

Stop this Hooliganism!

Letter Of The Communist Party (Majority Group) To The American Civil Liberties Union

We publish below the letter sent by Benjamin Gitlow, secretary of the Communist Party (Majority Group), to the American Civil Liberties Union.—Editor.

* * *

July 13, 1932.

Roger Baldwin,
American Civil Liberties Union,
New York City.

Dear Mr. Baldwin:—

Recently, the open-air meetings of our group, arranged in various parts of the city, have been broken up by the members of the Communist Party. It seems that the Communist Party is determined to smash every open-air meeting arranged by our group. From the press, I learn also, that the Communist Party has broken up open air meetings of the Trotsky group and also of the Socialist party.

Outside of New York, notably in Detroit, the Communist Party for months has tried to break up every meeting of workers organizations. They have conducted themselves in a most rowdy fashion at open air meetings arranged by our group, the Proletarian party and the I.W.W.

The climax of the Communist Party's hoodlum tactics was reached at an open-air meeting which our group arranged to hold on Friday evening, July 8, in Brownsville at Pitkin and Bristol Streets. When our committee arrived at the corner where the meeting was scheduled to take place, they found a platform of the Communist Party on that corner. Not desiring to have any conflict, our committee decided to change the corner of the meeting and moved our platform to another corner at Hopkinson and Pitkin Avenue. Our meeting started in an orderly fashion and continued orderly until approximately 9:20 o'clock. At 9:20, a committee claiming to represent the International Labor Defense appeared with a platform at the

same corner on which we were holding our meeting. They demanded that we immediately stop our meeting and permit them to hold a meeting on that corner. We protested and said we do nothing of the kind, in view of the fact that we had already changed from the corner where we had arranged to hold our meeting, in order not to have any interference or trouble. Thereupon, the platform of the International Labor Defense was raised and the most rowdy, hoodlum tactics were resorted to in an effort to smash our meeting. I was speaking at the time. They began to boo, yell and sing. They sent people into our crowd to shout and ask the workers to leave the meeting and go to a "genuine Communist meeting"—all in the name of the International Labor Defense, which is supposed to advocate freedom of speech and assemblage and which organization the Communist Party claims is a non-partisan and non-political organization. Women and children were sent into the crowd, the children shouting, booing and hurling all sorts of invectives. The women assumed a hysterical attitude and shouted curses, much to the disgust of the workers who were present.

They then prepared to attack the meeting. They closed in on the meeting displaying brass knuckles; some carried knives and just as soon as the chairman adjourned the meeting, which was about 10:30, they rushed the platform and started a riot. How many workers were injured, I am in no position to say, but the workers, men, women and children, were sent scampering and crying in fright in all directions.

This action of the Communist Party is one which will give the capitalist authorities all the pretexts and excuses for closing the streets to open-

(Continued on Page 2)

SLAVE LABOR DECREE IN GERMANY

(Continued from Page 1)

direct form are expected as the results of the July 31 elections.

The movement for the establishment of a united labor front against Fascism, the only way in which the Nazi menace can be smashed, is marching forward but slowly; the bright perspectives that seemed to have been suddenly opened for this movement thru the recent "new turn" in the policy of the Communist Party, are now almost dispelled again. The Social-democratic officials sharply rejected the Communist Party offer of a united front, as was to be expected they would, and the C.P. leaders, instead of pressing forward to mobilize the Social-democratic workers to force their officials into a united front, grew frightened at their temporary sally in the right direction and relapsed again into the worst sectarianism. They have held a series of sham "united front" anti-Fascist conferences all over the country, representing nobody but the Communists and their sympathizers. The divisions in the ranks of the working class and the isolation of the revolutionary forces are growing and with them the inability of the labor movement to defeat the bid for power of the Hitlerites.

AN END TO THIS HOOLIGANISM!

(Continued from Page 1)

air meetings. The Communist Party, however, does not attack the meetings of the Republican and Democratic parties or other capitalist organizations. They are only determined to prevent minority parties and groups

from having access to the streets and to the masses for the expression of their viewpoint. Unless some action is taken immediately, not only to sharply protest against such tactics on the part of the Communist Party but also to assure the right of other working class political organizations and groups to hold meetings, freedom of speech and expression will be gone in the city of New York. I am sure that the Civil Liberties Union realizes what is involved in the present tactics of the Communist Party. I am sure the Union realizes that these tactics of the Communist Party are a serious blow to freedom of speech. It is, therefore, imperative that the American Civil Liberties Union take immediate and decisive steps to prevent the continuation of these tactics on the part of the official Communist Party. I hope that the American Civil Liberties Union will see to it that the right to hold street meetings is assured and guaranteed to other parties and groups. Please take this matter up at once and let me know what you have decided to do.

Very truly yours,

(signed) **BENJ. GITLOW,**
Secretary, Communist Party U. S. A.
(Majority Group)

COLUMBUS, Ohio.—One miner, a youth of 18, was killed and a half-dozen wounded when the national guardsmen opened fire on July 12 on a group of miners near the New York Central bridge at Chauncey in the coal strike area. Another encounter took place at the Provident mine in Belmont County when the sheriff tried to prevent a crowd of miners from picketing.