

LABOR UNITY

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A SHOW DOWN IN THE I.L.G.W. HITS SIGMAN

Called For a Test And Got Licked

Workers Did It

BY JOSEPH ZACK

THE bureaucrats in the Needle Trades Unions tell us that amalgamation would be a good thing, but the workers are not yet ready for it. This amalgamation would strengthen the unions against the bosses. But when it comes to fighting the left wing, the bureaucrats are quite ready to amalgamate their forces. Thus, they have organized in New York, a conference to "preserve" the trade unions—for themselves.

Recently, this conference, being in the good graces of the powers that be, got two armories for a mass meeting against the "reds". Nothing was left undone to get the workers to attend these meetings. The A. C. W. members were told if they didn't come, their jobs would be lost. The Sigman-Beckerman machine worked overtime to put things over.

The Great Test

It was more than a mere meeting. It was intended to be a stoppage, the workers were asked to quit work one hour early to attend. The bosses co-operated in stopping work. The capitalist press, even two hours before the meeting, appeared with flaring headlines and even pictures, announcing that 100,000 workers were storming the armories to flay the "reds". It was a bold-stroke for the right wing, which had never before dared to rely upon the mass of workers. Will it ever dare again?

Who had the active mass, the right wing of the left wing? That was the issue the meetings would tell. Because the left-wing challenged the right with a counter demonstration, called by the Cloak and Dressmakers' and Furriers Joint Boards. Half a dozen halls to hold about 12,000 against the 18,000 of the right wing's two armories were hired. Madison Square Garden was unavailable, though one hall would have attracted more than many small ones.

The Show-Down

At 4:30 P. M., half an hour after stoppage, the first six left wing halls were already jammed. Then the left wing kept hiring more and more halls until every hall available on the East Side of New York was taken, seventeen halls in all being hired by six o'clock. Thousands wandered about in the miserable rain from hall to hall trying to get in, and many gave it up and went home.

The capitalist press admitted that 30,000 went to the left wing meetings. At least 23,000 got into the 17 halls. But the right wing had not more than 7,000 in their two big armories. It was a sad affair. Hugh Frayne of the A. F. of L. spoke. Unenthusiastic reaction. When Beckerman, the mimic Mussolini, began, a good part of the

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FIGHT THE WAGE CUT!



The coal operators of the central competitive field, comprising Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and Pennsylvania, met at Toledo, Ohio, January 19 and unanimously adopted the following resolution as policy for the operators in the negotiations with the United Mine Workers opened at Miami, Florida, February 14:

"Resolved, that it is the sense of the meeting that the scale between the operators of the central competitive field and the miners' organization or miners, must be continuously competitive with the wages paid in West Virginia and Kentucky."

This means a fight to cut wages of union miners to within a few cents of the non-union miners in West Virginia and Kentucky. And the words "or miners" mean a fight to destroy the union if it does not consent to the wage cut.

The Miners' convention instructed the Scale Committee against any wage reduction in the new contract. But John L. Lewis, who has deliberately kept West Virginia and Kentucky miners unorganized, has appointed Harry Fishwick, friend of the operators' friend, Frank Farrington, as head of the Scale Committee.

The Miners' Union is in danger. But can it trust Fishwick? Can it trust Lewis, who stole the miners' votes and bullied their delegates at their convention? No! But there is one way the miners can win against all enemies!

The existing Progressive Committees can be strengthened and their number multiplied. Such Committees, organized in every local in the United Mine Workers, can compel Lewis to lead a real fight against a wage cut, and can stand guard over the fight to prevent any betrayal.

Miners! The agreement expires March 31. There is no time to lose. Organize all progressive forces!

WHAT IS A STRIKE VOTE FOR?

The railroad companies are rolling in profits. But now, the latest group they have defeated on wage demands are the Engineers and Firemen on the 59 Eastern lines, given a paltry 7½ per cent raise instead of their demand for 20 per cent. This is arbitration! This is the Watson-Parker Law!

So it goes for the strongest railway unions. The Shopmen are too weak even to take their demands to the peril of arbitration. They have no stomach for even an arbitration struggle. So they are put off with one, two and three cent raises—and even no raise at all!

