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Textile Strike Debacle

By JAMES P. CANNON

The great general strike of the textile workers, which raised the whole insurgent movement of labor to a new height and stirred the workers everywhere with its mighty sweep and militancy, has come to an inglorious end—defeated and shamefully betrayed by the leadership of the U.T.W. and the upper crust of the A. F. of L.

In the history of the American labor movement it would be difficult to find a more cruel example of the evil role of the "labor lieutenants of the capitalist class" and the heavy price the workers must pay for allowing them to hold the leadership of the unions. Incompetence, cowardice, and, at the crucial moment, outright treachery—these are the contributions which McMahon and Gorman, pushed behind by Green and Co., made to the strike from the vantage point of the leading staff.

THE STRIKE SETTLEMENT

To call the ending of the strike a settlement is to rob the word of any meaning. The whole report of the Winant board, stripped of its essence, was nothing more than a promise to look into the grievances of the workers. And not even that was accepted by the bosses. Without that, without even an agreement to reinstate the strikers, the leaders called off the strike at the peak of its strength and abandoned the workers to the savage reprisals of the mill owners. Tens of thousands of workers, unionized for the first time and staking everything on the struggle, have been left in the lurch by their leaders and locked out of the mills by the bosses. A terrible introduction to the trade union movement for them; a terrible warning for all of what the present leading staff of the labor movement will be capable of in the greater tests to come if they are not thrown overboard in time.

The executive council of the A. F. of L. cold bloodedly isolated the textile workers, refused to move a finger to provide funds to feed them—millions could have been raised in the trade unions at the scratch of a pen by Green—and devoted themselves exclusively to machinations to get the strike ended at any cost. These scoundrels fear the mass struggles of the workers no less than the bosses fear them. A militant labor movement, drawing great masses into action, is incompatible with their role. They aim to crush this movement and restore "peace" in the relations between labor and capital, even if it is the peace of the breadline and the graveyard for the workers.

RANK AND FILE L-SARMED

What is most remarkable and outstanding in this tragic situation is the proof on every side that the rank and file of the textile workers were without any means of resistance to the perfidy of the leadership; that the millions of other trade unionists, who were inspired by the magnificent struggle and wished to aid, were powerless to make a move. Black reaction and cynical treachery are enthroned in the labor union machine. The mass discontent at the bottom, generating enough energy in these years of crisis to blow the bureaucratic machine to bits, and the whole system of exploitation along with it, remains without organization, without program, without leadership. The Greens and Gormans rule the movement and ruin the most heroic struggles because there are none to challenge them.

The fearful textile strike debacle follows the tragic experiences of the auto workers, the steel workers, the San Francisco general strike, and other movements of insurgent labor in 1934 which have been turned into bitter defeat. They all cry out the same warning: The insurgent movement must be organized; it must work out its program and find its authentic leadership. The heart of this program must be an unrelenting struggle against the labor agents of the masters who sit on top of the trade union movement. The insurgent leadership must be dedicated to this struggle as a part of the struggle against the bosses and the National Rind Around.

Forces for a mighty left wing and progressive movement in the trade unions are not lacking. The crisis years have created the conditions for its emergence on a wide scale. Every new treachery of the bureaucracy prepares new recruits. What is lacking is a conscious, unifying and guiding nucleus which alone can organize the movement and provide it with a program. What is lacking is a revolutionary party.

The Stalinists perform all the functions of a party in reverse order. Where organization of the vanguard is needed, they disorganize. Where clarity is required they sow confusion. Even the weapon of denunciation—the sword of Lenin against traitors—is blunted in their hands. They crack their voices in slandering honest opponents; when they try to scratch against real betrayers their stock of epithets is exhausted and they are too hoarse to be heard. As for the socialist "Militants," they belie their name by their silence in the face of the black betrayal of the textile workers. They have not yet learned to criticize the traitors. Will such people lead a fight against them?

A NEW VANGUARD IMMEDIATELY

No! The workers need a new revolutionary party. Even a vanguard organization of a few thousand, if it understands the trade union question and penetrates deeply into the mass movement, can become the crystallizing agent for a colossal progressive movement in a short time. The times are favorable for the launching of such a party. Its program has been worked out in the years of principled struggle against revisionism and reaction. Sufficient forces are at hand to make a beginning. As the two most important independent groups, the American Workers Party and the Communist League bear a heavy responsibility. It is their duty to get together and set the new movement into motion. The tragedy of the textile workers is another warning against delay.

