

Letters from Militants

Twenty-two P. M. A. Miners Framed

TAYLORVILLE, ILL.—The working class is again on trial in a county called Christian. Twenty-two members of the Progressive Miners of America will stand trial March 13 on a murder charge, growing out of the Kincaid battle of two weeks ago when Emma Cumerlato, an Auxiliary member, and two Peabody strike-breakers were killed and 18 others wounded.

In an atmosphere that smells notoriously Peabody, our fellow workers are being held like convicts of old behind dismal walls that have been constantly in service for the Insull Empire since the beginning of the strike struggle against the scab-herding United Mine Workers of America.

The Christian county grand jury has rendered murder indictments against the backbone of the midland strike movement. Besides the 22 charged with murder, there are 32 others charged with unlawful assembly and inciting to riot. The names of others are being suppressed by the court. The suppression is, no doubt, to be used as a club over an active striker's head.

Bills charging murder were reported against the following persons:

- Albert Mattozo, Kincaid Chief of Police
- Nick Passa
- Fred Bassana
- Vincent Calza
- Emilio Vitali
- Ferdinand Patterozzi
- Walter Lusebrink
- Emil Dupre

Other charges have been placed against the victims. 10 of the 22 indicted on the most serious charges are already held in the Christian county jail without bond. Defense attorneys have been employed by the Progressive Miners of America to defend the miners.

The case developed from the gun fight that took place between striking coal miners and Peabody guards, when the latter attempted to disperse a group of pickets that had formed along the sidewalks of the mining town of Kincaid. The guards approached the miners with guns in their hands and white banners tied around their arms, as an identification mark to prevent their side from shooting at them.

The Peabody guards were the aggressors in this fight as they have been in many other struggles that have taken place in the strike-torn region.

Thugs Terrorize Miners

It developed, however, that in the melee that took place the striking miners properly defended themselves and for once the Peabody guards got the worst of the fray. In retreating the thugs sniped Mrs. Emma Cumerlato as she was opening the door of her home to save her husband from the wild shooting.

Vincent Rodems, formerly a national guard, now employed by Peabody as a guard, died as a result of wounds. The following morning James Guy Hickman, imported from West Virginia, was killed as he shot at the relief station of the Progressive Miners of America in Kincaid.

Immediately following the battle the Peabody gunmen, backed by members of the national guards, began a reign of terror. Relief stations were smashed; women and men were dragged from their homes and beaten; striking miners were kidnapped and strike leaders were hounded for weeks. The blood-lusting gunmen of the Peabody Coal Company started one fight in which the miners did not bow like slaves before their master. W. C. Argust, general superintendent of the Peabody Coal Company, issued a statement that the scabs were unarmed. "They were helpless," he stated to the press. Yet in recent conferees it has been proved that strike-breakers have a checking room in wash houses where they store their guns before going into the pits.

Members of the Progressive Miners of America have been urging the formation of a defense committee to secure national attention on the cases that threaten to execute active members of the Progressive Miners of America. The formation of such a committee is under consideration.

GERRY ALLARD.

Stalinists Collaborate With Clergy, Millionaires

PHILADELPHIA.—Because of our exposure of their shameful collaboration with the Greek clergy at the Greek meeting on Jan. 8th, the Empros placed the blame on the shoulders of the comrades of the Unemployed Committee of N. Y. City. In spite of this the Empros of Jan. 21st encouraged the Philadelphia Stalinists to undertake a united front with the semi-Fascist organization, Ahepan, a priest of St. George Church, and a rival church which is controlled by a group of Greeks headed by the millionaires, Stefanou Brothers. This meeting coincided with the day of our lecture in Philadelphia. Many Greek workers whom I met upon my arrival suggested that we postpone the hour so they could be present.

