

The Jailed Marine Workers & the I.L.D.

Soderberg Explains the Disruptive Role of the Stalinists in the Defense Negotiations

(Continued from page 1)

turned us down with the excuse that they did "not want to reopen friendly relations with Soderberg". He told me to "forget it." After some discussion it was decided that Brodsky call on Sabatino with a view of cooperating as an attorney and that the I. L. D. get in touch with the committee. To date, Brodsky has not called on Sabatino nor Fishman. From this date, November 15th to January 19th and two days before we were scheduled to go to trial, nothing more was heard from the I. L. D.

On January 19th, Stern, Organizer-Secretary of the New York district of the I. L. D. called and saw me here in prison. He said the I. L. D. had sent him to offer the services of that organization. I pointed out to him that we were going to trial in 48 hours so what could we do now? He stated that he had been too busy with other cases. As far as he personally was concerned, he had just arrived from Pittsburgh where he had been at the time of our arrest and therefore did not even know we were arrested until his arrival in New York a couple of days ago. How sincere this individual was can be judged by the fact that at that very moment was resting in my pocket a letter written to some friend of mine dated New York City, Nov. 25th, with an official I. L. D. letterhead and telling my friends that "Soderberg has associated himself with some racketeers", was "an enemy of the workers" and finally that "this is not an I. L. D. case" and warning my friends to "keep hands off." I knew he was lying when he spoke to me but I did not want to do anything that would prevent the I. L. D. from joining with the committee in the defense. I told him that I was still ready and willing to accept the I. L. D. in conjunction with the committee. A few hours later an attorney arrived bringing with

him a statement drawn up by Carl Hacker, N. Y. District Organizer of the I. L. D., which in effect asked us to dissolve the committee and discharge the Attorneys Sabatino and Fishman. We pointed out to him that it would be against all ethics and principles to do so now but in order that no one should say that we turned any defense offer down, we would be willing to accept the I. L. D. attorney as associate counsel if that would be satisfactory to our attorneys. That evening I sent a letter to Stern informing him that I was willing to go to any extent to make this a real united front of the defense.

I stated, however, that I would not under any circumstances tolerate a dual defense movement. I endeavored in my letter to make all kinds of concessions in order to leave the door wide open for the I. L. D. to come in. The following day, Mr. Buitenkant, the I. L. D. attorney, arrived and we had a discussion. I asked him to explain the previous actions of the I. L. D. where they had spurned us and even referred to me as a stool pigeon. In reply, he stated that they had been mistaken, that their previous actions were erroneous but that they now were willing to rectify the errors.

I asked him to leave, so the defendants could discuss the matter. I was warned during this discussion by both Bunker and Trajer that the I. L. D. was not sincere in this offer. I refused to believe it at the time. I could not conceive of an organization playing with the very lives of three workers. I could not imagine the extent of their irresponsibility and treachery. How correct Bunker and Trajer were later events have proven.

Later Buitenkant returned and shortly after, Sabatino and Fishman arrived. We informed Buitenkant that we could not and would not supplant our present attorneys nor discharge the committee that had worked faithfully for us. My stand was that I was still willing to ac-

cept I. L. D. attorneys as associate counsel with Sabatino as chief attorney, providing arrangements could be made with Sabatino and Buitenkant. It soon became evident, however, that this was impossible due to the obvious belligerent and domineering manner of Buitenkant towards Sabatino. He informed Sabatino that he did not understand the case, knew nothing how to defend it, etc. It should be borne in mind that Sabatino had gone through the case carefully several times but as far as Buitenkant was concerned, he had not even looked up the indictment and certainly had not asked us what it was all about. As Brodsky stated, "It is an ideal I. L. D. case." "We have the dynamite," "We have the workers framed," "And we have the stool pigeon".

That is all the I. L. D. knows about the case to date, yet an attorney that has spent three months working on the case does not know "how to defend it." It was evident that we could come to no arrangement after this. The following day we went to trial and a mistrial was declared. Upon returning to my cell I found a telegram from the I. L. D. offering to take over the defense. Although I at this time was certain that the desires of the I. L. D. leadership was not so much to defend us as it was to disrupt the defense committee, I still wanted to keep the welcome sign up and wired the I. L. D. that my stand was still unchallenged, i. e., I was still willing to accept the I. L. D. attorney with our attorneys, but that there was a danger of a disagreement among the defendants and that there still was time to fight, in view of the mistrial.

