

FROM THE FIRING LINE

We Ride The Rods To The Merger Convention

From Kansas City To New York

We were off the evening of Nov. 20, amid falling snow and sleet, on a Wabash oil car. I had \$3 in my pocket—all the available cash of our Kansas City branch of the Communist League of America. My companions were three C.L.A. comrades who had travelled from California and who, like me, were bound for New York and the national C.L.A. convention and merger convention.

There was no place to sit, so we had to hold onto the iron rod that ran around the car. Oh boy, what a hold-on! My feet ached until they lost all feeling; I knew I had to hold on for 72 miles, so I did.

At Carrollton, Ill., we spent the night in the railroad station. When we asked the station agent to let us stay, he said curtly, "That colored fellow, does he get cold?" I replied emphatically, "Most assuredly; very much so." He let us remain, but looked at me suspiciously until I obeyed his dictate in the middle of the night and brought in a bucket of coal.

Next morning we decided to travel in pairs, so that in case of arrest at least one pair would reach New York. Ray and Abe took the highway; Al and I took another. But the next 90 miles convinced us that to ride on oilers was unprofitable. Open box cars, flat cars, on top and in coal cars, but no more oilers.

From then on it was a nightmare of cold cars and long walks from one railroad yard to another and efforts to get food and a place to sleep. In Moberly, Mo., we tried to panhandle for food and coffee, because we knew my \$3 wouldn't last the whole 1,000 miles of our trip. All the restaurants lived up to the true American tradition of segregation. Finally we went into one to buy two cups of coffee. The corpulent blond at the counter informed me she was "so sorry" but I would have to go in the kitchen; but she became apologetic when Al went with me.

In Springfield we searched for hours and walked miles to find Joe Angelo, one of our League comrades. When we found him, he was

almost barefooted and on the verge of starvation. He had been thrown out of his union and his relief reduced because of his radical activities.

Once we went too far, riding past Fort Wayne and on to Montpelier, O., where we had to wait all day to get out of town. This mistake was due to our ability to be so tolerant in the midst of bitter cold.

In Detroit, we had to walk 12 miles to get from one freight yard to another, and in Toledo, 20 miles and then remain for the night in a dilapidated vacant house. In Cleveland, we got a train out right away, after walking 15 miles to the west yards.

In Elmira, N. Y., we spent the night in the county jail lodging house on iron beds. The transient

camp had gone on a holiday and the Salvation Army refused to feed us, although the table was elegantly set for the officials, on the pretense that we were too late.

At Susquehanna, Pa., we were pulled off the train and threatened with 30 days in jail. After some explanation the railroad bull directed us to the transient camp and advised us to take a day's rest and dry our clothes. We took his advice. I was forced to sleep on the floor because the transient authorities have not discovered that Negroes sleep in beds.

We left our last transient camp, in Port Jervis, with a group of hobo geniuses. From Jersey City we caught a bus to New York, took a subway to the office of the Militant, went home with a comrade to wash the dust from our faces and attended the celebration meeting of the joint convention that night. The conventions of the League and the merger were over. The song was over, but the melody of enthusiasm lingers on.

—SIMON WILLIAMSON.

Defeating the Militants in Illinois - The Real Story

Allard's Account Reprinted from Labor Action

By GERRY ALLARD

Ralph Shaw, southern Illinois organizer of the Communist Party, writes another story of the Illinois coal miners in the Nov. 24 issue of the Daily Worker. Shaw writes of the struggle to place militant candidates on the ballot for the elections in the Progressive Miners' union, Dec. 4.

He charges that the Left Wing miners, an amalgam of A.W.P.s, Socialists, Syndicalists, and Independent radicals, refused to join with the Communist Party in fighting for a radical slate in the P.M. of A. elections. If Shaw means that we turned him down in a united front proposal he doesn't know what he is talking about as no such offer was made on this specific situation. The Left Wing group has turned Shaw down on a number of occasions when he approached us on united front proposals on the "basis of supporting" the Unemployed Councils, the International Labor Defense, etc.