This we did and went with the comrades to the Church where the meeting was taking place. There we were amazed to see the Stalinists guarding the gates of the church! Against whom were they on guard? Not against the bourgeoisie. They were supporting the meeting and were using again the services of the famous lackey, Snelcarlos (former editor of Empros whom we helped to remove), who still parades as a Communist thanks to the Stalinist regime of the party which covers every

section committee that brought the charges. Of most significance was the vote of the jury. Seventeen voted for expulsion and eleven for probation. While most of the party members and YCLers voted for expulsion most of the members of the party-controlled organizations voted for probation. The audience was divided on this decision, not unlike the members of the jury.

To rid the working class of white chauvinism mass trials must not be made farces. What is needed is Communist education. This Leninist method, which is foreign to the Stalinist bureaucracy, must be revived.

—L. ROBERTS.

League Activities in Youngstown

On Sunday, January 8, the Youngstown Branch of the Communist League of America (Opposition) held a lecture and discussion on "The Communist Party and the Left Opposition", at Central Auditorium, Youngstown. The meeting began at 2:30 P. M., with comrade Gordon presenting a brief outline of the history of the Bolshevik-Leninist Opposition in the Russian Communist Party. He followed this sketch of the Left Opposition's origin with a summary of the platform of the Opposition today, dealing with the question of the united front against Fascism in Germany, the betrayal of the Chinese Revolution and their problems confronting the Communist movement.

There was an interested audience of workers present—several members of the C. P., S. L. Pites, and a number of workers interested in Trotsky's position. The crowd totally forty, most of whom were very favorably impressed by our platform. A number of them asked very pertinent questions on the united front policy, and we were able to explain Lenin's tactic to workers who will ponder the questions seriously.

After a summary by comrade Gordon, in which he refuted the charges of Trotsky's having broken discipline and explained what Bolshevik discipline is, the meeting, and, consequently, we were able to make clear to all the workers present that despite our bureaucratic expulsion from the C. I., we remain the Left wing of the Communist International. The meeting was a success for the Opposition.

Bureaucrats Checked in I. L. D.

Recently several members of the Left Opposition, after repeated attempts, were finally admitted into the I.L.D. branch in Youngstown. This organization, like all the other Party organizations here, have been terribly run down by the Stalin regime, so that hardly a skeleton remains of its former self. Our comrades joined, declaring their willingness to exert every possible effort in helping to rebuild the workers' defense organization. They were sympathetically received by the membership at the first meeting they attended and one of their number was even elected to the Section Bureau.

The Party bureaucrats, alarmed by the progress of the Left Opposition, immediately set out to "rectify" this "mistake". To the next meeting they sent down a representative, a certain Lewis, who is not even a member of the organization, to "wipe out" the Trotskyites. Lewis took the floor without anybody's permission, denounced the Left Opposition, and declared that they had no place in the I.L.D. This provocative action of the bureaucrats' representative naturally aroused the resentment of all the members present and after a brief struggle on the floor he was overruled and the meeting proceeded to its order of business.

The Left Oppositionists remained at their posts in spite of the bureaucrats' attack. We consider this, and not without cause, a victory for the Left Opposition and a defeat for the Stalinist bureaucrats. The utterly unfounded and slanderous accusations of Lewis—going so far as to call one of our comrades, without rhyme or reason, a "white chauvinist"—left a deeply negative impression on all those present. The Left Opposition will not be harried from its course and will continue its efforts to help build up the I.L.D.

At a recent meeting a national reporter stated that in the course of the Scottsboro campaign all the other sections of the International Red Aid registered advance, only the American section of the I.L.D.—not only did not gain, but even had to register losses. The foregoing example of bureaucracy as well as other examples to follow do much to illustrate the causes for such a sad state of affairs. The Youngstown branch, for instance, is small and weak. The bureaucrats, in a purely mechanical manner, without consulting the membership, have proceeded to split up this branch into even smaller units and thereby to deprive it of whatever vitality the I.L.D. has left here. Naturally, every serious worker, not to mention every serious Communist, has to oppose such a reckless tactic and to fight for the preservation of the single branch up to a point where it will be so strengthened that it can only gain by expanding into more numerous units.

