

# ORGANIZATION NOTES

The ideas of the Left Opposition are making their way despite all obstacles. Our members are learning to swim against the stream and their persistent efforts are bringing substantial, if not spectacular, results. The manner in which the Minneapolis branch carries on its activities is a good example. It is one of our oldest branches which was organized at the inception of the Left Opposition in America.

The Minneapolis branch has certain advantages. Before coming to the support of the Left Opposition many of its members had been deeply rooted in the labor movement. This record affords them respect in the minds of the workers. It means also a degree of experienced leadership already established. Our membership there cannot easily be ignored by the trade union bureaucracy nor by the official party functionaries. The slanders of the latter have therefore also been less effective.

Comrades from Minneapolis have made several trips covering the approximate distance of 150 miles up the head of the lakes. Each time some small measure of progress was made. Now there are more direct results to show. As *The Militant* readers already know, comrade Bloomberg of Duluth became a convinced supporter of the Left Opposition. He set to work ably and energetically, organizing a public meeting and comrades Cowl and Skoglund from Minneapolis made another trip to Duluth to speak together with Bloomberg at the rousing meeting there. Our Minneapolis branch is now considering the project of sending an organizer to Duluth to follow up and build the movement there.

In the present circulation campaign the Minneapolis branch has attained excellent results. The manner in which it carries the campaign through it is about the best. The outstanding feature is the fact that the membership participates collectively, the new members and the younger comrades and the more experienced membership all taking part and scoring their points.

The branch has its weaknesses too. For example, it allowed itself to be too easily out-manuevered by the Stalin petty functionaries from direct participation in a Mooney Conference organized by them. But that only contributed subsequently to the complete stagnation of the Mooney movement in Minneapolis. Such out-manuevering is not likely to happen often. The fact that our members are deeply rooted in the labor movement makes their participation necessary. It has also made possible that they could be the driving force in many serious attempts of the organized workers to guard their interests more effectively. Our comrades played a leading role into local railroad workers' council, as well as in the movement in opposition to the A. F. of L. bureaucrats. The lesson in Minneapolis membership has learned quite well, that is to utilize every opportunity for propaganda for our views. The branch has thereby been able slowly and persistently to increase its membership.

**NEWARK, N. J.—**  
In this city, as reported, we now have an active functioning branch. It is our youngest and its membership is not yet very large. It has, however, made an excellent start. First of all, it is beginning by sending in prompt remittance of all materials received and for literature distributed. And that is of quite serious account in the revolutionary movement today.

The Newark branch, immediately upon its formation, organized a public lecture at which comrade Louis Basky spoke. That was the beginning. The intention is to follow up with more lectures. Since then it has in a systematic and planned manner visited meetings of workers and of workers' organizations, well supplied with our literature. A regular sale of *The Militant* is being established. New subscribers have been turned in, and already a considerable amount of our pamphlets have been disposed of. The Newark branch has thus made a good beginning.

**N Y ACTIVITIES**  
The past winter months have witnessed a substantial increase in practically all activities of the New York branch. The issuance of *Unser Kampf*, *Young Spartacus* and *Communists* drew a number of the comrades into real active work. Distribution of the papers has meant added burdens for the membership. In spite of that the younger comrades distributed their paper before many Y. C. I. units and other places. The Jewish comrades literally spread their paper far and wide. "Communists" created a stir among the Greek workers. Practically all outstanding news stands and meetings of Jewish workers have been covered.

The acquisition of the group of Greek workers, the formation of the Spartacus Youth Club and the *Unser Kampf* Arbeiter Club have attracted new and good elements to the branch. Most of these new comrades have already partaken of considerable activity and helped to some extent to relieve the weight of the whole.

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work from the comrades who bore it until now. With these additional members, the branch is already planning to increase the number of open air meetings over those held last year. Two years ago the branch was able to hold but one meeting per week. Last year we succeeded in holding two per week, and this year there will be an attempt to have three. Through this medium, much literature was disposed of last summer; expectations are for an increase this summer.

The weekly forums have been quite well attended, some weeks drawing a capacity crowd. The most successful single activity has been the class in the "History of the Communist International", led by comrade Shachtman. While advertised as a class, it has in reality almost become a second weekly open forum, judging by the attendance. From thirty-five to fifty people have attended every session, giving rise to prospects for several classes next fall. The class in Marxism, conducted by comrade Swabeck, entered into a thorough discussion of important works of Marx. Comrades of the class were drawn into a closer study of these works by acting as reporters, thus enlivening interest and argument. From the experiences with classes thus far, the N. Y. branch should be ready to start a "Workers' School" of its own, next fall.