Youth Unite Against Fascists

Sponsored by the Young Peoples Socialist League, a united front conference was held in New York City last Thursday to consider a counter-demonstration to the Yankee Stadium pageant planned as a greeting to 300 Italian Fascist students. The invited organizations included the Young Communist League, the National Student League, Student League for Industrial Democracy, the Communist Youth Opposition, and the Spartacus Youth League.

Prior to the conference the Young Communist League had sent a letter to the Y.P.S.L. (published in the *Daily Worker* of Sept. 27, 1934, under the head "Y.C.L. and Y.P.S.L. Take Step for Joint Action") clearly stating that the invitation of the Lovestonites and the Spartacus Youth League places "insuperable obstacles in the way of achieving unity". Their scurrilous attacks on the "Trotskyites" are once again repeated. In fact it is only the latest step in a systematic campaign of the Y.C.L. against the Spartacus Youth. The *Young Worker* (Sept. 25, 1934) devotes a great deal of space to explaining why the Y.C.L. cannot make a united front with the "Trotskyites".

While the Y.C.L. absented itself from the conference, the National Student League sent observers. The latter, at the opening of the meeting, explained why they could not participate in the united front: the N.S.L. and the S.L.I.D. had already made arrangements for a demonstration on October 12th (which the S.L.I.D. delegate denied) and the Y.P.S.L. had barred the participation of the Y.C.L. by inviting objectionable groups—the Lovestonites and the S.Y.L.

The stammerings of the N. S. L. delegate to questions on the statement showed that the National Student League which denies its Stalinist character refused to participate in the united front because of the presence of the Lovestonites and Spartacus Youth League.

Ben Fisher of the Y.P.S.L. replied to the N.S.L. by stating that when his organization made the offer of united front they had good reason to believe that it would be accepted by the Y.C.L. In Belgium, the Yipsels, the Y.C.L. and the Trotskyist youth formed a united front. In Spain the Communist party recently joined the united front which includes the Socialists and the Trotskyites.

The Spartacus Youth League submitted a statement on the Y.C.L. refusal to join the united front. Despite requests that the N.S.L. remain as observers they stated that they had no proposals to make and saw no reason for staying.

The conference then proceeded to discuss the draft of the united front

(Continued on Page 4)

Relief System Endangered In New York

Once again the unemployed relief structure of the city of New York broke down, throwing thousands of desperate workers to the mercies of coniving politicians and banks demanding their pound of flesh. But poorly-fed, badly-clothed, destitute human beings are not to be trifled with. The capitalists and their flunkies know that jobs or relief must be forthcoming or the jobless will take matters in their own hands—individually or collectively.

After a bitter fight the city administration adopted a three-point program to raise fifty million dollars. It calls for a tax of 1/10 of one percent of gross receipts of business in excess of \$15,000; a city tax amounting to 15% of the Federal income tax, additional to all present income tax; and a municipal relief membership association, which is a disguised public lottery.

The Chamber of Commerce and other business organizations are up in arms. They will not stand for it. They propose a 2c levy on subway and other fares. They want to pass the burden of maintaining the jobless on to the workers. In the meantime the unemployed are organizing for the fight.

A review of the unemployment relief situation in New York City will give one a picture of the efforts of the crisis upon the working class and the problems of a new permanent army of millions of unemployed. More than one million workers are on the relief list, one family out of every seven in the city. Mr. Hodson, head of the Welfare Department, estimates the number will increase to two million by the end of the year. Over 500,000 families are obtaining relief in one form or another. The demand for relief increases at the rate of 1,500 daily. New applicants for relief are skilled workers and professional men. Many workers from these categories have been unemployed for years and having used up their savings and are now forced to apply for relief.

In September, about 125,000 heads of families were on work relief, and the Bureau of Homeless and Transient were lodging over 4,000 a night, which is only a small part of the workers who need shelter. Considering the additional number of unemployed who are not on the relief list in any form and you have a vast army of unemployed whose morale is being lowered unless they find their way out through active struggle.

Jobless Will Demonstrate November 24th

Five years of crisis and unemployment have wrecked the homes and lives of millions of unemployed workers and the coming sixth winter promises to be the most miserable of all. Millions are on the brink of starvation, forced to subsist on miserable relief pittance. Unless the unemployed organize and battle with greater determination and militancy than ever before the boss class and their government will slash the present dole into ribbons, and with it will go wage cuts for the employed.

