

FROM THE FIRING LINE

Wild Cat Strike Looms at Mine

JOHN L. LEWIS HOLDS ON BY STRONG-ARM METHODS

SPRINGFIELD, Ill.—When the miners of mine No. 4, Panther Creek Coal Co., here made demands that the haulage way be cleaned and the wash house enlarged, they got immediate results. They issued an ultimatum that if the coal dust wasn't cleaned out of the haulage way in three days they would call a strike. So two days later the company worked a night crew to do the job.

Instead of enlarging the wash house, which is what the miners demanded, the company merely made some repairs. The wash house is dirty, cold, unventilated and dangerously unsanitary. The miners called state mining inspectors to examine the wash house as the state law was being violated. The company promised to arrange suitable washing facilities for the men and the state inspectors said they would return in three days.

Left Wing Polls Heavy Vote in P. M. A. Election

GILLESPIE, Ill. Dec. 14.—Joseph Burrell, president of local union 34, Gillespie, and former chairman of the Progressive Miners State Relief and Educational Committee, polled a good vote in the state union elections recently held, according to incomplete reports gathered here this week. Burrell was the left wing candidate for the position of secretary-treasurer of the Progressive Miners of America.

Burrell defeated Claude Percy, incumbent president of the union, by a vote of 106 to 63 in local union No. 77, Springfield. Burrell also polled nearly 500 votes in the large amalgamated local union at Gillespie. Unofficial reports state that Burrell also defeated the union president at Auburn, Pa., "Little Dog" mine and Local Union 12, Springfield. S. L. Jones, Sherman Stiehl and Jess Anderson were also candidates for the position.

Percy's candidacy for the position is an outright swindle as the recent convention of the P. M. A. as well as the first convention of 1932, stated that "no officer could succeed himself in office nor run for a lower office until he had worked two years in the mine after his tenure of office." The union president's candidacy is obviously a conspiracy for the right wing clique to perpetuate themselves in office through machine rule. Much indignation was expressed by the rank and file at Springfield, where the Progressive Miners of America have 14 local unions, seven under job control.

The six amalgamated striking local unions and local union No. 77 at Springfield voted in membership meetings to condemn the bureaucratic procedure of the union officers. Local union No. 77 also filed charges against Joe P. Goett, erstwhile Lewis tool, and now editor of the "Progressive Miner" because he refused to publish a resolution adopted by the local scoring Claude Percy's candidacy.

Unconfirmed reports state that a run-off is to be held for the position of secretary-treasurer since no one candidate received a decisive majority of the votes cast throughout the state.

The Party at Work

MEMBERSHIP MEET RAISES \$500 ON BUILD PARTY FUND

The program of action for the building of the Workers Party was presented to the New York membership at a general membership meeting Friday, Dec. 14, at the Stuyvesant Casino. The reporter for the National Committee, Comrade A. J. Muste, the National Secretary of the party, outlined the various points of the program of action and spoke of the enthusiasm with which the launching of the W. P. was met throughout the country.

The report of Comrade Muste was followed by a report of the New York District Organizer, Comrade Lewis, who dwelt on the concrete tasks before the New York District.

The Workers Party in this city starts out with seven branches in the various sections. All of these branches will very shortly have to be subdivided, since some of them are too bulky even now and new applications are coming in very rapidly. Over 40 applicants for membership in the party were received right after the mass meeting that followed the fusion convention.

The general membership meeting

rife. A "wild cat" strike is liable to break out any time.

In Benton, Ill., on Dec. 11, the day for biennial elections of the United Mine Workers of America, local and national, the rank and file of the union was dumfounded to learn that John L. Lewis and his entire machine, with rare exceptions, were without opposition. At least, the union gangsters did not permit duly nominated rank and file candidates places on the ballot.

In the Springfield and Franklin county sub-districts of the U.M.W.A., only the perennial office-holders were allowed places on the ballot. Dictator John L., of course, took care that no one should compete for his job. He barred Bill Sloan, Westville, Ill., and other rank and filers from the ballot for the offices of president, vice president and secretary-treasurer. Sloan and his group were permitted, however, to appear on the ballot as delegates to the A. F. of L. convention.

So the Lewis machine rolls on, in spite of its tremendous unpopularity among the rank and file. One day the miners, under real leadership and organization, will destroy this infamous machine.

In St. David, Ill., where the fight between the Progressive Miners of America and the U.M.W.A. has been bitter for two years, George Stouffer, for years a gun toter and agent of the notorious Lewis-Farrington machine, and one Murray, also a former crony of the machine, are dead, victims of a gun duel. Stouffer was former sub-district president of sub-district 22 of the U.M.W.A.

Stouffer, recently proprietor of a beer tavern, shot it out with Murray; both were killed outright. Two other persons, one a woman, were wounded.