The last week added another activity in the form of a special drive for the Marine Workers' Defense Committee. The pledge of the national organization for an additional \$100 has been met. Four open air defense meetings were held by the Youth Club and branch in the past two weeks, with from two to four dollars collected at each meeting; and interest and sympathy with the frame-up victims evidenced at each meeting. On Saturday and Sunday, April 9th and 10th general collections were held. The Spartacus Youth Club members soon found the technique of how to get something in the collection boxes and enthusiastically did their bit. Members are visiting unions and other workers' organizations and getting results—if not always from the leadership at least from the rank and file.

The main problem of the branch remains building up its contact with the Party and sympathizers around it.

## Militant Drive at Half Way Mark

With the issue of *The Militant* the subscription campaign is half over. Although we got under way slowly, we are now moving ahead. Subscriptions and renewals are coming in. Last week we reported 72 subs and renewals. This week the figure stands at 87. The staff of *Militant* builders has risen from 17 to 21.

The standing of the branches is substantially the same as last week:

New York	32
Minneapolis	24
Chicago	7
Boston	4
St. Louis	1
Newark	1
Philadelphia	1
Montreal	1
Miscellaneous	16

New York and Minneapolis branches accounted for fourteen of the fifteen subs reported last week. No other branch reported. What is the matter, Chicago, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Philadelphia, Newark, Boston, Montreal? Are you going to let New York and Minneapolis have it all their own way?

And what is the matter with Cleveland, Youngstown, Kansas City, New Haven, Los Angeles, Pittsburgh? Are you going to be left out of it? There are only six weeks left to June 1st. Get busy.  
The race between New York and Minneapolis is getting closer and hotter. Last week the difference between them was ten subs. This week it has been cut to eight. Will Minneapolis make good its promises to give New York a drubbing? (Confidentially—New York is getting worried.) It is understood, of course, that we are strictly impartial.

The Minneapolis team standing (\$1 is one point) for the week ending April 6th was:

Team No 1—24 3-4 points  
Team No 2—17 1-2 points  
The branch total is 42 1-4 points. This total does not include the subs the Minneapolis branch is steadily sending in for *Unser Kampf* and *Young Spartacus*.

A new bundle order was reported last week from Duluth, Minnesota, by comrade Carl Cowl of our Minneapolis branch. Verily, this is a branch! No other bundle orders were reported. What is wrong, comrades? Newsstands, bookstores, which will carry *The Militant* exist. They must be found out. And then they must be revisited. If comrades will send in lists for their cities, we will run them in *The Militant*. This should help.

No requests from out of town were received last week for bundles of sample copies for free distribution. Yet it is astonishingly easy to make these distributions. In the needle trades market in New York last week four comrades distributed 1900 *Militants*, *Unser Kampf* and leaflets in fifteen minutes. A comrade who went out on another occasion to make a free distribution of back numbers was kept breathlessly whirling around, trying to put *Militants* into the workers' outstretched hands. Last summer in Cleveland hundreds of copies were distributed in this way. And these distributions of back numbers increased the subsequent sale of current issues. Comrades, it can be done. It is being done to some extent. But not enough. Order back numbers now!

Are you comrades taking full advantage, as an inducement for getting subs, of the appearance in *The Militant* of ex-

# LETTERS FROM THE MILITANTS

## Two Reformist Meets

**MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.**  
Two state conventions of rival reformist parties were held last week in the Twin Cities—the Socialist Party on April 28th at Labor Headquarters, Minneapolis, and the Farmer Labor Party on April 29th and 30th in the St. Paul Auditorium.

To give a brief political characterization of these assemblies, it can be said that aside from the difference in size and excitement, both have adopted on almost identical program of practical reforms with vague references to a new society.

The Farmer-Labor Party of Minnesota is unique in American politics in being the only third party to elect a governor (Floyd B. Olson), state and congressional officials and a U. S. Senator (Shipstead). It is not surprising, therefore, that the St. Paul auditorium hall was jammed to the doors (about 1200) with a motley delegation of farmers, bankers, lawyers, labor officials and a sprinkling of rank and file members.

The Socialist Party state gathering of about 50 met in Labor Headquarters, Minneapolis. I say gathering advisedly, since it was not a delegated body, there being no functioning units in the state. All those who "consider themselves as socialists" were invited to attend the state "convention".

