

# The MILITANT

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## The Illinois Miners' Struggle

### Crash in the Stock Market

Not all of the soothing assurances of Herbert Hoover and the other spokesman of the ruling class can conceal the fact that the stock market crash was a sharp blow to American capitalist stability, that revealed the anarchy and weakness of the industrial and financial structure of the present system. The heavily inflated stock market, the accumulation of the growth since America's entry into the World War, burst like a punctured windbag.

#### The Causes of Crash

The Wall Street crash was not due solely to the speculative mania, which only aggravated the situation. Its roots go deeper. Since the end of the World War, the United States became the world's banker. "Easy money" made possible an embarkment on a road of production increase such as has not had its parallel in history, accompanied by an unprecedented export of capital.

The tremendous productive capacity and output of American industry did not, however, entirely correspond with the growth of the American home market. At the same time, with the world market growing narrower, European economy, rehabilitated largely by American dollars, continued to hammer at the doors of the American market with a demand for entry.

The world and its markets, however, have certain physical limitations. The struggle for this market becomes keener every day. American capitalism must have an ever-increasing share of this market commensurate with its top-heavy industrial structure. It must either go forward—which means the inevitable armed conflict primarily with England for a new division of the world market, or else it must vomit up the indigestible over-capitalization of its industry induced by frenzied speculation and investment. This is what happened.

It does not follow, of course, that the collapse on the stock exchange is to be followed immediately by a collapse of American industry. The ups and downs of stock market speculations do not directly reflect the conditions of industry, where money changes hands—under "bull" or "bear" influences—without producing anything or, frequently affecting values. It has been evident for months that American industry has entered a stage of depression in some of its most important branches.

#### Where the U. S. Will Press

But the United States is still in a sufficiently strong and arrogant position in world economy and politics to endeavor to overcome its economic difficulties at home by pressure on two points: on the U. S. workers in the form of a more intense drive to lower wages, lengthen the work day, speed up the workers, and on Europe, in the form of a decreased ration for France, Germany, Italy, England and the rest of the world market.

From both of these points, United States capitalism will meet with increased resistance. The attempt to issue out of its own difficulties at the expense of the American workers, and particularly of European capitalism, will involve it in the most violent collisions. The American worker, accustomed to a relatively high standard of living, will fight, if not to raise it, at least to retain it. The European countries especially England, will be pushed by the force of events to fight back, at first around "peaceful" conference tables and in the end on the battlefield of imperialist war.

The factors making for war are already resent in embryo. They are maturing rapidly. The crash on the stock market is a harbinger of the coming catastrophe.

### Trotsky Greet the Weekly Militant

Dear Comrades:

You cannot, in my opinion, better mark the Twelfth Anniversary of the October Revolution than by transforming *The Militant* into a weekly. It is a great step forward. A semi-monthly gave the possibility of assembling the first cadres of the faction. The weekly creates the possibility of direct and permanent intervention in the life of the whole working class.

The weekly, in turn will have to prepare the road to the Daily. But isn't it Utopian to speak of it now? I do not think so. For it is in this direction that the road of development is leading.

In the U. S. S. R., in Germany, in France, the Left Communist Opposition represents a faction that is fighting for influence upon the proletarian nucleus of the official Party. In Belgium, the situation is quite different. The official Party there is entirely insignificant. Well, the Belgian Opposition can and must lead to the role of an independent Party. Upon it devolves the task of fighting for the proletarian nucleus not of the Communist Party but of the Social Democratic Party.

In America, the situation is closer, to that in Belgium than to that in Germany. The essential task of the American Communists consists of direct action upon the revolutionary elements of the class; the struggle for the workers who belong to the official Party or who are misled into the Right Wing not having a great importance. That means that the Communist League in America has all the necessary elements for developing into an independent Party. And if such is the case, the weekly can and must become a stage on the road towards a daily.

I am sending you for the first number of the Weekly my article on the Twelfth Anniversary of the October Revolution, and at the same time my promise of the most active collaboration and the assurance of my devoted support.

Constantinople, October 19, 1929

L. TROTSKY

### The Conference at Belleville

By Joseph Angelo

The news as reported in the Daily Worker on the Belleville convention of the Illinois National Miners Union is just as far from the truth as that carried in the capitalist press. What the convention was in actuality will be given here.

#### A Convention of Speeches

The first day of the convention (Saturday) began with speech making and ended with speech making. First Voyzey spoke, then Corbishley, then, following one one after the other, Boyce of Indiana, Guynn of Ohio, Kelley from Chicago on the I. L. D. (Kelley is a new one to me, looks more like a business man than a worker—a typical Babbitt), and Allard. Thus the first day of the convention ended with six Communist speakers and after adjournment the rank and file delegates stood outside the convention hall, some with stoical faces and others full of resentment. The miners of Illinois are in revolt. They have had enough of speech making at home. They came to Belleville to help outline a plan of action to build the National Miners Union, to fight the coal operators and their hunkies, the Fishwicks and Lewises, but not to listen to a lot of gibberish from second-hand peddlers. So the first day of the convention created a smoldering volcano.

