

## The Mining Situation and the Tasks of the Left Wing

(Continued from Page One)

ranks while the old union is numerically many times stronger its fight cannot consist exclusively of a frontal attack against the U. M. W. A., but of the mobilization of the broadest possible sections of the miners to conduct a struggle against the offensive of the employers and the betrayal of the officialdom. For this a two-sided policy is necessary: the extension and consolidation of the National Miners Union on the one hand and the establishment of a firm base in the ranks of the old union on the other.

Under the new conditions that have been created, the N. M. U., particularly in view of the fact that its generally weakened position throughout the industry has been further aggravated by the Illinois defeat, must in all fields where the U. M. W. A. embraces the majority of the miners—and particularly where the check-off system prevails—maintain and constitute itself as a Left wing in the U. M. W. A. without at the same time dissolving the N. M. U. In Illinois, this is especially imperative because of the practical "illegality" of the N. M. U. and the conditions of check-off that prevail. The organization of a Left wing minority in the U. M. W., especially in Illinois, has a favorable basis and is necessary as a counter-agent to disintegrating tendencies.

### 3. The Coming Convention of the N. M. U.

The Left wing of the coming convention of the N. M. U. in Pittsburgh should set for itself the goal of re-uniting the miners on a national scale in a single organization. This does not exclude but presupposes temporary agreements with progressives and semi-progressives, which is one of the most effective means of establishing broad contacts in the ranks and advancing the interests of the workers and its most progressive vanguard. The elements in and around the N. M. U. must establish connections with the new movement in Illinois and push it persistently to the Left. They must demand of Howat, Brophy and others who base themselves on the progressive-minded workers, that they express themselves on the record and program of Farrington-Fishwick-Walker, and separ-

ate themselves from the latter. The Left wing must put to the progressives—in formal public statements and by widespread agitation in the ranks—the question of their position on various issues: Democracy in the union; National vs. local and district agreements; the organization of the unorganized miners and a fight for regaining their lost standards; the reinstatement of expelled miners; the Lewis plan to run 300,000 miners out of the industry; the right to independent thought and action and expression for minority groupings; independent working class political action, etc. By working in the ranks of the miners along this line, the Left wing will clarify the situation; it will be able to draw the miners to its side and prevent them from falling under the complete influence of the Fishwick-Farrington machine and those who support and strengthen it in any way.

There are, however, certain pre-requisites for such a drive, which must be accomplished by the N. M. U. Pittsburgh convention. The N. M. U. must become a forum for the rank and file members, who should be made to feel that it is their union. The N. M. U. must declare for the unity of the Left wing, which means that all elements must be given full opportunity for participation and expression of their views. Up till now, the party leaders in control of the union have used it for a faction battle-field against their party opponents. A united Left wing, however, is a pre-condition for a successful influencing of the new movement. The N. M. U. must throw overboard the whole narrow line with which it has been operating, arbitrarily foisted upon it by the party leadership, and certain if persisted in, to doom it to a futile sectarian existence. If the Left wing is to fight successfully for trade union democracy in the U. M. W. A. it must first establish such a regime in the N. M. U. This does not exist today. All opponents and critics of the Party policy are mercilessly crushed without the interests of the workers and their union being considered. The N. M. U. must reject the party theory of purely mechanical, strangulating control of the unions by the C. P., and replace it with ideological and comradely guidance, advice, influence and aid of the working class party. The present relations of the Party to the union only plays into the hand of the Lewis-Green-Compers theory of "no politics in

the union" (i. e., for capitalist politics in reality) or into the hands of the "pure and simple industrial unionists" (I. W. W. anti-political actionists).

Not only the convention, but the Left wing miners now, must reject the course proposed in the T. U. U. L. Board statement, (*Daily Worker*, February 20, 1930), which states: "The T. U. U. L. calls upon the miners to quit the Lewis organization and to eliminate Fishwick and his whole crew of 'progressive' fig leaves. Send no delegates to this fake convention." That is no method of eliminating Lewis and Fishwick, but of strengthening their position. The Left wing miners must, on the contrary, send as many delegates to the proposed convention as possible, establish a Left wing bloc there, force the progressive leaders to the wall on the burning issues of the day, and challenge Fishwick and Co. for the confidence of the miners. The proposal to leave Fishwick an open, unhampered field at this convention must be repudiated out of hand by the Left wing.