While the F. L. P. declared for a "new social system", the S. P. called for "the abolition of capitalism". The S. P. demand for "Unemployment Insurance, full cost to the boss", is countered by the F. L. P. "federal and state unemployment insurance... the industries, corporations... must bear the burden of this protection." The socialist proposals for a graduated income tax with emphasis on the rich takes the form in the F. L. P. platform of a "graduated, progressive income tax, the proceeds to be used to reduce the present tax burden of the farmer and small home owner." They both declare for the old-age pension and the shorter work day.

The only point of real difference in the two parties is the purely parliamentary one of national candidates. The Socialists endorsed Norman Thomas and Mayor Hoan of Milwaukee for the head

of their national ticket. The F. L. P. leaders apparently plan an election deal with the democrats behind Roosevelt in return for state support of the latter for the F. L. P. candidates. Therefore, when Slonim, late committeeman of the S. P. and delegate to the F. L. P. convention in an impassioned speech, threatened to withdraw from the body if the "fusion" measure passed, a storm of railery opened up from the floor. The motion to leave the matter in the hands of the state executive committee finally passed. So the clique in control of this going concern is free to make any deal they care to.

In spite of all the ballyhoo of the liberals there is little indication of a national third party ticket. Julius J. Reiter of Rochester reported a conference of the "National Farmer Labor Party" held at Omaha in February. His heated argument for the endorsement of a third party presidential candidate, or at least, the nomination of F. L. P. presidential electors, fell on deaf ears. The prevailing sentiment, as expressed by numerous speakers, was that the capital of the Party was not to the detriment of the offices already achieved in Minnesota.

Although the S. P. convention elected a state executive, state secretary and state organizer, and some half-hearted speeches were made to stage an S. P. "comeback", there is nothing to indicate that it will not go back to sleep after the elections for another four years... at least in Minnesota. The putting up of a socialist ticket in the event of the F. L. P. endorsement of Roosevelt might give it a spur of life—for the period of the campaign—but little more. I say this in view of the fact that in Minnesota the F. L. P. has completely usurped the functions of the S. P.—in fact, the latter is merely a loose faction of the former.

So much for the news. In next week's *Militant* the writer will attempt to present a political analysis and draw conclusions with regard to the role of the Communists and the Left Opposition.

—CARL COWL.

## Movie Chains Try to Smash Union

**NEW YORK N. Y.**

Sign Writers' Local 230 in New York of the Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators, and Paperhangers of America is a typical A. F. of L. craft union. Its administration is a graft-ridden, business agent-executive board regime. The business agent receives about \$120 a week; the executive board members also receive salaries. A former business agent was expelled because of his open collusion with the bosses; he took money from them and winked at violations of union conditions like an owl which cannot see in the daytime. Such people have no interest in maintaining union wage scales and conditions. Their sole interest is in their weekly checks and in the graft they collect. The workers were aware of this but remained indifferent as long as work was steady. Now they are resentful but helpless and they do not as yet know what to do.

The local has about five hundred members. They are first, second, third, fourth and fifth year apprentices, helpers, mechanics and designers. For the privilege of being an apprentice a worker had to pay the union bureaucrats an initiation fee of from \$5 to \$50; a mechanic \$150; a helper \$500. The union controls about sixty small shops. The other four hundred shops are non-union. Many of the bosses of the union shops are members of the union.

The wage scale was as follows: for apprentices, from the first to fifth year: \$3.15 to \$11.50 a day; for helpers: \$10.50; designers: \$20.00. The helpers constitute a large majority of the workers in the trade.

Through one pretext or another this scale was undercut by the bosses without protest from the workers or the union. The workers did not protest the undercutting of the wage scale because sixty per cent of them were unemployed and those at work were working part time. They were afraid to stir up a

This was the situation when the wage agreement with the bosses expired on March 30th. The union proposed to the bosses a renewal of the wage scale. This was nothing but a gesture as the scale was not being enforced. To ally the unrest of the rank and file the union bureaucrats proposed in addition to the renewal of the wage scale that helpers be permitted to do part of the apprentices' work. This would enable the bosses to lay off some or all of their apprentices and increase the work of the helpers. It is the old A. F. of L. trick of playing off one section of workers against another. The union further proposed the introduction of split time at the discretion of the union and under the control of the union. The time cards of the workers were to be sent weekly to the union headquarters.

