

## Letters From the Militants

### A Scandal in the Red Food Workers' Union

NEW YORK, N. Y.—Last week, the left wing workers of New York witnessed a sorry spectacle. There was a "picket line" formed in front of the Foodworkers Industrial Union on 28th Street. The men were picketing their own collective organization! Placards, slogans appeared along the line.

An investigation of the whole matter shows, as we suspected, that the initiative for this action came from shady elements within the union, men with a doubtful record like Kennessy. It is also more or less established as a fact that these people sought and got the aid of the yellow fakers from the S. P.—types as notorious as Augie Claessens. The latter, of course, did his darndest to turn the affair into a campaign of vilification and calumination against the Left wing as a whole and against Communism.

The "picket line" of the dissatisfied and restless workers within the Foodworkers Industrial Union was an ill-starred attempt, an action which only drives water to the mill of the disreputable "socialist" racketeers and which, in the last analysis, can only harm their own cause—the interests of the working class. As class-conscious workers, who know the treacherous role of the S. P. and who realize how eager and anxious these bosses' lackeys are to take advantage of disagreements between militant unionists for purposes of betrayal, we must categorically condemn the "picketing" of the union headquarters as an act detrimental to the working class. The militant industrial unionist rejects and disdains such methods.

At the same time, we must take into account that there were sincere if misled militants participating in this anti-union action. It is necessary patiently to explain to them how false, how harmful their conduct was. They have to be made clear, that no matter what their grievances against the industrial union leadership may be, no matter how wrong this leadership may act, a fight against them must be confined to the limits of the union itself, if it is to be effective, if it is not to play into the hands of the bosses and their yellow agents.

And we must admit that the food clerks who took the altogether false road of "picketing" the F. W. I. U. headquarters did have genuine grievances. Much as we have to condemn their hasty and thoughtless behavior, we cannot overlook the fact that the Stalinist leadership of the union bears a good share of the responsibility for this disgraceful incident.

We have time and again pointed out in *The Militant* that the bureaucratic and high-hatted manner in which the F. W. I. U. functionaries deal with the membership, in the distribution of jobs, in the suppression of the elementary rights of union democracy, in overriding the decisions of the rank and file can only lead to such uncontrollable and disastrous outbreaks on the part of the workers.

The "picket line" incident has its roots in the past. It is a direct result of the non-Leninist policies of the Stalinist leadership in the union. Mechanical control, the subordination of the elementary interests of the workers—which caused the workers to join the union—to the needs of the party and the T. U. L. apparatus (as was the case in the Comcoops, in the Cooperative Camps, etc.) can only stir up dissatisfaction and unrest among the rank and file. These facts cannot be dismissed by the Stalinists merely by calling those who raise them—stoop-pigeons and counter-revolutionary Trotskyists. This method of the Stalinists only helps the real stoop-pigeons, the real disrupters in our midst to cover themselves up and to strike a blow against the union at the critical moment—as was the case with the "picket line". It only confuses the rank and file workers and makes them unable to distinguish between the actual disrupters and those sincere militants who oppose the leadership on matters of policy because they want to help their union make progress.

The "picket line" is a dangerous symptom. It should be a warning to the leadership of the union and to the Stalinists in control of the party. If they look at it objectively, they will see the grave dangers it indicates.

It is high time now for the Communist workers in the F. W. I. U. to wake up, if they have the interests of the union at heart, if they want to fulfill their tasks as revolutionists. We must prevent the recurrence of such "picket lines" in the future.

There is only one way in which to do this: By demanding the restoration of workers' democracy within the union. By fighting for an open and frank correction of the party line of mechanical control in the union, by making the union a genuine class struggle union, devoted to the broader interests of the class. A

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#### EDITORIAL BOARD

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turn must be made in the policy within the union, not by picking out scapegoats, not merely by a lot of talk about "cliques"—but by admitting openly the mistakes of the past and by steering the course of the union back to the Leninist trade union line. —FOODWORKER.

### A Run-in With the Party in Duluth

DULUTH, MINN.

