

WORKERS  
OF THE  
WORLD.  
UNITE

# THE MILITANT



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## The Miners' Convention

Ravages of Lewisism; the Position of the Communist Groups

October the third undoubtedly turned the attention of thousands of miners toward Gillespie, Ill. Even from far away Nova Scotia, where the miners have completely broken with the Lewis regime, taken matters into their own hand and organized the Amalgamated Mine Workers, greetings go out to the constitutional convention of the Progressive Miners of America. That is understandable. Illinois represents almost the sole solidly organized miners section of some real substance left in the field. But whether this constitutional convention can make a serious beginning toward the solution of the all important problems, remains to be seen.

The mine fields today in an organizational sense present a picture of frightful devastation. In 1921 when John L. Lewis was solidly entrenched on his throne in Indianapolis the U. M. W. of A. reached its highest point of growth with a total membership of 515,243. By Dec. 1928 the number, including Canada, had been reduced to 172,632, of which 83,446 were in the anthracite and 53,088 in Illinois. Reports from the U. M. W. of A. of actual membership have been very scarce since; but obviously the drop has gone considerably further downward. In other words while in 1921 about 75 percent of all the soft coal hoisted was mined by union labor there is today less than 10 percent of the total tonnage union mined. What a frightful trail of destruction!

**How the Miners Were Eliminated**  
The method of its accomplishment becomes somewhat clear when one recalls how John L. Lewis in the 1922 strike betrayed the 60,000 miners of the Fayette and Somerset counties in Pennsylvania. These miners had just been organized but were in the settlement left to shift for themselves and disappeared as an organized rank.

Frank Farrington, who was then President of the Illinois district, charged John L. Lewis with having received bribes to the tune of \$750,000 from interests closely associated with the Pennsylvania and Kentucky operators, to break the strike. This accusation was made in repayment for the Lewis' charge against Farrington of having received \$27,000 to break the 1919 Illinois strike. Undoubtedly both gentlemen were entirely correct. And certainly both instances exemplify, though these alone only in a small measure, what the miners had to endure during this kind of a regime.

To the uninitiated it may appear as if the present break in Illinois occurred purely on the question of the wage scale, that is, the maintenance of the basic \$6.10 a day scale or the sell out agreement of Lewis-Walker for the \$5.00 a day scale. This is only one of the manifestations. To the miners, though, it becomes a quite important difference, when one considers that an employed miner in the soft coal field is quite lucky to average about two working days in a week, aside from the large number totally unemployed.

The fundamental cause is very far more deep-seated. It is the natural question of union organization which is involved, and in that sense thousands of miners may justifiably turn their eyes toward the Gillespie constitutional convention. In that sense also the responsibility of that convention becomes a far greater one.

**The Parties and the Miners**  
It is not at all strange that the Socialist party officially takes the position of neutrality and non-interference in the break the Illinois miners have made with the Lewis-Walker clique. That was to be expected. First of all, and this may be the smallest consideration, that position enables them to have their members in both camps to fish for votes and support in both directions. But essentially this cover of neutrality enables the Socialist party to give its support in reality to the reactionary camp and help stem the Leftward tide of the new movement. That part of its role will become increasingly clear with future developments.

But there should be no less concern over the attitude of the official Communist party. From a letter issued by Joe Tash, the U. M. U. and party organizer in the Illinois field, dealing with the foundation conference of the P. M. of A., we take the following excerpts: "However, it should be obvious just from a glance that the leadership of the conference succeeded in putting over another betrayal of the Illinois miners..." And further, "This further means splitting the ranks of the miners and defeating the splendid unity of the Illinois miners. It is the same policy that Walker and Lewis are known for and which smashed the U. M. W. A. as a fighting union..." If this be true, then there could be no distinction between the new union and the old gang. In that respect the party is duty bound to change its

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attitude. It is duty bound to turn its attention toward the unification and further development of all the progressive forces, maintaining its criticism of the conservative and reactionary elements within them, but to support the movement in its rebellion against the Lewis-Walker crew.

**Those Who Condemn a "Split"**  
The Right wing Lovestone group chips in its bit with regard to the Illinois miners situation. It says in sum and substance in an editorial in the *Workers Age* of Sept. 24, that any idea of uniting the anti-Lewis groups outside of the U. M. W. A. would be false and share the same fate as the N. W. U., and that a new union should not have been organized. In other words, according to this advice the Illinois miners should be driven back again to the U. M. W. A.

