

# John L. Lewis Continues His Betrayals

## A Review of the Thirty-second Convention of the United Mine Workers of America

The 32nd Consecutive Constitutional Convention of the United Mine Workers held a twelve day session in the historic Tomlinson hall of Indianapolis, Indiana, beginning January 26th and ending February 5th. The huge auditorium was draped in the tri colors of the Wall Street republic. It was a fitting arena for the arch reactionary fakers of the union. It reflected bowing to the captains of American industries, their apologizing for the radicalization that is taking place among the mine workers of this country. The atmosphere of the gathering, was a sorrowful one. The conventions of yore that had pictured hectic sessions, fighting, energetic, militant, rank and file miners, was almost a memory aside of an extremely small minority that courageously fought throughout the entire convention exposing the traitorous role of the Lewis machine in shackling the mine workers.

The keynote of the administration was sounded in the beginning of the convention when Phillip Murray, International Vice President, made the joint report of the three standing officials. A lengthy report covering a pamphlet of 83 pages, the keynote was "stabilization of the coal mining industry by Federal Government regulation in order to assure the coal operators a fair return on their investments and to abolish the cut throat competition especially in the central competitive fields." The woes and sufferings of the miners was secondary and almost forgotten.

The officers report mentions unemployment, but they are so reactionary that they even fear unemployment insurance, as a step forward in alleviating unemployment. However, the pressure of even a packed convention forced the issue on them and they were compelled to accept unemployment insurance in the records of their report and to include it in the general program of the union. The remainder of the officers report is merely a repetition of a typical A. F. of L. union. Class collaboration, quotations from famous letters from the great Mr. Hoover, more mechanization, greater efficiency, etc., etc.

The most sorrowful expression of the convention was the gigantic retreat the miners union has taken in the last ten years. The miners union under the administration of Lewis has diminished in strength, influence and confidence so badly that there is even a growing tendency among the capitalist and their agents to begin to ignore Lewis. This is well confirmed by the fact that Secretary of Labor Doak and President Hoover refused to give Lewis a conference, with the coal operators of the Central Competitive field, due to the fact that a wild cat strike had taken place in southern Illinois where the United Mine Workers and the operators had a contract.

The decline and defeat of the United Mine Workers of America can well be summarized by the following facts and figures:

Year	Membership
1901	198,024
1911	250,250
1921	442,057
1931	152,148
less last ten years	289,900

Let us see how this great retreat under Lewis has affected the Bituminous coal producing fields. In the year 1921 the U. M. W. of A. had 385,724 dues paying members in the bituminous districts of the United States and Canada. For the six months ending June 1, 1931 there is merely 52,723 average tax paying membership in the 28 bituminous districts of the continent. In other words there remain less than 14% of the former tax paying membership. A retreat of 86% of its former strength! The United Mine Workers Journal tells us that in some of the unorganized fields wages are as low as \$1.50 per day and 14c per ton, for nine to ten hours work.

The retreat of the organization can be further shown by the West Virginia situation. In 1921 the union had an average tax paying membership of 45,802 divided in 595 local unions. In 1931 up until June 1, we have 40 dues paying members from seven feeble local unions. The role of Van A. Bittner the chief representative of the United Mine Workers of America in West Va., and the right hand man of John L. Lewis on the International Executive Board, has long been proven notorious. William Z. Foster, in his book, "Misleaders of Labor" points out to the workers that, Van A. Bittner is the coal operators' best assurance that the coal miners of that state will not be organized." The figures of the most recent betrayals by Bittner prove this adequately. Later on we will deal with the West Virginia situation more thoroughly. This particular section of the coal mining industry is today the most important and the pivot of all union movements.

In spite of these figures which are derived from the official records of International Secretary-Treasurer William Green and Thomas Kennedy, Lewis is continuing to pay tax on 400,000 members in the American Federation of Labor in order that he can use the voting power for his own personal ambitions.