This is a true picture of happenings since our arrest and up till January 25th. On that date, the official organ of the party comes out with a vicious attack upon the Marine Workers Defense Committee and accuses the committee of betraying the defendants. As one of those defendants I state openly and knowing the full meaning of my statement, that the betrayal is at the hands of the I. L. D. leadership. Not only have they betrayed the three defendants and viciously stabbed them in the back, but they have betrayed all that is fine, that is decent, that is sacred in labor's principle.

They have shown themselves to the rest of the working class as open collaborators with the prosecution, first at the time of the arrest when they left us at the mercy of the police and treacherously sneaked away and actually assisted the authorities with their thinly veiled provocative articles in their press, and secondly, when they, under excess of wanting to correct these past errors, came in and came with one purpose only—that of smashing our defense. In their eyes we are but political pawns. Our lives mean nothing to them. They are not concerned. They have played a game in this case so despicable, so utterly anti-working class that it makes one wonder and ask, why? What are their purposes?

Of one thing I am sure, if we are acquitted at our trial it will not be because of the I. L. D. but rather in spite of the I. L. D. There is one gratifying feature about this case. For the first time in modern labor history has it been found possible for Anarchists, Syndicalists, I. W. W. and Communists of different factions and A. F. of L. trade unions, to sit at the same table and discuss ways and means of freeing members of their class. This is an achievement but it is precisely this achievement that the party bureaucrats—with their blind, mad, factional rage—are trying to split. They tried, by lies, to stampede the workers at our arrest. They did not succeed. They cannot understand it. I ask comrades, workers everywhere: Support the Marine Workers Defense Committee which is the only body that has the full and undivided confidence of the defendants.

JACK SODERBERG,
Tombs Prison
February 4, 1932

N. Y. Open Forum

The subject of comrade Shachtman's lecture on Saturday, February 13, held before an audience of about fifty workers, was "Imperialist Aggression in China—the danger of War". The facts and arguments adduced by Comrade Shachtman forecasted a brilliant confirmation of the forecast made by comrade Trotsky in November, in his pamphlet *Germany—the Key to the International Situation*—"there is no threat of an immediate and acute danger to the existence of the Soviet Union from the Far East."

While the *Daily Worker* and the Stalinists saw in the Manchurian events principally a series of maneuvers against the Soviet Union, the Japanese imperialists were preparing the attack on Shanghai. With the realization of their immediate objective in Manchuria, they shifted their scene of operations southward, leaving the *Daily Worker* analysis hanging in mid-air. Nothing on Shanghai, the beginning of an assault against the Chinese Soviet Republic, that mythical creation of bankrudd Stalinism.

While the cannon roar in Shanghai and the civil population is ruthlessly slaughtered the suave diplomats meet in Geneva to discuss disarmament! To this orgy of hypocrisy and jockeying for favorable position comes that bright star of Soviet foreign policy—Litvinoff. Not to be outdone by Grandi, the Fascist spokesman, he proposes as the only solution to the problem of war—complete disarmament! But not to seem unpractical, he is willing to accept less as a beginning.

So clear was the opportunistic policy of Stalinism at Geneva, so evidently incorrect was the Stalinist analysis of the Manchurian and Shanghai events, that there was no discussion in opposition to comrade Shachtman's presentation of the point of view of the Left Opposition.

ORGANIZATION NOTES

Our subscription drive is getting underway. That there are real opportunities for extension of circulation of the Left Opposition Press is indicated by letters we have received recently. We quote from one received from a comrade from Pittsburgh: "What I learned for a short while reading *The Militant* and the paper from Greece called *PALI TON TAXEON* (Cress Struggle) I never learned for six years reading the *Empros*, the Greek language paper of the official Communist Party of America. I received your Greek paper *COMMUNISTES* which was sent to me, and found it very interesting." The comrade subscribes to *The Militant* for *COMMUNISTES* and orders some literature.

From a Chicago comrade we received the following: "Please find enclosed money order for \$2. for renewal of subscription to *The Militant*. I am out of work since May last year. The little savings I had are gone and I live on charity at the present time. That has never happened to me before. The only thing they could not take away from me is the same old hatred which I feel for our wonderful order of society, the capitalist system. I hope the comrades are able to keep *The Militant* going as a weekly."

This should be a good incentive to *The Militant* builders. We have had among the most active ones of the recent months such comrades as Hedlund from Minneapolis, Sacharow from Chicago, Schechet from Boston and Goodman from Philadelphia. Comrade Goodman is now going to serve his term in Prison but we expect the Philadelphia branch to follow his fine example and to keep up this work. And we count surely on

more comrades joining the ranks of *The Militant* builders. The New York branch has elected a special committee in charge of the drive. Each member is required to bring in at least one subscription. The record of accomplishments will be kept on the bulletin board. This branch expects to be in the lead. Comrade Tom Stamm is giving special attention to the subscription drive in his capacity of being in charge of *The Militant* circulation.

