his litany on and on. Rubicki was very anxious to go to a vote. The delegate from the Opposition however got the floor and spoke, in brief, as follows:

### OPPOSITION ON FLOOR

"The statement of comrade Rubicki is untrue. While the Communist League of America (Opposition) is undoubtedly outside the Communist Party against our wish and action, because it disagrees with the policies of its leaders, it still recognizes the Communist Party as the incarnation of the ideals of communism which live in spite of the actions of the leaders of the party. Comrade Rubicki is challenged to prove that we, by word, writ or deed in any way are against communism. Even if this statement were true, which it is not, the call for the conference specifies that all organizations 'regardless of the affiliations to unions or political parties' are invited. Would that mean that the Democratic, Republican or Socialist parties or their controlled organizations would be allowed to send representatives and the Opposition not permitted? Unity is the need of the movement; rally the workers behind the Communist Party and T. U. U. L."

Rubicki constantly hurried the delegates and begrudged them a few words and demanded that a vote be taken. Discussion was for the moment cut short.

"All those in favor of the motion that the delegates of the Communist League of America (Opposition) not be seated, raise their hands". Two hands were

is too discredited and that therefore we don't even have to think of it is wrong.

Not enough attention was paid to penetration of the shops. Our few shop nuclei became barren, impotent. They lost any ability to conduct independent strike struggles. He also spoke on other party work, but I noted these points as of major interest in the attitude and development of the party.

Siskind spoke in support of the draft resolution of Section Two which laid out a plan of work for the next four months. "The methods of shock troops" are to be applied, and concentration is to be directed in the four months plan on two needle trades buildings to be selected by the union and section bureau, one dock and the Nabisco company. Shop and building nuclei are to be built at these points—with shock troop methods.

These are some of the aims set forth by the resolution for four months activity. The resolution also dealt with the work and proposals regarding Negro work, unemployment and tenant leagues, bureaucracy in the section, Y. C. L., etc. By way of contrast there is a good deal to be said concerning future hopes and the plan, as can be seen by the resolution's statement of failure on shop work and other activity in the past. It said:

"We failed: (1) to build shop nuclei; (2) to expand existing shop nuclei; (3) lack of individual activity; (4) failure to carry on work in company union shops; (5) non-coordination between section and union; (6) failure to participate actively in the fur strike; (7) failure to recruit members into the to build party during the course of the strike."

Readers of *The Militant* on the basis of Siskind's report and excerpts from the section resolution will be able to note the extent to which the party bureaucrats have learned from the criticisms and advice from the Left Opposition and *The Militant*, and the great extent to which the party still fails to set forth correct policies and persists in a false line.

—A PARTY MEMBER.

raised. Rubicki blinked in amazement, counted again. There were yet two.

"All those opposed." . . .

Three hands were raised. Rubicki went pale with horror. It was bad enough that he had had to sit on the same committee with a "renegade", but to have that committee go down and recommend the seating of the delegates of the Communist League of America was more than flesh could stand. Three to two the credentials committee stood, for seating the delegates of the Left Opposition.

### RUBICKI IN FRENZY

Rubicki now became interested in further discussion. The Negro delegate, Williams, was evidently a new party member and instinctively he reacted to the proposals of the Left Opposition for unity. Upon him all the attention of Rubicki was turned. Rubicki was in a frenzy. The delegate of the Left Opposition, calm, had no difficulty in refuting Rubicki's arguments. Rubicki had to dig deep into the sewers of slander and demagoguery in order to bully the Negro delegate into voting to unseat the delegates of the Left Opposition.

The Committee then stood three to two on the question of seating the Opposition. A demand for a minority report was voted down—a Jeffersonian prejudice; it is all right for left wingers to ask such rights from reactionary labor unions, but quite different when the Opposition demands it from the party bureaucrats.