The Left Wing faction of the P. M. of A. has time after time made unity with Communist miners, over the heads of Ralph Shaw and B. K. Gebert. We have no reason to alter our policy in this connection. We are dealing with a coal miners' situation; therefore, when we speak of united fronts in the Progressive Miners union we deal with members of that organization, and not with people who have opposed and scabbed on the Progressive Miners of America.

The struggle in the P. M. of A. to nominate a Left Wing slate was conducted without ballyhoo or a Communist Party. The line of the Left Wing faction was one of concentrating on local union elections.

Shaw states that the refusal of the Left Wing to unite with the Communist Party enabled William Keck, reactionary incumbent secretary-treasurer, to secure the nomination for president without opposition. In another paragraph he hastens to assure the readers of the Daily Worker that the Communist Party will support Joe Burrell, Left Wing candidate for secretary-treasurer. Shaw does not explain just how the refusal of the Left Wing to join in a united front with the C. P. resulted in electing Keck president of the union by acclamation.

The Real Story

Here is the real story: During the nominations for union offices in Amalgamated local union Number 1, at Gillespie, Ill., with a membership of some 2,400 members, Claude E. Pearcy, incumbent president, was nominated by his faction for the position of secretary-treasurer. Joe Burrell, Left Wing candidate, was nominated by our faction. As predicted, the vote proved to be very close. In order to make it easier for the reactionaries to win the nomination the Communist Party miners, not of their own free will, but because of fraction discipline, nominated Laverne Pruett, who everyone agreed had very little chance to receive the vote on the nominees resulted in Pearcy receiving 118 votes; Burrell 115; and Pruett 4. Burrell was snubbed out by a nose, thanks to the treachery of the Communist Party.

Indignation swept through the rank and file miners of this territory. The repercussions penetrated deeply within the ranks of the Communist Party, and rumors are circulating to the effect that Adam Churs, leading rank and file Communist, has resigned from the C.P. and the professional ballyhoos began to justify the course by stating that the C.P. did not believe in the theory of the "lesser evil". This is the horse radish to the miners who know Burrell, and the miners accepted the Shaw version of the C.P. position as an insult.

Shaw switches from his lamentable "theory of the lesser evil" to a blanket endorsement of Burrell. He does this not because of the interest of the rank and file, but in order to check the revolt within the C.P. coal miners.

C. P. Tactics

The treachery of the C. P., under caucus instructions by Shaw, was duplicated in scores of local unions where Left Wing candidates were nominated. In local union after local union, the reactionaries are plurality candidates not majority candidates, thanks again to the Communist Party leaders' tactics.

The Left Wing miners succeeded in placing in nomination candidates for every desired office with the exception of the presidency. What the result of the election will be is a foregone conclusion. The right wing have a machine, funds, political connections with the Repocrats, etc., which will enable them to land the major offices. If the Left Wing fails to elect its slate, it will not be because of the workers; it will be because the Communist Party is

Merry Christmas--! F. D.'s Little Gift To the Jobless

FERA 30 cent Minimum Wage is Abandoned

Just a year ago President Roosevelt handed the unemployed a Christmas gift in the form of CWA. Men who had been out of work for several years gratefully accepted wages of \$12 a week—and sometimes more—for "real work". The President was going to abolish the dole—and Christmas was a joyous time for those who had been put on CWA, and a time of happy anticipation for those who were still getting relief but hoped for CWA jobs soon.

Another Christmas will be here in a few days. President Roosevelt has a new gift for the unemployed. FERA, which succeeded CWA last spring, has abandoned its 30-cent-an-hour minimum wage rate. Instead, rates are to be set by local relief boards (which means by employers of labor) in accordance with local wage standards.

A Merry Christmas for the bosses, who have been begging for this ever since CWA was started. Reports from the south tell of new minimum rates of 5 cents an hour and maximum of 15 cents in some districts.