Our Second National Tour
This week, comrade Grotzler is starting out on his national tour. Public meetings have been arranged in the various cities which will serve to further bring the views of the Left Opposition on the burning issues of the class struggle before the American workers. It will serve to give added life and added strength to the branches as well as to make more firm their contacts with the Centre. A couple of big features of this tour are to be a planned address over the radio from St. Louis and a debate with A. C. Townley at Minneapolis.

The subject of Grotzler's meetings will be in the main center around the issue of the international movement, and particularly of Germany. Comrade Trotsky calls Germany at present the key to the international situation. It is decisively so. We propose to follow up regularly in *The Militant* columns with information of all developments in Germany and endeavor to make a searching analysis into the events and perspectives. We propose that in addition to Grotzler's meetings the branches should wherever possible bring the subject forward at open forums and public meetings arranged by them. They should also, when an opportunity is available, endeavor to have our comrades speak on this subject before labor organizations. We expect the situation in Germany to become a subject for serious discussion by our membership as there are many important lessons to be learned in such discussions. Above all spread this opportunity to utilize to should comrade Trotsky's pamphlet on Germany far and wide.

BOOK REVIEW

Unemployed Councils in St. Petersburg in 1906 by Sergel Malyshev Workers Library Publishers.

This pamphlet is an interesting and popular account of the unemployed movement led by the St. Petersburg Bolsheviks in 1906. Although the situation in which this movement developed is radically different from that which surrounds the unemployed here of today, nevertheless one reads these pages with the hope of finding some general experiences which are instructive for the Communists at present. And to be sure, this is to be found in the tactic used by the Bolsheviks in involving the employed workers in the fight for the interests of the unemployed.

The unemployed council movement in St. Petersburg developed on the declining wave of the 1905 revolution, which had already attained its climax in the Moscow uprising of December. The fright which the Russian rulers had experienced as a result of the revolutionary actions of the proletariat plus the well organized movement of the unemployed enabled the Bolsheviks to wrest some concessions from the St. Petersburg city Duma for the unemployed. The unemployed situation itself had been artificially created by the bourgeoisie through a lockout of the workers in the last months of 1905 in retaliation against their revolutionary demands and actions. In the beginning the St. Petersburg Soviet had assumed the responsibility of caring for these tens of thousands of locked out workers, but after its suppression the Bolsheviks commenced the organization of the unemployed councils. Unlike the present unemployed councils which consist of all unemployed who wish to join them, the St. Petersburg unemployed councils were representative bodies. The unemployed workers elected their delegates who composed the unemployed councils. The first unemployed council consisted of thirty delegates.

The author relates how after its organization he and the president of the Unemployed Council went to Lenin to report what had been done to organize the council. "Vladimir Ilyitch heard what we had said, and then said he had some doubts as to whether the Unemployed Council alone could fulfill its program by its own efforts."

Lenin told them: "Through this organization alone you cannot influence the bourgeoisie; you will not be strong enough, and the unemployed workers themselves will not be able to develop this work on a broad proletarian class basis. Therefore, you must immediately extend the Unemployed Council to include representatives of those employed in all the factories and mills in St. Petersburg. You must now begin to agitate in the factories and mills for this purpose, and immediately arrange for the election of these representatives. The Unemployed Council must consist not only of 30 representatives of the unemployed, but of 100 or 150 from all districts, from all factories and mills. This will provide the unemployed with a genuine proletarian leading body which will really be able to exert pressure successfully on the City Duma and on the bourgeoisie generally."

In accordance with Lenin's suggestions, the organizers proceeded with the further formation of the Unemployed Councils.

While the suggestions of Lenin are not applicable in their exact form for the unemployed movement in the United States, nevertheless, the essential idea, that is, that the unemployed themselves cannot compel the bourgeoisie to alleviate their condition to any appreciable extent, but must gain the support of the employed workers, remains particularly true today. In St. Petersburg where the workers had already experienced the organization of Soviets, it was proper to go to the factories to obtain the support of the employed workers. In the United States, unfortunately, this cannot yet be done, that is, not on a mass scale, for the workers are not ready for it. But it is possible to go to the trade unions. It is possible to fight within the trade unions for their participation in the unemployed movement. This of course requires a correct trade union policy and a correct unemployment program, neither of which the Stalinists possess. The proposal of the Left Opposition to organize the unemployed councils on the united front basis is in accord with Lenin's idea. This would transform them from their present feeble and insignificant state into organizations of influence, really capable of conducting a fight to help the unemployed, and develop the class consciousness of the proletariat.

