

Letters from Militants

Miners' Women on the March

SPRINGFIELD, ILL.—Dressed in white uniforms, ten thousand Illinois coal diggers' militant wives, mothers and sweethearts staged a colorful demonstration of working class power and solidarity through the state capitol's busy thoroughfare, voicing protest against the fourth year of the hunger era.

Mass delegations from fifty-one mine towns were prompt in their response to the call of their executives to assemble here January 26 to take up the fight of the Progressive Miners of America on four burning issues: Namely, unemployment insurance, increase in state aid, restoration of civil rights and against the sales tax.

Marching eight abreast in disciplined formation, the huge army of women stirred to ecstasy the thousands of coal miners who flanked the streets all along the road of march.

Five miners' bands led the mass of women in the one hour march from the State Arsenal to the Capitol.

Loyal rank and file miners from the fighting Springfield district, along with large committees from all over the state, were at hand to spur the women on to struggle against the intolerable conditions of unemployment.

At the head of the inspiring multitudes was Agnes Burns Wieck, commanding the organized from delegations through fifty-one branch presidents. Along side of her were Celine Burrell, Secretary-Treasurer, and Mrs. Leon Besson, Vice-President, of the Illinois Women's Auxiliary.

Proceeding the state officers was the Gillespie-Bend-Wilsonville fifty piece band forming the vanguard of the white army of marching women. Next in line, faithfully trudging along, was "Mother" McKeever, unmindful of her 75 years. Then came the widows of the Moweaqua miners dressed in black mourning, further symbolizing the woes and tortures of that section of humanity that choke deep under in producing society's basic fuel. Broad smiling faces regained their seriousness and hats were removed as the bereaved women of Moweaqua marched solemnly by. Their heads were drooped in sadness and tears were visible.

Next in line came the families of the martyrs of the Progressive Miners of America, Mrs. Andrew Gynnes, Mrs. Joe Colbert and Albin Cumerlato along with his daughters and son. Those who gave their loved ones for the cause were highly honored by the whole gathering of women fighters. Deeply written from one column of the march to the other were signs of worry and desperation steered by a solid phalanx of organization.

The first delegation to lead the parade was the women of Springfield who were honored to first position because of the affair being held in their home city. Several hundred were numbered following a large banner proclaiming: "12 mines work under P. M. of A. contract and peace in Springfield. Why not Peabody?"

Next in line were the other auxiliaries from the Springfield district—Riverton, Niden, Dawson, Williamsville, Witt, Nokomis, Gerard Panama, Thayer, Divernon, Auburn, Pawnee—marching at a steady gait, headed by banners describing the names of their towns.

Then came the large Gillespie group followed by the Bend school band and their home town auxiliary. Bend with a large banner proclaimed: "Bend Women's Auxiliary of the Progressive Miners of America. 610 members strong."

Next in line were the mass groups from Mt. Olive, Carlinville, Staunton, Wilsonville, White City, Livingston and Williamson.

The towns of Hillsboro, followed by the Tovey band, then Taylorville, Langleville, Bulpitt, Stonington, Kincaid, Tovey, Pana and Decatur came next. The enthusiasm of the miners' women from the midland territory was visibly undaunted as they confidently marched behind their sisters from every nook and corner of the state.

The northern district with Peoria, East Peoria, Farmington, Galesburg, St. David, Cuba and Norris were also present, raising their banners high to the world that was out to watch them.

The Belleville territory with its numerous, sturdy German women were next in line. Banners on which were inscribed Belleville, O'Fallon, Marissa, Breese, Pocahontas, Coulterville. Tilden boomed over the heads of different groupings.

Last but not least were the courageous mining women of southern Illinois who braved threats and intimidations to join their sisters of the north. Du Quoin and Dowell, new allies of the Progressive Miners of America, were present. Then came groups of women representing auxiliaries from bloody Franklin county. It takes a man with a mighty heart to be an active Progressive down in that land of terror, but here we had delegations from West Frankfort, Ziegler, Buckner and Christopher. The writers are proud to belong to the great cause of the Progressive movement. A defiant smile gleams from their faces as they take their places side by side with the new champions of labor.

