

# THE UNITED FRONT IN THE OHIO STRIKE

## II (Conclusion)

**T**HE strike-breaking role of the United Mine Workers of America can be brought home to the mass of the strikers only by the most skillful and determined work of our union. It is not enough to "let the UMWA leaders expose themselves to the rank and file." We must not underestimate these fellows. If they are to be exposed as strikebreakers before the whole working-class it is exactly our union that must tear from them their mask of false phrases about struggle, etc. Nor can this be done through agitation and propaganda alone, important as this is. It can only be done by so maneuvering as to place these people in a position where they are forced to expose themselves in action as opponents of workingclass unity, as the tools of the operators. This can only be achieved by a correct application of the united front from below.

### Skepticism in Ohio

Lack of confidence in, and resistance to the union line in Ohio is most completely expressed by the first of the three "theories" we are examining namely that "it is impossible for us to take over the leadership of the present struggle in Ohio."

In the first place the whole question of independent leadership is here put incorrectly. We have no intention of going to the strikers with the declaration: "The UMWA is betraying your strike, as is proved by such and such actions of the leadership. Let us lead your strike and all will be well." Yes, this is a wrong conception of how to obtain the independent leadership of the struggle. Our policy in Ohio is quite different.

### What Must Be Done

The National Miners Union must above all come before the strikers as the only sincere advocate of real working-class unity in the strike. Due to mistakes already made in this strike many of the strikers are suspicious of us. They are inclined to believe the lies of their leaders that the National Miners Union has only one purpose in the strike, to disrupt the ranks of the strikers and thereby contribute to the loss of the strike.

How are we to break down these suspicions? By plunging boldly into active work in support of the strike.

Up to the present our principal activity has been to issue an entirely insufficient number of leaflets. We must change this.

We must break down in every NMU local the present resistance of sections of our membership to any active participation in the strike whatsoever. On the contrary the NMU and its membership and sympathizers must become the most active, the most militant, the leading fighters in the strike.

Our comrades must take the initiative in the organization of mass picket lines over the heads of the UMWA officials.

Our comrades must lead such picket lines and the mass demonstrations against terror, for relief for the unemployed, etc. In all phases of strike activity our comrades must prove to the masses of strikers that the NMU by no means held aloof from the strike, that on the contrary the NMU and its members are the most faithful and the best fighters in the interest of winning the demands of the strikers.

Second, it is necessary to convince the mass of the strikes that the first prerequisite for a successful struggle is the formation of a **united fighting front of all those who are ready to conduct an honest struggle for the demands.** The National Miners Union must take the initiative in proposing the means whereby unity in the ranks of the strikers can be achieved.

Third, we must explain to the strikers in the most simple and understandable terms the only possible basis for unity. We must expose the record of the UMWA leadership in the past, we must expose every concrete action of betrayal of the UMWA in the present struggle and then we must explain to the strikers that we will never unite with the UMWA officialdom for to do so means to unite on the basis of **united strike-breaking.**

We must explain that we are opposed to unity on the basis of a wage cut. That we will fight to the last against unity on the basis of a scale of 22½ cents a ton such as Van Bittner signed for in Scotts Run. We must make plain to every striker that we propose unity on the basis of a **united fighting front of all strikers for the demands of the strike and against the operators and their tools, the UMWA leadership.**

Fourth, we must show that all elements who wish to conduct an honest militant struggle for the demands of the strike can only be welded into one united fighting front by the setting up of a broad rank and file leadership representative of all such elements. We must show how the policy of leadership by committee appointed by Lee Hall, Cinque and Co. gives no representation to the vast majority of the strikers who are unorganized, gives no representation to the hundreds of NMU members who are involved in the strike and gives little if any representation to the rank and file members of the UMWA itself who have nothing to say in these appointments from above.

We must explain that it is impossible for those who have no voice in the selection of such committees to give them support. We must explain the opportunities for complete betrayal of the strike, for manipulation and secret agreements behind the scenes provided by the existence of

such committees. We must demand and fight for a leadership elected and controlled by the mass of the strikers; that is, rank and file strike committee. It must be made clear to every striker that during the struggle itself this is the only organizational form a real united front can take.

Such must be the basic line of our agitation and propaganda, of our NMU organizers, speeches, of our leaflets, of resolutions introduced on this question or that in strikers mass meetings, in local unions of the UMWA where we have influence, etc. The whole strike area must be flooded with such agitational material, bringing our true position home to every striker.

### Concentration Necessary

At the same time we must, in view of our few leading forces, concentrate on at first only three or four sections where conditions are most favorable to speedily put the policy into action. We must send a leading comrade into each of these sections to mobilize all local forces for the work and to lead the work itself. We have made a beginning in this, concretizing the policy in each instance to fit the needs of the particularly section, and already we are meeting with some success.

Hand in hand with the struggle to wrest the leadership of the strike from the hands of the UMWA bureaucracy and to place it in the hands of broad elected strike committees under our general leadership, must go an intensified campaign of recruitment of new members for the NMU.

Already some three or four new NMU locals have been organized, not so much as the result of persistent work on the part of our comrades but because the men, many of them United Mine Workers of America members came to us and asked us for help in organizing locals in their mines. How much better results will be obtained when our union leadership and membership in Ohio is really mobilized for this task!

Finally, in the organization of united front relief activities we have one of our best weapons in the struggle against the UMWA fakers. A splendid beginning was made at the recent Workers International Relief conference in Yorkville where the number of UMWA locals represented outnumbered the NMU locals with delegates present.

Much can be done in the organization of the relief campaign in the strike area itself but it will fail of its fullest effect unless we show to the strikers in action that the WIR with the aid of the NMU is ready and able to mobilize workers from other sections for the support of the Ohio strikers.

This is a task not only for our comrades in Ohio but for the entire membership of our union and for the national organization of the WIR as well.

We conclude with this question from the Resolution of the Eighth Session of the RILU Central Council on the tasks of the revolutionary trade unions in America:

"One of the most important methods in organizing the working masses for the struggle and to undermine the influence of the TU bureaucrats and the social-fascists is the correct application of the united front tactic. The Revolutionary TU movement must take the initiative in carrying out the united front of the working masses from below, drawing them into the struggle, showing up the maneuvers of the reformists, particularly of the Mustelites."

This, then is the central task of the National Miners Union in Ohio today. With increasing emphasis it will become the central task of the NMU throughout the coal fields.

## Pamphlets Which Help in Shop Struggles

The Yellow Dog Contract, by Elliot E. Cohen, International Pamphlets No. 21 ..... 5c.

The Injunction Menace, by Charlotte Todes International Pamphlets, No. 22 ..... 5c.

Profits and Wages, by Anna Rochester, International Pamphlets, No. 16 ..... 10c.

Spying on the Workers, by Robert Dunn, International Pamphlets No. 17 ..... 10c.

**I**NTERNATIONAL Pamphlets, in publishing its latest two pamphlets on subjects of vital interest to workers engaged in shop struggles, is furnishing valuable ammunition in our day-to-day struggles against the employers and against the government which is their tool. This relationship between government and employer, in the struggles to keep the workers suppressed and unorganized is now better analyzed in these two new pamphlets, just off the press--**The Yellow Dog Contract**, and **The Injunction Menace**. An analysis is given in each of the use put by the boss and government of these two vicious weapons.

The history of the development of these weapons; and an analysis of the deceptive anti-injunction bill sponsored by the misleading Am-