For two years, in St. David and the surrounding territory, the battle between the Lewis gunmen and the P.M.A. has resulted in much fighting. The field is now closely divided between the two unions. Neither has absolute control.

Leibowitz Plans Anti-Labor Trial for Scottsboro Boys

By HARRY STRANG

The moment approaches when the United States Supreme Court clerk will call to the bar of the highest tribunal of capitalist justice, the contestants in the historic Scottsboro case. And although the defense counsel must soon make his argument, the working class public is bewildered as to who that counsel will be.

Many weeks ago Samuel S. Leibowitz, reactionary flag waver once employed by the I.L.D., announced his claim to represent the boys. Ever since he has been mum as a clam. The I.L.D., having denounced its former ally as a traitor (because he did just what revolutionaries predicted he would do when he was hired) continues to shout that it represents the boys. . . . and to offer a united front to Leibowitz, correctly characterized by the I.L.D. as an ally of the Southern lynch-ers.

United Front With Leibowitz

Why does the I.L.D., which for years would make no united front with reformism represented by Norman Thomas, or with revolution represented by those now in the Workers Party, offer Leibowitz a united front? Can it be that the I.L.D., having lost the support of the defendants, hope by an unprincipled united front with the ally of the Southern lynchers, to get, if not a front seat, at least a back one when the case comes to court? Leibowitz is silent because he is confident. Having been told by the I.L.D. that it deserved their trust because it had enlisted Leibowitz's services, the nine defendants came to lean solely upon Leibowitz. Would it be surprising that when the I.L.D. lost its boasted asset, the boys were to leave the I.L.D.?

Leibowitz's "defense" plans include a furious attack not only on the I.L.D. and the C. P., but on all progressive elements, on all militants and advocates of working class mass action. Although the I.L.D. has not used mass pressure (substituting the opportunistic alliance with Leibowitz while he let them, and covering up with provocative stunts), Leibowitz is in a good position, thanks to the previous boasting of the I.L.D., to give the idea of mass action a black eye.

Leibowitz plans to do more than attack all shades of militancy and radicalism. He means to whitewash Alabama class justice and sing praises of the Bourbon ruling class of the south. He wants to "put the Negro in his place", and to beg mercy for the innocent victims of a vicious frame-up. All the more reason why a mass pressure campaign is needed. Some liberal elements who regarded the I.L.D. as very clever when it hired Leibowitz (and who now naturally prefer Leibowitz to the I.L.D.), oppose further mass pressure. They say mass pressure was helpful in the past but would be harmful now. Aside from the fact that they opposed mass pressure in the period in which they now say it was useful, the fact is that mass pressure is more essential today than ever before.

Every new turn in the Scottsboro fight makes clearer the need to found a militant defense organization with genuine principles and a broad enough base to include all honest working class and progressive elements. Members of all trade unions and workers' political organizations should consider and prepare to act on this question.

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Steam Shovel Dynamited

MINERS EKEING OUT EXISTENCE IN CLASH WITH COAL CO.

SHAMOKEN, Pa.—A steam shovel costing \$8,000, brought here last week by the Stevens Coal Company, was blown to bits when someone planted dynamite beneath it.

Coal diggers who belong to the United Anthracite Producers, a "bootleg group" numbering 1,600 miners, would have been thrown out of work by the new machine. These miners dig coal in small quantities, by hand, a small group to each "bootleg hole", entire families, men, women and children joining in the risky work.

The Stevens Co. turned up last week with a brand new steam shovel, prepared to wipe out the miners' holdings with a stripping. The miners barricaded the road leading to the tract, and succeeded in "persuading" the truck driver, who was hauling the shovel, to turn back.

Later in the day George Jones, superintendent of the Stevens Co. turned up with the state police. The barricade was torn down, but the ill-fated shovel hadn't gone a hundred yards before it slipped on the muddy road and went into the ditch. Mr. Jones then asked for a conference with the miners.

He said that the fate of the Cameron Colliery of the Stevens Co. depended on the successful working of the Edgewood tract.

Lester Koble, replying for the miners, observed that they were completely indifferent to the success or failure of the Cameron Colliery, and were only concerned for their own means of support.

The conference was a deadlock. A few hours later someone deposited several sticks of dynamite under the shovel and blew it to pieces.

"Save the Workers From Revolution!"

U. S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BUSY

Words of Abraham Lincoln on Rights of the People To Change or Overthrow the Existing Government

One of the primary purposes of the United States Chamber of Commerce is clearly revealed in the report on "Combating Subversive Activities in the United States" which was sent out to its members for special consideration on Nov. 27.

The 29 page report defines as "subversive" all "activities of political or other bodies in the United States, having as their objective the overthrow, by force and violence, of the Federal, State and Municipal governments, and of the existing social and economic order of the United States." Mentioning anarchism as the main danger in the past, the report goes on to indict "Soviet Communism" as the real danger of the present post-war period.

