

# The MILITANT

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## The T. U. E. L. Conference at Cleveland

### A Forecast of the Work of the 'New Trade Union Center'

#### No Illusions on the Gastonia Trial

As the trial in Charlotte, N. C., of the 16 Gastonia textile strikers and leaders gets under way, it develops certain features which, though dissimilar to many that characterized the trial of Sacco and Vanzetti years ago, does not change the primary fact that it is a frame-up of workers because of their activity in the labor movement.

These features, deliberately developed by the prosecution and the judge, are calculated to create an artificial atmosphere of "fairness", by a scrupulous regard for polite formalities, by insignificant "concessions" to the defense attorneys, by banquets to the prosecution and defense counsel, and by a general skilful handling of the case by the judicial harpies of the Southern textile barons. Why? In order to disarm the protest movement of the workers by creating the impression that the defendants are guaranteed a square deal at the hands of the chivalrous gentlemen of the black robe. The greatest danger to the interests of the defendants lies precisely in these illusions.

The role now being assumed by Judge Barnhill in Charlotte has been played before, and more than once. It was played by Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis in perfection in the trial of the 100 I. W. W. in Chicago during the war, and he succeeded very neatly in disarming the radical press generally. The conviction and the savage sentences he meted out which had been prepared behind this screen, came as a rude jolt to those who thought that fair words and false appearances did away with the class struggle and the class function of the capitalist courts.

It is in the light of this and similar experiences that the workers should read the words of Norman Thomas, the new evangelist of the Socialist Party, in the New Leader (August 31, 1929). He writes enthusiastically: "Hats off to Judge Barnhill for his remarkable fairness thus far to the Gastonia defendants. At least North Carolina is to be spared the disgrace of a Webster Thayer."

This is the quintessence of socialist and liberal wisdom, which limits objection to the frame-up system to the crude jobs of the bungling Thayers. In reality, it is the smoother and suaver Barnhills and Landises who are better exponents of the frame-up system precisely because of their superior "technique". Only a blockhead—or a socialist liberal—can fail to see this.

In the Gastonia case, the prosecution is seeking to establish the responsibility of leaders for all acts of violence that occur during a struggle. The attempt to establish this "principle," on the one hand, and the struggle of the labor movement against it, on the other, run like a red thread through the history of American labor trials since the days of the Haymarket martyrs. This is the essential aspect of the Gastonia frame-up as it has been in many other cases. The real attempt there is to fasten upon Beal and other leaders, who were not even present at the tent colony when the fatal shooting occurred, the responsibility for the death regardless of who fired the shots. With such a precedent fixed, every active fighter and leader in the working class movement can become an easy target for any kind of prosecution for events taking place entirely out of his control. With such a precedent a "Wall Street bomb explosion" caused by accident or by provocateurs, can become the basis for a wholesale victimization.

This is the central feature of the Gastonia case which gives it a particular claim upon the whole labor movement, besides the general claim of solidarity which every worker prosecuted in the capitalist courts for his activity in the class struggle has a right to make.

Precisely for this reason, and for many others that we have adduced in previous issues of the Militant, do we repeat the necessity to emphasize the slogan of the "Fight against the Gastonia frame-up!" as the central rallying cry of the fight for the defense. The slogan of the "right to self-defense" of the workers involved, as the main and only slogan in the campaign, appears to be very radical and revolutionary solely upon the surface. In essence, it narrows the fight to a legal tilt between prosecution and defense, confined to the court-room, to establish the "preponderance of evidence" on the weighty question of who fired the first shot, as though the class struggle would be suspended while this fine point was fairly adjudicated. As though the honest witnesses for the defense are sure to outnumber and outweigh the hired perjurers of the prosecution backed by mill owners' money.

The workers must be on guard. No illusions! Our

We go to press before the sessions of the Cleveland conference of the T. U. E. L. have opened; it is therefore necessary to deal with the actions and decisions of the conference in detail in the next issue of the Militant. However, there are already a sufficient number of signs that indicate what the character of the conference will be. We mention a few of them here, and each of them, from a different direction, cast the shadow of what will take place in Cleveland.

1. The delegation from the southern textile fields will probably be the only really representative and important group at the conference. Most of the other delegations represent wishes and hopes instead of substance. We were not taken in by the empty fanfare and "delegations" at the fake Federated Farmer-Labor Party convention in 1923; we are not gullible enough to swallow the delegates "representing the masses of the unorganized" in the shape of formless mass meetings, or, as in most cases, of Party fraction meetings in a shop. The conference was extremely ill-prepared, its slogans were wrong, it was organized in a purely administrative manner without worrying about the masses of the workers. This is not the way to organize the unorganized workers, but to confuse them and to lay the basis for their disillusionment.