Is this reactionary attitude any better than that shown by the Socialist party? Not one whit. The figures cited above, giving the present status of the U. M. W. A., in addition to the well-known long series of betrayals by its officials, long prove, if anything, that conditions have long been rotten ripe for a definite split away from this corrupt clique. But up till now the subjective factor, the membership itself, was not sufficiently matured to carry it through. Attempts were made, but mostly on a false basis. Now, it appears to be conclusive, and at least with prospects of heading in the right direction.

Unity of the mine workers throughout the field is the essential problem. That can no longer be accomplished within the bounds of the remnants of the U. M. W. A. controlled by a reactionary clique of capitalist agents of the Lewis-Walker types, whose objective is exactly the opposite. The place of the revolutionists is undisputedly with the rebel movement, fighting for its necessary Leftward direction and for unification outside of the deadening grip of the reactionaries.

—A. S.

## Illinois Conference Opens

Miners Are Militant but Right Wing Forces Are Organized

**SPRINGFIELD, ILL.—**  
Over 200 delegates, representing at least 22,000 miners of all sections of the state, from the terror-ridden southern counties (Franklin, Williamson and Saline) to the far northern Peoria-Wilmington fields, assembled in a constitutional convention to decide upon the form and aims of the organization of coal miners to replace the shell of an organization left by the Lewis-Walker-Coal operators' combine.

The opening of the convention on Monday, October 3 was marked by a parade of 3,000 coal miners and their women folk. The demand for clean fighting unionism has reached into elements hitherto dormant or nearly dormant. The spirit of the well-organized women's auxiliary is distinguished by its militancy.

The convention heard the secretary of the West Virginia Miners' Union with great attention and evinced their solidarity with that movement there. The applause left no doubt of the position of the Illinois miners on the question of national unity when Shearer, the secretary of the W. Va. Miners Union, raised this point in his speech.

The convention was very jealous of the rights of the membership. As a reaction to the mandatory fashion of the Lewis bureaucracy, this swing to rank and fileism goes to nearly ridiculous extremes. The spirit, however, is very healthy and very vigorous in its extreme care for democracy.

As yet no Left wing has appeared in the convention. The proposal to turn a speaker from the N. W. U. was turned

## Saturday: All Out to Union Square For Scottsboro!

The Communist League of America calls upon all its members and sympathizers to participate in the demonstration in Union Square, Saturday, October 8, at 2 P. M. The demonstration is to be one of the many called by the I. L. D. for that day throughout the nation, demanding the release of the Scottsboro boys. The Supreme Court hearing begins October 10. The demonstrations on the 8th must echo and re-echo throughout the land. The voice of the workers must penetrate the Supreme Court walls. The Scottsboro boys must not die! Members and sympathizers of the League are requested to assemble at the Opposition headquarters, 84 East 10th Street, 1:30 P. M. Saturday, so that we can go to the Union Square demonstration in a body... All attend!

## Elephant, Donkey and "Socialists" Compete for Election Honors

As the election campaign wears on toward its climax on election day the antics of the elephant, the cavortings of the donkey, and the flarings of the torch more clearly reveal the true nature of the three parties of capitalism as they swing into the final phase of their strategy. The "issues" they pounded so heavily in the earlier stages of the campaign have gone by the board as they scramble madly for votes.

Only a few months ago the Republican band-wagon was assuring the country that if the engineer was not measuring up to the publicity balldoo it was not his fault. He was the victim of circumstances over which no man or party could prevail. But a series of dramatic incidents in which the Communists did not play the least role brought out clearly the reactionary character of the administration and its shining light. The Hunger March of last December, the shooting of workers demonstrating for relief in Cleveland, Chicago, Detroit, etc., focussed attention on the vicious resistance of the capitalist class and its servant-engineer to the demands of the unemployed for relief. The nation-wide hunting down and deportation of foreign-born militants; the passage of the Dies

Bill; the nation-wide terrorism against the bonus marchers culminating in the armed eviction of the bonusers from Washington, make up a record of reaction too clear to be explained away as the result of circumstances. The Republican boosters are now prating that Hoover's policies saved the country. That is the only shred of demagoguery left them. This blind alley into which life has forced the Wall Street elephant has given the Democrats a great opportunity. With windy demagoguery they are parading themselves as progressives. They are appealing to the "liberal element of the community". That is the line of Roosevelt's speeches in Iowa, Wisconsin and Detroit.

**The Donkey Brays**  
How well the donkey is braying this time will, of course, be decided on Election Day. But this strategy is already paying dividends. The New York Times of October 3 reported A. P. Whitney, president of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, as saying: "I am supporting Governor Roosevelt because I believe his liberal views pertaining to the welfare of the masses will result in general prosperity".