Another example of bureaucracy: applications for membership are passed, by the membership, but by the section bureau, without the membership having any say in the matter! The same holds true for expulsions, appointments and removals! It is no wonder then, that the initiative of the membership is thereby altogether deadened and such results as loss in membership are not at all surprising. The Left Opposition here, as elsewhere, will have as one of its first tasks in helping to pull our movement out of the rut: raising the initiative of the membership—in the case of the I.L.D.—by throwing off the shackles of bureaucracy and reestablishing a regime of proletarian democracy.

H. S.

Report of Unemployed Conference

(Continued from page 1)

cial Fascists", did not address itself to the Socialist party or the A. F. of L. Such a turn-about face—demanded by the situation as well as by the elementary Leninist conception of the united front—was too much to expect from the Stalinist bureaucracy which only yesterday opposed any united front at all. The result naturally was that only the most advanced sections of the A. F. of L.—and comparatively few of them—responded to the call and the militants were deprived of the opportunity of pressing the A. F. of L. leaders to the wall on a concrete issue and revealing to the rank and file conservative workers what their leaders are worth. The same held true with regard to the Socialist party. The call was addressed to "locals of the Socialist party", thus making it unnecessary for the S. P. hierarchy to put themselves on record. Concrete results of this "united front from below" of the second edition? One local of the Socialist party responded to the Conference, and not a local from the metropolitan area, but one of the least important groups—Huntington, Long Island. The rank and file of the socialist workers, who by and large feel as much attached to their organization as do the Communist workers to their party, responded just as coldly to the Sunday Conference call to the "locals of the S. P." as, let us say, the individual shop nuclei of the Communist party would respond to a "united front" appeal of the Socialists addressed to the "lower branches" of the Communist party. This simple fact, which does not require a course in the Moscow Lenin School to be comprehended (more accurately: only such a course is capable of rendering the student incapable of comprehension!) has not yet penetrated into the skulls of the Stalinist bureaucracy. If it has, they have thought the better of it in the interests of maintaining themselves in the international apparatus.

To make up for this mortifying failure to bring the socialist workers into the conference, the Conference directors elected as chairman the sole S. P. delegate from Huntington! This decorative trick—worthy of the intellectual level of a stage manager in a small-town theater which is short of appropriate scenery—was the Stalinist substitute for the united front proposed by the Left Opposition which would bring together into a militant movement not only the Communist but also the socialist workers.

In the invention of such two-faced tactics, the Conference stage-managers were inexhaustible. The call asked for the election of two delegates from every organization; but the call was not meant for the Left Opposition. When the self-appointed credentials committee reported, its secretary proposed the unseating of one of the two delegates from the New York branch of the Communist League of America (Opposition), one of the two from the Young Spartacus Club, from the Unser Kamf Workers Club and from the Protomagia, the Greek workers' club sympathetic to the Left Opposition. Furthermore, James Gordon, unanimously elected by the cafeteria department of the Food Workers Industrial Union, was marked for the discard by the credentials committee. Finally, the Lovestonite youth group was to be unseated altogether, as were also two of the three delegates sent by the parent body.

"Brilliant Tactics"

The motivation for these unseatings was positively brilliant and worthy of the masterful strategist who conceived it. Where the central organizations—like the A. F. of L. or the S. P.—did not have delegates, it was explained, their local organizations were entitled to two apiece. But where the central organizations did send delegates—like the Communist party, the "Communist Oppositions", the Unemployed Councils they would be adequately represented by one delegate! Thus, the TUUL, with its how-many-thousands of members was given one delegate, while a carpenters' local, let us say, a hundred or more members, was given two delegates. What could be fairer? Thus the Communist party, with Hathaway, its one official delegate (together with the dozens of Rubins, Winters, Benjamins, Neesins, and others from party-controlled auxiliaries), was on an "equal footing" with the Left Opposition or the Lovestone group!