"We saw Edmondson peering from the side of an auto," said one Franklin county woman. "He looked like he was going to faint." Edmondson is the renegade of the rank and file movement who is employed as the leading terrorist of Franklin county by Walker and Lewis. It was a sorrowful day for the reactionary fakers of the old United Mine Workers of America.

The last column having passed the towering statue of Abraham Lincoln, the

women began to break from their lines, filling the entrances of the state Capitol. The curious and interested masses that flanked the streets started to move towards the steps of the Capitol. Bands incessantly played their many stirring tunes.

After the singing and band concerts had abated, Agnes Wieck called her executive board together and along with the fifty-one branch presidents, the committee representing the Women's Auxiliary of the Progressive Miners of America, made their way through the immense crowd to present to the chief executive of Illinois, Governor Horner, the demands of their organization.

The reception room of the Governor was taxed to capacity. The hallways were jammed with miners' wives. State Highway Patrolmen, one with a tear gas gun, were standing in strategic positions. Plain clothes men were milling around somewhat uneasily. We later learned that the day previous a large delegation of unemployed workers had entered the state capitol to petition for unemployment relief and had been unmercifully clubbed by the police. Possibly this caused the uneasiness. A few representatives of the Progressive Miners of America who had remained at the side of the women's committee throughout the whole demonstration were eyed suspiciously. At Mrs. Wieck's suggestion, the Governor agreed to meet the entire delegation in the reception room.

The Governor was finally met by the women's committee. Mrs. Wieck then read to him their statement in behalf of the housewives of Illinois' mining fields—those who often must make "meals" solely from the flour that is labeled "American Red Cross". The statement was tersely written, it rang with the tone of resentment against impoverishment of the workers dependant upon coal for an existence.

The following immediate demands were presented by the Auxiliary here:

1. For restoration of civil liberties in coal fields.
2. For increased and more equitable distribution of State Aid.
3. For unemployment insurance paid by industry and state.
4. For defeat of the State sales tax.

That night the members of the Women's Auxiliary, Progressive Miners of America, jammed the main floor and balconies of the huge state arsenal to listen to the report of their delegation. The report on the conference with the Governor was made by Agnes Burns Wieck.

Following the report, a grand ball was held celebrating the tremendous organizational success that the women marchers had made. Proceeds from this affair will go to the Moweaqua victims and the Springfield unemployed miners who are still on strike against the Peabody Coal Company.

Until early morning, tractions, buses, autos and trucks continued to roll, transporting the greatest gathering of working women in the history of the American labor movement. The precision, discipline and spirit of the women marchers was highly commendable. The militant members of the Women's Auxiliary gathered in Springfield to wage the struggle against hunger at the very doors of the representatives of the government.

Success of their fight, however, will depend largely upon the degree of organization that will be exerted to change the evils responsible for starvation amidst plenty. Back in mine towns, through the Progressive Miners of America, through their own organized efforts, utilizing every possible economic and political instrument at their command, the Women's Auxiliary will be ultimately triumphant in the war to make labor safe from hunger.

—A MINER.

I.L.G.W.U. Leaders Seek to Corral Youth

At the call of the Dressmakers' Joint Board of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, a conference of "radical youth" groups was held in New York, February 3, to aid the union in its organizational drive. Representatives of the Young Peoples Socialist League, the Inter-Collegiate Student Council of the League for Industrial Democracy, the Lovestonette youth, the Young Circle League and the Vanguard (anarchist) group had a short while previously participated in a pre-conference to arrange for this conference. The Left Opposition youth—the Spartacus Youth Club—was not invited to either gathering. It had an observer at the conference.

After the chairman explained the purpose of the meeting, Max Bluestein, manager of the Joint Board, spoke in glowing terms of the history of the union and the need of the cooperation of the youth assembled to help the union organize the dressmakers. Following this, representatives of the youth groups present spoke.

