

Letters to the Editor

New York Furriers Situation

To the Editor of the Militant: I will begin my letter with a short summary of the conditions in our trade.

The great majority of the fur workers have been unemployed for many months. Only about 3,000 are working, most of them part time. The unemployed have no prospects for work before the month of May. In the meantime, they and their families suffer hunger and starvation, such they have not known before at any time. Only those who know the poor reasons the furriers had in the past few years, can realize the sufferings of the fur workers. At the last hearing in Washington it was brought out by all sides concerned, that in recent years the furriers worked an average of no more than seven or eight weeks in the year.

Chaos in Shops
A great number of furriers live on the relief handed out by the authorities. When a furrier gets a job he finds himself compelled to work below the scale and long hours because of the chaotic conditions in the shops. Neither of the two unions is in a position to regulate the conditions. They are engaged instead in a bitter struggle among themselves, blaming each other for the existing conditions.

Another problem that we have to contend with is that of contracting. The contractors take most of the work out of the shops, work for cheap prices, and help undermine conditions. For years the union has been struggling against this evil without success. On the contrary the contracting evil has been growing. The sweat shops have been growing at the expense of the bigger ones, which find it more profitable to contract out their work. In this manner the manufacturers have been liberated from the responsibility for the conditions of the workers, and do not have to deal with the union directly.

Both Unions Impotent

I mentioned already that neither of the two unions can meet the problem. They are both powerless. The International, although having an agreement with the manufacturers, does not have the confidence of the majority of the workers because of its traditional treacherous policy and the gangster methods it employed in controlling or in combating oppositions. The Industrial Union, on the other hand, having the great majority of the organized workers in its ranks, cannot meet the united opposition of the bosses and the International.

Prior to the NRA the Industrial Union had the upper hand in the trade. The International could not succeed in shaking the hold of the Industrial Union despite the support it was getting from the other needle trade Internationals. For a while we thought that the problem was settled and that nothing would bring the International to life anymore. The NRA, however, changed the situation and we are now confronted with a repetition of the year 1927, when the International, with the aid of the bosses, police and courts, forced the workers to register in its union.

Shady Role of Lovestonites

The Lovestonites have joined with the International in the present struggle. As a matter of fact they are in the vanguard in this struggle on the side of the International. The Industrial Union, with its lack of democracy and forcible suppression of any oppositional viewpoint, plays into the hands of the International.

The International is so far on the defensive. There is no work in the

industry, and the bosses, despite the paper agreement, cannot supply it with members. Its own forces are very insignificant. It is reported that it has no more than two or three hundred members, including the Lovestonites who are playing so prominent a role in its ranks.

Preparing Strike for June

The Industrial Union is preparing for a strike in June. The fur market is flooded with police. The atmosphere is tense with the expectation of bloody warfare.

It is difficult to predict what the response to the strike will be. Opinions on the matter vary. Some think that the furriers will not respond to this strike as they have in the past. Most of them have been disgusted in the factional battles in recent years. Most of them want peace. They want a breathing space. These sentiments will not shake the Industrial Union in its determination to call the strike. It will undoubtedly go through with it, relying upon the two to three hundred active workers in its ranks. Even now in the two shop strike that the Industrial Union is conducting it is evident that the workers do not care to participate in the picket lines and demonstrations that are being arranged daily.

I am stating to you the situation as it is. I hope that you will react to this problem through the columns of the Militant and express your opinion.

Fraternally yours,
—KAMENETSKY.

(Ed. Note.—Next week's Militant will contain a special editorial on the Furriers' situation.)

Strike of New York Dental Mechanics

On Wednesday, March 7, the Dental Technicians Equity of New York City called its 800 members out of the Laboratories on a general strike. The call applied to the entire Metropolitan area, including New Jersey.

Thursday morning found the great majority of the labs in this region without men to carry on with the work.

Facts about the Strike

The demands: For recognition of the union; the forty hour week; \$15 minimum salary (apprentices) to \$55 top (skilled mechanics), with a sliding scale for classifications in between.

The industry: a handicraft with hardly any machinery or mechanical devices. Approximately 1100 men employed. About 250 men working in shops employing five men or more. The rest working in one, two, and three men laboratories, in close contact with the bosses.

The bosses' associations: "The Associated Dental Laboratories", the organization of the big bosses, that is, the "big" laboratories. The force which broke the strikes of 1928 and 1929. Up until now a merciless opponent of the closed shop.... "The Metropolitan Laboratory Owners' Association": Organized some nine months ago, and led by one Stodell, with a shady record as organizer of the mechanics union of 1928. The reason for the formation of the association being the dirty deal handed to the small lab owners by the Associated. It controls number of men employed in the industry. Fighting the Associated tooth and nail in this strike.