But it is not alone the petty bourgeois strata of the working class, the labor aristocracy, which are singing Roosevelt's liberalism. Senators and congressmen, staunch and not-so-staunch supporters of the Republican machine in "normal" times, are coming out for Roosevelt. They are alarmed at the Leftward drift of the masses, awakening to class consciousness from the illusion nurtured by Hoover and company. A section of their political base, the petty bourgeoisie, is also moving to the Left under pressure of the crisis. These windbags must move along with them or be left behind. And, finally, they see the handwriting on the wall: Hoover and the Republican party are going to get a beating. These new prophets of liberalism have a keen eye for their political futures. They will lose nothing, they calculate, by climbing aboard the band-wagon now.

The indicated success of the Democrats in corraling the "liberal" vote has alarmed the socialist party. They have been making a bid for this vote themselves. In their campaign book just issued, they make it plain, according to the *New York Times*, that they do not advance any revolutionary objectives. They limit themselves to reforms within the limits of capitalism. Their New York state election program reeks with the same reformism. Mr. Fuess of the Republican party hails the socialist party as respectable. In the rush for votes the socialist party leans, not on the working class it claims to represent but whose interests it betrays, but strains itself to the right, to allure the petty bourgeoisie with its socialists.

**Socialists and Liberals**  
To offset the threatened Democratic sweep of the "progressive" and "liberal" vote the socialist party had undertaken a mobilization of the more "radical" liberals. Together with them it has organized the Committee of 100,000 to support the Thomas-Maurer Ticket. The chairman of this melange of philosophers, bishops, editors, and economists is Paul Douglas, professor of economy in the (Continued on page 2)

**VOTE  
COMMUNIST!**

## Program of Action of the League on the Unemployment Situation

The unemployment situation, which is growing continually more acute, presents an enormous problem to the American working class. With an ever accelerated speed this situation helps in the process of separating it from its former bourgeois political ideology and allegiances. On the whole the unemployment situation constitutes, particularly by its definite aspect of permanency, an important factor in our revolutionary perspectives.

There are no exact figures available as to the size of the unemployed army of the country, but even the conservative American Federation of Labor estimates grants a total of 11,400,000. There need be little doubt that the actual figure is quite larger than this estimate. This is much well borne out by the Department of Labor index figures of unemployment based upon returns from 89 manufacturing industries. The month of July 1932 registered the lowest employment percentage yet on record. The index figure had dropped to 55.2. The full year of

1926 is reckoned as 100. In this connection it is necessary also to take into account the drop in total payroll for which the recorded index figures are based upon the same industries and with the full year of 1926 reckoned as 100. The July 1932 total payroll index figure was 36.2.

The disparity shown by the much greater drop in total payroll gives conclusive proof to the contention that unemployment and wage cuts go hand in hand and that the growing unemployed army becomes a particular incentive utilized by capitalism to reduce the standard of living of the workers. In sum and substance this situation reveals within the imperialist stronghold today the staggering working class misery accompanying the large scale overproduction of capital. It shows also the picture of arrogant flaunting of the demands of the unemployed workers and brutal suppression of their demonstrations.

Efforts of the American bourgeoisie to hold in store the prospect of increasing resistance to the capitalist enemy. The perspectives of the unemployment situation are therefore intimately connected with the coming serious working class struggles. Communist policies, tactics and slogans must particularly take this into account. The tactics and slogans must change to correspond with an unemployment situation bound to develop in growth, intensity and sharpness, even with coming temporary let-ups. The Communist policy is the means by which we aim to reach the specific revolutionary goal. But in each separate stage of development our tactics must lay the correct basis for preparation and direction of the next one. Wrong tactics lead away from it and strengthen the enemy. A correct approach to the problem of ameliorating the working class needs of today, and now so acutely pressing, prepares the battles of the rising labor movement to (Continued on page 4)

## Scottsboro Case Up In Supreme Court

Only Mass Action Can Save Framed-Up Negro Boys!

The case of the nine Negro boys who were framed in Scottsboro, Ala., by the white southern bourgeois on a trumped-up charge of rape is now approaching a tentative conclusion. On October 10, the Supreme Court of the United States is to review the case. That the case has gone so far is entirely to the credit of the International Labor Defense and the Communist party which have fought in this case with an agitational ardor that is truly admirable.

The Supreme Court is to review the case of only seven of the defendants. In previous trials the cases of two of the boys were eliminated in so far as a Supreme Court hearing is concerned. In the case of one of the boys a mistrial was declared, as he was a minor. In the other case a retrial was ordered. The Supreme Court hearing will, in any event, affect all of the nine defendants.