Refused even this ridiculous 7½ per cent by the South-eastern lines, the Grand Lodge officials of the Conductors and Trainmen have ordered a strike vote. But who are the officials fooling by this gesture? Not the railroad companies. The companies know that the union officials have been sewed up against strikes by the Watson-Parker Law.

If the union officials even faintly believed in strikes, why did they hog-tie the union with the Watson-Parker Law? They do not believe in strikes, and the only reason they order a strike vote is to fool the members of their union, to make them think their officials have guts enough to fight.

Railwaymen! A ninety per cent strike vote was taken by the Canadian Conductors and Trainmen, but their demands were compromised for an amount the officials have not even dared to make public.

If the railwaymen want what they demand, then a strike vote must be followed by strike if they don't get it.

On every system militant railwaymen should hammer this lesson home and organize groups to compel the union officials to act.

PROGRESSIVES BATTLE LEWIS IN CONVENTION

Machine Rules By Fake Majority Members Protest

THE convention of the United Mine Workers of America which opened at Indianapolis on January 25 and lasted for ten days will have a profound effect on the entire labor movement. The triumph of John L. Lewis in getting official endorsement for his workers and management "co-operative" plan, his expulsion policy, etc., solidifies the whole labor bureaucracy against all progressive opposition.

Lewis is the most ruthless autocrat in the labor movement and he will go to any extreme to retain his strangle hold on the union. The most menacing aspect of this is that the strength of Lewis reflects the weakness of the union. He grows strong as the union weakens. The progressive group understood exactly the crisis of the union when they raised the slogan "Save the Union".

Great Loss of Members

The operators have prepared for struggle since 1924, and, following Lewis' statement that there were 200,000 too many miners, they shut down the union mines and starved the union miners out. Secretary Kennedy's report shows a loss of 129,000 miners since 1924; 19,000 in the last six months.

While the Lewis machine controls every district except No. 24, and has fortified itself mechanically, opposition to the administration embraces the majority of the members as proven by even a few facts.

False Election Returns

1. The last two international elections. The constitution says the votes must be tabulated by locals and sent to every local. Yet neither in the election two years ago, when Voyzey ran against Lewis, nor in the last one when Brophy opposed Lewis, has this been done. The inference is that Lewis is defeated when he refuses to tell the membership how the vote went.

In the last election the first official statement (not a tabulation) given out was that Brophy received 85,000 out of a total of 280,000. This was an estimate based on the old 500,000 membership and given before Kennedy prepared his report. So the latest official statement is that Brophy received 60,661 and Lewis 173,323. According to Kennedy's report there are 273,307 dues-paying members. The statement on votes would mean that 85 per cent of the members voted, which is preposterous. A tabulated vote would show up the crookedness. In West Virginia, where Kennedy's report shows dues paying membership of 377 and no one but Lewis claims any more than 2,000 members, Lewis cast some 15,000 votes for himself and allowed Brophy 600.

2. There is a storm of protest from the membership against (Cont. on page 3)

Sigman Whipped In Call For Show Down

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audience started to walk out. The chairman ordered the doors shut, but this caused such a row he ordered them open again. We said it was a sad affair.

Waterloo for the Right Wing

The right wing cannot defeat the left wing without the aid of the bosses. To get that, they must give the bosses privileges the workers will not bear. Now the workers are back in the shops and the season is beginning, they see conditions are not being lived up to by the bosses and union spirit revives.

The Joint Board and local offices (suspended) are leaping. Even some shops who registered under coercion are coming to the Joint Board for complaint adjustment. Sigman now announces that workers who have not registered will not be discriminated against. The slugger becomes almost a gentleman.

A Disgraceful Frame-Up

Recently, Sigman tried to frame up the strike leaders by trying to get some arrested strikers to give information against Joint Board leaders on alleged violence upon scabs and scab-nests in the strike. When these workers refused to turn stool-pigeon, Sigman con-



NO BUYERS!

trived to have them sentenced by Judge Rosalsky to savage terms in prison, from two to five years. Then he promises that if they turn informers he will have them pardoned by influencing Governor Smith.