The Mechanics' Union
The union: Organized some eight or nine months ago by a handful and witnessing a steady growth to about 700 members on the eve of the strike. A mixed membership, containing many members who were in previous strikes, as well as many inexperienced in any struggle. De-

termined on the whole that this strike was to be one in which we were not to become the tail end to any bosses' associations, that we would settle with individual shops. This appeared to be the approach of the leadership to the question at the beginning of the strike.

The Leadership: The Executive Board dominated and practically controlled by fellow-worker Posner, the leader of the strike. The majority of the Executive Board and officials of the union are "independent" who have allowed Posner to conduct all of the negotiations practically alone. Independents of the type of Goldsweig, Berman, "Serchy" and others. A minority of one (Pickson) on the Board, supported by a fraction in the union, and on the strike committee.

Policy of the Leadership

The policies of the leadership: Posner is very individualistic, acting in many instances without informing the strike committee or the membership. A fighter, but using a method that has gotten him in hot water with the membership, and following a policy that should be carefully analyzed and watched. Under his influence, the original generally accepted demand of 35 hours a week was changed to 40 hours by the Executive Board, without asking either the advice of the strike committee or the membership.

We must recognize the fact that all members of the Associated immediately signed up, writing their names in on the agreement as follows: I.....(name of lab)..... designate the Associated Dental Laboratories and Dental Committees as my representative". This amounts to practically recognizing the Associated, for any argument hereafter with an individual lab must be taken up with their representative, the Associated Dental Laboratories. When the deadline of April 2 comes around, the date on which the new wage scale is to go into effect, the men will find themselves up against an organized force of the bosses.

The Executive Board and our lawyer made a concession to the Associated which may prove to be a heavy one. The bosses now have over half the men back at work for the more paper recognition of the union, while they have been given a leeway of three weeks in which to consolidate themselves as an organization. In this whole business the Executive Board has not dealt frankly with the membership, claiming, "we can't tell everything to the membership."

The Bosses' Organizations

There are rumors to the effect that the whole strike was arranged and prearranged on Wednesday night between Posner and other members of the Executive Board and the Associated. They met with Sternberg (owner of the Zelinsky-Sternberg Laboratory and the man who "runs" the Associated) on Wednesday night the eve of the strike. Added weight is given to this by the fact, we repeat, that the Associated Dental Laboratories were the first to sign. The Metropolitan Association of the small labs has called all the labs under its control not to sign up!

Posner, and the Members on the Board who supported him or kept quiet, thereby fell victim to a legal trick. A trick of the Associated in having their labs sign and designate the Associated as their representative which has caused a crisis in the strike. The strike will now have to remain in force until the Metropolitan labs are forced to sign. Had the Executive Board at least brought these facts to the membership, we would today be clear. As it is Posner has caused, by this individualistic method of doing things, a discontent which might be harmful to the strike and the union. We must not be used as a tool by the Associated against the Metropolitan!

Expulsion of B.J. Field and A. Kaldis

The New York local of the Communist League, at a joint membership meeting of all the branches held on Sunday, February 18, expelled B. J. Field and A. Kaldis from membership in the organization. This action was taken after a protracted discussion of the Hotel strike, and the conduct of Field and Kaldis as officials of the union, to which three membership meetings were devoted, with almost the entire membership participating in the discussion.

Ever since Field and Kaldis became officials of the union their conservative policy, bureaucratic attitude toward the union membership and clique practices brought them into conflict with the worker-Communists who were members of the union and the League. The leading committees of the League, both the New York City Committee and the National Committee, attempted by every Communist means to adjust the disputes on a Communist basis and to correct the false position of Field and Kaldis. Numerous meetings were devoted to these endeavors, but without success. Field and Kaldis tried to use their strategic positions in the union as a club over the League and to set themselves above the discipline. Relations with them

whole matter was up for discussion and action by a membership meeting when the strike began.

With the commencement of the strike the petty bourgeois careerist characteristics of Field and Kaldis came out in full bloom. Turning their backs on the League members and all other class conscious workers in the union, and paying no heed to the demands of the League for a militant class struggle policy in the conduct of the strike, they chose as allies and counselors the most conservative elements and carried out a corresponding policy—kow-towing to the NRA and bourgeois public opinion on the one hand, and engaging in treacherous intrigues and open attacks on the class conscious militants in the union, including League members, on the other. Their conduct throughout was detrimental to the union and the strike and discrediting to the League. The League as a bona-fide workers' organization had no choice but to throw them out of its ranks.