2. Johnstone's article in the Daily Worker of Aug-

#### Lovestone's Burglaries

It makes a lot of difference whose office is burglarized, it seems. The Lovestoneites whose skill with the jimmy and the dark lantern is well known have turned their attention—and their burglarious talents—to the National office of the Communist Party, and the workers who have waited a long time for the whole truth are informed in horrid detail that the Party boss of yesterday, blessed by Stalin, saluted by Foster, is not only a petty bourgeois politician and an opportunist but is a burglar and all around crook as well. The working class public on last Tuesday was edified by a detailed account of the robbery in the Daily Worker.

This exhibition of criminality is indeed a shocking spectacle which shames and discredits the communist movement, undermines its prestige and makes it the laughing stock of its enemies. Every revolutionary and every conscientious worker must and will condemn the Lovestone gangsters who have demonstrated once again that they stand on the moral level of the underworld. Such elements are alien to the working class. They belong in the category of criminals who live by their wits, their black-jacks and their jimmies.

But if the burglary of the National office, and the second one a few days later of a section headquarters, were a black tragedy, there is at least a comic relief. This is supplied by the outbursts of moral indignation from the Foster-Wicks leadership of the Party. To hear these people cry one would think they had never seen a burglary before, much less taken part in one together with Lovestone. The two robberies of the office of the Opposition last winter were carried out jointly by them with him. It was an "official" job which they took no pains even to conceal or deny. The stolen documents were flamboyantly displayed a few days later in the Daily Worker and the combined forces of Lovestone and Foster, then happily united, proclaimed to the world that their mutual love was the kind that laughs at locksmiths; that if they couldn't answer our arguments they could at least rob our house and make away with the loot. Those who applauded the burglaries of Lovestone while he was the secretary of the Party have no ground to complain when their chickens come home to roost.

In view of this the fulminations against the latest burglary sound a bit hollow. Stalinism brought with it into the International all the methods of which the present Party leaders complain and they themselves have used them against the Opposition. Therefore we would not advise anyone to take their loud protests against the "underworld and police methods" of Lovestone as an indication of a serious intention on their part to swear off and go straight. It is safer to rely on stronger locks and a watchman with a shotgun.

countless dead and imprisoned have taught us that the real defense of the workers is a militant protest movement.

The organization of this movement on the broadest basis remains our central task. The formation of a united front—in deeds—against the Gastonia frame-up is a duty of the hour.

Those who want a working class victory for Gastonia must and will work for this with all their might.

ust 30, 1929 on the tasks of the conference, which is valuable only for its bluntness and not for its proposals. What Foster is cautious enough to equivocate about, or encircle with qualification, Johnstone blurts out. Like the proposed constitution and program of the T. U. E. L., he tips his hat brusquely to the necessity for working in the old unions, but on this basis: that the Left wing is to work in the old unions only for the purpose of splitting off what they can to affiliate these splinters to the new trade union center. This is plain enough, at any rate. Not only does it violate all we learned in the Communist movement about work in the basic mass organizations of the workers, but it precludes any possibility for carrying on such work. This grows plainer every day. The "new line" results in the surrender of the 3 or more millions of workers still in the A. F. of L. to the mercies of Green.

3. The proof of the virtual liquidation of Party and Left wing activity in the A. F. of L. unions is now mountain-high. A dozen trade union conventions in the last few weeks alone could be cited where not a single Left wing delegate was in evidence, and in many cases for the first time. At the Minnesota State Federation of Labor Convention (at Mankato) only O. R. Votaw, member of the Communist League, was a delegate, with no other Left wing present. The New York State Federation of Labor convention had representatives of the Muste group acting as the only opposition, insipid and timid as it was, to the machine. Numerous other instances show the same dark picture or darker. If this situation can possibly grow worse, the "new line" of the T. U. E. L. is sure to contribute its big mite.

4. The Eastern conference of the Marine Workers League. The ultra-mechanical control by the Party of this movement has throttled it until it is almost a wreck. The results of the policy of alienating and driving away all elements not members of the Party—and of a certain Party faction, at that—has narrowed the League down to its present shadow and resulted in a turn-out of 31 delegates, 2 of whom represented no one at all in New Orleans, 2 more represented the same grand total in Galveston, another 2 spoke for nobody in Boston, with the same from Norwalk. New York represented about 100 members, Philadelphia and Baltimore 50 each. The splendid possibilities for the organization of the movement were whittled away by those put in charge of the work. On the newly elected Executive Committee, there are approximately three actual seamen. The real inner "powers" of the Marine Workers League remain Mink, Sparks and Somers, who are the kind of "seamen" that would look for the foc's'le in the galley and for the bo'sun on the bridge. Left wing and revolutionary militants like Jim Gildea, John Russell, Hector Macray, Brophy, S. M. Rose, Fred Crowley, Sizemore and King, were either wangled out, driven away, or "disciplined" out of activity. Their misfortune is that they have experience, ability, authority and prestige among the seamen. Four delegates go from this conference to Cleveland to represent American seamen!