In this case more than any, the bureaucracy is revealing its unity with the most outspoken enemies of labor for imprisonment of strike leaders, and in the measure that the right wing thus exposes itself, the most backward workers begin to understand that under no circumstances must they permit scab-trailors to pose as their leaders. A big movement is now rising for defense of these victimized workers.

Schachtman Uses Injunctions

Another glaring example is furnished by the injunction obtained by President Schachtman of the Fur Workers' International from a Newark, New Jersey, judge, known as the worst labor hater and anti-labor injunction judge in that district. This injunction restrains Local 25, in which the left wingers were elected to office, from functioning as a union and directs the officials to turn over all business to Schachtman.

The membership does not want Schachtman, but he uses the capitalist courts and police to obstruct elected officers and install himself. An injunction judge becomes the final arbiter as to who is to handle the business of the union.

We can say, in view of these developments, that time is working for the left wing, and that these are the very last gestures of a bureaucracy that is corrupt to the core and for which workers in the needle industry are certainly not going to stand.

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Lewis' policy. More than two-thirds of the resolutions submitted to the convention expressed opposition to Lewis administration and policy. There were 557 resolutions, 226 dealing specifically with the coming wage agreement and supported by 287 locals. The whole tone of these resolutions is one of violent protest, not a single one supported the administration.

These resolutions represent one of the greatest mass protests against employers and labor officials ever presented to a labor convention. Space forbids quoting from these deep cries of indignation and demands for struggle arising from the coal-pits of this country. Hammered out by those who live in the tragedy of the union's crisis, their frustration by the Lewis machine is a crime.

Demands From the Pits

Suffice it to say that they attack Lewis' policy on all sides, against violation of the agreement, for a militant fight to regain conditions lost since Lewis became president, demand for rank and file control, for organizing the unorganized, for the six-hour day and the five-day week, demanding a tabulated election vote, protests against the joint discrimination of union officials and employers against the membership, for short term contracts, and an expressed distrust shown by many resolutions demanding a financial accounting.

3. Without going into the "blue sky" locals in all districts, and taking up only the "blue sky" districts, a cursory glance at Secretary Kennedy's own report shows a packed convention. Per capita shown in the following was from June 1 to December 1, 1926:

District	Per Capita	Paid Members	Delegates
17. W. Va.	\$ 475.50	85	40
19. Tenn.	1,448.75	482	52
23. N. Ky.	17.50	0	14
30. Ky.	0	0	38
31. W. Va.	1,131.00	377	167
	\$2,772.75	950	309

The above means that from these districts alone, Kennedy's own report shows that there was one delegate at the convention for every three dues-paying members. Just

Progressives Battle Lewis

compare this with the figures from the Anthracite given below:

District	Per Capita	Paid Members	Delegates
1. Pa.	\$169,846.89	56,282	178
7. Pa.	57,705.24	19,263	52
9. Pa.	193,432.28	44,577	98
	\$350,985.01	119,927	328

The Anthracite got one delegate to every 363 dues paying members. The "blue sky" or paper districts were placed on nearly an equal basis with the entire Anthracite. They had six more delegates than the powerful Illinois district, 58 more than the entire bituminous fields of Pennsylvania, 14 more than Ohio and Indiana combined and 58 more than the combined delegations of Washington, Iowa, Kansas, Colorado, Arkansas, Wyoming, Michigan, Missouri, Montana and Nova Scotia. Besides these "blue sky" districts, there were innumerable paper locals represented by Lewis henchmen from almost all districts.

Under such conditions it was extremely difficult for the progressives to make headway. Following his general attack against the membership, Lewis transferred as much power as possible from the members to the International Board by constitutional changes, and removed in the same manner all semblance of pro-war socialist ideology from the constitution.

So crude was the administration tactics that even with its packed delegation, the convention twice defeated the machine.

Lewis Whipped Twice

The first was a constitutional amendment to give the Board full power to assess members any amount at any time. This was defeated, but it was declared carried, and a demand for roll call declared beaten by three votes. The second machine defeat was on a proposal to lengthen the term of local officials on the plea of stabilizing the union. The vote was so crushing the machine could not steal it.

However, by denying seats to some of the most capable progressive floor leaders, such as Alex Howat, Powers Haggood, Pat Tooney and Luke Coffey, strong arm methods such as slugging of Haggood, and the packed convention, the Lewis machine was able to get

majorities on all other questions.