Protests against this ruling were voted down. Another ruling was that there shall be one speaker from each "trade" or "political" group. That is only one carpenter could speak at the conference; only one member of an Unemployed Council could speak; only "one" member of the Communist party could speak as a "Communist"; naturally, only one Left Oppositionist could speak; and let us not omit to mention that comrade James Gordon, the Oppositionist whom the bureaucrats just expelled from the

parly, could not speak at all because he was unseated on the grounds that the Executive Board of the Food Workers Industrial Union had sent a delegate, thus voiding the unanimous decision of the Cafeteria department to send its delegates. In this manner, Shachtman of the Left Opposition delegation, Carter of the Spartacus Youth Club, Bonauas from the Protomagia, and two Lovestone delegates were required to leave the conference when it went into "executive session". With this ingenious tactical plan the Stalinists won the signal and decisive victory of ridding themselves of a handful of Oppositionists from the Conference, even if their pretensions to "respectability" made it extremely difficult to unseat us altogether. The motion of comrade William Kitt, of the Alternation Painters Union, to seat as fraternal delegates those whom the Stalinists proposed to exclude, was defeated by a show of hands, thus saving the American revolution, the Communist International and the Soviet Union.

This picaresque trick did not keep the Opposition from presenting its stand-point to the conference, just as little as the well-oiled maneuvers at the New York "anti-war" conference prevented us from making known our point of view.

Opposition Speaks

No sooner was the floor thrown open for discussion than comrade Cannon, representing the League, was up to the front of the room and ready to speak for the Opposition. A vigilant Stalinist promptly jumped up to propose a limitation of speaking time to seven minutes, which was adopted and to which comrade Cannon was held with laudable strictness! The Opposition had already issued a leaflet to the conference in which our point of view was set forth. In addition, we had handed out to every delegate a copy of the two resolutions which we presented to the conference for consideration. One dealt with the need of organizing immediately for a second conference on a broader basis to which would be invited not only local but central organizations, like the A. F. of L., the Socialist party, the Communist party and the independent trade unions. The other proposed a concrete and all-embracing program of action on unemployment which would go beyond the mere demand for an unemployment insurance bill and a parliamentary agitation for it. All three documents are printed elsewhere in this issue, as is also the speech delivered by Cannon.

Our representative spoke on the resolution for a broader conference and expounded, for the first time in years before an audience composed overwhelmingly of Communist party members, the A. B. C. of the united front as outlined in the Communist International by Lenin and Trotsky. There was not only the closest attention paid to his remarks, and a complete absence of interruptions, but at the end of it there was a good round of applause. The presentation of our stand-point, in the resolutions and the speech, was a striking advance of the Left Opposition. The turn made by the party was in the direction we had been demanding for a long time and the apparatus men felt uncomfortable about the fact. By the very nature of things, the Opposition set the tone for the conference from the outset of the discussion.

The numerous party members who took the floor after Cannon, spoke generally in an agitational spirit, but none of them ventured to attack or abuse the Left Opposition in that contemptible routine manner which has always been the stock in trade of the Stalinists in their campaign against the Bolshevik-Leninists. Of considerable interest was the speech of one of the two Huntington S. P. delegates who referred to comrade Cannon: "I deny the assertion of the first speaker that the Socialist party is unwilling to fight for unemployment insurance and relief," he said. "It is necessary to use politics. The Labor party in England had unemployment insurance. In Germany and other countries the Socialist party got unemployment insurance for the workers. In Holland, they have good unemployment insurance. (All of which will be gratifying news to the German, British and Dutch workers!) I will conclude with the hope that we will support the Socialist party—but we must not fight amongst ourselves." The Communist delegates carefully refrained from dissipating the illusions of the socialist delegate. Like him, they were anxious "not to fight amongst ourselves"—which they understand to mean the concealment of the Communist point of view.

