

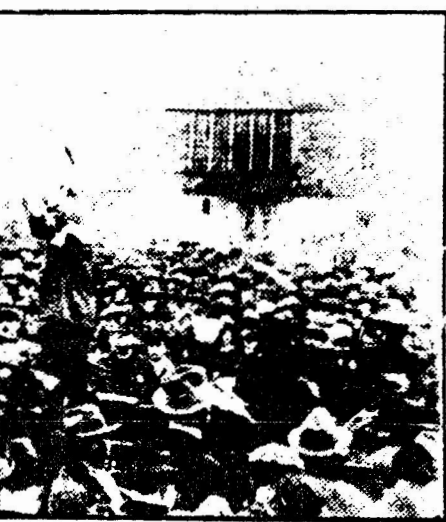
Ruthenberg's Contributions to the League.

BY SAM DARCY.

Our enemies can rejoice. They have won a distinct advantage in the loss of our leader, Comrade Ruthenberg. But sober minded workers will feel the loss and work harder in the movement to help sustain it.

If this applies to the adult workers, it applies infinitely more to the young workers who have so few able leaders among ourselves and so few among the adult workers who understand our problems, and can give us guidance. Comrade Ruthenberg was one of those who can serve as an example for all of us.

The history of his activities in connection with the working class youth the Left Wing within the Socialist dates back to the early struggles of Party in 1917-1918-1919. As the leader of the Left Wing forces in the middle west in the very early days he constantly worked with the existing youth organization and was largely in-



Anti-War Meeting in Cleveland.

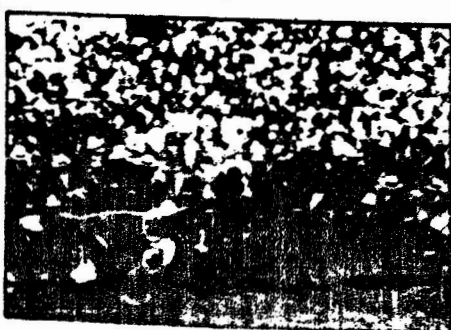
strumental in winning them for the Left Wing.

It was, however, in September of 1919 that he began working with the youth on a national scale and giving it the careful personal guidance that steered it away from the betrayals of the Socialist Party and the inevitable destruction that lay in the conflict of the various Communist groups.

After the September conventions of the Socialist Party, Communist Labor Party, and Communist Party, Comrade Ruthenberg met in a joint committee with John Reed, Lewis C. Frana and some other of the adult comrades together with Gerisch, Ball, Carlson, etc., of the Y. P. S. L., to work out a plan that would make possible the building of a Communist youth movement under the joint auspices of the C. P. and C. P. and C. L. P., thereby eliminating the utilization of the youth movement as a faction in the hands of one group or the other. It was the support to this proposal that made possible the formal splitting of practically the entire youth movement from the Socialist Party at the succeeding convention in Rochester.

By this time Ruthenberg had become one of the outstanding leaders in the struggle against militarism and the war in this country. He already had served in Canton, O., for an anti-war address in Cleveland against conscription. Like Liebknecht he learned the problems of the youth largely thru his anti-war and anti-militarist activities. In 1920 he again was indicted in New York state and served a term in Sing Sing.

From Sing Sing he emerged in April, 1922. Despite the tremendous volume of work that he faced and his weakened physical condition he arranged as one of his first tasks the studying of the situation in the youth League.



Notice the Cops at Both Meetings.

About a week after leaving the gates of Sing Sing he attended the first national convention of the Young Workers' League and worked to help it formulate its policies and program. Even those in the convention opposed to the position that Comrade Ruthenberg took on the various policies expressed admiration at the thoroughness with which he had studied our problems and the understanding he showed of them. The writer had expressed differences with a position that Comrade Ruthenberg had taken. After the convention when the position that Comrade Ruthenberg took passed by an overwhelming majority, and any other leader would be satisfied to "let well enough alone", he called the writer into conference and went into long and patient detail to show the correctness of his position.

Since then, as the leader of the Party, he constantly helped and gave guidance to the organization of the revolutionary young workers, the Young Workers (Communist) League of America. He often wrote on youth problems. In the previous issue of this paper one of Comrade Ruthenberg's articles is reprinted which gives even the superficial student of our work the feeling that here was a revolutionist who did not deal with general phrases but understood

After the last convention when the League was practically non-existent Comrade Ruthenberg again began studying the problems of the League. In a series of sessions with the writer he outlined a campaign for building the League. He brought his plan into the Central Executive Committee of the Party and there formulated the slogan, "Build a league unit wherever there exists a party unit." The campaign toward this end had to be postponed for a period because of many new developments in the movement which interfered. His subsequent death prevented him from completing the work. Let us however, commemorate the memory to Ruthenberg by carrying to a successful conclusion the work he outlined but which his untimely death prevented him from carrying into effect. Let the Party of Ruthenberg carry on in his spirit the actual tasks before it.

We can hardly appreciate the tremendous role that Comrade Ruthenberg played in the history of the American Communist movement. We are too close to him as yet to see his work objectively. When we look at the history of the Russian Communist Party we are most impressed by Lenin's leadership of the Bolsheviks during the developments of the Communist faction and subsequent Communist Party 1903-5, to the final victory in 1917. Ruthenberg played a similar role in the development of the Communist Party beginning with 1912 to the split in 1919 and the founding of the Communist Party subsequently. Only death prevented him from carrying on his work further.

He was undoubtedly the outstanding figure in the application of Leninism in this country. He led in every struggle to establish a Leninist policy and activity; the struggle for a legal Party and the recent fight on the Labor Party are only two of the many examples.

We have undoubtedly received a great blow in losing him. Shall we weep? Shall we express pious wishes and weak phrases? No!

We have his guidance. His last slogan was:

"LET'S FIGHT ON!"

With the example of his revolutionary integrity, his self-sacrificing devotion and his thorough understanding we will fight