The Left wing is confronted by the most serious tasks. Its present line is a rope around its neck that must be ruthlessly cut before it chokes the breath of the movement among the miners. A new course must be steered. The Left wing must rise to its task and be capable of mastering it.

\*\*\*

The members of the Communist League in the mining industry, and the non-party militants co-operating with them, have before them now exceptional opportunities and responsibilities. In carrying their work forward it is particularly necessary for the Opposition Communists to bear in mind the differentiation and relation of forces within the Left wing as well as within the miners movement as a whole. The Left wing, organized primarily in the National Miners Union with all its defects and weaknesses, and the false policies of its leadership, is the main dynamic force for progress in the industry. The adherents of the Communist Opposition are but a faction—at present a small faction—of the organized Left wing. From this follows the central task of the Opposition Communists: to struggle within the Left wing to unite it on this program. All provocation and slander, aimed to isolate them from the or-

ganized Left wing, must be met with a deeper penetration of it. This work within the ranks of the National Miners Union goes hand in hand with the widest possible proclamation of these views in the ranks of the U. M. W. A. and independent agitation for them.

By steering a firm and steady course as Bolshevik fighters along these lines the Opposition Communists in the mining fields can bound forward. They can render great service to the interests of the miners and bring a new prestige to the banner of Communism which has been sullied by the Party bureaucrats. Conscientious work for the policy indicated in this statement is the road to this accomplishment.

National Committee  
Communist League of America (Opposition)

## Operators Speed-Up Illinois Coal Diggers

SPRINGFIELD, Ill.—Speedup in Illinois mines is on the increase month by month, according to official state figures. For January the statistics show that more coal was dug than in December. This was done with fewer miners employed than in December. And each miner worked fewer days in January than in December. When an Illinois coal miner told Michigan college professors three years ago that the mine was turned into a "goddam factory" that was only a very modest beginning of the underground speedup.

The actual figures are given by state director of mines and minerals John G. Milhouse as follows: Tons of coal dug in Illinois in December, 6,415,838 in January, 6,590,275; number of miners employed in December, 51,265, in January, 50,664; average days employed per miner in December, 29.1, in January 19.7 days.

Ten men were killed and 1,399 were injured seriously enough to keep them from work a day or more in January mine accidents in the state, the director adds.

HAMMOND Ind.—Serge hands and electricians in union theaters in Hammond, East Chicago and Indiana Harbor won a raise of \$2.50 a week to \$72.50. Operators were raised \$16.25 a week to \$95.

BATTLE CREEK, Mich.—Union painters have won a 5c increase to 85c an hour in a contract with the employers as-

## WAR'S GLORY

By Peter Hansen

Brr...brr...went the field telephone in the dugout in trench No.—, where a group of Russian officers shivered in the cold of an early morning of the winter of 1915. Brr...went the telephone, and the operator lost no time in alerting it.

"Lieutenant Orloff!" he called out. "Division Headquarters on the wire."

A tall, blond fellow with a mild peasant face that harmonized little with his military bearing strode forward and seized the receiver, frowning. He listened intently for a moment, and his face cleared as he wrote down the message:

"At eight o'clock sharp you will attack enemy trench No.—. Two hours of artillery preparation will clear the wire entanglements. Occupy the trenches and hold them at any cost."

"Thank God!" he exclaimed. "We're going into action." Similar cries of relief came from the assembled group, and one after another the officers leaped to their feet to receive their orders. The Lieutenant, breathing quickly, read off the message.

"It's just five minutes of six," he concluded, consulting his watch. "You've got two hours to get the boys ready. Each man to his post now." They saluted him gravely and turned to go.

"Just a moment!" he called. "There's one thing more." He smiled. "See that all the men have a good stiff drink before we go into action. They're going to need it."

The smile still lingered on his face as he entered the trench for his morning inspection. The dawn was breaking and the forms of a long line of khaki-clad men, still shivering from the night's intense cold, were just barely visible. Orloff spoke a few encouraging words as his men saluted, but as he passed along a little inward voice kept asking: How many of you are going to be missing at the next inspection? To Orloff his men were not inferiors, but fellow-fighters in a common cause.