Several unemployed organizations of the United States held a two day conference in Chicago and elected a Committee of Action which is calling upon all unemployed organizations of the country for a united demonstration on November 24. Organizations participating in this conference included the National Unemployed Leagues, Illinois Workers' Alliance, Federation of Unemployed and Emergency Workers of America, Ft. Wayne Unemployed Leagues, Minneapolis Central Council of Workers and organizations from Missouri, Wisconsin, Florida, etc.

The Committee of Action calls for a demonstration throughout the nation before Saturday, November 24. At the same time a committee representing the nation's unemployed will present their demands at Washington.

The demands follow: 1. Pending passage of Unemployment Relief, direct cash relief at the rate of \$10 a week for single persons, \$15 a week for a family of two, and \$4 a week for each additional person be paid.

2. Public works to provide work for the unemployed upon the basis of \$30 per week for 30 hours, with the payment of skilled workers at union rates.

3. That the Lundeen Unemployment Insurance Bill be enacted.

4. That the right of all workers on public works to organize and engage in collective bargaining be granted.

5. That representatives of organized unemployed before relief administrators be recognized.

6. That Federal adequate disability compensation on all public projects also to and from jobs be provided.

7. That all war funds be turned over for unemployment relief. The unemployed workers, together with the organized employed workers must make this a powerful demonstration.

FOR THE NEW PARTY

(Appeal of the National Committee, Communist League of America)

A year ago, after the full force of the German debacle had been clearly registered, and the responsibility of the Second and Third Internationals for the triumph of Fascism no less clearly established, the Communist League proclaimed the need for a new revolutionary party and a new International.

All that has transpired since that time has only served to confirm the correctness of that position, and we repeat it today with firmer conviction. More, we have reason to hope that the idea of a year ago can become a reality in the near future. We are sure in any case that a beginning can be made to give organizational form to the idea of the new party in America, the first section of the Fourth International in an important capitalist country.

Our forces have grown. The *Militant* has doubled its circulation. We have added a monthly theoretical magazine, the *New Internationalist*, to our arsenal. The Spartacus Youth has acquired a national organization. We have taken part in strikes and mass activities and proved our mettle in them. Our circle of sympathizers and our influence in other movements have expanded. From every standpoint we are in a stronger position and surer of our future than we were a year ago.

In addition, while drawing the line dividing us from reformism and centrism more sharply, we have consistently sought to find a basis of cooperation and a common standpoint with other independent groups. In the case of the Gitlow group we met with failure due to the inability of this group to take a firm principled position. Discussions and negotiations and experiments in practical cooperation with the American Workers Party, on the other hand, were more fruitful. We hope that the negotiations now pending will result in an early fusion of the two organizations. This will make the formal organization of the new party possible.

It is our desire to contribute our full share to this historic enterprise. Not only ideas but material forces as well. The stronger the Communist League, the stronger the new party at its inception. We must devote the coming weeks to an intensive campaign of organization and agitation to prepare the way for the auspicious launching of the new party. By building the League we are building the foundation of the new party.

This present campaign has two parts:

First: Build up the organization. Systematically canvass all sympathizers and ask them to join the League now. Appeal for new members at every meeting. Organize the membership drive in every branch under the slogan: **Recruit Every Sympathizer into the League!**

Second: Raise a new party fund. Provide the organization with the means to increase its activities, strengthen its press and send organizers into the field. Every member should make a special sacrifice. Affairs should be organized to raise funds. Sympathizers should be asked to contribute. "New Party Certificates" in the amounts of one dollar and five dollars are being printed. Buy them and sell them. Let us redouble our activities, strengthen and tighten up our organization in preparation for a leap forward.

We are going to call the roll in this campaign which, we hope, will be the prelude for the definite transformation of our organization from a propaganda circle into a political movement. Sign your name to the roll call with a contribution and send it to:

THE MILITANT,
144 Second Avenue,
New York City.

Blackshirts Challenge to N.Y. Labor

Three hundred and fifty Italian university students landed in this country last week. They are Fascist students, sent by a Fascist government to show us the "marvelous" results of Fascist training. Let us consider a few facts about them.