Removing the restrictions on FERA wages has had the result the employers hoped for; it has affected wages for employed men. The south, where lack of organization by labor always gives employers the jump when restrictions are removed, again reports farmers paying laborers as little as 50 cents a day; and, since employers, farm and industrial, usually run the relief boards, threats of withdrawal of relief can be used to force the workers to accept.

Relief administration Harry Hopkins, whose good but futile intentions promise to pave hell for the unemployed, fought long against lowering the minimum wage standard. But President Roosevelt, under pressure from employers, forced acceptance.

Unemployed Are Fearful
The unemployed are fearful that the relief administration's acceptance of the bosses' wishes in this instance pressures further trouble for them. Pressure is being brought to reduce the already inadequate relief standards. While the Scripps-Howard newspapers publish a survey in 24 areas in the country, showing 18,000,000 men, women and children are receiving public relief and pointing out that "the present outlay is inadequate", business men are asking for investigations and insisting that relief be reduced.

Voice of Wall Street

Speaking in San Francisco, Winthrop W. Aldrich, chairman of the Chase National Bank of New York, pleaded for a return to direct home relief and abandonment of work relief projects. Concerned about the increased tax burden—and evidently not at all about the effect on the unemployed—Mr. Aldrich talked about business and taxes and budgets (government budgets, of course, not more adequate budgets for the unemployed). He wants the cost of relief borne by local communities; but did not suggest how local communities which are now defaulting their bonds could meet these costs.

Clearly, what the bosses want is a return of relief to local communities over which they have more control, so that they can reduce standards and, by making voluntary contributions, or setting taxes through local politicians, can reduce at the same time their responsibilities.

In this connection, it is interesting to note that Community Chest campaigns—for private agencies—this year have been more successful than for several years past, and in many cities exceeded their quotas. For every business man who contributed more generously through a greater sense of responsibility—or sense of guilt?—there must have been others who want to see relief back in their own hands.

Using Sales Taxes

The growing custom of using sales taxes for relief is another symptom of the trend for industry to play the tune in relief. New York City has just put a tax of 1 and 2 per cent on all articles costing more than 12 cents, exempting foods. Mayor LaGuardia, who made speeches in Congress against sales taxes a couple of years ago, suggested an income tax, but the bankers have a way of persuading the liberal mayor what is best for the city—and the bankers.

And So—Merry Xmas!

October, balmy month that it was, added 37,000 families to the relief rolls, according to preliminary figures by the Relief Administration in Washington. This brought the total to 4,082,000, as compared with 3,010,516 in October of 1933. Another report from Washington showed that while incomes under \$25,000 during 1933 had decreased, those above this figure had increased.

Merry Christmas!

Red Sees the New Militant Coming From the Press

Finds the Shop Coffee Good - And Black

By RED

First thing you see is a big coffee pot. In fact there are two coffee pots and a dozen cups. Half the cups are clean and half the cups are not clean. The biggest big coffee pot sits on top of a little heater which is sometimes hot and sometimes not so hot.

You go through a dark hallway on the first floor, and at the back a door opens into the print shop of the Pioneer Publishers of the Workers Party. You can't see the print shop for the clutter of things. The one peaceful spot is on top of the stove, and the coffee pot has a monopoly on that.

Clutter of Things
Tables, shelves, piles of paper, buckets of lead, fonts of type, a linotype machine moving its one long arm up and down, rattling out labor news and editorials for the New Militant, a Whitlock press (the hands of Joe Hirsch who does everything) whipping off 1,200 copies of the paper an hour, a job press turning out red membership cards of the Workers Party of the United States, and three or four people going from tables to type and type to tables and back again so fast you get confused and imagine there must be at least a dozen of them.

theoretically supposed to be a part of the left wing labor movement. Until the Left Wing miners can definitely clarify the relations of the bankrupt Communist Party to the Left Wing, as that of being fundamentally dissimilar, the right wing will continue to be plurality candidates.

