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Milliners Stoppage Settled

Trimmers Suffer Cut As Contract Is Made Behind Closed Doors

As we go to press some of the millinery workers in New York are returning to their shops, while others await orders from the union and the settlement committee.

About 15,000 ladies headwear workers filed out yesterday morning from the uptown, midtown and downtown shops in a stoppage called by the union here. Two halls were filled to capacity.

The millinery workers had a preliminary shake-up a few months ago when the manufacturers threatened the union with a general lock-out. Since then a number of sizeable concerns left New York, thereby swelling the ranks of the unemployed. Because of the general scarcity of work and the unprecedented number of unemployed there was a deep-going interest in the negotiations and in the agreement.

Trimmers Lose Out

Agreements were signed with two associations and many independent shops. The settlements involved the following branches: operators, blockers, cutters and trimmers. The conditions of the first three branches remained the same as in the old agreement while the trimmers who constitute a majority in the trade lost one fourth of an hour in overtime pay.

The administration of the Millinery Union greeted the membership to an original method of procedure. There wasn't a single provision made for discussion of the agreement before ratification, either at the chairman and chairladies meeting of two weeks ago, or at the two general membership meetings on February 4. A new method of bureaucratic control over a union!

There were many dissenting voices among the trimmers who suffered by the compromise with the manufacturers. Even during the life of the NRA, the trimmers received time-and-a-half for overtime. Now with the union agreement they are entitled to only 25 cents extra per hour for overtime. But they were submerged by a well-organized and well-oiled bureaucratic machine.

Another NRA

The orations of the officers of the union, including President Zaritsky, were petty, superficial and primarily shop talk. They lacked inspiration and fighting spirit. Zaritsky's announcement about his new creation of a "union NRA" fell flat. Nobody was interested, and why should they be? One lesson of the millinery workers have long ago learned: whatever they get will be only through their own organized effort and not because of any outside force or benevolent individuals. The president called his latest creation a "Gentlemen's Board" consisting of two "liberal" and "honest" men, who previously served on a Labor Relations Board, and one professor, who is all good intentions.

In spite of all these shortcomings, the stoppage had a number of advantages. First and foremost—the display of organized strength of the millinery workers. This union doesn't make a practice of calling regular membership meetings, mass meetings or any other kind of collective demonstration. The revision of the conditions in the shops brought to the surface many evils existing therein, and emphasized the need of more attention and stricter control. It gave the workers a new start to begin a drive for the improvement of working conditions. It undoubtedly created a spirit of closer cooperation between the different branches that work side by side in the shops.

They Will Organize

These scattered voices who were unable to make their opposition heard or felt in this stoppage will eventually combine in an organized force to fight against the undemocratic methods of the leadership of the Millinery Union. They will find a way to voice their opinions during the life of the agreement, when it is under consideration and even during a stoppage of a strike.

It is interesting to note that the nominal opposition that has existed for the last few years in the millinery trade under the name "Rank and File Committee" (a Stalinist stooge organization) which in the "third period" called for strikes over the heads of the officialdom, could not be heard even in whispers during this stoppage.

Furriers Strike Is Scotched

Gold Forces Wretched Agreement on Union No Closed Shop

The new agreement signed between the Furriers union and the employers in New York clearly revealed that the only concern of the Stalinists in the leadership of the union is "respectability," to curry favor with the A. F. of L. bureaucrats and the bosses even at the price of sacrificing the last pretense of struggle.

Surrenders Closed Shop

The union has surrendered its demand for a closed shop, entitling the bosses to fire workers after the six months of equal division of work. In addition the demand for a labor bureau was abandoned, which empowers the boss to hire whomever he chooses. A major concession was made when the clause in the last agreement, providing for an unemployment insurance fund, paid for by the bosses and administered by the union, was completely omitted in the new agreement.

The agreement provides for a ten percent wage increase, equal division of work for six months of the year, no firing of shop chairmen before March 1, 1937, only two bosses to be permitted to work in the shop, agreement to be binding in case of removal of firm from the city, equal wages for women.

Compared with conditions prevailing in other sections of the needle industry, this agreement is the worst. Furthermore, this agreement was signed at the very time the L.L.G.W.U. is fighting for a renewal of its own contract. A very encouraging token, indeed, for the dress bosses in their present conflict with their own workers. The bosses could desire no better negotiator "for" the workers than Ben Gold.

The furriers have written many heroic pages in the struggle for union conditions, enjoying the best conditions in the needle industry until internal strife and division in the ranks destroyed a considerable part of their past gains. But with the union reunited, it was the hope of the furriers that the time had come to wage a determined fight for the closed shop and for conditions that would at least equal the standards of the other needle trades unions. But the policy of struggle is today alien to the Stalinists who now head the union.

The Pot of Gold

In presenting the agreement to the membership meeting held at Mecca Temple on Tuesday, Feb. 4, Ben Gold brought all his demagogic tricks into play to make the fur-

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700 in N. Y. Mass Meet Protest Stalin's Terror

Vote for Resolution Calling for Committee To Probe Charges Made by Ciliga and Tarov

NEW YORK, Feb. 2.—A packed hall of over 700 people in Irving Plaza roared an enthusiastic "Aye" to a resolution protesting Stalin's anti-Bolshevik repressions and calling for a committee to investigate the Daily Worker frame-up against the NEW MILITANT and Leon Trotsky.