A rousing open air meeting was held Sunday night by the Communist League on the Court House Square. Listening attentively to an excellent speaking program, 600 workers applauded vigorously the fight of the Left Opposition for the unity of the Communist movement on the basis of Leninism. For the first time on the streets of Duluth the truth about the Chinese revolution and the crisis in Germany was told. Comrades Dunne and Skoglund, respectively, clarified these questions and demonstrated the international basis for the struggle of the Opposition, especially the menace of Fascism in Germany, which now constitutes the main danger to the Soviet Union.

Comrade Bloomberg's analytical report of the four national conventions of the political parties held in Chicago was frequently interrupted by stormy applause. In a speech filled with fighting exposure of the Republican and Democratic platforms, and satire and scorn for the Socialist party platform, he called on the workers to rally behind the Communist party candidates in the coming elections.

It was not until the collection that the party bureaucrats became concerned. Some minor functionary called out to the audience that the money collected was not going to the Communist party. We can sympathize with the anxiety of one who makes a living from such collections on the street, but, as comrade Bloomberg immediately pointed out, the chairman, Miles Dunne, had openly announced the meeting under the auspices of the Communist League. All funds are to be used for our publication and organization work. The audience responded splendidly.

Comrade Cowl then made an appeal for the unity of the Communists in the name of the Communist League. He urged all class-conscious workers to demand of the party bureaucrats a cessation of their splitting tactics concealed under pseudo-revolutionary slogans of social Fascism and their slander against the Left Opposition. He challenged the hecklers to debate the disputed questions then and there or any other time or place they might designate. Workers who accept our program for reform of the party should not hesitate to support our press and join our ranks.

Instead of rushing to the defense of the position of the party as self-respecting Communists should, the Stalinists proceeded to start another meeting in the center of the crowd, amidst boos and angry shouts of the workers, who saw that the issue at stake in this instance was clearly the attempt of the party to break up the meeting, after they had been invited to participate. One Stalinist bureaucrat, with the bureaucrat's contempt for the wishes of the working class, sneeringly launched a tirade of mud-slinging and personal slander against the character of Trotsky and the record of Bloomberg and Cowl. All of which, as is to be expected, left the audience cold. So that it was not difficult, in the midst of comrade Sara Avrin's speech on the "Washington Massacre" to bring the entire audience, with the exception of the few faithful, to the other side of the monument which served as our platform. Here our meeting continued with greatly increased interest and closed with a number of questions and discussion. We called on all the workers present to participate in the anti-war demonstration the following night.

As these lines are written for the current issue of the *Militant*, a public challenge to the Communist party to debate the proposition: "That Trotsky is an Enemy of the Working Class" has been issued in the capitalist press by the Communist League for Tuesday night on Court House Square. The results of this meeting and other organization work in Duluth will be reported in the next issue of the *Militant*.

—C. C.

### Extracts from Earl Browder's Autobiography

Discerning readers of the official party press will have noticed that Earl Browder, the present leader of the party, has been presenting us his auto-biography (or his confessions, if you like) in the guise of this or that political report. Shyness alone has prevented him from naming himself, but even the dullest reader can see whom he means when he talks. One extract from a recent confession will show what we mean:

"I have noted a widespread opinion that if a party or trade union functionary speaks in a loud, sharp tone, this is bureaucratic, but if he speaks gently and softly then this is a good, non-bureaucratic approach. As for myself I am all for the soft voice as opposed to harsh speaking, but I object to this being put forward as the essence of the question of bureaucracy. In fact, some of the worst bureaucrats that I have bumped into in my life were the softest speakers." (*The Communist*, July 1932, page 305.)

Always boasting about his gentle tongue!

### Opposition Progress in Africa

Dear Comrade:

Your letter of the 30th May last and the 50 *Militants* has provoked some life amongst the Stalinist bureaucrats of the Communist Party of So. Africa. Private meetings are now being held to discuss the best methods for killing the Trotskyist views, before penetrating into the minds of the opposed people of Africa, to these meetings only those who are known to be anti-L. Trotsky have been privately invited. Expelled and unexpelled anti-Trotskyists are now united on an anti-Trotsky campaign. Some of our members (of the group, I sent you the names) have also been privately invited and since then the man that acted as chairman and treasurer of our meeting held on the 22 April last, has now completely taken quite a different attitude towards the Communist League of Africa (Opposition). They sing to the tune of anti-Trotskyism, and the first two lots of the *Militants* have been purposefully held up, not to be sold, better to be returned to your League, but the last lot has been disseminated amongst the African Negro workers with good results.