"We're Kept Busy"

"Yes," said D. Marcus, who takes care of the financial end of the shop, whichever end that happens to be, "we're kept busy. We're getting out 8,000 copies of this issue. The type is set for the first pamphlet of the Workers Party—the Declaration of Principles. The first printing will be 10,000. A new pamphlet will be issued each month. We're printing thousands of the membership cards. And in addition to the New Militant, we get out the New International and Young Spartacus.

"However, the shop does need a new press. This one is too slow. When the party moves into new headquarters, we will look around for a new press."

On Its Way

The rumbling in the shop continued. The linotype key-board under the hands of Walter Tushmann continued rattling off news from the labor front. Ann Cohen who looks 18 but declares she is older bustled herself setting up new headlines. Joe Hirsch was busy at the press, feeding papers into the machine, printing the first forms. The 8,000 sheets would have to be fed through once more and then the mailing department could get busy.

The New Militant would be on its way to you—in the mails!

P.S. Your correspondent had a cup of coffee from the big pot on the little stove and though it was black it was pretty good if you like black coffee.

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IN THE UNIONS

By KARL LORE

Building Trades War

"When thieves fall out, honest men get their due", says the old proverb. And while it may not apply entirely in the case of the officials of the Building Trades Department of the American Federation of Labor, this rift in the ranks of the old guard labor leadership merits the most careful attention by those who are out to revive the fighting spirit of the trade union movement.

There has always been trouble between the big unions of the Building Trades—electricians, carpenters, bricklayers and their supporters—and the smaller unions of the department. For many years the Big Three were unaffiliated with the Building Trades Department of the Federation. Last spring, however, they joined again and the unity of the building trades was hailed with much jubilee and shouting.

It Didn't Last

A short six months and the war was on again. At the San Francisco convention of the A. F. of L. the ranks were again divided when the smaller unions in control of the Department refused to seat their opponents at the B.T.D. conference. It was a serious split and the Federation convention was unable to settle it. All efforts since have been fruitless. A convention of the Department called by William Green was attended only by the Big Three and their supporters. The Department was reorganized and in consequence we now have two departments, each claiming to represent the building trades unions of the A. F. of L.

Jurisdiction Claims

Behind the whole fight is the bitter jurisdictional squabble which has always cursed the unions of this industry. Who, for example, hangs metal doors? Sheet metal workers, iron workers and carpenters have claimed the work. What union takes care of moving metal

furniture? The list is endless and the jurisdictional fights and strikes that they have caused has ripped labor solidarity in the building trades to pieces. With the coming of the NRA and the inauguration of the tremendous government building program, the issue has become even sharper.

The control of the Building Trades Department has become an important weapon in the jurisdictional war, since Department officials are the ones who confer with government agencies in charge of building projects. They have a great deal of influence in determining what kind of jobs should be done and what arrangements made to carry them out. Building Trades bureaucrats are afraid of the thousands of unemployed in their membership. If the per capita is to continue rolling in and their power to continue unchanged, work must be found for as many as possible. The control of the Building Trades Department is a matter of vital concern to the union moguls. On it may depend, in large measure, their very existence.

Does It Mean Split?

The smaller unions know that the Big Three intended to take the reins into their own hands. They are determined to keep control themselves.

As yet, no solution has been found. The A. F. of L. itself must support the Big Three. But it must also find some solution soon if one group or the other is not to pull out of the Federation ranks entirely. The situation is already giving plenty of headaches to the executive council of the Federation. They know that unless some compromise can be patched up and patched up soon, a jurisdictional war is likely to ensue which will make all those which have gone before look like sham battles. Such a conflict, in fact, may go so far and be so vicious that unionism may be practically wiped out in the industry. The building trades organizations, furthermore, have always been the financial and political backbone of the Federation old guard. Unshakably conservative in their policies, they have constituted a Rock of Gibraltar against progressive ideas.

