

THE MILITANT

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THE MILITANT

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April 14, 1933

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Dear comrade Trotsky:

Enclosed herewith you will find a copy of a letter which we have sent to comrade Gerry Allard, a member of the League who holds a prominent position in the Progressive Miners Union in Illinois and is editor of their official organ. The letter is largely self-explanatory. Comrade Swabek, if he is still there when this arrives, can supplement the information as he is very well acquainted with the whole question.

The problem is undoubtedly a very important one for us and one that will arise many times in various forms as the League progresses as a factor in the class struggle and roots itself in the trade unions. It is highly important that we do not bungle the job, and we should have some advice from you if possible.

This is all the more necessary because we seem to have a certain difference of opinion in the NC on the question. The difference, as it seems to me, is one of method and tempo in dealing with comrade Allard. In NC minutes #135, in paragraph #7 of comrade Shachtman's motion, the problem is formulated as one of "coming now to a final conclusion in this case". This appears to me as too abrupt, as a premise that can force us to break with comrade Allard prematurely, before all means of pressure and persuasion have been exhausted and before the impossibility of correcting comrade Allard has been fully demonstrated. As a matter of fact I myself am by no means convinced that we cannot bring comrade Allard along. His difficulty, in my opinion, comes chiefly from his tendency to adapt himself to the mass movement and his lack of political understanding and experience. His position is difficult and complicated. Above all, he needs direct and constant political aid. It is from this point of view that I emphasize so strongly the necessity of having a more experienced member of the NC present in the mining field in the next period.

I am finishing a document which embodies my estimation of the Illinois mining situation and our tasks there. As soon as it is finished, I will send you a copy. Meantime, I wish you would give some consideration to the special question of comrade Allard.

Yours fraternally,

J.P. Cannon

Secretary