That this action was taken in the midst of the strike by a general membership meeting, with full unanimity, is testimony to the Communist character of the organization and to the obvious fact that Field and Kaldis were completely alien elements who had wandered into the League by mistake.

—HERBERT CAPLIN.

Organization Notes

Among the latest additions to the League are the branches organized in Winnipeg and Salt Lake City. The former starts out with a membership of 41, the latter made a more modest beginning. Yet the Winnipeg comrades inform us that their numbers do not give a real picture of their strength, since they have amongst them several members of many years standing in the revolutionary movement. They add that they have from the very outset many good contacts in the city.

The Canadian branches are now taking the initial steps toward establishing themselves as an autonomous section, continuing, however, their close relations to the League. In Canada our movement, the same as in the United States, has experienced steady growth. This is especially the case in Toronto, where our membership has taken a leading position in several important local working class activities. Their mass meetings bring turnouts of up toward a thousand.

Due to increased membership and activities, the Toronto branch was some time ago reorganized on a territorial basis within the city and divided into several now actively functioning branches. With Toronto as the main basis, the Canadian comrades are in a position to maintain their own permanent publications. Later we shall report in detail on the further developments of the Canadian section.

The Salt Lake City branch arose out of the expulsion of several comrades from the official party because of their Left Opposition views. Some of them had formerly come into contact with League publica-

tions and had made a study of the position we take. All of them had been very active within the official party, where a couple of these comrades held important positions. Their activities had been centered with the party units, within the I. L. D., in securing support for the striking Utah miners and on the university campus. At the latter place they succeeded in organizing a broad student movement which is now functioning very actively.

Our comrades, when accused of "Trotskyist" tendencies, were given the monumental task by the official party bureaucracy of making a thorough study of some of its most rabid anti-Trotskyist literature. They did, and that itself became a help in their own development. They formulated their replies to all the distortions and slanders and false political concepts contained in that material. The inevitable expulsion followed, and at that same moment the comrades constituted themselves a branch of the League. They are now making active preparations for mass meetings to be held in connection with the national tour of comrade Shachtman. The formation of the Salt Lake City branch together with the development of our movement on the Pacific coast were the important factors which helped make possible such an extended tour.

THE INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN

We have previously informed the League branches that the International Bulletin is now appearing in a new series. The English edition will be published in printed form,

and it will be available also for close sympathizers of our movement who are especially interested. By the time this Militant issue reaches the readers, No. 1 of the new series of the International Bulletin will be off the press. League branches and others interested should forward their regular orders. It is ten cents a copy and will be forwarded only by cash payments made in advance.

NEW YORK REORGANIZATION

Until about 6 months ago the Communist League in greater New York functioned as one branch. This was obviously not the best way for a Communist organization to function. It limited our activities within the confines of the down-town section in Manhattan, to the neglect of the working class residential sections in Brooklyn and the Bronx.

When we grew sufficiently in numbers we proceeded to divide the one New York Branch into three—one for each Borough, Manhattan, Brooklyn and the Bronx. This was unquestionably a step forward, and increased our recruiting power. Today, six months after the first reorganization on the basis of Borough branches, we are in a position to take the next step in making our organization a more effective weapon in the class struggle. As a result of activities we developed in the various sections in Brooklyn, we have been able to set up branches, aside from the one in Brownsville, where the Brooklyn Branch had its headquarters, also in Bay Ridge and Williamsburgh. We are also in the process of organizing a new branch in Harlem. This will give us a total of six territorial branches in New York. In the forthcoming issues of the Militant we will report the functioning of the branches and the activities they are developing.

MARCH OF EVENTS

AFTER THE CWA WHAT?

The CWA was Roosevelt's creation for the ostensible purpose of warding off "degradation" and "degeneration" of starving workers by the granting of outright doles. The independent spirit of the workers was to be upheld by the payment of wages for "honest" toil, just as in the private system of wage slavery. In actuality the CWA was coldly calculated to scotch the struggle for unemployment insurance that threatened to establish the workers' right to live, their right to a lien on government funds obtained from the bourgeoisie for the purpose. Roosevelt is now unloading the burden of relief. Nor do the states and local communities show any sympathetic desire to shoulder the burden dropped by the federal government.

The U. S. government has taken its cue from English and European experience. Only those who can prove "need" are to be continued on relief. The entire sham and pretense of the "liberal" program of Roosevelt is contained in the "pauper's oath", as the questionnaire to be filled out by all CWA workers has been rightly dubbed. This outrageous document leaves nothing to be desired in the way of capitalist preying and sniping for the purpose of avoiding relief and involving the unemployed worker in the reddest of red tape. The widespread protest that has ensued must be organized to reopen in a most powerful manner and on a new plane the fight for immediate relief, unemployment insurance or the providing of jobs for those willing to work.