For their own self preservation, some sort of settlement will have to be worked out. Indications are that some sort of compromise will be concluded in time to prevent all around throat-cutting from killing organizations in the industry.

Basically, however, the conflict will continue until the reign of bureaucracy, gangsterism and corruption is wiped out, and until steps toward industrial unionism are taken. That is the job of the progressives.

Department Stores

There are few cases on record of strikes of department store employees. The labor turnover is great, the percentage of skilled workers small. Employees generally consider their jobs as temporary and are unwilling to organize on that basis. In Milwaukee, however, 1,500 employees of the Boston store have gone out in a strike which presents a number of interesting angles. The workers are organized into a number of craft unions of which three—clerks, janitors and truck drivers—have struck. Four other groups—the electricians, painters, carpenters and linoleum layers—have remained on the job because of contracts and are working side by side with scabs.

Books by Leon Trotsky

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Men Who Get \$3,000 a Day Doubled by Nira, Roosevelt

Incomes Under \$25,000 Shrink, Tax Returns Show

President Roosevelt once remarked, echoing Adolf Hitler, that his New Deal would redistribute wealth. There is hardly a person left outside of Germany who still believes that Hitler is redistributing wealth; but a good many Americans who took Roosevelt seriously were unpleasantly surprised by the report, on Monday, of the U. S. Income Tax Bureau.

In the calendar year 1933 there was a rise of 26 in the number of people reporting a million dollar a year income. Mind, a million dollar income, not a million dollar capital, but a million dollar profit in one year, or about \$3,000 per day. There were twenty million-dollar boys in 1932; in 1933, even though the first two months of that year saw the very lowest depression culminating in the bank crash, the New Deal in the remaining 26 months succeeded in creating 26 new financial monsters, bringing the total up to 46.

"Redistributing" Wealth
That isn't all. Income tax returns are distributed according to classes. There is the million dollar class, the five-hundred thousand dollar class and so on down to the thousand dollar class. (Incidentally one unnamed man, in a class by himself, reported an income of five million, \$15,000 per day!)

Both the number of incomes and the amount of the incomes above \$25,000 per year increased, while both the number and the total amount in the classes below \$25,000 decreased. Guess which way wealth is being distributed by the New Deal!

Where did the money come from? Wages and salaries reported to the bureau totaled 7.7 billion dollars in

Wealthy Americans

Twelve billion or one-third of the \$36,000,000,000 now on deposit in the banks of the country is owned by 49,900,000 small depositors, according to figures released recently by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. This figures out at an average deposit of \$240.

Twenty-four billion or two-thirds is owned by 800,000 other depositors. They average \$30,000 each.

Nothing is said about the financial status of the other 70 million who make up the population.

We know, however, that 18,000,000 of them are being "kept alive" by relief.

Mooney May Be Pardoned

SAN FRANCISCO.—While the working class anxiously awaits the results of Tom Mooney's recent appeal to the U. S. Supreme Court (an appeal which would have more assurance of success if there were an organized and militant movement fighting for Mooney), rumors are afloat in California to the effect that the newly re-elected Governor, Frank F. Merriam of strike-breaking fame, is contemplating the pardon of Mooney.

Mooney has for years refused a conditional parole or pardon. Steadfastly maintaining his innocence of the crime he was charged with, he has conducted a bold battle for unconditional release from San Quentin prison where he was incarcerated 18 years ago at the behest of the organized bosses of California. Merriam, who was elected by the skin of his teeth, is thinking of releasing Mooney in order to gain a little popularity among the California workers who hate his very bones. The reasons for the change are described as follows by George F. West, New York Times correspondent in San Francisco:

"A strong conservative minority embracing some of the most influential business men in San Francisco have long been saying privately that the Mooney agitation should be ended by executive action, preferably a commutation of sentence that would release Mooney with no opportunity to accept or reject; a choice that would be his should the method of release take the form of a parole, for which Mooney has repeatedly said he would never ask." (Continued on Page 3)