The Credentials Committee report was a piece of out-right robbery. The part the Credentials Committee plays is to be sure that enough delegates are packed that will give Lewis an overwhelming majority. The job is done very crudely, but it is put over convention after con-

vention. Out of the 1155 delegates that attended the convention the bulk of them only represented themselves. The bona fide delegates from the Anthracite regions, Illinois, Indiana and a few other remnants of districts, were pitted against "blue sky" delegates that possibly had never worked in the coal mine or had never belonged to the organization. The figures of the International Secretary-Treasurer compared with the report of the Credentials Committee, proves this very conclusively. We have the following facts:

District	Paying	
	Delegates	Members
2 Pa.	39	955
5 Pa.	89	1142
6 Ohio	89	862
8 Ind.	5	168
16 Md.	10	2
17 W. Va.	22	37
19 Ky. & Tenn.	47	489
21 Okla. Ark. & Texas	25	63
23 Western Ky.	52	377
25 Missouri	19	187
30 Kentucky	14	34
31 West Va.	125	2168
Total	533	6484

353 of the above delegates do not have a single tax paying member in the local unions they represent!

Illinois had 285 delegates representing a total membership, 31,368 dues paying District No. 1—Pennsylvania had 131 delegates with 45,643 paying members. District No. 31—West Va. had 125 delegates with 2168 tax paying members. District No. 9—Pa. had 61 delegates with 32,403 tax paying members. District No. 5—Pa. had 86 delegates with 1,183 tax paying members.

Quite a contrast. Yet some of the simon pure, "loyal unionist" suffer under the illusions that Lewis and his machine may bow to majority decision and voluntarily abdicate when the majority so desires. The above facts indicate all too clearly; if further proof be needed, that only by a strongly organized determined Left wing can the union be cleaned of such rubbish. That implies tenacious struggle and united efforts of all who are ready to fight for a clean union.

The National Miners' Union in a statement to the convention charges that the delegates that came to this convention from the unorganized fields were "hand picked, baited with whiskey, no elections of delegates being held, packing the convention for the Lewis machine." That is obviously true.

The first day's session of the convention was marked by a sharp division of forces, led mainly by the Illinois "insurgents". Some 222 opposition votes were "counted" by the Lewis tellers. This is far from correct. Whole rows of opposition delegates were left out from the count. This, however, was the largest opposition vote cast against the Lewis machine. It remained fairly well intact throughout the entire convention, voting against practically every proposal that the administration brought forward. Within the Illinois opposition was formed a Left wing group. A few allies from the outlying fields were joined. However, the terror and persecution of the Lewis administration was so brutal that greater numbers were prevented from joining forces. Notably, among those who led a militant Left wing fight throughout the convention, were delegates Gerry Allard, August R. Hoffman, Lawrence Lamb, Borell, of Illinois, Delegates Schuster, Mische, of Pennsylvania and a few other elements with a "socialistic tinge". Outside of the above mentioned elements, the convention was dominated by two rival reactionary factions. The Illinois faction, embracing scores of honest, rank and file delegates, fought all through the convention for home rule. The Left wingers supported them on every progressive issue.

The injunction secured by the former district President of the Illinois miners Harry Fishwick, and still enforced against the arbitrary revocation order of the International Union, was the subject of heated discussion for the first six days. A wide range was given in the discussion where Illinois delegates clashed with the supporters of the International Union. Fist fights broke out in the convention on one occasion when the Sergeants-at-arms attempted to drag out of the convention, John Hindmarsh, of Springfield, Ill., self-claimed socialist and for years a figure in the miners' movement. The disgraceful attempt of the International officers ordering the ejecting of Hindmarsh so stirred the convention that the Anthracite and Illinois delegates joined forces in defeating the attempts of kicking Hindmarsh out of the convention. The fighting determination of the insurgent delegates was so great that fear struck the hearts of the reactionaries. This had a great effect in stopping any further attacks on delegates who dared to dissent with the almighty ruler. Aside from heated verbal clashes, coupled with the great one man burlesque of John L. Lewis, no physical damage was recorded.