The Italian universities are not scientific institutions; they are Fascist propaganda institutions. The professors must all take an oath of loyalty to Mussolini before they may teach; all their teachings are censored; to criticize the government means to be fired and jailed. The middle class youth is taught to believe in the brutal reactionary "theories" of Mussolini, and to prepare to take its part in the oppression and persecution of workers, which alone enables Italian capitalism to continue its exploitation of the Italian masses.

Fascist Student Groups

The students must belong to the Fascist Student Groups, where they are under the orders of the Fascist party. On this trip to the U. S., they are under the orders of Giovanni Poli, a Fascist brigand and tyrant. Most of the students, entirely without independence, are satisfied to repeat like parrots the vicious nonsense taught them by their corrupted professors. Should any student dare raise a question, he is expelled from the university, beaten and tortured, perhaps jailed.

These students are qualified to do three things. In the first place, they can tyrannize over oppressed workers. Secondly, they are "patriots", that is to say, they are trained to fight to defend Italian capitalism against foreign capitalists and Italian workers. Their organization publishes a newspaper; its name is "Book and Rifle". The third thing these students can do very well is to live well off the products of other people's labor. In return for their "patriotic" services, they get fat jobs and free trips to the U. S.—on money sweated out of the wretched masses of Italian workers and peasants.

Fontamara's Challenge

Just as they arrived there is being published a novel called *Fontamara*, written by an Italian, Ignazio Silone, and forbidden in Italy. While the Italian students are here trying to tell us how wonderful life is under Fascism in Italy, we can read Silone's true picture of the misery of the Italian peasantry today. These Fascist students are going to visit many universities where American students friendly to the labor movement will be in contact with them. They should be confronted with a copy of *Fontamara* wherever they go. Let these students know we are aware from *Fontamara* and other sources of the truth about the foul and brutal regime in their country.

It is interesting to note that the Italian Fascist students were received at New York's city hall by Mayor F. H. La Guardia. This "liberal" gentleman, who the other day had no time to attend a dinner of the Italian local of the garment workers, delighted to honor the spawn of the labor-hating, murderous Italian Fascists!

On Columbus Day this band of Fascists will attend a celebration at Yankee Stadium. A good time to let them know what the workers think of them! What was characteristic of Columbus—an enquiring mind and indomitable courage—is foreign to Fascism; their minds are against inquiry on principle; for courage they substitute bestiality.

Down With Mussolini!

Our comrade, Leon Trotsky, hounded and persecuted by every government in Europe, cannot enter this country. Are we to be silent while these 350 parasitic Fascists tour around the country, spreading their poisonous propaganda against the workers' interests?

It would be well if many labor organizations were to unite in a counter-demonstration. Liberals, Socialists, Communists, trade unionists are being tortured in Italy today by the thousands just as they are in Germany. The Communist League, for one, is ready to participate in a united anti-Fascist demonstration on Columbus Day.

It is not enough to publish articles in radical papers. Let us go into the streets on Columbus Day and demonstrate against Fascist oppression and militarism and against those who are "honoring" these Fascists here!

JOIN THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE

Green & Co. in Control as A. F. L. Convention Opens in San Francisco

Left Wing Lacks Clear Program and Capable Leadership

On October the first the Fifty-Fourth annual convention of the American Federation of Labor will be held in San Francisco. This convention comes upon the heels of the Frisco general strike. The eyes of the nation will be focused on the convention and its outcome. The class conscious workers well remember that it was William Green's role in the Frisco strike that helped the bosses break the strike. It was Green who issued the statement of opposition to sympathy strikes. And in spite of their strike-breaking role in the Frisco strike Green and Company come to this city as leaders of the American labor movement.

This clearly reveals to the class conscious workers that one of the main tasks confronting us today, and the task which determines our road to the masses is the extension of left wing influence in the trade unions.

Meets After NRA Period

This convention meets after a storm period under the NRA. All the promises offered labor under the NRA have turned into rainbows. In its major aspects, Nationalism has not fulfilled its objectives and has broken down. While the labor skates meet in Frisco, President Roosevelt and his administration are reorganizing the NRA from top to bottom to save what they can to enable the NRA to continue creating a more favorable basis for cartels and monopolies, eliminating the small producers, and tightening the grip upon labor. In this sense the NRA work to date has been a success. But as an instrument to bring back prosperity, to bring order out of capitalist chaos, to revive the basic industries, and to start a new era of capitalism, the NRA has failed.

What will the labor leaders in

A.F.L. Leaders Plot Against Food Strike

BULLETIN

The cafeteria strike conducted by local 302 of the A. F. of L. has spread to practically every union house in Manhattan and the Bronx.

