

Illinois Miners on the March

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of the sell-out career of the old union officials. It legalized the speed-up, wage cut system and the complete loss of union conditions. The miners knew that before the contract went into effect and they voted against it. A canvass made of 177 locals of the U. M. W. of A. shortly after the referendum vote showed only 14,000 votes in favor with 39,000 against.

This Illinois miners' strike once again demonstrates how quickly the governmental authorities will respond to the call of the employers and order out troops to smash the workers' ranks when they dare to enter into open struggle for the needs of their daily life. Particularly is this the case when the workers' militancy is feared. There is not the slightest lack of unity between those who have common interests: the coal operators, their fellow capitalists, their government, and their faithful lieutenants placed as officials in the union corrupted by them, the U. M. W. of A. But this time also the Taylorville struggle showed a remarkable display of working class solidarity: the rank and file members of the U.M.W.A. refusing to work while troops were mounted against their brothers in the National Miners Union.

The response of the coal miners to this strike, known in advance to be against heavy odds, shows their temper, which has been steered under conditions growing constantly worse. Mechanical mining has definitely established the worst features of the speed-up system and mass unemployment. Added to these features are reduced wages, all made possible for the benefit of the capitalists by the corrupt bureaucracy of the old union. The miners are beginning to see the only way out of this dilemma is through struggle. In growing numbers they welcome the new union. It has great possibilities.

Strike Shortcomings

With the heavy odds against the strike, in spite of which the conditions for further extension are favorable—because of the splendid fighting mood of the miners—the absolutely inadequate preparation prior to the strike call falls back upon the leadership as a heavy responsibility. Lack of preparation in this instance is the greatest handicap. Calling of a general strike is a serious matter even under the most favorable conditions. It requires first of all a concentration on the issues of the strike in such a way that not only the most militant workers know what the fight is about but so that the broadest strata can be

aroused to active participation. While all the demands made in this strike certainly represent the needs of the miners there can be no question that with a concentration on a couple of the most prominent points a broader basis would have been provided, making it much more possible that the workers employed in the heavy coal producing territory of Franklin Williamson and Saline counties, could also have been brought out, thus creating a real basis for victory.

Ever since the present squabble for the division of the spoils between John L. Lewis and Fishwick began, the favorable possibilities for establishing militant unionism and building the National Miners Union have increased manifold. It presented the opportunity for organization and strike preparation. It required the establishment of correct tactics and real solidarity. This opportunity was squandered by putting up straw men to be knocked down. All efforts were concentrated on fabrication of false issues against the national president of the N. M. U., John J. Watt. This brought about a practical split situation at the Belleville convention just when the building of solidarity should command all attention. For this the leadership of the Communist Party is fully responsible animated purely by its false theory of complete mechanical control of all organizations in which it wields an influence. The results so far have been failure to prepare as conditions demand, and if continued can be nothing but a disastrous narrowing, not only of the basis of the present struggle, but also of the organization itself.

Rally All Support!

However, despite all shortcomings the struggle is on and is not merely the concern of the miners but of the whole working class. It demands their support, and particularly does it demand the support of all class conscious workers. Relief for the strikers must be furnished. It will come only from the working class. To be effective, such relief action must be organized on a broad united front basis endeavoring in this manner to bring in large number of workers to understand the need of solidarity with the struggling coal miners.

The Illinois coal miners are struggling against the combined forces of the capitalist powers and corrupt traitorous union officials. They are struggling for the building of militant unionism. Real working class support will bring victory so much nearer.

The Auto Show and the Auto Slaves

NEW YORK—With a somewhat hesitating step and ill at ease—as a proletarian is likely to be when he approaches the fair of the owning class—I entered the great ball-room of the Hotel Commodore where the classic of the automobile world is annually held. The Automobile Salon is distinct from the ordinary automobile show, for it caters only to the upper crust of society, and the place it is held in and the nature of the wares there exhibited automatically excludes the mob.

The contrast between the Commodore ball room and the East Side, where I usually hang out when not in the shop, was so great that I was for a moment dazed at my own audacity in being there, and was further dazzled by the brilliant light from the crystal chandeliers reflecting itself in the dress shirts and diamonds (?) studs of the high-powered salesmen all about. These gentlemen were rushing about—if anything in a white collar may be said to rush—explaining to numerous society ladies overburdened with jewelry and paint and tired business men the superior merits of their respective cars.