### OPPOSITION'S PROGRAM

Meantime, down below the work of the conference had begun. During the discussion, comrade Oehler of the Opposition had put forth the position of the Communist League; for the six hour day and five day week without reduction in pay; for social insurance; for the extension of long term credits to the Soviet Union and development of economic relations between the United States and the U. S. S. R.; for unity of the workers; for the ultimate goal of the proletarian revolution. Oehler's remarks were received with manifest applause by the delegates. Following him, Gebert party district organizer, spoke.

Gebert's speeches never vary, especially against the "Trotskyites"; the same adjectives, verbs, nouns, adverbs, etc. He scarcely allows himself to give order to his words of what he would like to be "burning scorn", but he only succeeds in boring his audience. Maybe there is merit in Gebert's methods. Since he will never discover any new proofs of the "renegacy" of the Left Opposition, he will also not be guilty of deviations.

### THE MACHINE "REPAIRED"

Finally the report of the credentials committee was called for. Rubicki reported and scarcely allowed himself time to mention the number of delegates, 320, before he attacked the "renegades". The slip-up of earlier in the day was not to be repeated. The machine had been repaired, oiled and put again into first class shape, but in spite of all this, the attempts at steam-rolling had quite a bit of resistance. The unprecedented refusal of a minority report abashed even a number of party comrades. "When 'Noes' were called for, there was quite a sprinkling of them throughout the hall.

Some of the die-hards then arose and demanded that the unseated delegates leave the hall. The bureaucrats thought better of it, the action would be too

obvious, and our support was not negligible. The die-hards, who plainly did not have much support from the floor, were quieted.

During all this hub-bub the delegates from the Left Opposition received whispered words of encouragement from workers. Their attitude was admiration of the more advanced communists and their sincere proposals, so obviously in place. The Opposition demand for unity aroused many of the workers. Our support was larger than ever before. In spite of the methods of the bureaucrats, we advise all workers, especially those who supported our seating, to remain in the Unemployed Conference for these, among other, reasons: (1) It is the only conference for unemployment relief under the leadership of the revolutionary party; (2) To fight from the inside for the seating of the Left Opposition in the best interests of the immediate and historical needs of the working class.— C. C.

## The Bureaucracy in the I.W.O.

The lengths to which the Stalinist bureaucracy will go in order to prevent workers from discussing the vital problems of the revolutionary movement has recently been demonstrated in Chicago.

At the last meeting of the John Reed branch of the Chicago International Workers' Order, the educational committee brought in a proposal to have among the speakers at the branch meetings comrade Hugo Oehler, of the Left Opposition, to speak on the Five Year Plan.

The Stalinist watch-dog in the branch is the party functionary, Sam Hammersmark, who has apparently left his best days behind him and carried his worst ones forward. Upon the proposal being made, Hammersmark, at the end of a long discussion, announced that if the branch voted to allow "this gentleman" to speak, the party would mobilize to break up the meeting and to see to it that comrade Oehler did not speak. Under the influence of this papal decree, a number of votes were cast against the proposal by members who were favorable to the idea originally. Even then, the vote stood 12 to 12, so that only the vote of the chairman decided finally in favor of submitting to threats of Stalinist hoodlumery. Some of the workers who voted against Oehler speaking said that they knew the Left Opposition was not counter-revolutionary, but that in order to have peace in the branch they would vote against his lecture.

Such a stand, while understandable, is highly unfortunate. To obtain "peace" in the movement by swallowing the insults and despotic arbitrariness of a high-handed Stalinist functionary is one good way of destroying the movement. Only the most stubborn resistance to such scandalous methods, which strike for the "peace" of the graveyard, can deliver the movement from its present state of confusion and impotence which Stalinism has introduced into it.

Additional issues of the *International Bulletin* have already been received and are now being translated into English. Send subscriptions to the *International Bulletin*, 84 East 10th St., New York, N. Y.

International Bulletin No. 7 of the Left Opposition is now out. This issue contains documentary material on the German Left Opposition and statements by Leon Trotsky, as well as other material of interest.

## New International Bulletin Out on Sale

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