The report of the Committee on Resolutions revealed that 97 resolutions of different character were submitted to the convention by various local unions throughout the country mainly from Illinois. The Committee expressing the political line of the administration rejected scores of progressive resolutions. Resolutions on the six hour day and the five day week, bank to bank, Unemploy-

ment Insurance, Against Criminal Syndicalism, For Old Age pensions are about the only concessions the reactionaries made. The pressure was forced to all extremes by the Left wing group, the originators of these progressive measures.

Resolutions on the recognition of the Soviet Union came from Westville, Illinois; Rocks Springs, Wyoming; and a militant one from local Union No. 303 of Orient, Ill. The resolution from local union No. 303 called upon unconditional recognition as well as to extend liberal trade relations with Soviet Republic, extend credits, etc. The resolution further pointed out that recognition of the Soviet Government would assist generally in relieving existing unemployment difficulties as well as to assist the Russian working class to realize their great efforts at laying the foundations for Socialism. Gerry Allard, mover of resolution, delivered a powerful attack against the Lewis regime in refusing to recognize the Soviet Government Delegate Mische, District 1 of the Anthracite, supported the resolution and opposed the Committee's report. Secretary-Treasurer Kennedy, in voicing the opinion of the administration charged the "Soviet government of assisting the capitalist class in this country to destroy the United Mine Workers of America and the official labor movement." Allard challenged Kennedy to submit the evidence that the Soviet government had done so. Kennedy spluttered to the best he knew how, but no evidence was forthcoming. In spite of a predicted defeat, the resolution gained attention, received applause and a substantial vote but the eye and nose vote was cast against the Committee's report.

On Unemployment Insurance the committee made a report camouflaging the issue, by stating the International Executive Board will "investigate". A rank and file delegate asked the committee what they were going to "investigate"? How an unemployed worker dies of hunger? The Committee's report, as was to be expected, was concurred in by the packed bunch of professional hand clappers that infested the conclave.

A resolution from Royaltan, Illinois, asked that John L. Lewis resign as president of the International Union. The officialdom assailed the resolution and charged that it was "a piece of coal operators' work or Communist propaganda." August R. Hoffman, young militant mine leader of Illinois attacked Lewis for his betrayals for many years and asked that Lewis resign. However, he pointed out that he understood in the beginning that it never would be complied with. The chair later reprimanded

Hoffman and threatened to bar him from the convention if he made another break. Delegate Hindmarsh asked that Lewis resign as International President or as President of a large bank in Indianapolis. This stirred the convention. Lewis never denied that he was the president of a bank, rather admitted that he was. From Union president to Republican National Committee man, to Bank president—that proves that America is a land of great promise for the youth of the working class! the great, bushy browed, pot belled John L. Lewis roared time after time as youthful delegates poured a hot barrage of attack against him and his hirelings. With his oratorical tricks and experienced lieutenants, he succeeded in every instance to impress the newspapermen in the press box who cleverly fixed the reports for the "public".

The outstanding features of the convention was the fact that the dominating, active element from the Anthracite and Illinois delegations were young coal miners. The statement in the convention was made, that never before had so large a number of youthful delegates attended the United Mine Workers convention. Lewis, time after time, along with the official family, attempted to excuse the young miners who attacked the administration as "young", "inexperienced", "they will change their minds in due time." This healthy representation was a ray of great hopes. The forces within the mining industry, as well as in the entire capitalist order, threw the class lines sharply before the miners, especially those active young men who dared to voice protest in a terrorized, packed convention.

The United Mine Workers of America has completed another great betrayal, under the rule of Lewis. Lewis, the mouthpiece of the capitalist class performs the role of agent provocateur, deportation agent, assists to railroad militant workers to prison, stifles union progress in the mining fields. The Left wing forces in the mining industry that are slowly but surely molding their efforts together must fulfill their tasks speedily. The rank and file of the United Mine Workers of America, the National Miners Union and the West Virginia Miners Union, must unite their efforts under a clear, uncorrupted, democratic leadership and pave the way to the rehabilitation and rejuvenation of the miners' struggles, carrying the fight on a higher revolutionary program of unionism. With the many odds against such a movement, unification of the Left wing element is a crying need. Division on account of personal or factional preference is the weapon that the bosses and their agents will further use to starve the working class into submission. The fight against the misleadership of the United Mine Workers of America goes on. It will continue in spite of all the enemies of the coal miners.