Hit Working Class Violence

The authors pretend that they are not opposed to the aim of the communist movement—that is, to the replacement of the capitalist system by a new worker-controlled economic, social and political order. All they dislike is the method of violence. But do they protest equally against the Fascist murderers, to the K.K.K. terrorism and lynchings, to the violence breaking up of peaceful picket lines by boss thugs, corporation police and state militia? No! The Chamber of Commerce has not one single word to say about any of this, but it sets up a special committee, prints pamphlets, and urges its members to press Senators and Representatives for action against the "Communists" because they are the "leaders and agitators" of the working class.

Defending Capitalism

The truth is the C. of C. is solely interested in defending capitalism and the interests of Big Business. And it is exactly its members who are most willing to resort to the use of force and violence, to the most under-handed stool pigeon methods, in order to defend their "rights" when confronted by organized labor. In fact, it is reliably reported that the C. of C. promotes a labor espionage bureau for the use of its members involved with unions.

In contrast to the Chamber of Commerce contention that it is "American" to try to reform the present order by amending the present laws peacefully and that it is "Un-American" to try to overthrow the system by revolutionary means, it is well to recall the political philosophy of early America. Abraham Lincoln expressed it quite clearly in his First Inaugural Address as follows:

Right of Revolution

"This country, with its institutions, BELONGS TO THE PEOPLE WHO INHABIT IT. Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing government, they can exercise their constitutional right of amending it, OR THEIR REVOLUTIONARY RIGHT TO DISMEMBER OR OVERTHROW IT." . . .

After maintaining that Communism is an alien movement backed and sponsored by the Soviet Gov-

ernment, the report goes on to list all the subversive activities of communism from 1932 on: working class discontent and rebellion in Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia, Ecuador, Mexico, Guatemala, Great Britain, Belgium, Netherlands, Finland, Spain, China, Japan, Germany, Cuba and finally from coast to coast in the United States.

(Poor capitalists! But for a few thousand "communist agitators" the workers would be satisfied with this lovely world and let the rich live in luxury and peace!)

All to "Save" the Workers!

The Chamber of Commerce is going to "save" the working class from such evil influences as "communism"; therefore it recommends the following government measures of force:

1. The amending of the present seditious conspiracy law so that it would be more like the "World War Sedition Act" or the Canadian Anti-Red Law, so that stern punishment could be meted out to anyone who even dared to think that a revolution might be necessary.
2. That the U. S. mails be denied to any person or group advocating revolutionary or subversive doctrines.
3. That immigrants only be admitted on condition that their native country agrees to take them back on request of the U. S.
4. That no person believing in revolution shall be naturalized.
5. That stern penalties be provided for those persons or groups which try to spread anti-war or revolutionary propaganda among the armed forces.
6. That the Department of Justice be given authority and funds to set up a special department to investigate the activities of all persons, groups and organizations suspected of "communist" or "subversive activities" and to bring before the courts for punishment all those persons suspected of violating any of the broad measures mentioned above.

Wants Stricter Dictatorship

It is not enough for us to point out that this action of the Chamber of Commerce indicates that Big Business in this country has come to the conclusion that some strong anti-labor measures are necessary for capitalism's good and welfare. Business would like to take away from labor its right to free speech and self-organization. It wants a stricter dictatorship against labor. Therefore, it first intends to isolate and jail the radicals, the revolutionists, the militants, the fighters; then, if it succeeds, it will take the same measures against the freedom and organizations of the working class as a whole.

The aim of the Chamber of Commerce must be defeated! The working class must be aroused to the danger that threatens it! An organized mass protest of the entire labor movement can resist the attack at this time.

—A WORKER.

Why Mooney Remains in Prison

SAN FRANCISCO. — "Governor Stephens, it is my life you are dealing with.

"I demand that you revoke your commutation of my death sentence to a living death.

"I prefer a glorious death at the hands of my traducers, you included, to a living grave.

"I am innocent.

"I demand a new and fair trial or my unconditional liberty through a pardon."

These are the words Tom Mooney

sent to Governor Stephens of California sixteen years ago when at the wired request of President Wilson who feared "if Mooney is executed international affairs will be greatly complicated", Stephens commuted Mooney's death sentence to life.

Tom Mooney is still in San Quentin. All the world knows that he is innocent, yet he remains in prison.

Why? The answer is plain. Tom Mooney is a fighter for the working class. That is why he is held in jail, and only that.

CAPITALIST SABOTAGE

PITTSBURGH.—Steel, industry's basic unit, continues to reflect accurately Wall Street's sabotage in production. Steel finishing mills have operated at only 40% of capacity during 1934, despite America's vast need for good housing, railroad

maintenance, schools and cheap automobiles.