#### Stalinist Threats

It is perfectly clear to us that those who oppose the formation of the Communist League of Africa (Opposition) do so with a specific object that the Stalinists in So. Africa might value them so as to be reinstated into the C. P. S. A. Since I started this Opposition I am told of various things that would happen to me if I was in U. S. S. R. That I have committed an unpardonable crime by propagating the views of the International Left Opposition. I am asked why do you write to a group of men who oppose the leadership of the Communist Party of U. S. S. R.? Then they give as a kind of reasoning that L. Trotsky has tried to oppose the leadership of the party and has completely failed. You, too, will fail and you shall be condemned for life never to be reinstated into the C. P. S. A. Again I replied to all this talk that I do not see any mistake in the views expressed in the *Militant*. I see no crime that L. Trotsky has committed. I see nothing that might be styled a blunder but as to Stalin I can only come to the conclusion that he is an opportunist of the worst type the world has ever produced. In support of this conclusion let me say Stalin is the stumbling block of the world revolution. He should not have expelled and exiled comrade L. Trotsky from the C. P. S. U. and from the U. S. S. R. He knows quite well that if Trotsky is given complete freedom in the U. S. S. R. he (Stalin) would no longer be at the head of the Soviet Union; some one else would be. The International Left Opposition must see that comrade L. Trotsky is given the necessary freedom and returned to the U. S. S. R.

On the 2nd of July I was taken by surprise. The chairman and treasurer referred to above threatened to hand me over to the police for having sent their names to the Communist League of America (Opposition) applying for membership, and I was dragged at about 5 P. M. of the same day to Doornfontein Police Station but no charge has as yet been laid against me, so they threatened to murder me in the street. Comrades, this is just the beginning. I expect quite a lot of trouble from the Centrists, but we must not be down-hearted. The International Left Opposition must penetrate into the minds of the mine, town, and agricultural workers of Africa whether the Stalinists like it or not.

In following the instructions of the Stalinist bureaucrats there are serious blunders that have been and are being committed in the Communist Party of So. Africa and I have no doubt that it shall be the duty of the Communist League of Africa (Opposition) to induce the C. P. S. A. to follow the correct line and never ignore their mistakes.

#### The African Opposition

In reply to your question. The Communist League of Africa (Opposition) is newly constituted. It is not a section of the Communist Party of So. Africa and has not been in touch with the Communist International. It is organized by an expelled Negro foundation member of the Communist Party of So. Africa (T. W. Thibedi). Although many of the expelled members expressed sympathy with the formation of the Opposition there is quite a lot of hesitation on their part to come forward like real revolutionists. They are in the main afraid that if they join the Opposition they would be condemned and never again be reinstated into the Party. We have been carrying on open air meetings and nuclei have been formed at these places. Kringsdorp, Vrededorp, Prospect Township, and Pretoria and we are also reorganizing the trade unions of native workers which in 1928 had 10,000 membership but has since 1930 been left by the Stalinist bureaucrats of the Communist Party of So. Africa to collapse. We have behind us the "Laundry Workers Union", 1,000 members strong, and the "Baking Employees Association" is speedily coming up. Amongst the Negro miners, nuclei have been set up at these mines: "City Deep Mine" and "Crown Mines." I must say this is the first time in the history of the revolutionary party in So. Africa that Negro miners are seriously being taken up. Again, a nucleus has been set up against the "Municipal Employees" at the "Doornfontein City Power Compound."

For many years T. N. Thibedi was the only Negro member of the C. P. S. A. and during this time succeeded in organizing the following branches of the

C. P. S. A. most of which were left to collapse after his expulsion from the party: Vereeniging, Potchefstroom, Pretoria, Paaredskop, Evaton, Blomfontein, Ndeabeni Location, etc., etc. At present the only branch that still survives is the last mentioned.