—A DELEGATE.  
Indianapolis, Ind. Feb. 10, 1932

## Lovestonites in the Workmen's Circle

A Protest Conference of Workmen's Circle Branches was held on Sunday, February 7th, 1932 at Stuyvesant Casino, 142 Second Avenue, New York City.

This conference was called by an Initiative Committee, organized by the following branches of the Workmen's Circle: 16, 34, 368, 386, 417, 637 and 656. The purpose of the conference as explained in the call, was: "To discuss the scab-disease problem in the W. C. and the passive attitude of the present leadership of the W. C. towards scab members. The same statement also infers; that the problem of change of leadership is involved in this struggle and that such must be proletarianized.

150 delegates, representing 75 branches, participated in the conference. The majority of the delegates came from New York City and New Jersey State. A few came from Philadelphia Pa., Boston and Springfield, Mass.

If we take into consideration the unfavorable conditions which the Initiative Committee had to contend with, and especially without a press, the Conference was a success. It has proven again the fallacy of the "Third Period", ultra-Left policy of splitting the Workmen's Circle (which was also supported by the Lovestonites) and leaving the workers in that organization at the mercy of the S. P. leadership.

The response to the call has shown the correctness of the Leninist position against splits which he has so profoundly expounded in his pamphlet, "Left Sickness". The workers, even those who were sympathetic towards the Left wing movement, refused to split away, because of their healthy instinct against splits in the labor ranks. Then again the objective conditions of the last few years, as unemployment, the successes in the Soviet Union, have changed the mind of a great many workers in those organizations. These workers are now violently opposed to the course of the present leadership in the trade unions; their anti-Soviet attitude, their toleration of scabs and employers in the W. C. leadership was needed to give expression to that sentiment. The call for the conference gave this opportunity.

The Lovestonites Play Their Role  
The party, in the deplorable condition it finds itself because of nine years of Right wing and (traitor leadership), is not apt to give leadership to any movement now. Here a wonderful opportunity is given the Lovestonites to perform their "historic" role. They drag this movement into the swamp of opportunism.

Because of lack of space, it is impossible to go into details of the organization of and procedure at the Conference. Those of the readers of *The Militant* who can read Jewish will find a very elaborate article on that subject in the second issue of *Unser Kampf*. Here we will explain the position of the Lovestonites in the W. C., in brief.

The Lovestonites, still believing that they are the "Majority Group" of the party, at the time of the split of the W. C. engineered by the party, supported and participated in the splitting of the W. C. Shortly afterwards they realized that those that followed the call of the party will not support Lovestone. In a hurry, they made a fast turn. Back, with lightning speed to the W. C.—became their motto. Since then, the Lovestonites everywhere travelled with lightning speed to the Right. So also in the W. C. But here, in the W. C., they were not received with open arms as in the I. L. G. W. U. or Paterson. The Right wing leadership could not find a reason why they should recognize them. But despite all the noise the Lovestonites make and the foolish attitude of the Freiheit towards them, by boosting them through attacking them every day in the Freiheit, they have not even today not gained organizationally, but have lost influence, membership and even in circulation of their paper. They are making a desperate attempt to get a foothold somewhere, ready to pay any price for it. In the Workmen's Circle, they try to utilize the present dissatisfaction in order to force a deal on the so-called opposition (which is only a Right wing clique fighting for power).

Is it any wonder that under such leadership the Conference showed its political impotence. The Initiative Committee showed an utter lack of understanding of the problems confronting the membership of the W. C. They haven't even understood the real character of the scab problem in the W. C. They have tried to make it a "pure and simple" scab issue, not realizing that it is a symptom of a diseased body and that some limbs, especially the scab and employers group, to whom the present leadership looks for support, will have to be amputated. Consequently, the whole movement had all the characteristics of the opportunist swamp, as: no perspective, no plan, not a single concrete proposal. The few concrete proposals in the resolution by the conference were taken from other resolutions.