Progressives Fought Splendidly

The progressives, led by Brophy, Stevenson, Hindmarsh, Minerich, Demchak, and others, put up a splendid fight for all important progressive demands. Every argument made by the progressives was met with a bitter personal attack and the usual red-baiting and bull-dozing. Not one old machine supporter met the issue squarely. They were not sure of holding their packed majority.

Although many resolutions were in demanding justice to Howat, support of August Dorby, release of labor's prisoners and so on, the machine simply refused to print them or allow them to come before the convention because on such questions Lewis might lose his unstable majority.

Under Adverse Conditions

The progressives were militant and ideologically a unit, but were rather weakly organized. This lack of a definite organizational crystallization has long been a great obstacle to effectiveness of the progressive miners. The lack of literature in the hands of all delegates at the opening of the convention, analyzing the industry, the union crisis and explaining the progressive program was also a handicap. But the progressives put up a good fight under very adverse conditions.

By the reactionary position of the administration and the progressive program of the opposition being revealed in the convention struggle, the lines are clearly drawn, and all who believe that the aims of the union can be won only by a struggle will find themselves in opposition to the Lewis administration.

The task that confronts this opposition is to organize for the coming struggle with the operators, and to compel the administration through rank and file pressure to wage a real battle against wage reductions, for better conditions, wage increases in the unorganized fields, the six-hour day and the five-day week, a real drive to unionize the non-union miners, a national agreement, submission of agreement to referendum before signing, to grant democracy within the union and to carry out the Save the Union program.

FLIMFLAMMING THE RAILWAYMEN

BY ARTHUR C. JOHNSON

WHEN the Watson-Parker Law was being drafted in the early part of last year by joint conferences between the railroad managers and the officials of the standard-railway organizations, the union officials advanced many extravagant claims as to what it would accomplish for the workers when it became effective, as these officials wished to forestall any possible opposition from the membership.

Among other things, and there are many things about this law which we need to examine in detail—we were told that it would abolish company unions and compel the railroad managements to recognize the chosen "representatives of the employes", that adjustment boards must be created to handle the grievances arising between the companies and the men, and further, that the law would prevent the companies from using coercive measures against the efforts of the unions to organize the workers.

The Baited Trap

What is the purpose of these adjustment boards and how will they work? The boards make binding decisions when there is disagreement on grievances and disputes. The law provides that such boards "shall be created by agreement between any carrier or group of carriers or the carriers as a whole and

its, or their, employes".

The railway workers are now discovering that, in the interpretation and application of this clause, they have been caught in one of the several traps this law contains, and that the management is allowed to bring forward their company unions as representing the workers.

Leisure for Repentance

Immediately following the enactment of the law by Congress, several conferences were held by the union executives, which resulted in the formation of a joint committee representing all railroad unions to confer with the companies relative to the setting up of these boards of adjustment.

For many months this committee has been coaxing the railway managements to proceed with the creation of these boards and carry out other related provisions of the law. However, up to this time, all attempted negotiations with the companies have been futile. We were recently told by the union officials that it was not thought "advisable" to make any statement on the course of negotiations.

Regional Versus System Boards

When the unions proposed some time ago that regional boards be created representing all regular organizations, the management flatly refused to deal with the unions as a whole and, taking advantage of the

above-mentioned clause, insisted that system boards be set up.

The purpose of the management in demanding that these boards be constituted on a system basis, is perfectly clear. It will enable those systems that now have company unions, which comprise nearly half the railroads in the country, to deal as they see fit with their employes through the existing company unions.

That the railroad managements foresaw this, and are taking full advantage of it, is indicated by the fact that as soon as the law was passed, they promptly began creating system boards through their company organizations.

Not So Nice, After All

Now when the regular unions file applications for regional boards to include all bona fide organizations, the companies reply that they have already agreed to deal with the "representatives" of their company unions.

Thus we see that this law, which had the enthusiastic support of the officials of the standard unions, is the means whereby the railway managements will try to continue and increase the company unions on the railroads. Instead of eliminating them, as was claimed, the companies use the law to give com-

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