#### The Party Slogan

In 1928 the Centrists forced this slogan on the C. P. S. A.: "Native Republic" as a stage towards the "Workers' Republic". Almost all the Negro members opposed this slogan as it tended to create a racial feeling and national hatred. I believe in "Workers' Republic", not in the native or European Republic, but I do not hate any one to come to the same conclusions. After that slogan was adopted at the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International no one tried to propagate it with the exception of those who opposed it. The Stalinists were silent on this slogan in all public meetings. All the history of the C. P. S. A. is full of blunders that have been made particularly since comrade Lenin died.

There is not a single white or black trade union at this present time that the C. P. S. A. can boast of. One thousand members of the Laundry Workers Union left the C. P. S. A. in disgust; so did even the "Clothing Workers Union". Those were the only two Trade Unions which constituted the Federation of Trade Unions (A. F. T. U.).

We desire to have a complete set of the literature published by you but you should also not lose sight of the fact that we are a much poorer lot than you are, and do not forget sending also complete volumes of the *Militant* from No. 1 to the latest. From now onward I shall be writing you fortnightly.

Non-Europeans are the most unorganized of the South African Trade Unions.

Yours for a speedy Revolt.

—T. W. T.

Johannesburg, So. Africa  
July 6, 1932.

### German Left Will Issue Weekly

The latest issue of *Die Permanente Revolution*, official semi-monthly organ of the Left Opposition in Germany announces that beginning with its next number our German brother organ will appear as a weekly. The terrific poverty existing throughout the German working class, and particularly among the revolutionary militants, has for some time stood in way of imperatively needed advance. Now, the growth of the ideas, influence and strength of our German section has succeeded in surmounting even this great obstacle. The appearance of *Die Permanente Revolution* as a weekly paper will enable our comrades to intervene more frequently and powerfully in the struggles of the German proletariat, bringing to them the ideas and teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky which the Stalinists throughout the world have so violently prevented or ignored and the Left Oppositionists have borne aloft.

The American Oppositionists send their German comrades warmest wishes in the success they have already attained and are convinced that the immediate future is rich with even greater progress for our cause.

The advance of *Die Permanente Revolution* comes a few weeks after the similar success obtained by our Bulgarian comrades who have been battling mightily not only against the stream of Stalinist abuse and violence, but the persecutions of the Bulgarian reaction. Their organ, *Osvobodnenye*, (Emancipation), which commenced as a monthly paper, is now appearing every week.

Our Swiss comrades, with the great traditions of internationalism associated with their land, have succeeded in a brief span of time in converting their mimeographed organ, *Bolshevik*, into a well-printed, well-edited monthly.

Finally, our Spanish comrades have just issued the first number of *Joven Espartaco* (Young Spartacus), a 16-page monthly magazine of the Opposition Youth. This step forward is a reflection of the gratifying progress our Spanish comrades have been making among the young revolutionists of the country, increasing numbers of whom are being organized into the ranks of the Left Opposition. *Joven Espartaco* makes the second paper in the International Left Opposition devoted to the youth, the first having been *Young Spartacus*, our own youth paper in the United States.

To *Osvobodnenye*, *Bolshevik*, *Joven Espartaco*, go our heartiest revolutionary salutations. The International Left Opposition is invincible!

### MILITANT BUILDERS

We're under way. Subs are coming in. They're not exactly rolling in but they are coming in a little bit faster than in the past month. And that's something. But seriously! A real effort must be made on the basis of the great timeliness and importance of our literature to bring in even more subs.

All the articles by comrade Trotsky and the other leaders of the International Left that we print in the *Militant* will not sell the paper. We must do that by getting subs and placing it on newsstands. Right now we must place a great emphasis on getting subs. You see, comrades, we need money, desperately. One of the best ways of getting it is by getting subs.