To this the bosses replied with proposals of their own. Of the sixty unionized shops some ten or fifteen do work for the moving picture chains: Loew, R. K. O.; Warner Bros., etc. These outfits would like to either employ non-union labor or union labor at open shop rates. Best of all they would like to smash the union. In the present situation they see their opportunity. They have taken the first step.

Upon their instigation the bosses rejected the terms of the union; they want the right to hire and lay-off and fire at will; they want to strike out from the agreement the clause requiring them to get the union's permission for overtime work.

This is important to the shops doing theatrical work. The chains always shoot only by overtime work. The chains produce a 25% wage cut. These terms would reduce the union to a meaningless shell.

The union bureaucrats would have accepted these terms were it not for the dissatisfaction of the rank and file which forced a strike. The strike is now taking place. Picketing is being organized. Acid was thrown on a sign at the Astor Theatre. Twenty shops have settled on the union's terms. But not the shops which get the moving picture chains' orders. They are holding out.

The attempt of the chains to smash the union is reflected in the struggle inside the union. The workers in the shops which get the chains' orders, who are a numerical minority in the union, are more steadily employed than the workers in the other union shops. With sixty per cent of the membership unemployed, this numerical minority almost alone carries the financial burden of the union on its back. It is more outspoken and hostile to the bureaucracy. But the bureaucracy always manages to out-vote it.

The rift between this minority and the bureaucrats supported by a majority of the membership came to a head with the expiration of the wage agreement and the exchange of terms. This theatrical show card minority anxious to continue working was opposed to the strike. It was and is willing to arbitrate with the idea of settling for a ten per cent wage cut. It has no interest in the strike. It has called a secret meeting to discuss plans for the formation of a separate organization independent of local 230, and for a settlement on the basis of a ten per cent wage cut. This extremely short sighted policy will get these workers nowhere. If realized it will break the union, accomplish the aim of the chains and their own isolation, leaving them to the mercies of the powerful chains who will, of course, proceed to lower their living and working conditions even further through additional wage cuts, speed up and lay-offs.

In the ranks of the theatrical show card writers and in the union generally are several Left wing workers. These workers should immediately work out a program and present it to the union membership.

They must explain to the theatrical show card writers that they have embarked on a suicidal course both for themselves and the union as a whole. They must show their fellow workers that this is playing the game of the chains who alone will benefit from it. Against the split they must propose a fighting unity of the whole union against the chains and the bosses for concrete demands to be worked out by the membership.

To the union membership as a whole they must propose as an indispensable prerequisite for the fight against chains a fight against the bureaucracy in the union and its scheme of setting off one section of the workers against another. Instead of split time they must propose the wholly practicable slogan of the six hour day without reduction in pay. And to this they must add unemployment insurance at the expense of the bosses. They must also propose the elimination of the five categories of apprentices since the introduction of machinery and mechanical methods of production have largely eliminated the necessity for skilled use of the brush. Finally they must propose organization of the unorganized shops. As a prerequisite for this they must abolish the initiation fees.

—T. STAMM.

## BACK NUMBERS OF "MILITANT" WANTED

We are preparing files of the *Militant* for binding. We plan to bind in one volume all the issues from Vol. 1, No. 1 to Volume IV No. 12, the last issue of the semi-monthly *Militant*. We are missing the following numbers: Vol. I, No. 1, November 15, 1928. Vol. 2, No. 4, Feb. 18th, 1929; Vol. 3, No. 31; Oct. 1 1930; Vol. 4, No. 2, January 15th, 1931. Vol. 4, No. 10, May 15th, 1931. Will comrades who have these numbers please send them in at once. Just as soon as we receive these numbers we will be able to proceed with our binding plans and offer the bound volumes for sale.

## IN THE CANADIAN MOVEMENT

### The Turn in the Industrial Union

**TORONTO, ONT.**

Before beginning the discussion on the new turn in the Industrial Union policy it is worth while going back to spend a few minutes on its preceding history. While I am limiting my remarks to the Dressmaker local of the Toronto Needle Trades, it was this Union that was first organized and upon which the greatest hopes and possibilities were placed.

The organization of the Industrial Union closely approximated the defeat of the Left wing in the Amalgamated where for over a year the Lefts were in control. The formation of the Dressmaker local, met with good response. Several hundred workers immediately joined. Due mainly to lack of decision and leadership, the union soon began disintegrating.