5. The Cleveland conference meets under the warning sign of three severe defeats for the Left wing in the New York unions. The loss of the Left wing furriers' strike and the triumph of the Right wing among the cloakmakers, have delivered a dizzying blow to the organized left wing in New York. In addition, last week's election of officers at the Iron and Bronze Workers Union, under the leadership of one Left wing for years, returned a complete Right wing slate, ousting Rosenfeld, Hofbauer, Powers and Karin who ran for re-election, and giving over the executive board of the union completely to the Rights. Philistine philosophers will always find "objective conditions" to explain these alarming facts. We find the cause where it actually lies—in the false, the radically false policy of the Left wing, that is, of the Communist Party leadership.

The Cleveland conference will run quite smoothly, we know. That has been taken care of in the usual way. It will be of service in emphasizing the great necessity of organizing the unorganized millions, demanded by us over a year ago. But few, if any, clear voices will be raised to demand the revival of the correct line that can fructify the excellent objective possibilities into blossoming realities. For our part, we will continue to demand the application of the teachings of Lenin on work in the trade unions, the united front policy, the organization of the unorganized in reality and not in manifestoes and fake conferences, the collaboration with workers following the progressives, the fight for the class struggle in the unions.

—M. S.







## PARTY PROGRESS

### The 3rd Period Hits St. Louis

A clearcut illustration of "Third period" adventurism and the consequent isolation, is afforded in St. Louis. The May Day Conference called by the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and the Mooney-Billings Freedom Conference called by the Molders' Union were exceptional opportunities for mass activity and for the local Party to become a factor in the St. Louis labor movement. Did the Party get out Lenin's slogan of the united front and work in these conferences, pushing them so St. Louis would have a huge May Day Mass Meeting, and so that the workers and their organizations and unions would become aroused about the frame-up system and Mooney and Billings? No. Well, what did the Party do? Nothing. That is, nothing with reference to the Mooney-Billings Freedom Conference; the May Day Conference they broke up.

Let us take these up singly and see what we get out of this adventurism. The May Day Conference called by the Amalgamated Clothing Workers was an opportunity for St. Louis to hold a huge May Day Mass Meeting on the basis of a united front with other labor organizations. The delegates to the Conference had no disagreement about the program or policy for the proposed May Day meeting (briefly, Fight against imperialist war! Defend Workers' Soviet Russia! Fight against low wages, long hours, rationalization, etc.) yet the Party leadership, who controlled the majority of delegates, broke up the conference! They were against a united front on any basis; their advice was each labor organization shall hold their own May Day meeting! The result was no joint May Day Mass Meeting; three small, isolated meetings being held instead, with only the Communist League of America (Opposition) holding a meeting which could at all be called successful. A chance to politically wake-up St. Louis with a huge joint mass-meeting and the Party's slogan is "Break up the Conference!"

The other illustration of a bankrupt leadership is afforded in the Mooney-Billings Freedom Conference called by Local 59, of the International Molder's Union. Some twenty local unions and several labor organizations have participated in the work but at none of the conferences has the Party done anything. Why, the Party has not even been represented! Neither has the I.L.D., the W.I.R., the Y.C.L., or any of the Party controlled organizations, Ladies Auxiliary, etc. Why was this?

Here was an opportunity for the Party to be freed from their Labor Lyceum isolation; to push if not lead a union fight against the frame-up system, yet the Party's policy is "we don't want to have anything to do with them, they're labor fakers". To hell with the united front, to hell with the fight against the frame-up system, to hell with a demonstration and mass-meeting for Mooney and Billings, "we won't have anything to do with the A.F.L., they're labor fakers"! The result is the Mooney-Billings public protest meeting and the automobile parade on July 27th, 13th anniversary of Mooney and Billings' imprisonment is being held without the local Party and their controlled organizations taking any part in the demonstration. A new force is in the field: the Communist League of America (Opposition) and they are the pushing and leading force. Accordingly we find the "Boycotting" Party becoming more and more isolated and foreign to the St. Louis labor movement; each adventure isolates it more—while the Communist Opposition finds its influence growing, its ranks larger, because it is a part of the labor movement, and its political line is for the workingclass.