Now, who is going to come out on top at the end of the month? Will it be that needler from Minneapolis, com-

## American Foreign Trade and the Question of Credits to the Soviet Union

Some figures on the decline in the foreign trade of the United States since the crisis set in, published in the New York Times of July 31, tell heavily in support of the slogan of the International Left for large scale, long term credits to the Soviet Union. According to the Times the decline in volume has been drastic. It arrives at this conclusion on the basis of the facts that the decline in the wholesale price level of commodities since June 1929, is 33.7 per cent; while the decline in value is 67.8 per cent. "These heavy losses" says the Times, "amounting in several cases to more than 80 per cent, are not the result merely of a decline in prices, but also of a sharp contraction in volume."

#### MACHINERY DECLINE

Amongst the commodities which the United States is exporting in diminishing quantities are plows, which declined from 105,958 in 1929 to 8,204; and grain harvesters, which declined from 11,871 to 213. In the first five months of 1932 the United States exported 60 million dollars of agricultural machinery; whereas in the first five months of 1932 this figure fell to four million seven hundred thousand. Similar figures obtain for industrial machinery. Included in this decline is a precipitate decline in Soviet purchases of agricultural and industrial machinery. In a statement issued by the Amtorg in October of last year the value of Soviet purchases was shown to have declined by 51 per cent.

But the years 1929-32 are the period of the great growth and expansion of Soviet industry; of the growth of its inter-relationship with the world market. From August 1930 to June 1931, to take but one example, the Soviet Union doubled its exports to Italy and increased its imports sevenfold. So said Commissar of Foreign Trade, P. Rosengoltz to a delegation of 32 Italian industrialists, who visited the Soviet Union in June a year ago.

What is the cause for the decline in the purchase of what the Soviet needs to build its growing industry? The Amtorg statement of last October says, "The drastic decline in purchases is due to the lack of favorable credit facilities in this country as contrasted with long term credits extended to Soviet organizations by European countries." (Our emphasis.)

Credits are what the Soviet Union needs, long-term credits. But the Stalinized Comintern, hamstrung by the fatal theory of socialism in one country, dares not call on the working masses to demand credits from their capitalist governments for the workers' fatherland. It would be an open admission of the impossibility of building a socialist society in the Soviet Union with the efforts of the Soviet Union alone. And this admission Stalin cannot make.

He seeks to attain the same end—not through the class struggle; but by diplomatic maneuvers. That the Soviet Union has made diplomatic approaches to various capitalist governments for credits is no secret. The Times of July 15, 1931 reported the discussion between the Soviet delegation to Paris and the French negotiators in the following words: "The discussions center around a plan by which the Russians would obtain two to four year credits from France."

In fact trade treaties have been signed. One was signed with Italy last June. Duranty reported it from Paris. "The chief Soviet benefits from the trade agreement are credit for buying Italian machinery, aid from Italian specialists, use of the Italian merchant marine for shipping exports and a convenient market for grain, oil and coal." (N. Y. Times, June 20, 1931.)

But, the Stalinists have argued, the Soviet Union gets its credits by treaty. What need is there of making a mass fight of it? As comrade Trotsky pointed out in his *World Unemployment and the Five Year Plan*, the interest of the workers all over the world, in the Soviet Union and its socialist construction remains an abstraction unless it is concretized, in the present situation of world unemployment, by mobilizing the masses to fight for long term credits upon the basis of their understanding that the resulting orders would go some way toward relieving unemployment by opening up a number of factories.

In the United States it would mean that the index of employment in the agricultural machinery industry, for example, would rise from 22.1 at which it stood in June of this year. A similar rise would take place in every branch of industry with which the Soviet would place orders. An identical result would be achieved in all capitalist countries in which the Soviet was able to place orders. The volume of imports the Soviet would be able to command would be many

times in excess of its present volume, including the volume embraced by its present trade treaties. The result in the construction of socialist industry is too apparent to need elaboration. As one element the volume of exports could be increased with a further increase in imports. So the whole cycle of imports and exports could be increased.

The prestige of the Soviet Union would be increased in the eyes of the workers by its ability to work out large scale plans pivoted on its export and import relations with the world market, and its ability to meet its obligations.

An organized fight for credits is a lever to set the masses in motion against their class enemies. It creates the basis for a united front with the socialist workers against their leaders should they, as is most likely, oppose the united front.