Stalinist Confusion

The Negro delegate from the Carpenters' Union, comrade Moore, opposed the Opposition's resolution and offered a sorry example of Stalinist mis-education. "Don't waste time on the leaders of these organizations," he urged, referring to the S. P. and the A. F. of L. "The

rank and file are with us". The only trouble with his assertions was that they were, unfortunately, not true. It was and is precisely because the rank and file are not yet "with us" that the revolutionists must "waste time on the leaders" and organizations whom the masses still follow.

Among the delegates who did support our viewpoint was comrade Dreyer, of the Pharmacists Union, who called our resolution the only united front proposal made along the line of Lenin's teachings. His speech is not even mentioned by the Daily Worker. It does, however, mention the "fact" that the Left Opposition "did not have a single worker representative of organizations outside of themselves". Not only were we supported by the Spartacus Youth Club, the Unser Kamf Workers Club and the Protomagia, but also by such delegates as Dreyer of the Pharmacists, Bill Kitt of the Alternation Painters Union, William Hermann of the Carpenters Local 2090, Henry Stone of the Technical Men's Union, and a couple of delegates from the International Labor Defense. Out of a total of 90 delegates, Cannon received 13 votes as candidate for the resolutions committee, with the highest vote cast for a candidate standing at 61.

The Lovestonite delegate, Lifschitz, spoke in favor of the united front, and Weisbord, representing his group, announced his support of Cannon's argument for a new conference and a broad united front, adding that it did not "go far enough" because it did not propose to aim at a... general strike. All during this discussion, the representatives of the official party were silent, apparently not greatly concerned with our intervention on the grounds that "we have the votes anyway; let them talk". But at the end of the discussion, the floor was taken by the "sole" representative of the party, Hathaway. He took his place in the division of labor arranged for by the steering committee which he directed. The Communist workers and militants who did not directly represent the party, were allotted the task of speaking like trade unionists—not as Communist trade unionists but as "respectable" trade unionists! The "pure Communist" stand-point was to be presented solely by the official party spokesman. Thus, while the bulk of the speeches made by the Communist militants could have been made without much difficulty by a somewhat advanced representative of the A. F. of L. School, "comrade" (not brother, or sister) Hathaway took care to maintain appearances by telling the audience not to "think that the legislature will give anything it is not forced to give". "We have to reject," he added, "the proposal of Cannon as a proposal to delay." What Hathaway meant was that the movement had to orient itself—not on the mobilization of the widest section of the working class, but on the legislative calendar at Albany. In this single sentence, Hathaway revealed that aside from a few formally radical phrases about "not relying" on the legislatures, his viewpoint differed in no serious degree from the vulgar parliamentary opportunism with which the speeches of the other party-instructed delegates was drenched.

Genuine United Front Rejected

The proposal to "invite the leaders", as he put it, was also rejected by Hathaway because, you see, they are sabotaging the fight; Hathaway only neglected to point out that the workers still following these leaders by the millions, are not yet aware of the sabotage, unless Hathaway believes either that nobody of importance is following them or that they are being followed because they sabotage the interests of their followers.

In any case, it is interesting to note that Hathaway refrained from the customary slanders about our "counter-revolutionism".

The resolutions committee report proposed that all the delegates present constitute themselves as the provisional committee for the Albany state-wide conference. As to the resolutions we submitted, the committee found itself obliged to borrow virtually all our concrete demands. Instead of confining the movement to social insurance, the program now included the demand for immediate relief, and for the shorter work day, without, however, specifying the six-hour day and five-day week. The only one of our proposals not incorporated by the committee was the one dealing with credits to the Soviet Union. Our resolution for a broader conference was rejected without a single political argument being presented against it. The cornered Stalinists merely argued that there were only six weeks left until the legislature convened, and they were so anxious to be on time to meet it that they would not be able to find time in which to call a wide united front conference to precede it!

Yet, so demoralized were the Stalinists, caught in the contradictions inherent in the half-heartedness of the turn, of its inadequacy and one-sidedness, that upon Weisbord's motion that the central bodies—the A. F. of L., the S. P., the

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LEON TROTSKY

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