Cars for the Leisure Class

Determined not to be overawed by any salesman, or any bourgeois present, male or female, I braced myself mentally and looked about. There were cars of all shades and for all purposes needed by a leisure-class family, at prices running from a mere five thousand to a bagatelle of thirty thousand and perhaps more. Here was a smart-looking town car exhibited by Hibbard & Darrin, Paris, that will no doubt be eventually used by some feminine parasite for her shopping tours or to take her pet dog out for his daily airing in Central Park. There stood a Duesenberg roadster just waiting the masterful hand of the collegiate son of some millionaire. In

another corner is a beautiful cabriolet by Brunn just made to set the eyes of a pampered mistress of a captain of industry to glittering.

I was in another world now; I had almost forgotten the slum where I betake myself when the boss has wrung a day's measure of toil out of my carcass; I felt as if I, too, were on top of the heap instead of the bottom when, glancing over the assembled crowd I discovered the familiar faces of a few other workers who had had like myself, the audacity to horn in on the show. They, mind you, had merely built these expensive specimens of the coachmaker's art, and it was only by the gracious permission of their respective bosses that they were allowed the privilege of looking at the fruits of their toil in surroundings appropriate to their grandeur.

I saw them in their threadbare overcoats timidly stealing about, instantly crushed by the stern look of a salesman if one of them dared to finger the shining sides of the thing he had built.

"Look at this Mercedes sedan. Isn't it stunning?"

Yes, young lady, and the man who built it was also stunned when the boss laid him off on completion of the job, to face a winter of unemployment and hardship.

And that Packard sedan your companion admired. I know all too well every piece of wood in it! For weeks I toiled and sweated to build it and now it is ready for some parasite to enjoy while I who made it pound the pavements in search of another master.

Exhibition by Fleetwood: beautiful cars, yes—but built by men working 60 hours a week for a bare subsistence.

Exhibition by Le Baron: Obscure toilers putting in 54 hours a week turned them

out.

And so on down the line—marvelous cars all, built, says the souvenir catalogue, by High-sounding Name & Co. . . . Rotten hypocrisy! They are the product of unknown proletarians, toiling long hours for small wages in unsanitary shops under hazardous conditions and the jaundiced eye of the boss.

Who, though, in this gay assemblage cares? They don't know, and they don't want to know, that automobile workers have been laid off by the thousands. "You've done your work as a good servant should. Now go and hide your misery in the slums. You're not wanted here, making a nuisance of yourself." That is the attitude of those who ride in \$20,000 cars toward those who built them.

The automobile industry, though the second largest in the country, is practically unorganized. Men in it work from 54 to 60 hours a week, the only exception being New York City, where a small union has been able to maintain itself and hold a few of the bosses down to 44 hours a week. In all shops, the conditions are practically the same as they were 20 years ago with the addition of a highly developed speed-up system. At several conventions of the American Federation of Labor resolutions were passed to organize the automobile industry, but like most resolutions they were voted for with a great hurrah, and then shelved until the next convention when they get their annual dusting off. Hell will freeze over before the A. F. of L. bureaucracy will bestir itself on behalf of automobile workers.

No, fellow workers in the automobile industry: if you want better conditions and shorter working hours, don't wait for some A. F. of L. Moses to lead you out of the

present wilderness. Nor for Mr. Ford to give them to you on a silver platter. His lately published story of higher wages is the bunk.

You start with a minimum wage of \$7 a day—just enough to keep the wolf away—then after a couple of years you are to get an increase. But here's where the trick comes in. There never are a couple of years to follow; you never get that increase, for after six months, or, at the most, one year in that slave mill, you start on your way to the Home for Cripples, or worse yet, the Home for the Feeble-minded. Your successor will start at the bottom, where you did, and repeat the process. It's like a treadmill: when you step up one you go down one.

Ford's "Paradise" for Labor

And don't forget the annual laying off by Mr. Ford or General Motors. At the present time thousands upon thousands of auto workers are walking the streets unemployed. They worked too long hours and produced too much. The market is glutted with cars and there comes a stoppage to the whole industry.