The agitation carried on in behalf of the boys has not only had a tremendous echo in this country but internationally as well. Agitation for the Scottsboro boys has been carried on in almost every

country of the globe. In Chemnitz, Germany, a number of workers were shot while demonstrating for the release of the Scottsboro boys. The tour of Mrs. Wright, the mother of one of the boys, and J. Louis Engdahl through the countries of Europe on behalf of the International Red Aid has been of tremendous significance in the cause of international working class solidarity. From some of the European countries they were summarily expelled.

**No Let-Up!**  
But there must be no let-up now. The lag in agitation in recent months, as the Communist press now points out, may have been unavoidable. But the point now is to multiply the agitation tenfold. The demonstrations called for by the party for October 8, throughout the United States, must be supported by every class-conscious worker. We must not leave to the so-called impartiality of the Supreme Court the fate of the Scottsboro boys. We must demonstrate in mass for our demand that the Negro boys of Scottsboro do not burn!

## Opposition Youth Calls Scottsboro Meeting

The Spartacus Youth Club of New York will hold a special meeting on the case of the Scottsboro Negro boys, whose trial comes up before the U. S. supreme court on the tenth of this month. The dastardly frame-up of these nine innocent boys will be analyzed in detail, a history of other cases of frame-up in the labor movement of this country given, and an investigation of the Negro question presented. Three speakers will handle the different topics, comrades Craine, Bord,

and Capels.  
The date is Friday, October 7, at the Stuyvesant Casino, 9th St., and 2nd Ave., at 8 o'clock sharp. All members and sympathizers of the club are urged to attend this important meeting. Y. C. Lers are especially invited to be there. On Saturday, the Club and its sympathizers will participate in the demonstration called by the I. L. D. on Union Square in defense of the imprisoned boys.  
**All out on Saturday!**

## Convict 6th Harlan Miner

5 Now Serving Life Terms While 37 Others Still Await Trial

The sixth miner to be sentenced to life imprisonment by the coal barons of Kentucky has just been announced. His name is Jim Reynolds. The five others who are now serving life terms in the Kentucky dungeons are Jones, Hightower, Poore, Hudson and Elzie Phillips, a Negro miner. All in all there are 43 miners facing life imprisonment on a charge of murder growing out of the battle at Evarts, Kentucky, on May 5, 1931. The case of the six already indicted is under appeal by the state supreme court.

The battle of Evarts came as a culmination of a reign of terror instituted by the coal barons and their hirelings, the police. After trying by individual shootings and terrorizing to break the strike in Harlan, Ky., the mine owners organized a concerted effort to break the picket line. On May 5, when the mine pickets were attempting to stop a truckload of household goods from being shipped to strike-breakers in a nearby town, three auto-loads of thugs were seen approaching. The pickets sought cover in the adjacent bushes and behind rocks. The thugs then opened fire by splattering a hail of machine gun bullets into the bushes and down the hillside. In self-defense some of the besieged miners who were armed expecting just such an emergency, returned fire. When the fighting ceased Jim Daniels, the leader of the gunmen, and two other thugs were found dead. One miner Carl Richmond, was killed by the thugs. Martial law was then declared. Forty-three people were arrested and charged with murder as a direct result of the clash. Sixty-three others were picked up and charged with criminal syndicalism.

The trials of the arrested miners have been as indicative of American class justice as any one could hope to cite. In the case of Negro workers brought to trial, race prejudice and race hatred was the dominant key note stressed by the prosecution. In the Negro-baiting South a jury composed of petty bourgeois whites could be relied on to bring in the proper verdict—guilty. In the case of the white workers, class hatred was aroused in the bosoms of the property-loving members of the jury by telling them hair-raising stories as to the deeds of violence these men had committed against property.

The General Defense Committee of the I. W. W. has carried on a courageous struggle for these imprisoned miners. Fighting in the bourbon South for workers imprisoned by the class enemy is no easy task. All in all the General Defense has stood nobly by the imprisoned workers. It has been instrumental in having the indictments against five of the miners dropped. Not all of the General Defense Committee's activity in the strike however can be placed on the credit side of the ledger. There is at least one important debt to record. The General Defense has relied too much on the legal aspects of the case. In a matter of working class defense before capitalist courts, mass agitation and pressure is at all times of the utmost importance. It should be clear now even with the mock trials in the courts of Kentucky, that extra-legal pressure from without by thousands and millions of workers can be the most effective weapon in fighting for the release of those of our comrades imprisoned by our class enemy.

## NEW QUARTERS

On October 15, the League will move into new headquarters at

126 EAST 16th STREET  
New York City

THE INTERNATIONAL  
WORKERS SCHOOL  
Will also be located there

## OPENING BANQUET

On Saturday Evening, OCTOBER 15

Friends and sympathizers are cordially invited. Come and bring your fellow workers. Help us realize this for-ward step