The crassest example of opportunist

# Is Mooney to Stay in Jail?

## Reactionaries Make Capital of the Stalinists' Blunders

Disgusted by the betrayals of the cynical fakers of the California State Federation of Labor and the A. F. of L., the impotence of well intentioned liberals and the futility of purely legal maneuvers, Tony Mooney addressed a ringing call to the working class of this country to unite in a fight for his liberation and the freedom of class war prisoners. Fourteen years in prison had not softened the militant fighter. The ideas and language of his call are revolutionary. They constituted the necessary spark to fan into flames again the smoldering resentment of the working class against perhaps, the rawest frame-up of capitalist class justice. And they came at the time of the approach of the third year of a still deepening crisis, when their result in a militant working class movement would open up tremendous possibilities for the fight against the capitalist offensive and for relief.

In naming the organizations to the militant individuals and units of which he appealed, Mooney placed squarely upon their shoulders the responsibility of uniting in a movement for his release. In the list were all the Communist groups including the International Labor Defense. It was obvious, although Mooney did not say so, that he meant the I. L. D. and the C. P. to take the initiative in launching and organizing such a movement. Mooney's pamphlet exposing the betrayals of Schauenberg and Co. who received the undivided support of the A. F. of L. bureaucracy, and still do, left no doubt that he did not look to these gentry to build and lead a fighting movement. Nor could it be reasoned that he had any confidence in the I. W. U. utilitarians, or the other groups enumerated in his call, including the simon pure legal men of the socialist party leadership. Their record of incapacity, spinelessness and betrayal shouted too loudly against the supposition of their conducting a fight.

The organization to whom fell the task of issuing a call to build the movement was the I. L. D. On the fifth of September the *Daily Worker* issued a "Call for United Action". Mooney left the I. L. D. no choice. He asked for a genuine united front. The I. L. D. called for United Front Conferences.

The united front projected by the call had two principal defects. The conferences were to be called—for the release of Tom Mooney and Warren Billings, the Harlan Miners and Scottsboro Negro boys, Imperial Valley strike leaders and other class war prisoners. As *The Militant* remarked on September 12, "It is obvious that a united front movement for Mooney would be recreant in its duty if it failed to conduct a struggle also for the other class war fighters. But in this specific campaign, the whole point is missed by failing to concentrate the whole issue around Mooney as the outstanding symbol of the capitalist system of anti-working class frame-ups..." But for the Stalinists bureaucratic complacency and prestige is all! The Mooney issue—could be buried by lumping it with half a dozen other issues!

The second mistake in the united front outlined by the call was its appeal not to organizations to join with the I. L. D., but to individuals—"the rank and file members of the A. C. W.—the working class members of the socialist party, etc.—" It was to be a recruiting drive disguised as a united front from below. They obstinately persisted in a masquerade which fools nobody!

On the negative side, there is much to record. The Opposition, pursuant to its policy of opposing Mooney's appeal (*Militant*, Sept. 5th), sent a delegation to the N. Y. united front conference. Despite the fact that the Com-

charlatanism was demonstrated by the Lovestonites by the introduction of the second resolution. In this resolution, the Conference protests against Baskin, Secretary of the W. C., for refusing the addresses to the Initiative Committee at the same time giving it to a Mr. Feinberg, who sends out an appeal for an Anti-Soviet paper and slanders the Soviet Union.

The purpose of this resolution was to dampen the protest of the radical delegates against the rejection by the Lovestone group of every progressive resolution, as: recognition of the Soviet Union, Unemployment, Trade Union Unity, etc., introduced by the delegates. They wanted to smuggle in the word "Soviet Union" and make their few followers believe that this is a resolution for recognition of the Soviet Union. The result was that the Right wingers wouldn't agree to be fooled in such a manner and left the Conference. The progressive delegates are still in the dark and cannot explain how such a conference of workers could fail to take a stand on such issues as Soviet Union, Unemployment, Trade Unions, etc.