MADISON SQUARE GARDEN

M. Olgin has shown his usual haste in coming to the defense of reactionary Stalinist Communism. As American correspondent for Pravda he hastened to wire Moscow on the occurrence of Feb. 17th at Madison Square Garden. His story appears in the Pravda of Feb. 18th in a statement that betrays the utter inability of the official Party to explain away its anti-working class disruption of the socialist meeting. Olgin states that the socialists began a vicious attack, in their speeches, on the Party, whereupon Hathaway marched to the platform to "refute the socialist charges". Come, come! Olgin will have to work in better agreement with the "leaders" on the line.

ENGLAND

The workers of London, fearful of the organized assault of Fascism on their democratic rights and on their working class organizations, have turned to the one party they "trust", the Labor Party. The London municipal government is now controlled by a Labor Party majority. Knowing its own record, the Labor Party was itself taken by surprise by this vote of confidence. As though the gaping holes in the Vienna workers' apartments had no meaning, the leader of the Labor Party in London, M. Morrison, proceeded to outline the reforms, particularly in housing, that would soon be inaugurated.

Without question this vote has great national significance for England. It is one answer to Lord Rothermere's ballyhoo for Fascist dictatorship. The first reaction of the workers in their struggle against the open dictatorship of the club, is to rally to the defense of democratic institutions and to place them in the hands of a working class party. Nor can the internationalist Communists afford to ignore this fact. They must know how to lead the workers in this progressive struggle so as to show up the utter inadequacy and betrayal of reformist leadership. In the open struggle that is bound to develop, the workers must be led, by utilizing their immediate aims, step by step along the revolutionary road to power, a road that is clearly visible on the historic scale only to the Communist. The vote indicates that the workers have been aroused to the need for resistance against reaction. This mood of struggle must be encouraged by proper internationalist-Communist leadership.

—J. WEBER.

OAKLAND BOOKSHOP AND FORUM

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THE MADISON SQUARE BOOMERANG

When the Communist Party marched into Madison Square Garden a few weeks ago and disrupted a Socialist protest meeting against Austrian Fascism, it stirred up a nest of hornets who are daily raising new bumps on its skull.

Within the S. P. the reaction to the Garden disruption has been sweeping. The rank-and-file, many of whom had been growing increasingly discontented with the old guard leadership, has been swept off its feet by bitterness against the C. P. disrupters. The old guard is more firmly in the saddle today than ever before in recent years. These S. P. members who have been agitating for united front action with the C. P. have been discredited. Such Socialists as J. B. Matthews and Mary Fox of the I. L. D., who have been sitting on united front committees with C. P. leaders, are today isolated inside the S. P.

Fake United Fronts Crack Up

One immediate result has been the cracking up of the various fake C. P. united front bodies. The League against War and Fascism was never a real united front of the masses. It was a committee set up by the C. P. and a handful of liberals including Roger Baldwin, Anne E. Gray, a female pacifist, and a few Socialists. Now Matthews and Fox have pulled out and, despite a touching appeal by Browder, Baldwin and Gray, that body is headed for decomposition. Similarly, there is a wide-open rift in the American branch of the Lord Marley Committee. All over the country, too, the S. P., with the enthusiastic support of its rank-and-file, is adopting resolutions against united front action with the C. P.

The workers in the trade unions which participated in organizing the Garden meeting have been similarly affected. A number of meetings called in the garment trades by New York C. P. groups have had to be abandoned because of the threats of non-Party workers to break them up in revenge for the Garden disruption. Last week the Militant printed a letter from a worker showing how the mood has altered: when a C. P. member insulted a member of the Left Opposition in a New York shop, the workers forced an apology from the Stalinist.

Sympathizers Alienated

Among C. P. sympathizers the effect of the Garden tactics has been profound. In addition to the Open Letter to the C. P., signed by 25 intellectuals hitherto friendly to the Stalinist party, there have been a whole series of private letters by smaller groups and individuals. Apparently the Daily Worker has no intention of printing these letters, although few of them are as frank in condemnation as the Open Letter. The effect of this suppression has been a further rise of discontent. The Daily Worker, incidentally, has not yet commented on the Open Letter. The New Masses did and, week, tried to "defend" the Garden boogianism of the C. P. by insulting the authors of the Open Letter. The Freiheit has since published its own comment. Although the New Masses poured imprecations over the questioners of the C. P.'s behavior, the Jewish organ of the C. P. calls them "well-meaning". It defends the behavior of the C. P. chiefly with the argument that the

Austrian Socialist leaders are "worse".