The opportunities such a struggle affords to Communism to appear before the class as the leader in the fight for relief, and the opportunities for class education are enormous. To pass them by and call the slogan counter-revolutionary, as the Stalinists have done, is not the least of their crimes.

The Stalinist idea of diplomatic maneuvering for credits without calling on the masses who are vitally interested in the question rests upon a lack of faith in the masses. But the masses, learning from the Left Opposition, will force the Comintern to place this slogan in the forefront of the fight for relief. In the United States the workers under the pressure of the deepening crisis will force the party to translate its paper turn of half a year ago into a real class fight for long-term, large scale credits to the Soviet Union.

—T. S.

### New York's Aug. First Meet

Between 13,000 and 15,000 workers answered the call of the Communist party in a demonstration on Union Sq. against Imperialist war. In comparison with the two previous "Red Day" demonstrations, this year's meeting was one of the best—but only numerically.

The intensification of the economic crisis and the more recent attack on the veterans in Washington has served to awaken thousands of workers from passivity. But if the N. Y. demonstration was large in numbers, it was low in spirit. The meeting followed a stereotyped plan. The speakers were poor. The speeches of Shoppard, Trumbull and Amter in no way made the impending world slaughter clear to the assembled workers. They rambled on incoherently, discussing practically everything else. The war danger came in for the usual cut-and-dried slogans.

Germany—the key to the whole international situation, scarcely a mention. Only in the speech of Amter, did he make some vainglorious boasts about the large vote of the C. P. G. in the recent elections. Only one placard carried by the Y. C. L. called for the smashing of Hitler's Fascist hordes. But this was obscured by the multitudinous slogans which helped to confuse and mask the importance of the war danger.

If the placards of the 1929 demonstration against the war danger reflected the mad adventurism of the "third period", those carried in this year's meeting bore witness to the opportunism of the "new turn". One of the slogans read: "Hoover is responsible for the riot in Washington. We demand his impeachment". The S. P. must have turned green with envy when they saw this placard.

Amter, of course, did not fail to attack the "renegades from Communism"—the Lovestonettes and the Trotskyists. While the crowd boomed and jeered any mention of Hoover, Roosevelt and the socialist, they greeted this attack on the L. O. with an icy silence. Apparently they did not see its connection with the war danger. If words can't do it perhaps silence might penetrate Amter's thick bureaucratic skull. We have our doubts.

The struggle against the war danger must not end with this demonstration, which is only a small beginning. The party must awaken the masses to the dangers awaiting the Soviet Union if Hitler seizes power. Only in this way will it fulfill its duty to the American and international proletariat. The L. O. has sounded the alarm. What is your answer, party members?

### Pioneer Publishers Notes

#### MARXIST CLASSICS

Through an exchange arrangement with a local bookseller we have got a number of copies of the *Communist Manifesto*; *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*; *Wage Labor and Capital*; and *Value Price and Profit*. In the past we have received requests for this literature. In the course of our propaganda work among workers we frequently find it necessary to begin at rock bottom. This is all the more necessary today because of the terribly low ideological level that obtains in the party ranks under Stalinist leadership.

Unfortunately because of the terms of our exchange arrangement we are unable to offer any discount on this literature. The selling prices in the order in which they are listed above are: 10 cents; 25 cents; 10 cents; 25 cents.

rade Hedlund? Or will some other comrade take his laurels away from him? And what branch will come out on top? Will it be the old stand-bys, New York and Minneapolis? Or will our younger branches dispute the title with them?

It is too early to say. All we can do is point to the record of the staff to date which we give below:

|             |       |
|-------------|-------|
| A. Weaver   | 1 1-2 |
| L. Goodman  | 1     |
| H. Schwartz | 1     |
| J. Edwards  | 1     |
| W. Wynne    | 1     |

The record by branches is as follows:

|              |       |
|--------------|-------|
| New York     | 4 1-2 |
| Minneapolis  | 2 1-2 |
| Chicago      | 1     |
| Philadelphia | 1     |

THE DRAFT PROGRAM OF THE COMINTERN is out of print and is available only in the BOUND VOLUMES of comrade TROTSKY'S pamphlets.