

ELLIS SEARLES

JOHN L. LEWIS' \$25,000 BABY

By JAY LOVESTONE

The very bottom, the nadir, of fraud and terrorism to date employed by our reactionary labor leaders to dominate the trade unions is to be found in the sessions of the convention of the United Mine Workers of America now being held in Indianapolis.

The outstanding features of this convention coming at the most critical moment confronting the miners, are:

(1). A reckless padding of the convention with hundreds of delegates from blue-sky, non-existent locals. In the case of district 31, West Virginia, the Lewis machine has brought down one delegate from prac-

tically every two tax-paying members. No wonder that there have come from this delegation more than a score of resolutions proposing that Lewis' official annual salary be doubled, be raised to fifteen or twenty thousand dollars.

(2). Wholesale fraud in the recent election campaign in the union.

According to the official report made by Secretary-Treasurer Kennedy to the convention, there are now approximately 273,000 dues-paying members in the union. Lewis would have us believe that nearly 235,000 miners participated in the voting for international officers just closed. That so large a proportion of the

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total membership participated in the voting or that so big a total vote was cast is obviously impossible. It is just as obviously impossible and a fake that Lewis got as many votes as he claims. It is, of course, obviously impossible that Lewis has magnified Brophy's vote. Every miner knows that Lewis' generosity stops at John L. Lewis himself and goes no further. The fraud perpetrated by Lewis & Co. in re-electing themselves to office is plain and clear even to the blindest.

(3). An unrestrained use of force, violence and terrorist methods against the progressive. The repeated cowardly assaults against Powers Hapgood, one of the finest and outstanding leaders of the progressives at the convention, is typical of the Lewis machine thuggery.

(4). Widespread, wholesale disfranchisement of progressive delegates. Here the cases of Alexander Howat, Powers Hapgood and Pat Toohey stand out clearest as most flagrant types of such wanton recklessness by the reactionary machine against the most constructive elements in the union. In the cases of Howat and Hapgood the Lewis machine did not even amass enough guts to report their disfranchisement to the convention. That Lewis wouldn't take a chance even with his padded delegations in these instances is the best proof of the raw deal he is handing out.

(5). Flagrant misrepresentation, lying and bogey-raising in order to becloud the real, pressing issues before the union.

As usual, the threadbare bogey of Communism is being continuously dragged before the convention. Red scares galore are being manufactured by those labor lieutenants of American imperialism now infesting the U. M. W. of A. The sole purpose of this red-baiting is to misinform, mislead, cajole and terrorize the delegates so that they will not get wise to the black crimes committed by Lewis and Co., to the serious hardships to which this union-wrecking crew has forced the United Mine Workers of America.

But when Lewis raises the red-scare he lies, and he knows he lies.

Here are some facts which we challenge Lewis and Co. to disprove:

(1). In the late summer months of 1923 the Lewis machine published a series of articles supposed to be an exposure of "nefarious Communist activities."

(2). Ellis Searles, editor of the U. M. W. of A. Journal, bought these articles from a discredited representative of a notorious open-shop lobby agency in Washington, D. C.

(3). Ellis Searles contracted to pay for this open shop bunk \$25,000 in good, cold cash coming out of the treasury of the United Mine Workers of America, coming out of the pockets of the hard-pressed, underpaid miners.

(4). When Lewis heard of Searles' agreement to buy this bunk at the fancy price of \$25,000 he was as sore as a boiled pup. He knew that the whole "exposure" was a fraud from A to Z. Lewis, then, did not think that that stuff was worth so much cash.

(5). Lewis then rushed Van Bittner, one of his most trusted lackeys, to Washington with orders to have Searles call off the whole deal, with instructions not to invest such a big pile of money in such evident lies, in such outright nonsense.

(6). When Van Bittner arrived in Washington he found that Searles had already closed the deal and signed the contract with the discredited open shop lobbyist. Van Bittner had come too late to stop Searles from throwing into the sewer this sum of \$25,000 belonging to the members of the miners' union. Mr. Searles had already signed and sealed the agreement to deliver to the open shop agent the \$25,000 from the treasury of the United Mine Workers of America, for this ridiculous "red exposure."

(7). Van Bittner immediately reported this situation to his boss Mr. Lewis.