The Restaurant Owners Association is doing its utmost to break the strike. Information which leaked out of the offices of the Association's lawyer, Mr. Shapiro, confirms the fears of members of Local 302, namely: that J. Kearney and W. Lehman, both International Vice Presidents, reached an agreement with the Association to lock out all the workers belonging to Local 302 and sign new contracts with a wage of \$25 per week for countermen and \$14 for girls. \$3 will be deducted from this princely sum for meals.

To smash the strike and get local 302 out of the way, Kearney and the Association decided to close the doors of every shop where a strike is in progress and reopen under new names. Many cafeterias have already closed in the Bronx and many more will close tonight.

At the Navarre cafeteria, where a strike was in progress, the Industrial Union pulled out the unskilled help belonging to their union and the bosses were forced to close the establishment.

The fight now taking place is against a new wage cut demanded by the bosses. The union, on the other hand, is demanding the restoration of a five dollar wage cut they took a year ago.

Whether or not local 302 wins the strike depends on the militancy of the strikers who are still in high spirits. And also on whether Local 302 can smash the sell-out agreement between J. Kearney and the Association.

THE NEED FOR THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Lecture by

MAX SHACHTMAN
Editor of *New Internationalist*
Sunday, October 21, 8 P.M.
at Bronx Free Fellowship
1591 Boston Road, Bronx
(Corner Suburban Place)

convention say about this? What will they say about the fulfillment of Section 7a in the auto settlement, the steel settlement, and now the textile strike settlement?—to say nothing of the strike movements that have swept the nation in two gigantic waves, with indications that a new and higher wave is on the horizon.

Fakers Lie About Facts

These conservative labor leaders cannot tell the truth about this. Their very existence as "labor leaders" depends upon their skill in lying about these facts, their ability to confuse the issues and make the NRA scheme of suppression look like an instrument for the workers' salvation. They will speak about its shortcomings and criticize the NRA—not for the protection of the workers—but in order to obtain more posts in the NRA and on the Labor Boards.

One thing is sure. The reactionary leaders will confront more opposition in the present convention than they have had to contend with for a long time. The opposition is not yet an organized, conscious revolutionary force. It is a new progressive opposition to the reactionary leaders and their policy.

The New Opposition

This opposition came into being under the impact of the new developments in the American labor movement: the changing class relations, the prolonged crisis and unemployment, the Europeanization of the American workers, the increase in the number of semi-skilled workers brought into unions for the first time, the precarious position of the skilled workers as the basis for the reactionary control of the A. F. of L., and the new developments under the NRA.

The most negative element in the opposition forces are the Stalinists and their false policy. These methods have had disastrous effect upon communist activity in reactionary trade unions. If the Stalinist policy in the trade union movement, had been swept aside by the American Communist movement the present opposition would be a full grown power instead of a movement in its infancy. It is a force which is feeling its way along and will have to learn through its own mistakes and will have to retrace many steps already covered, thanks to Stalinism.

Opposition Is Heterogeneous

A firm crystallization of this new progressive opposition has not been established upon a national scale. The Stalinists are attempting to make up for lost time, but are still mainly on the outside looking in. The Socialists, in the main, and especially the right wing, have played a reactionary role. The *New Leader* in a recent issue even defends William Green against the position of the Left socialists.

This opposition to the reactionary leaders has developed in struggle. It has placed its main emphasis on strike struggles as a means to obtain its objectives under the NRA, and has contended that the unions will obtain gains to the extent that they are able to force recognition. In carrying out this policy these new opposition and progressive forces run counter to the class collaboration policies of the leadership and sooner or later a clear-cut struggle between a policy of class struggle and class collaboration will develop in the different unions. In the auto workers' and in the steel workers' struggles these tendencies could be seen.

Incipient Revolts

The opposition to the leaders developed, but was not strong enough to gain its ends. In the auto workers' union the opposition forces did not crystallize until after Green's sell-out, and then assumed the dangerous form of a split, in which company union influence appeared. In the steel workers' struggle the rank and file committee took the power out of the hands of Tighe and Company, but was outmaneuvered.

In the textile strike the opposition to McMahon brought on the strike. They had to fight the leaders every inch of the way, but the horse-trading of Rieve, the socialist, weakened the strike struggle before it started and enabled the reactionary leaders to control the strike and betray it at the oppor-

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