The author traces the progress of the St. Petersburg Unemployed Council and the successes it was able to win until its liquidation when the reaction became very black. Of interest is the story of how the Bolsheviks were able to finance a whole series of strikes with funds obtained by the unemployed council from the City Duma. This was done among other ways by listing the strikers as unemployed. The author narrates a number of other interesting occurrences which makes this pamphlet very readable.

-G. R.

FOR YOUR LIBRARY

Books by Leon Trotsky

<p>THE DRAFT PROGRAM OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL I. A Criticism of Fundamentals Introduction by J. P. Cannon 140 pages hard paper cover 35c</p>	<p>2. THE STRATEGY OF THE WORLD REVOLUTION (Part 2 of the "Draft Program") 86 pages, two-colored paper cover 25c Introduction by Max Shachtman</p>
<p>THE SPANISH REVOLUTION 30 pages, paper cover 10c</p>	<p>THE PERMANENT REVOLUTION 208 page book—cloth bound 1.00 paper bound 50c</p>
<p>THE HISTORY OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION Translated by Max Eastman Vol. I—The Overthrow of Czarism Special price for shareholders—\$3.00 For members of the Communist League of America \$3.50</p>	

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AFTER THE R.R. WAGE CUT

In our previous article on the Railroad Brotherhoods, we quoted a United Press report to the effect that on Jan. 14, Railroad capital and Railroad labor "sat down across a conference table determined to provide dividends for rail investors and work for unemployed rail men."

Accordingly, the recent Chicago railroad wage conference had a two-fold purpose. First, to provide more profit for the millionaire investors in railroad bonds and stocks, more money for the rich who do not need it and did not earn it, and this money was to be taken from the poor railroad workers who needed it badly for food, clothing and rent, the very necessities of life. Well, the first purpose of the wage conference was accomplished by taking \$215,000,000 from the rail workers wages and giving it to the railroad capitalists. But what happened to the second question on the conference program, to provide work for the unemployed rail workers? That was only a bluff in the first place. The Brotherhood misleaders, who have nothing in common with the workers anyway, never had any intention from the beginning of getting any work for its unemployed members by accepting a voluntary wage cut for those who were unemployed. Ignorant, incompetent and overpaid as these Brotherhood officials are, they nevertheless know, and admit in their final agreement with the railroads, that wage cuts will not create more work but diminish it.

Complete Harmony prevails at the Wage-Cutting Meet

According to T. C. Cashen, one of the participants at the conference, there was no disagreement between the Chiefs on the question of taking the ten per cent cut for the men. The only difference of opinion which arose in the conference was over "the policy of procedure". The policy agreed upon was to take the cut for the men right there and then. The Chiefs did not want their cronies Dan Willard to wait until they put the wage cut through the mill of the Watson-Parker Law, because that might have delayed the cut for another thirty or sixty days. As a matter of fact the Brotherhood Chiefs were so anxious to see worked overtime on Saturday, January 30, in order to get their letter of acceptance in shape for presentation to the railroads on Sunday, Jan. 31st, so the cut could be put into effect on Monday, February 1st. And to show by their own words the brazen betrayal of the railroad workers at this fake wage conference at Chicago by the Brotherhood leaders, we will quote in full their letter to Willard accepting everything the railroads asked for. Read it carefully:

The Palmer House
Chicago, Illinois
January 31, 1932

"Mr. Daniel Willard
Chairman, Committee of Nine
Railroad Presidents
Chicago, Illinois

"After a painstaking review of the proposals and arguments which have been ably and forcibly presented in behalf of the railroads, we feel compelled to reiterate our previous opinion that as a matter of pure right and justice, the railway employees could not be called upon to agree to a ten per cent reduction of their meagre earnings. Nor do we wish to give any assent to the theory that wage deductions are to be regarded ordinarily as the appropriate means to promote prosperity. We cannot believe that the public welfare is advanced by reducing the purchasing power of labor. "But, with a profound sense of our

responsibility to the workers whom we represent and our country, we have weighed the urgent needs of the railroad industry and the demands of the public welfare in this present unparalleled situation against the individual sacrifices requested of the railroad employees. In the hope that our action may improve the health of our industry, may improve the cooperative relations of management and employees, may stimulate a revival of business, and may advance the general welfare, we have decided to accept the proposal of the railroads to the employees whom we represent, that—

"Ten per cent shall be deducted from each pay check for a period of one year beginning February 1, 1932:

"Basic rates shall remain as at present:
"This arrangement shall terminate automatically Jan. 31, 1933.