The YPSL, LID and Young Circle League pledged their support and readiness "to take orders". The speaker for the Lovestonettes endorsed the campaign and spoke for a "clean, fighting, militant union" which would fight racketeering and organize the youth in the trade. The chairman, an official in the union, greeted this mild and meaningless speech. The spokesman of the Vanguard (anarchist) Group launched into an attack upon the leaders of the A. F. of L. and the ILGWU, and their sell-out policies and agreements. He exposed by direct references fake agreements made in the dress and cloak industry in New York by the ILGWU. He protested at the original refusal of the officials of the ILGWU to invite the youth of the CPLA and the Left Opposition to the Conference. They had

My Daughter's Suicide

Open Letter On Stalin's Role in the Death of Zinaida Volkov

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE C. C. OF THE C. P. OF THE USSR.
TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE USSR.
TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE C. C. OF THE C. P. OF THE USSR.

I deem it necessary to inform you how and why my daughter committed suicide.

At the close of 1930, upon my request, you authorized my tubercular daughter, Zinaida Volkov, to come to Turkey temporarily with her five year old son Wessolod, for treatment. I did not suppose that behind this liberalism of Stalin lurked a mental reservation. My daughter arrived here in January 1931 with a pneumothorax in both lungs. After a ten months sojourn in Turkey we finally obtained—despite the constant resistance of the Soviet foreign representatives permission for her to go to Germany for treatment. The child remained temporarily with us in Turkey so as not to burden the invalid. After some time the German physicians thought it possible to remove the pneumothorax. The invalid began to recover and dreamed only of returning with her child to Russia where her daughter and her husband, who is a Bolshevik-Leninist held in exile by Stalin, remained.

On the twentieth of February 1932 you published a decree by which not only my wife, my son and I, but also my daughter Zinaida Volkov, was deprived of Soviet citizenship. In the foreign land where you gave her permission to go with a Soviet passport my daughter occupied herself only with her treatment. She did not, and because of her health, could not take any part in political life. She avoided anything that might throw the shade of a "suspicion" upon her. Depriving her of her citizenship was only a wretched and stupid act of vengeance against me. For her, this act of personal vengeance meant a break with her little daughter, her husband, her finance and all her customary life. Her mental condition, already disturbed without that by the death of her younger sister, by her own illness, received a fresh blow all the more atrocious as it was quite surprising and not provoked in any way by her. The psychiatrists unanimously declared that only a return to her normal environment, with her family, and her work could save her. But your decree of the twentieth of February of 1932 removed precisely this possibility of saving her. All other attempts, as you know, have remained in vain.

German physicians insisted that at least her son be brought to her as quickly as possible; in that they still saw the chance of restoring the moral equilibrium of the mother. But as the six-year old child was equally deprived of Soviet citizenship the difficulties of his departure from Constantinople to Berlin were multi-

plied. A half year passed in constant but fruitless efforts in several European countries. Only my unforeseen trip to Copenhagen gave us the opportunity to bring the child to Europe. With the greatest difficulty he made the trip to Berlin in six weeks. He was hardly near his mother for a week when Gen. Schleicher's police in collusion with the Stalinist agents decided to expel my daughter from Berlin. Where? To Turkey? To the Island of Prinkipo? But the child needed to attend school and my daughter needed continuous medical attention under conditions of family life bear this new blow. On the fifth of January she asphyxiated herself with gas. She was thirty years old.

In 1928 my younger daughter Nina, whose husband has been locked up in solitary prison by Stalin for five years, was bedridden and then taken to the hospital for a short time after my exile to Alma Ata. They found her with galloping consumption. A purely personal letter, without the least relation to politics, which was addressed to me, was held up by you for seventy days so that my answer did not find her alive. She died at the age of 24.

During my stay in Copenhagen, where my wife began a treatment for a serious illness and where I prepared myself to begin a treatment, Stalin, through Tass agency, issued the lying denunciation to the European police that a "Trotskyist conference" was meeting in Copenhagen! That was enough to have the Danish social-democratic government do Stalin the favor of expelling me with feverish haste, interrupting the necessary treatments for my wife. But in this case, as in many others, Stalin's unity with the capitalist police at least had a political aim. The persecution of my daughter was devoid of even a shade of political sense. Depriving her of Soviet citizenship—a loss of her only hope to return to a normal environment and to recovery—finally her expulsion from Berlin (a service indisputably rendered to Stalin by the German police), are acts without a political aim for miserable and stupid revenge and nothing else. My daughter was pretty clear about her position. She understood that she could receive no safety at the hands of the European police, persecuting her at the request of Stalin. Conscious of that, her death followed on the fifth of January. Such a death is called "voluntary". No, it was not voluntary. Stalin imposed this death upon her. I limit myself to this information without drawing conclusions. The time will come for this subject. The regenerated party will do it.