And so the local Party remains, as it has been for some time, isolated. A clique of Labor Lyceum debaters. With the Jimmy Higginess one by one becoming demoralized and disgusted, some with the isolation from the labor movement, others with the overnight expulsions of yesterday's "Leading and outstanding, best comrades". Most of the local members are Party patriots with little or no understanding of the Comintern policies and of Bucharin, Stalin and Trotsky; suddenly confronted by a C.E.C. member with: "unanimously and unreservedly endorse" this latest action or you are fighting against the Comintern, and are a socialist, menshevik, degenerate, counter-revolutionist, and they unanimously endorse anything and everything, not in the least enlightened but hoping that the C.E.C. member is right—that now everything is all right.

But it is hopeless to hope for heaven—for a mass Communist movement when the leadership continues their adventurist policies of isolating and splitting the Party. The rank and file should fight for an internal bolshevik discussion of the three political lines before the Party; the opportunist (Bucharin) the adventurist (Stalin) and the Leninist (Trotsky). An open discussion on the fictitious issue of "Trotskyism" will give a complete understanding of the present situation in the Comintern. To this end all rank and file members will come; there is no other remedy or solution. Mass Communist Parties do not grow on trees, or out of unanimous endorsements; they are based on understanding, and on correct workingclass policy.

MARTIN C. PAYER.

## TWO LETTERS FROM AFAR

### A LETTER FROM ALFRED ROSMER

Prinkipo, Turkey, July 9, 1929.

Dear Comrade Cannon:

We have decided here to publish an International Review, called "Opposition" as soon as possible. We hope to be ready by next September. This review is to be published in two languages: French and German. An English edition is, of course, very desirable, but we believe it not possible for the present. . . . In the meantime, we shall send you, of course, all articles of an international interest for insertion in The Militant. . . . We hope that the French Opposition will take during the months to come a new development. We are preparing a weekly which, according to our intention, must unite the present small groups—or most of the comrades who are in them—and above all many Communists who are no more members of the Party but are quite demoralized by Stalin's zigzags and partially inactive, our task will be hard but we take it with great confidence.

The arrival every fortnight of The Militant is always a great joy to me. I read it at once from beginning to end: it is good stuff and I admire your fighting spirit in the struggle against the Stalinist clique.

With my best wishes for the young Communist League,

Fraternally yours,

A. ROSMER.

P. S.—You know perhaps that Foster is an old acquaintance of mine. I wonder how he can stay in Stalin's galley. I used to hear him speak rather harshly of "bolshevism."

### FROM THE CHINESE OPPOSITION

Shanghai, China, July 8, 1929.

Dear Comrade:

Your periodical received with many thanks. In the fighting against the opportunistic leadership of the Party, we are reinforced by international theoretical support. As the Stalinist regime has reigned over all the world, we are sure that the fight against opportunism will be our united task.

We, under the Stalinist suppression, are hardly able to receive any information about the truth of Russia. Yet we have passed already one year since our organization has been founded. Victory is already on our side, in that the mass of the party has followed us on all the fronts that we face.

Our Party leadership is the true and honest disciple of opportunism. They follow what Stalin does against us. But we will never be discouraged, although we are under extreme suppression of our party leaders. They forbid us to criticize the opportunistic policy

## COMMUNIST LEAGUE ACTIVITIES

The Communist League of America and its branches are undertaking numerous activities. Some of the work is cited below:

**NEW YORK CITY:** The New York branch of the Communist League is conducting very successful street meetings every Saturday night. Militants and the pamphlet, the Criticism of the Draft Program of the Comintern by L. D. Trotsky, have been sold in large numbers at each meeting. Among the speakers have been comrades Max Shachtman, Martin Abern, Maurice Spector, S. M. Rose and many other members of the branch.

The branch is also conducting a membership drive and eight new applicants were accepted at the last two branch meetings which are held weekly. Sale of the Militant is stressed and upwards of one thousand copies of the August 15th issue are expected to be sold. The newsstands selling the Militant are regularly increasing.

A study class is also being formed for the fall and winter months.

A program of trade union and labor organization activities is being mapped out by the local Executive Committee. The branch is made up largely of members active in the labor unions.

**CHICAGO, ILL.** The Chicago branch is one of the best branches in support of the Militant and is now conducting a campaign to raise its quota for the projected WEEKLY MILITANT. Some of the oldest and liveliest wires in the revolutionary movement are in the Chicago branch. The Chicago comrades have been particularly awake to the task of getting subscribers to the Militant and the Chicago list grows rapidly.

**MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.** This branch of the Communist League is the unquestioned backbone of the revolutionary labor and Communist movement in Minneapolis. Its members are experienced workers in the labor unions and other labor organizations. Some of its activities are reported on in other columns of The Militant, notably its work in aiding to organize the unorganized clothing workers under the leadership of Oliver Carlson, an alternate member of the National Committee of the Communist League. Such live elements as Vincent R. Dunne, Carl Skoglund, O. R. Votaw, C. R. Hedlund, L. Roseland, Oscar Sover, Carl Cowl, and many others give the Communist League a prestige throughout the ranks of the workers.

The Minneapolis League is pushing the drive for the defense of the Gastonia frame-up victims, and is endeavoring to organize the movement on the widest possible united front basis.

The Minneapolis branch is strongly behind the drive of the National Committee for a Weekly Militant, as

taken in Russia as well as on an international scale. Under this condition we could not help but publish our paper and distribute to all the members of the Party. We feel that we have not yet got the sympathy of the masses outside of the Party. We hope that hereafter our attention will be given to this kind of work, as you did. We try to publish our periodical named THE PROLETARIAN. It shall appear before you very soon.

The Chinese revolution has lost all that we have been fighting for. Opportunistic leadership betrayed our hoped-for victory. We are now facing various kinds of oppression. We are in need of economic resources.

We hope that you will send us books and papers relative to recent conditions of the International Opposition. Organizationally, we have Action Committees in the nuclei in every part of China.

We hope you will inform us as to the condition actually in Soviet Russia and the Third International. In your paper we hope you can put more material on the position in China.

With Communist Greetings,

ACTION COMMITTEE OF THE  
CHINESE OPPOSITION.  
By P.

### The Sacco-Vanzetti Meetings

Outstanding in the second anniversary of the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti was the failure of the revolutionary elements to mobilize the workers for an international memorial demonstration, and to utilize the movement generated thereby for an intensified struggle against the persecution and imprisonment of working class fighters. The Comintern did not even make an effort to organize demonstrations internationally. In Europe, there were no demonstrations, at least none was reported either in the bourgeois or the Communist press. In the United States, there was no national movement organized, despite the pressing need and the excellent opportunity to knit the lessons of the Sacco-Vanzetti case with the struggle for the Gastonia defendants. The New York "demonstration" in Union Square was a pitiful fiasco—only some 3000 attended the meeting organized by the Party. In most of the other centers there was not even an endeavor to demonstrate on the anniversary. It was simply passed over.

This is a warning signal for the Party of the passivity that has crept into the ranks. The huge movement for Sacco and Vanzetti must and can be revived for Gastonia and for the workers who are already imprisoned, some of them for years. The present Party policy, however, is powerless to accomplish this urgent task.

well as in maintaining the paper from issue to issue. The branch undertook a house to house canvass for the Militant with considerable success, and the idea is recommended to other branches. The Minneapolis group rivals Chicago as subscription getters for the Militant. The comrades report also that the St. Paul branch is getting under way.

**ST. LOUIS, MO.** Since the formation of the St. Louis branch of the Communist League, St. Louis has been seen more Communist activity than it has for a long time. The branch is especially active in the Mooney-Billings campaign and is working to broaden this and similar movements to draw in every possible labor organization into the campaign.

**BIRMINGHAM, ALA.** Comrade Sarah Linn in this bailiwick of the Southern steel and cotton lords distributes The Militant and does all possible to further our revolutionary work.

**RICHMOND, CALIF.** A branch of the Communist League is being formed here.

**BOSTON, MASS.** An enthusiastic meeting of the Boston branch greeted the distribution by comrade L. Schlosberg of membership cards and dues stamps of the Communist League. Subscriptions for the Militant are coming in steadily from the Massachusetts territory. Our comrades in Boston have been very active in the shoe workers' strike. The Militant has a very good sale throughout Boston, Roxbury and nearby points.

**KANSAS CITY, MO.** "Shorty" Buehler, secretary of the Kansas City branch, reports that the Communist League there recently held a successful picnic for the benefit of the Militant, and that the comrades are now concentrating on new members. The Militant has sold well indeed, and a deep ferment has been aroused among the Communists and sympathizers in Kansas City, and all to the good of the Opposition led by comrade Trotsky.

**WILLISTON, N. D.** Comrade A. C. Miller, the first Communist legislator in the United States, reports that a strong branch of the Communist League is being formed of workers and poor farmers in and around Williston who are disgusted with the opportunistic policy of the Stalin clique and its local agent, Knunson.

Space prevents further reports of branch activities in the United States and Canada, but a regular feature will be made of organization activities from now on. Comrades are requested to send in brief reports regularly for publication.

The National Committee of the League is conducting a drive for the Weekly Militant. See other columns.