When I came into the convention hall for the second and last day of the convention (Sunday) my first impression was that I was either in Chicago or New York attending a Communist Party affair. There they were with their important looking brief cases Sklar, Tashinsky, Gebert, Bental, the great zig-zag Foster, the Toohey, Prokoff (another Party official in Illinois) and others whose names I don't know nor did I care to find out. Evidently this crew of Stalinites were delayed for some reason or other, therefore all the speechmaking and no action on Saturday.

The second day session came to order with Corbishley reading off a list of names that he said were selected by a small committee for the various committees, the resolution, constitutional, finance, credential and wages and demands committees. Corbishley asked for the adoption of his report. The report was amended by the convention adding a rank and file delegate here and there to the various committees. When we got to the wage and demands committee, I placed the name of John Watt in nomination: immediately the Stalinites present began to protest. Their argument was that the national office should not interfere in district affairs—this from Slinger and Allard. Then I raised the question of Freeman Thompson who is a National Board member and whose name was selected by the small committee for the wage and demands committee. The Stalinites realizing that they had made a mistake in their work moved that all national officials act as an advisory committee in all committees.

After this Toohey took the floor for one of his long-winded speeches which took over two hours, criticizing John Watt for his so-called "operators' neutrality" theory (which is bunk). Toohey ended his long tirade with a resolution on policy, wage and demands and asked for the adoption of the resolution. Immediately, Voyzey put the motion for adoption before the house and the motion was accepted without discussion of any kind from any delegates. Before the delegates knew what happened the resolution had been adopted. Shades

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### The N. Y. Vote - A Warning Sign

The vote in the New York municipal elections was not surprising or noteworthy by the fact that the loyal son of Tammany, James Walker, was re-elected to the Office of mayor with an overwhelming vote, or that the prize demagogue of the Republican (and yesterday of the Socialist) Party, LaGuardia was so heavily snowed under. That was to be expected. What does come as a humiliating blow is the unusually low vote of the official Communist Party. To find a figure that will match the vote received by Weinstone, the C. P. candidate for mayor, one must go back more than five years, and even then a comparison is difficult.

Weinstone, standard bearer of the Party, received 5622 votes throughout the city. This stands in sharp contrast not only to the 174,391 votes received by the Socialist candidate, Thomas, or the so-called "straight Socialist" vote for Solomon for Comptroller, but also to the 6,602 votes polled by Olive Johnson, candidate for the Socialist Labor Party. Even the mountebank Enright, with his "Square Deal Party" got 334 more votes than Weinstone.

This terrific defeat for the Communist Party must be examined in the light of the following facts: There is an increasingly radical sentiment among the workers, and this militant mood has been played up and exaggerated enormously by the Daily Worker and the rest of the Party press. For weeks before the election, the Daily Worker shouted itself hoarse with the boast that the workers are ready for Communist Party leadership, that they are leaving their betrayers in the unions and flocking to the revolutionary trade union center, the T. U. U. L., that the Communist campaign is to be waged fearlessly in the name of "class against class".

#### S. L. P. Beats C. P.

In the face of all this vapid prattling, the elections showed that the Communist Party received a smaller vote—for the first time in many years—than the anaemic and hopelessly sectarian Socialist Labor Party, which has no influence upon the American working class and pretends to none!

The course of the Communist Party is very instructive: In 1924, Foster received 4389 votes in New York City in his Presidential run and Johns of the S. L. P. 2226; Cannon, running for Governor, got 7,813 votes with the S. L. P. candidate run-

ning up 4,923. In the election for Governor in 1926, after the Lovestone wrecking crew had taken over the Party, Gitlow received 4,425, with Crowley of the S. L. P. getting 1,957. In 1928, Foster running for President, got 9,214 votes, and Reynolds for the S. L. P., 2,769. For Governor, William F. Dunne (C. P.) got 9,058 and Carregan (S. L. P.) 2,725. Not once did the S. L. P. come within a thousand votes of the C. P. This year, under the new leadership and the new line, Weinstone lost 3,436 votes compared with Dunne's vote last year, while Johnson, of the S. L. P., gained 3,877 votes over last year's S. L. P. candidate.

Elections are not decisive for the working class struggle; they are only barometers of the sentiment of the masses. As a barometer of the Communist Party strength, this year's vote indicates a pitiful weakness and is a crushing blow to all the bombast, fakery, exaggeration and direct falsification with which the present Party apparatus men feed the remnants of the Party membership.

#### Why the Falling Vote?

The New York vote is a warning signal to the membership of the Party. The efforts of the Daily Worker to conceal the shameful defeat with outrageously false headlines about the "doubled vote of the C. P." will only serve to deepen the crisis in the Party instead of creating the enlightenment necessary to overcome it.

As for the Socialist Party, it has no special cause for jubilation. In the percentage of total votes, Thomas received less than Hillquit did in 1917, despite the fact that Thomas' campaign was as fearfully "respectable" and as far removed from socialism as that of any liberal reformer. The deeply misled S. P. was dragged a yard further down into the swamp of capitalist degeneration by this year's campaign.

The post election "heated" discussion between Hillquit and Thomas shows where the S. P. is going. It is not a Party of the working class and does not want to be one. It yearns for the "classless" liberal and the dignity of the peanut-stand owner's adherence. The workers who follow Thomas and his Party will serve as vote contributors and nothing more. Unfortunately, the Socialist Party will continue to get working class votes also, so long as the Communist Party continues its ruinous policy.