(8). Lewis was now faced with two accomplished facts. First, Searles had already bought and paid for this fake anti-Communist dope. Second; he himself knew and knew darned well that the whole "exposure" was worthless, unfounded and just plain rot. For instance, the open-shopper's "revelations" charged that I had then just come back from Soviet Russia and brought more than a million dollars of Soviet gold to the United States. The fact is that it was not until nearly two years after this \$25,000 "exposure" that I had been in Soviet Russia for the first time. Then, of course, it is unfortunately untrue that I never in my life saw or heard the slightest sign of this phantom Moscow million.

(9). Having been fooled into this very bad bargain through Searles' stupidity Lewis decided to make the best of it. Between repudiating open-shop lies against Communist and militant workers and making an unwarranted vicious attack against the Communists and progressives, Lewis, as was to be expected, choose to stand with the open shoppers. Lewis decided to use the open-shop thrash which he all the time knew fully well to be a plain hash of lies. The columns of the U. M. W. of A. Journal were seen reeking with this anti-labor filth bought from the open shoppers for \$25,000 of miners' money.

MASSES OF MINE WORKERS TO REPUDIATE LEWIS

INDIANAPOLIS, Jan. 30.—The miners' convention enters its second week here with fundamental problems as far from solution as ever. No program has been worked out for the organization of West Virginia, the key to the union's critical condition.

The Lewis gang with its fatal record of losing 200,000 members to the union in two years, has a firmer grip than ever on the machinery thanks to its stuffing of the convention with payroll delegates from dead or moribund locals. The progressives, with their practical program to save the union, have been savagely assaulted and beaten down by ruthless machine tactics.

Emperor Lewis has cut the heart out of the Miners' Union by banning the most militant elements from membership. In a black attack on the miners' best fighters, he has carried out the dictates of the National Civic Federation, the National Chamber of Commerce and their servants in the A. F. of L. bureaucracy.

But Emperor Lewis has stirred the rank and file into open warfare by depriving them of all voice in the union's financial affairs. From now on they are required to stand by while the administration plunders their pockets to build up Lewis' personal machine of a hundred organizers averaging \$5,000 a year. Even such a cautious progressive as John Hindmarsh declares the miners will not tolerate such unbridled autocracy and will demand a housecleaning.

(10) Lewis, proclaiming his sincerity in the matter, then palmed off on the miners in particular and on the workers in general this open shop propaganda, tho he knew darned well that it was a fake from beginning to end.

MORAL:

(1) We maintain that in all these accusations against and denunciations of the Communists at this convention, Lewis and his black clique lie and they know they lie—just as they lied in September 1924 and knew they lied when they criminally squandered the mine workers' \$250,000 on the lemon of an "exposure" of Communists by an open shop agency.

(2) In 1923 the vicious open-shop attacks by Lewis and his ilk against some of our most loyal and militant workers, the Communists, cost the miners \$25,000. Today, in 1927, such attacks by Lewis and his ilk against the Communists and progressives are just as much inspired and supplied by open shop agencies as in 1923. But today such attacks are much more costly from every point of view to the union.

(3) Will some honest miner page Lewis in his swell hotel—this means only to take a chance on being sluggish by the machine's thugs—and ask Mr. Lewis why he doesn't spend the union's money he is wasting on attacking militant workers to organize the unorganized. At the convention Mr. Lewis is talking so much about his interest in organizing West Virginia. Here is a chance for Mr. Lewis to show that he means what he says this time for a change.

But to expect anything constructive for the labor movement from Lewis and his henchmen is the worst of stupidity.

We challenge Mr. Lewis to deny the above facts.

Lewis dares not answer. He cannot answer.

We are hopeful. We are sure that the miners will yet find a way to clean Lewis and Co. out of their splendid fighting organization which has the best and most militant traditions in the American trade union movement.

The fight in the mine workers has now crystallized itself into a struggle for democracy in the union against the dangerous centralization imposed by Emperor Lewis. The second struggle will be for more autonomy in the districts. The Miners' Union was great when it drew its strength from a score of powerful dynamic district organizations. Now with Lewis dominating every district with his own high-paid international representatives, undermining union strength, expelling left wingers and deliberately taking over entire districts which disagree with him, the Miners' Union is being sapped at its roots.

Progressives are rallying for a desperate fight to save the union from extinction in the central competitive field. They see that Lewis has succeeded in breaking the union in West Virginia and the south. Now they are witnessing his steady progress in weakening the union dangerously in Pennsylvania, with Ohio the next stronghold to fall. During this week they will fight stubbornly and with all the resistance a powerful minority can exert to save the union.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 28.—China views with suspicion the action of the powers, particularly Great Britain, in sending large detachments of troops to China to protect foreign lives and property. Dr. Alfred Sze, the Peking minister, declared today.