Inspection over, he returned to the dugout, listening intently the while for the familiar booming of the Russian

artillery from the lines in the rear. It would announce the beginning of the engagement, but now, at ten minutes after six, it was already overdue. "Two hours are hardly enough to destroy the entanglements," Orloff muttered to himself. "And still they are delaying." Scarcely able to contain himself, he re-entered the trench, and another quarter of an hour passed while he strove to hide his gnawing agitation. His subordinate officers looked toward him as if to question him, but military discipline held them back.

Orloff had kept up a nervous pacing. At seven o'clock he came to a halt, took off his cap, and wiped the sweat from his brow. He could hear the roar of cannon in the far-off distance but from his own sector not a sound.

"My God! Only one more hour," he groaned. "What can the matter be?"

He hurried into the dugout. "Was there a call from headquarters?" he asked the operator.

No, sir. Not a word," was the reply. Orloff turned away. His face was pale with rage and fear, and as he raised his field-flask to his lips his hand shook.

"Some more of their damn blunders—that we must pay for with our lives," he wheeled around again to say. With this he rushed out into the trench. But in a moment he was back. A look of dumb appeal on countless human faces was more than he could bear. He took the telephone receiver in his hand. He hesitated but a moment. Then, "Damn the discipline," he said aloud, and when a voice answered his ring his voice had the same edge of angry protest in its tone.

"What's the delay?" he demanded. "I am to go over the top at eight and the artillery hasn't started firing yet."

"Orders have been given," came the reply. The voice was a grey monotone.

"But what am I to do?" protested Orloff. "Obey orders," mechanically returned the voice, and there followed a sharp click as the receiver at Division Headquarters was hung up.

The soul of Lieutenant Orloff was at that moment a battlefield; and his face showed it. There the unquestioning obedience of the seasoned soldier fought with the passionate revolt of youth faced with death for himself and his comrades. Once more Lieutenant Orloff hurried into the trench; once more he faced the mute glances of his men.

Second Lieutenant Osol saluted him

"What's the order?"

Their eyes met. All too well they understood each other. But Lieutenant Orloff resumed the military mask.

"You have your orders. Eight o'clock. All the men to carry snipers. Wire snippers...is that clear?"

Osol repeated the order and withdrew. Orloff looked despairingly at his watch. Only ten minutes of the hour remained. His glance swept up and down the ranks of men, waiting, with fixed bayonets, for him to give the signal. He thought of what awaited them and a sob of pity tore at his throat.

Sharp on the hour of eight he raised his signalling whistle to his lips. A shrill note rolled along the line and with a shout, "For the Czar and the Fatherland," Orloff leaped out of the trench. A thousand voices echoed the cry as the Russians followed their leader. A short and furious run across No Man's Land and they had reached the wire entanglement.

"Down and cut through," shouted Orloff, panting for breath.

"Ra-ta-ta-ta," answered the German machine guns, and the Russians began to drop, while those who escaped the bullets cut feverishly at the wires. Terrific explosions now began to sound from the rear of the German lines and shells to plow the ground around the attackers. A shell burst over the head of Lieutenant Orloff and his face contorted with fury.

"Damn you!" he shouted. "Damn you! You're two hours too late!"

His men wavered. They were caught in a curtain of fire, the barrage from their own cannon. Their retreat was cut off.

"Forward!" shouted Orloff, and his order was repeated down the line. Again the men threw themselves upon the wire entanglement. In cutting through it lay their only hope.

"Ra-ta-ta-ta-ta!" The enemy's machine guns ceaselessly spit death. Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! and the Russian shells burst over their heads, raining deadly fragments among them.

Ramloff was on his knees, the blood streaming down his face. He staggered to his feet and shook his fists toward the Russian lines.

Fools! Murderers! You have betrayed us!"

"Ra-ta-ta-ta-ta!" Orloff crumbled up. "Boommmttttttt!" roared the Russian artillery, tearing up the wire entanglements.

Too late...Forever too late!...For Lieutenant Orloff and his men obeyed orders.