This Conference, due to the opportunist leadership, has failed so far to crystallize a class-conscious, militant element in the W. C. At the same time, it demonstrated that there are potential elements for the revolutionary labor movement, who crave for a consistent revolutionary leadership. Only by working within the labor mass organizations will the revolutionary movement be able to give leadership to the labor movement.

—J. B.

munist League is mentioned by name in Mooney's appeal as one of the organizations he wants to participate in a genuine united front, our delegation was ejected under threats of violence. In Minneapolis, St. Louis and Staunton and Belleville, Ill., where the I. L. D. organized no conference and where the Opposition was instrumental in setting them afoot, the I. L. D. pursued a policy of: either we control the conference or we smash it. In one way or another they wrecked all of these conferences.

This method of freeing Mooney has ruinous consequences for the Communist movement. Mooney's cause will not die if the party does not take it up. The issue will become a plaything for all sorts of political fakers. Particularly dangerous are the bourgeois demagogues who use the issue to make political capital, for the pursuit of personal ambitions. From time to time the press records their pious hypocrisy. The latest to come to our attention is the report in the N. Y. Times of February 13 of resolutions demanding that "Governor Ralph pardon Thomas J. Mooney immediately", introduced into the House of Representatives by those despicable demagogues from New York State, La Guardia and Sirovich.

In the lull in the fight created by the inactivity of the Communists, the Molders' Defense Committee, the I. W. U. and others are busy propagating the illusion that a boycott of California goods can force Mooney's release. When the itinerant peddler of confusion, Marcus Graham, of the I. W. U. can persuade a group of militant miners like the Staunton Miners' Educational Body to unanimously adopt a resolution for a boycott of California products as a means of getting Mooney out of jail it is only because these fighting miners have been made easy prey by their confusion and disgust with the Joe Tasaes and Bill Geherts.

Finally it must be remembered that the last act in the Walker-Rolph publicity stunt has not yet been reached. Gov. Rolph, who has reserved judgment on Walker's plea, is sitting back waiting to see what pressure the working class will bring to bear on him for Mooney's release. His reply is due soon. If no working class pressure is forthcoming, he will find that Mooney's release is not to be considered.

Working class pressure can force him to find the necessary legal pretext to pardon Mooney. The time is short in which to build a fighting working class movement. But it is not too late if we begin at once. This the I. L. D. should do. What is needed is a genuine united front, from which the Communists have nothing to lose and everything to gain. For this united front every party member, every member of a party organization should raise his voice.

—T. STAMM.

## A Letter From Our Class War Prisoners

We were committed to prison Wednesday 17th. It took us the whole day to get in. We see each other in the little prison yard every day for two hours; together with the other white prisoners. Have also been given work together. I am told that no days off are allowed on sentences under one year. We receive the common treatment accorded all common prisoners, no special privileges. Political prisoners are rather a novelty here. There are however a few sympathizers.

We will get a paper every Sunday only. I will inquire about a *Daily Worker* copy. The very meagre prison library can supply only trash and some classics. There is no book by any Russian writer! The rule is, I think, that books may be sent only from the publisher and then must remain here. Will see more about it. It works, as things do under capitalism, very hard on the poor. It is an expensive matter.

Have no concern on our part personally. We are well and in good spirits—we see each other every day you know. Not at all downhearted. We miss our freedom and contacts with the movement personally, but we know it is for a comparatively short while only. We are proud to be here as political prisoners: not for a moment would we change places for that of the hosts of bought souls and cravens, outside; and the saboteurs of working class unity. One thing we want is news of the outside, particularly of the movement. The comrades can do that. We are considerably hampered in sending out mail but can receive all letters sent us. Tell us, comrades, about the dressmakers' strike (the local daily papers carry no news of it); about the Marine Defense work; the I. L. D. and the whole movement and also as you may be able of your work. Also will one of the comrades mail me a picture (post card, I suppose) of Rose and Karl.

Please give our fraternal greetings of solidarity to the comrades of the Marine Defense.

Our best of comradely greetings. Courage and cheer for a good stiff fight from:

Your Comrades,  
GOODMAN AND MORGENTHAU