"We attach the following conditions to this acceptance of your proposal:

"(1) That the formal notices served by the railroads whom you represent upon the organizations of employees whom we represent, seeking a fifteen per cent reduction in present rates of pay, shall be withdrawn and further proceedings thereunder discontinued.

"(2) That the railroads whom you represent will agree that without attaching any limitation upon the use of funds derived from this pay roll deduction, the participating railroads will make an earnest and sympathetic effort to maintain and increase railroad employment.

"We trust the foregoing proposition will meet with your favorable consideration.

Very truly yours,
"(Signed) D. B. Robertson
Chairman, Railway Labor
Executives' Association."

We believe that the above letter constitutes the most open and shameful betrayal of the railroad workers in the annals of the Railway Labor Movement. The two feeble conditions incorporated in the letter and numbered, (1) and (2), are both pure fakes, and are merely put in there by the labor skates to cover up their treachery to the workers.

The request for a fifteen per cent cut referred to in condition (1) was never a serious proposal in the first place. If it had been, it would have been put into effect. In all probability it was a suggestion by the Brotherhood leaders to enable them to make the workers believe that their leaders saved them something. As a matter of fact, everyone knew, who studied the matter, that what the railroads really wanted was a ten per cent cut and they got it. Press reports released at the very beginning of the conference on January 14, stated so frankly.

In condition (2) where the Brotherhood Executives stipulate "an earnest and sympathetic effort to maintain and increase railroad employment", they got nothing. The railroads agreed to two things and those two they got, namely: A 10 per cent wage cut, and the offer on the part of the labor leaders of cooperation with the railroad management. Items (4) in the final agreement reads as follows:

"The parties unite in expressing unqualified approval of whole-hearted cooperation between management and employees and agree to do everything they can in support of this policy."

The only thing the railroad workers got out of the Chicago wage conference, was another costly lesson on the bankruptcy of its overpaid bureaucracy with its class cooperation policy and the useless character of the craft system of organization.

(To Be Continued) —A. E.

The Sims Murder

The terror of the boss-class in Kentucky knows no bounds. Not content with brutal repressions and beatings, they have resorted to murder. Cold, planned, premeditated murder.

On Wednesday morning, February 18, William Simms, nineteen year old organizer of the National Miners Union and member of the Young Communist League was shot down by deputy thug, Orbin Miller in the employ of the Rockefeller controlled mine interests in Pineville, Kentucky. He died a few hours later. Lawson Green, a N. M. U. organizer, who was with him when the shooting took place was arrested. As Simms lay dying in a Knox County hospital the inhuman district attorney kept plying him with questions. All urgings from hospital nurses and friends of the young organizer, to have that torture cease, proved futile. When the district attorney finished his inquisition the bed was saturated through and through with the red blood of the young miner and Communist. The end came a short while after.

Murderer Orbin Miller who went through a formal arrest was later released by county Judge Baker of Barbourville. The reason given being that he (the deputy murderer) shot in the defense of himself or his accomplice. "So it didn't matter." But it does matter! It matters to the starving and struggling miners in Kentucky. It matters to all those impoverished southern workers, black and white, fighting for the right to organize. It matters to the entire militant working class.

Lawson's killer Orbin Miller was rejected. His testimony was rejected because he was a miner. His testimony was rejected as invalid because he dared tell the miners of Kentucky-Tennessee of their serf-like existence. His testimony was rejected because he dared tell them organize. In the County Court of Barbourville, Kentucky, Orbin Miller's testimony proved valid and just because he has a general reputation as a killer. Because he served a sentence in jail for robbing the Cumberland Gap post office. This degenerate's testimony was placed against the testimony of Green Lawson, miner and organizer and the court decided in favor of the degenerate, the killer.

From the Needle Strike Front

(Continued from page 1)
workers; openly or behind the backs of the workers these class-collaborators and parasites will give up what still remains of the conditions that the dressmakers won through many bloody strikes. It is this danger of leaving the conduct of the strike in the hands of the Schlesinger machine and their Lovestone helpers that makes imperative for the Left wing to call for:

(1) UNITED PICKET LINES. (2) FOR IMMEDIATE FUSION OF THE TWO STRIKE COMMITTEES. (3) FOR A CONFERENCE TO CONSIDER THE SETTLEMENTS JOINTLY.

The banner of the Left wing can again be raised high among the thousands of organized and unorganized dressmakers in the struggle for unity, in the effort to bring about one Union, in the fight for better conditions for the needle workers. The great mass of dressmakers will march under the Left wing banner when they see it unfurled for unity.