Organize and fight for better conditions, is the slogan of the moment. Are you an auto worker? Do you by chance live in Detroit? There is a small union there. Join it and demand an industrial auto workers union.

Do you live in New York? There is a union here—Automobile & Vehicle Workers' Union 18065. Join it and demand a united front for all auto workers. Help build the union and in the end we'll get what we want. Fine Debs once said "The workers build fine cars, but do they ride in them?" The answer to that must one day be: "They certainly do!"

—PETER HANSEN

Opposition Group Formed in Argentine!

Buenos Aires, Argentine.

A few days ago some of us decided to send out some invitations to about 25 comrades, including members of the central committee, for a meeting and discussion on the subject of the International Situation and the Russian Communist Opposition. Another comrade and I were called by two members of the executive committee and told that we couldn't be allowed to hold the meeting in a comrades house, nor have any discussion unless permitted, and the E. C. couldn't permit any discussion of that kind in the party. (The reference is to the group split off from the official C. P.—the Penelon group.—Ed.) Of course, that was going too far. It meant that the members could not read and study certain things but couldn't open their mouths to speak to one another unless the E. C. gave permission. So that we are now out of the Party.

We are now receiving literature in four languages—the Militant, La Verite and Contre le Courant in French, the Bulletin of the Opposition in Russian, and Volkswille in German. But the main thing for South America, some organ in the Spanish language, we have not got. Books by L. Trot-

sky there are, but only a few buy and read books. Of course, later on we will do our best to get something, even if it is only by the mimeograph. The main thing right now is to organize some groups for Opposition propaganda.

I must not forget to mention that when we said we thought it would be advisable for the party members to discuss the international situation so as to be ready for the coming party conference, we were told that this point would not be discussed at all at the conference.

—R. GUINNEY.

The formation of the first South American group of the Opposition marks a great step forward in the international struggle for the regeneration of world Communism. It serves as one more reply to the twaddle about the "decay of Trotskyism". The future will soon show that the step taken by our comrades in the Argentine will be repeated in every other Latin American country. The American Opposition sends its warmest greetings and wishes for victory to our comrades in the Southern continent!—Ed.

A Reply to the Capitulators

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a demagogic move to cover their own sympathies towards the Rights. This is especially true of Radek, about whom there is evidence that, being in exile, he did not hide his sympathies for the followers of Brandler. Later on Radek gave some involved explanations of his behavior, similar to those he gave at the time when it was discovered that he, Radek, and no one else, insisted in January 1928 that Trotsky give an extensive interview (it would be more correct to say: extensive political declaration) to the Moscow correspondent of the "Berliner Tageblatt". These pretended enemies of the Right will now try choking the Leninist Opposition, in company with the Rights and the Centrists.

The banishment of Trotsky united the Right-Center leadership with the capitulators. From Bucharin, who voted for the banishment, to Radek and Smilga, a united front has been formed against the Leninist Opposition. We can confidently assert that in accomplishing its Thermidorian act, the Centrist leadership expected to facilitate the work of the capitulators. In their turn, Radek and Smilga, in starting a campaign for separation from Trotsky, were coming to the rescue of the party leadership. If the latter had not been sure of the support of the capitulators, it would never have ventured upon such a mad performance.

Hoover's Building Panacea

Right in the face of Hoover's bunco-steering panacea to settle the unemployment problem and industrial depression by a bigger "construction program" comes a crushing blow in the form of the Washington report of the F. W. Dodge Corporation, which shows that the decline of construction contracts from November of this year as compared with October awards for November of this year as compared with October amounted to 12 percent, or \$54,629,800. The decrease as compared with the contract awards for November 1928 was \$80,460,700 or 17 percent. The report says further: "New work reported in the contemplated stage in the 37 states (east of the Rocky Mountains) amounted to \$720,301,000. This total represents a loss of 10 percent from the amount reported in the preceding month and a drop of 23 percent from the amount reported in November 1928."

The workers who expect to have their present difficulties solved by Hoover's good looking blueprints are going to wait a long, long time.

MINNEAPOLIS A B C CLASS

Thirty-two comrades were present at the last session of the class in the A B C of Communism being conducted by the Minneapolis branch of the Communist League. All workers wishing to join the class are requested to get in touch with the School Committee, Box 45, Minneapolis, Minn.