Prinkipo, January 11, 1933

—LEON TROTSKY.

LEON TROTSKY

STALIN'S DENIAL

I am not in possession of the "Bolshevik" with the denial of Stalin of the article "With Both Hands". The semi-official communication of the "Berliner Tageblatt", however, suffices to give one an adequate picture of this denial.

Stalin did not react to Campbell's book until the Left Opposition seized upon it. Didn't Stalin deem the book sufficiently important? Yet he did grant Campbell an interview which, according to the report of the American, lasted until the early hours of the morning and, according to Stalin's denial, lasted "no more" than two hours. Even two hours are enough to confirm the importance of this conversation. Campbell received the

stenographic report of this interview: Stalin confirms this. Campbell is no journalist but an agrarian big bourgeois. Is it possible that Stalin took no notice of this man's book? Out of the question. The Press Bureau must have furnished him with the most important excerpts, especially those which concern Stalin himself, immediately after the appearance of the book. Nevertheless, Stalin was silent. The article in the "Bulletin of the Russian Opposition" first loosened his tongue. Therein is to be found the measure of value of Stalin's denial.

In 1925, when his policy aimed completely at the capitalist farmer, that is, at the Kulak, Stalin went so far as to have secret designs on the necessity of denationalizing the land. He arranged for himself an interview by Soviet journalists. One of the questions (dictated by Stalin himself) read, if it would not be advisable in the interest of peasant agriculture to hand over to every individual farmer the land tilled by him, for a period of ten years. Stalin's answer was: "Even for forty years." At the same time, the Georgian People's Commissar for Agriculture, after an interview with Stalin in the Caucasus, brought in a formal legislative project for the denationalization of the land. The Left Opposition unfolded a violent protest campaign against it. In this connection, it referred back to the already partially forgotten interview on the suspension of the nationalization of the land "for forty years". Stalin found it necessary to start the retreat. He simply declared that the journalists had "wrongly" understood him. But as to why he had remained silent about the printed interview for several months, he could make no answer.

In 1928, Stalin prepared the entrance of the Russian trade unions into the Amsterdam International. In the new edition of the membership books of the Russian trade unions, the passage concerning adherence to the Red International of Labor Unions was simply stricken out. At the same time, Kaganovich delivered a speech in Kharkov, naturally in agreement with Stalin, in favor of entrance into the Amsterdam Trade Union International. The Left Opposition once more raised its voice in vigorous protest. Stalin retreated. The new text of the membership books was explained away as a "misunderstanding". Kaganovich declared that the stenographer in Kharkov had bungled the meaning of his speech. The Kharkov Oppositionists, however, established the fact that the stenographic report had been carefully corrected by Kaganovich himself.

Back in 1930, Stalin, in conversations

The Capitulation of Roman Well and Co.

The international Stalinist press (in this country, the *Freiheit*), is celebrating a new "victory". Messrs. Roman Well and his handful of followers in the Left Opposition in Germany have broken away from the organization and have started on the thorny path to Canossa to capitulate to the Stalinist bureaucracy. Seizing upon the article "With Both Hands", in which Stalin's treacherous interview with Mr. Thomas Campbell was so thoroughly exposed, the Well clique found a pretext for their renegacy from the International Left Opposition. It proceeded to issue a "special issue" of the organ of the German Opposition, "Die Permanente Revolution", which is a forgery from beginning to end. The regular edition of "Die Permanente Revolution" is still in the hands of the Left Opposition, as is the bulk of the membership which is repudiating the turncoats. The Well forgery is not only different in format and in masthead, but by its very contents, reveals that it could not possibly have been issued by the German Left Opposition. The latest issue of our German brother organ, which has just been received, confirms the obvious impression of a fraud created when the Well sheet first arrived here.