Here are typical figures of steel production capacity in tons and 12 months' production ending September 30:

	Annual capacity	12 months' production.
Heavy structural shapes	5,390,000	903,000
Plates	6,124,000	1,016,000
Standard rails	4,750,000	873,000
Tool steel bars	107,000	19,000

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IN THE UNIONS

By KARL LORE

Rubber Organizes

Big Bill Haywood of the I.W.W. hit Akron, Ohio in 1913. He organized a union and led a strike of rubber workers in that year which was smashed beneath a torrent of riot sticks in the hands of police and company guards. After the war and during the boom years unionism was practically dead and the few small groups which maintained an under-cover existence were unable to challenge the rulers of the industry.

In July 1933 the workers in the Firestone plant organized a Federal union of the American Federation of Labor. Two weeks later the Goodrich Rubber employees got their charter from the Federation. A great wave of union sentiment hit the area and under the leadership of young and militant rank and filers a great organizing job was begun.

Is Akron Next?

A year later it was estimated that almost 100,000 rubber workers in various parts of the country were organized. The India Tire and Rubber at Akron had recognized the union. In Los Angeles, Regional Labor Board elections went overwhelmingly in favor of the A. F. of L. A vigorous four weeks strike at the Akron plant of the General Tire and Rubber had forced the signing of a contract. In December 1933 an attempt to organize an international rubber workers union failed, but a parade of over 10,000 greeted a convention held in Akron the next June which organized the National United Rubber Council. Six months more have passed and the rubber workers face their great test. Akron may furnish 1935's first major labor explosion.

Yellow Dog Unions

Nor were the employers asleep. Company unions were immediately installed at the large plants without letting the workers vote on the proposals. Employee representatives were bribed with extra salaries. All expenses were paid by the companies. The representation plans did not provide for general meetings of the workers nor even for regular meetings of the whole body of representatives. Elaborate machinery was set up to defeat any possibility of even these armour plated plans being used to advance labor's conditions.

Put Up or Shut Up

Now comes the showdown. The unions in the great plants of Goodrich and Firestone in Akron petitioned the National Labor Relations Board for supervised elections in order to establish their right to act as the representatives of the workers. The Board ordered such elections held. Immediately both companies started suit in Federal court to prevent the N.L.R.B. from proceeding with the vote, and the Labor Board has agreed to postpone action pending the outcome of the court proceedings. J. A. Thomas, Firestone president, issued a circular to his workers in which he declared his intention of fighting the legal battle all the way to the supreme court. Labor has answered with a special membership drive. The unions claim that over 13,500 of the 21,000 employees of the two companies are organized, and predict that 75 to 80 per cent of the workers will vote for the A. F. of

L. organization in any poll taken now.

Another Wierton???

Here we have all the makings of another Wierton case. Will the organized rubber workers allow their fate to be dragged through an endless procession of capitalist court rooms till the spirit of their organization is broken and the banner of unionism dragged in the mud? The steel barons have succeeded in playing that game all too well. Aided by a cowardly, chair-warming pack of national union officials they have stifled the fighting spirit of the steel mill men and have reestablished the company unionism that was once so thoroughly washed up. The same problem confronts the organized rubber workers. The Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company, for example, has maintained an employee representation plan for the past fifteen years which is strongly entrenched. Real action on the part of the United Rubber Workers Council will do much to break up Goodyear's phony union. Delay in taking real steps, weak kneed handling of the situation, will have exactly the opposite effect.

Where Are the Progressives?

The initial organization work in the rubber plants was carried on by militant rank and file members. Later an A. F. of L. organizer, well versed in all the tricks of trade union politics was sent in. The progressives followed faulty counsellors and—inexperienced as they were—made a number of bad mistakes. The Federation officialdom took over the situation.

In place of the original organization structure by which all workers in any one plant belonged to the same Federal union local, the A. F. of L. chiefs introduced a modified craft union apparatus. Craft workers joined their craft organizations which were then supposed to be united in each case by a plant council. The unskilled and production workers remained in the Federal unions which were shorn of most of their power although they represented the great majority of the employees.

Briefs

Over 1,000,000 workers have joined 1,400 local unions of the A. F. of L. in the South since NRA went into effect according to Federation Organizer George L. Googe. . . . G. E. Beers, chairman of the Southeast Portland Lumber Company local of the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen—better known as the 4 L's—should have known better than to try to get wage raises from that company union. He was fired when he did. . . . In April 1920 several thousand members of the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen went out on an unauthorized strike. Officials of the B.R.T. immediately revoked the charters of the locals affected and ordered cancellation of their insurance certificates. The ousted members have been trying to recover their insurance in the courts ever since. They met on the tenth of December to try to figure out what to do next. Forget it boys. . . . About 57,000 new members have joined the International Association of Machinists and 240 new locals have been organized since July 1933 says President A. Wharton. About 150 strikes have been conducted by the I.A. of M. in the last 15 months.

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