A year or so later the union was again reorganized on a very much smaller basis. About this time or soon after third period trade union policies were introduced. Unions under reformist leadership became "company unions", strikes called by the reformists were branded as "fake stoppages in the interests of the bosses"—unity of the workers was limited in the slogan of join our union—boring from within the reformist unions was discarded for fear of activating them.

Disintegration and isolation continued and a year later the third period trade union policies were intensified with the addition of the slogan of unity with the workers in their shops, boycott of their organizations.

The strike called by the union had all the earmarks of adventure and failed. True to their colors, the reformists did their part, by sending their members to replace the strikers. The strike called by the International Union which the Industrial Union sabotaged also landed on the rocks.

The net profit of both strikes was that the workers are disgusted and disillusioned, and ignored both unions despite the very bad conditions prevailing in the trade. Mass meetings called by the Industrial Union have dwindled down to hardly more than local meetings, while the attendance at local meetings is very small. The standing of the International is no better.

The delegates to the last congress of the R. I. U. returned with the crepe for the third period policies. Unions under reformist leadership are no longer company unions. Strikes called by the reformists are recognized as strikes that can be developed into real struggles over the heads of the leadership. Boring from within is again accepted. Even the united front from below now includes union proposals made directly to the reformist unions.

Thus far the new turn would seem to indicate a partial return in the direction of real Communist policies. A real Communist turn on the part of the leadership demands open admission before the whole working class and the union of their previous false policies and premises on which they were built. The broadest discussion and lessons are to be drawn. Finally, the placing of the responsibility on the responsible parties, it is needless to remark that the centrists won't do this. For them it suffices to throw the blame vaguely on "certain local leaders."

What lies underneath this new turn?

tracts from comrade Trotsky's latest work on Germany, **WHAT NEXT?** Are you making use of the literature premiums: a free paper bound copy of *The Permanent Revolution* with each \$2-1 year sub of 52 issues; a free copy of *The Strategy of the World Revolution* with each \$1-half year sub of 26 issues; a free copy of any of our 10c pamphlets with each 50c trial sub of 13 issues. Are you making use of the \$2 rate for a combined one year sub to *The Militant* and *Young Spartacus*? Are you using the 25c sub rate for 8 issues which is good only during the period of the drive? The promise of the first half of the drive must be turned into success during the remaining six weeks. We have important tasks to perform. We must put *The Militant* on a sounder financial basis so we can continue without retrenchment the fight for the regeneration of the Party and the Comintern.

If every comrade will take it this way and put his shoulder to the wheel we can move forward. Let us make the growth of the staff of *Militant* builders a criterion of the response to our appeal. Here are the 21 *Militant* builders and their records in the campaign: C. Cowl—5; A. Konikow—4; V. R. Dunne—4; F. Barach—3; L. Basky—3; C. Skoglund—2; M. Dunne—2; C. R. Hedlund—2; J. Carter—1; R. Ruskin—1; W. Curran—1; Zalmannoff—1; R. Sacharow—1; W. Herman—1; A. Swabeck—1; A. Glotzer—1; L. Logan—1; Kaldis—1; M. Engel—1; G. Ray—1; M. Sterling—1. Let us increase this list. Let us increase the number of subs per builder.

Once more—everybody into the campaign! Get subs! Get renewals! Get bundle orders! Make free distributions! Sell current issues! Make the sub drive a success! Increase the circulation of *The Militant*, *Unser Kampf*, *Young Spartacus*, *Communism*, the *Russian Bulletin*! **BUILD THE OPPOSITION PRESS!**

**ST. LOUIS, ATTENTION!**  
On April 23rd, at 8 P. M.  
There will be a lecture  
on  
**THE WORKING CLASS STUDENT,  
THE SCHOOLS AND THE  
CLASS STRUGGLE**  
by  
**MARTIN PAYER**  
The Cruden Branch Library Auditorium  
14th and Cass Avenues.  
ADMISSION FREE

**ST. LOUIS MAY DAY CONFERENCE**  
The St. Louis branch, Communist League of America (Opposition) has issued a call for a Joint May Day Conference to be held on April 24th, 3 p. m. at the Souldard Library Hall, 7th and Souldard Sts.  
All local working class organizations and political parties are invited to participate in arranging a Joint May Mass Meeting.

**CHICAGO OPEN FORUM  
WILL A THIRD PARTY HELP  
THE WORKERS?**  
Lecture by  
**JOHN EDWARDS**  
on  
SUNDAY, APRIL 24th, at 3 P. M.  
at  
1435 N. Western Ave.