Inside the C. P.

Inside the C. P. things are lively these days. In public, of course, exonerating the C. P. and making everyone repeat the official phrases a martyr of Hathaway. Some C. P. members go even further: they are circulating a fairy tale that the S. P. leaders, fearing to address the meeting they had called, had themselves arranged for its disruption and that the C. P. was laboring to calm the meeting. But in private all this pretense is dropped. All but the most fanatical realize that the C. P. disrupted the Garden meeting and all are depressed or disgusted. Even those who at first fell for some of the Daily Worker's puff are beginning to have their doubts now that they see the looks of S. P. workers and trade unionists. "We made a mistake", is the universal private formula of C. P. members.

Some are even openly rebellious.

We are informed that a Party unit on Tenth St., New York, has sent a resolution to the Central Commit-

International Workers School Notes

The Class of comrade Abern on the Communist Manifesto has been changed to Monday nights. His next lecture will be on the Four Social Systems.

Comrade Swabek will lecture next Wednesday, March 21st, on the Knights of Labor, the A. F. of L., and the I. W. W.

On Sunday, March 18th, comrade Carter will speak on the Foundation of the Young Communist International. This class will begin promptly at 2 P. M. All other classes start promptly at 8 P. M.

We are glad to announce that we

are able to add to our courses for this term a class in elementary Russian which will begin Sunday, March 25th, at 4 P. M. Registrations are accepted at school headquarters, 126 East 16th St., New York City.

Comrade Wright's class on the

"History of the Bolshevik Party" is given every Friday night at 8 P. M.

The first three lectures dealt with: (1) the pre-Marxist currents (2) the First Congress of the R. S. D. L. P. and (3) the Iskra Period.

The March 16 and 23 lectures will treat of the 2nd Congress (the Congress of the split) and 1905 respectively.

The instructor, due to his knowledge of Russian, has had access to many hitherto untranslated documents.

To understand the period of the gestation of Bolshevism is to have a truer insight into the present era. They reveal a fundamental similarity, though on different historical planes. Both are periods of intense polemic and ideological confusion. Many of the problems now agitating the workers' movement were victoriously fought out by the Bolsheviks in conflict with the other tendencies on both the ideological and historical arena. The same conclusion is the Marxists' task now.

tee complaining about the Garden affair.

That the C. P. officials are badly scared by the results of their exploit is evident. Beginning with the St. Nicholas Arena meeting several weeks ago, they have been working day and night to "explain" the Garden affair to C. P. members and friends. Hathaway has done more exhorting in the last few weeks than ever before in his life. The "united front from below" applied at the Garden was such a huge success that he has not yet stopped trying to explain to everybody that it is not a disgrace.

How successful these meetings are may be indicated by one fact. Because of the rebellion among the intellectual sympathizers, the C. P. decided to call a meeting of the National Committee for the defense of Political Prisoners at which Hathaway could once again explain what a glorious deed had been done at the Garden. This committee is simply a vest-pocket C. P. affair. But so scared is the Party, that instead of calling the whole Committee together, it is picking out the "safe" elements and calling them together secretly to hear Hathaway.

Mood of the Workers

Clearly the C. P. is still reeling from the blow it delivered itself at the Garden. To the revolutionist, however, this is not enough. The mood of the intellectuals may rapidly degenerate into disillusion and disgust with the workers' movement unless they are brought on to firmer ground. But of primary import is the mood of the workers. Driven back into the arms of reactionary leaders, they are today antagonistic not only to the C. P. but to the very idea of a united front with any militant group. They gladly listen to Left Opposition criticisms of the C. P. and are learning to distinguish between our comrades and Stalinist hooligans. But they are fearful of taking any action that may involve them in a repetition of the Garden affair. The latter has cost the C. P. a great deal; only hard work will change that into a gain for the revolutionary movement.

MILITANT PLEDGE FUND

Last week we reported the first pledger, Paul King, a member of the Brooklyn Branch. Today we are able to report nine other names. All of them are members of the Manhattan branch of Local New York. Each has pledged for a period of three months.

- The following are the pledgers:
- 1. Paul King 25c weekly
- 2. M. Kling 50c monthly
- 3. S. Bleeker 50c monthly
- 4. G. Wright 50c weekly
- 5. E. Konikow 25c weekly
- 6. M. Beardslee 1.00 weekly
- 7. T. Smith 1.00 weekly
- 8. M. Sterling .25 weekly
- 9. F. Victor .25 weekly
- 10. J. Weber .50 weekly

We hope that next week we can list a good many more names, and that some of them will be our sympathizers and readers of the Militant who, we know, are just as anxious as our own members to sustain the paper.