The rejoicing of the *Freiheit*, which announces gleefully that the "Trotskyist group in Germany has announced its own dissolution", is due to be short-lived, for it is based upon sheer falsehood.

Every edition of capitulationism thus far has sung the same song at the beginning. Zinoviev broke with the Opposition because "Trotsky had broken from the principles of the Opposition platform"; to defend the Opposition platform more ardently, Zinoviev rushed right into the arms of Stalin and Co. Radek, Smilga, and Preobrazhensky also found grace in the Stalinist bureaucracy by discovering that "Trotsky had broken from the principles of the Opposition platform". The third and most vulgar edition of the capitulators—Roman Well and his coterie—have crawled into the Stalinist camp under the same smoke screen: They, and not the International Left Opposition, are the true defenders of Bolshevism, the loyal supporters of the Comintern and the world revolution; therefore, capitulate to the Stalin faction!

In the declarations published in the with Lominadze and others among his confidantes, launched the argument: "The Comintern represents nothing and it ekes out its existence only because of our support." But the moment when Lominadze, in struggle against Stalin, threw up to him the opinion he had vouchsafed, Stalin had no difficulty in repudiating his own words.

So it is not for the first time Stalin, under the attack of the Left Opposition, has resorted to a denial of his own affirmations. One can say that this procedure is part of the iron arsenal of his policy. At every new zig-zag, he moves cautiously, sends up trial balloons, frequently has others send them up, but holds open the possibility of a retreat as long as he can. To repudiate one of his own declarations has never offered him any difficulties.

Besides, the conversation with Emil Ludwig—published by Stalin himself—differs in no essential from the denied conversation with Campbell. And what is more important: the denial does not alter by one iota either the Kellogg Pact policy or the tactic of Stalin-Litvinov in Geneva. And this is what's important. Prinkipo, January 14, 1933.

—LEON TROTSKY.

forged edition of "Die Permanente Revolution", the turncoats complain that none of Trotsky's analyses of the situation in Russia, Spain or Germany have stood the test of events (Stalin's have, you see!). "National Socialism has received powerful blows, the Communist party has considerable successes to record. Nothing has remained of the perspective of the 'unconditional and immediate uprising of the National Socialists'. The conception was and is correct that Fascism in Germany cannot come to power until it has assured itself along the road of coalition of decisive positions in the state apparatus. Even if the Fascist danger is not yet (!) over with, one thing is plain, that in the given situation it is in decline and the revolutionary proletariat has come ahead."

Two days after this declaration was received in New York, Hitler was made Chancellor of the Republic and the Fascist bands started their reign of terror with renewed vigor and violence!

For the capitulators, the Stalin faction does not represent Centrism, because, you see, Lenin spoke of Centrism only in connection with the social democracy! For the capitulators, the united front with the social democracy is inadmissible, because, you see, the social democracy is led by traitors! For the capitulators, the Left Opposition has no right to existence, because, you see, it is a small group; the German Communist Party has gained votes in the last elections; the 12th Plenum of Manuilsky and Co., "put into the foreground with Bolshevism determination the mass work in all reformist organizations". Finally, there is no "internal democracy"—the faction of Stalinist bureaucracy!

The Left Opposition, neither in Germany nor internationally, does not capitulate. It leaves that role to miserable turncoats who cannot distinguish between revolutionary internationalism and national Communism, who mix up the Stalinist faction of bureaucratic degeneration with the Party and Comintern of Lenin and Trotsky, who identify the interests of the ruling clique in the Russian party with the interests of the Russian and world revolution; who cannot distinguish between the German worker-Communists and the corrupt Thaelmann regime; who wince under the pressure of the party bureaucracy, and, not having the intransigence, the steadfastness, the endurance, the fierce loyalty to the revolution and its principles that distinguish the Bolshevik from the camp-follower of the revolution—run to beg for mercy and a tiny place in the sun of that bureaucracy.

The Well capitulation is an episode in the life of the Bolshevik-Leninists, not the first and not the last in the long struggle for revolutionary victory. But nothing more than an episode. We move forward over the corpses of these political suicides.

Tenacity, tenacity, tenacity! Bolshevik-Leninists, forward!

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