

ening, it can pull out of the fight just whichever sections of our army it deems necessary. All it has to do is to grant a few concessions to the group which is wants to pull out of action, and the job is done. Obediently they will join forces with the employers and thus help beat the rest whom the Railroad Labor Board has decided must stay in the fight.

Let's Seize Our Own Command

Can anybody deny that the foregoing is a true picture of the situation? Who can dispute the fact that the Railroad Labor Board is playing checkers with our unions, throwing these into battle and pulling those out, just as it sees fit by cutting wages here and withholding wage cuts there? Could a situation be more unfavorable for us, with the practical command of our forces in the hands of our enemies? And is it not high time that we put a stop to this ruinous condition by seizing command of our own organizations, so that we, and not the Railroad Labor Board, shall determine the number of troops we shall bring to bear against our opponents at any given time?

And we can seize this command only by amalgamating our many unions into one. So long as we are divided into many sections, the bosses will be able to play one against the other, as they are

now doing to our sad detriment. Only when we are all in one general railroad union, only when the whole body of us will rally to the support of every section of us that may be in trouble, will we actually have charge of our own unions. Now they are controlled in their most vital function by the bosses.

In the present great struggle, two supreme tasks confront us. One is to win the strike. We must and will carry that to victory, regardless of obstacles. This can be done, as the panic of the employers now shows, if we hold fast and extend the strike. In spite of our serious divisions we have delivered a smashing blow, which if followed up relentlessly cannot fail to bring a favorable result. And the other task is to point out to the railroad workers the need for united action by all of us against the companies, and also to show them that this unity can only be secured by amalgamating our unions together. In one gigantic union, built up of our 16 craft organizations, embracing all classes of railroad workers, lies the only remedy for the division and lack of solidarity which is costing us so dearly in this struggle. Amalgamation and victory, should be our slogan.

Railroad Workers' Section.

Trade Union Educational League.

Herrin: A Warning

By Earl R. Browder

THE miners of the United States have had bitter experience with the gunmen and private detectives hired by the operators. Particularly in the coal fields owned or operated by the steel trust and the oil trust, the lawless violence of private armies against the strikers has gone the limit. Ludlow, Cabin Creek, Calumet, West Virginia, are still open wounds inflicted upon the miners.

Williamson County, Illinois, has been a peaceful spot during all the recent coal strikes. But the Southern Illinois Coal Co., operating a strip-mine between the towns of Marion and Herrin, suddenly became militantly active in June, against the strikers. After working, under agreement with the union, only upon uncovering the coal while the strike was on, they suddenly announced they would begin to mine the coal itself. The union men immediately walked off the job. Armed private detectives and strike breakers were immediately rushed in, and scab operations commenced under charge of C. K. McDowell, a gunman who had "seen service"

in the mine strikes of Colorado and whose record was familiar to the strikers.

Then the information began to spread about that the steel trust had put money into the company and was directing operations. This was borne out by the identical tactics used in the West Virginia coal fields operated by the steel trust. Armed guards began to terrorize the inhabitants; public roads were closed; even representatives of the Chicago newspapers and of the State government, were stopped, and allowed to pass over the highways only under the permit of McDowell. The miners appealed to the State to remedy these conditions. The adjutant general of the State militia sent Colonel Hunter to Williamson County to investigate.

Hunter came, and was also stopped on the highway. When he inquired about the conditions at the mine, the matter of guns and ammunition stored there, etc., McDowell answered "this is being kept for ducks." When appealed to by the representatives of the State and county to withdraw the gunmen, he replied: "I've

broken other strikes, and I'll break this one." Hunter reported to Lester, the ostensible owner of the mine, that the gunmen were threatening the peace of the community, and action must be taken to curb them. He made this statement over the long distance telephone in the presence of the union officials.

Nothing was done. The gunmen ruled unchecked. The scab operations went on. On Wednesday, June 21st, the union miners sent a delegation to visit the mine to try to get the workers there to join the strike. According to one of the strike breakers, when interviewed in the hospital, the gunman McDowell in charge of the operations, saw the committee approaching through the woods surrounding the mine, raised his high-powered rifle and saying, "That looks like a man; let's see if it is," he fired, killing George Henderson, one of the strikers' committee, and another guard fired, killing Joe Picovich.

The news of these wanton murders spread throughout the county. Coming on top of all the previous terrorization, intimidation, insults and provocations, with the remembrance of West Virginia fresh in their minds, it roused the entire county to action. Thousands of miners flocked to the scene on the next day, and a battle ensued. When it was over the gunmen were either dead, wounded, or missing.

The coroner's jury which investigated the matter immediately after the battle, brought in a verdict placing the responsibility squarely upon the coal company which had imported the hired gunmen. The facts of the authority of the state having been flouted by these capitalist agents, of newspaper reporters having been threatened with violence by the detectives, of public roads

having been closed to traffic, and the brutal and cold-blooded murder of Henderson and Picovich, of the warning given by Colonel Hunter to the adjutant general that the gunmen would have to be curbed, and the failure of the State to act; all these things combined to make such a clear case that even the capitalist newspapers have had to quit printing "news" and fall back upon editorials in order to condemn the miners of Williamson County.

The people of Williamson County all know the merits of the battle. When a correspondent met the Mayor of Herrin and asked him for some particulars, the Mayor said: "As a matter of fact, the mine office is at Marion, and the mine is closer to there than to Herrin. So Herrin does not deserve, according to your point of view, the honor or the blame."

Williamson County as a whole considers it an honor that it prevented a repetition of the West Virginia slaughter of strikers. When they had the old challenge of the steel trust thrown in their faces they met it and wiped it out. Herrin stands as a warning to the predatory capitalists, that the use of private armed force is not entirely a one-sided game; it is a warning to the Government that it cannot continue to wink at murders committed by detectives in order to break strikes.

When the striking workers have to face the armed forces of the Government thrown into battle for the capitalists, that is one problem which has yet to be solved. But the use of *private armies*, detectives, thugs, and gunmen, has been met by the miners of Herrin, and a challenge has been accepted. It is a warning that the times have changed.



THE SCENE OF BATTLE AT HERRIN