With the same overwhelming approval the audience endorsed the sending of a cablegram of solidarity and confidence in its name to comrade Leon Trotsky in view of the slanderous charges made against him in the Stalinist scandal sheet.

The speakers at this meeting, comrades Cannon and Muste, called to protest Stalin's terror in the Soviet Union, lashed out against the murderous treatment accorded to Bolsheviki-Leninists and the attempt to cover it up in the U. S. by a miserable frame-up.

A. J. Muste, in a stirring talk, answered objections made by many uninformed workers who concede the truth of our exposures of the Stalin clique but who believe the publication of such facts has a deleterious effect on the Soviet Union itself. He pointed to the method employed by reactionary trade union bureaucrats who accuse progressives of injuring the trade unions by making known the crimes and misdeeds of the leading cliques. "Stop the persecutions," Muste urged, "and you will thereby deprive the capitalist press of ammunition against the Workers' Republic."

He was followed by comrade James P. Cannon who explained the fundamentals of the Soviet state as the greatest labor organization in the world, flayed the destruction of the Communist party, the Soviets and the trade unions, and the degeneration introduced into it by the Stalinist bureaucracy. Comparing the revolutionary measures of self-protection utilized under Lenin with the reactionary terror of Stalin under which the

best revolutionists are hounded, jailed, tortured and exiled, he exclaimed "Stalin is destroying the Russian revolution for there can be no revolution without revolutionists." But police terror can never vanquish the great ideas of Leninism, he concluded, "they live on in the prisons, the solitary confinement cells and Siberian exile!" Prolonged cheering and applause greeted the conclusion of the speech and the meeting ended with the singing of the Internationale.

The following is the resolution adopted:

"We, over 700 New York workers in mass meeting assembled, vigorously protest against the frightful hounding of revolutionists by the Stalin bureaucracy in the Soviet Union;

"We declare that the terror campaign against the true defenders of the Soviet Union seriously undermines the workers' state and aids the forces of counter-revolution;

"We call for the immediate cessation of these persecutions and the release of all revolutionists now in Stalin's Siberia;

"We protest the dastardly attempt of the Daily Worker to cover up this repression by linking the great co-worker of Lenin, Leon Trotsky, with the reactionary Hearst;

"We add our voices to the request that Roger Baldwin undertake the formation of a committee for an investigation of the charges of the Daily Worker against Leon Trotsky and the NEW MILITANT;

"We, furthermore, call upon all genuine supporters of the Soviet Union, workers and intellectuals, to support the demand for an international investigation by an accepted pro-Soviet committee of the charges of Tarov and Ciliga concerning Stalin's anti-Bolshevik repressions."

NEXT WEEK!

Two highly important articles, one by Leon Trotsky and another by A. Tarov, dealing with the Bolsheviki-Leninists in the Soviet Union, will appear in the next issue of the NEW MILITANT.

The article by comrade Trotsky is one of the most heartening and inspiring that has come from his pen on the Soviet Union in recent times. In it he takes the figures printed in the Russian Stalinist press on the recent party "cleansing" in the Soviet Union and submits them to a searching analysis. His conclusions, after examining every possible charge of exaggeration or partiality, prove that the Bolsheviki-Leninists in

the Soviet Union have become a mass force and at the same time the biggest and most tested section of the Fourth International. The new article by Tarov gives further information on the conditions of the Bolsheviki-Leninists in exile and prison in the Soviet Union, the names of the most outstanding personalities and a vivid narration of Tarov's escape over the border.

Watch for the next issue! Order extra copies and bundles in advance! Make sure that this issue of the paper finds its way into the hands of all our friends and sympathizers!

Pekin Strike Called Off; Paralyzes City in Fight To Remove Police Chief

Motor Products Strike Enters its Third Month

Detroit Auto Workers Battle Bravely Against Motor Dynasty, Police Terror, Dillon Sabotage

DETROIT, Jan. 30.—The strike in Detroit at the Motor Products plant is entering into its third month. This desperate battle, beginning as a controversy over wages, has developed into an epic struggle to conquer the right to unionism in the automobile industry.

The class-conscious automobile manufacturers saw the threatening danger facing all of them if the strike proved successful, and within a moment's hesitation or delay,

the "big three" declared a truce and banded together with the independents to destroy the common foe. Ford ordered new dies made for instrument panels to relieve the Motor Products management of any embarrassment because of the strike. Hudson began using mouldings from scab shops; Packards used rolling machines moved over from the Motor Products plant, etc.

Motor Barons Unyielding

The automobile barons, determined that their industry shall not be tainted with any part of unionism, resorted to the most violent methods to crush the strike and stamp out with iron any hopes the automobile workers may harbor about organizing. Five days after the strike was called, the Motor Products Co. joined the National Metal Trade Association. The Motor Products firm, it is reliably reported, has been heavily subsidized by Chrysler and Ford since the inception of the strike, with the latter directing the strategy of the manufacturers' movements. The "line" is the familiar one he employed in the controversy with General Johnson during the golden days of the Blue Eagle:—Don't talk, don't answer questions, don't negotiate with anybody—Just hold on tight and keep things in your own hands. The two federal conciliators sent in by the Department of Labor were given the runaround until they threw up their hands in despair and left for Washington; absolutely no negotiations have been contemplated since the N.M.T.A. has taken over the reins. The manufacturers are simply "ignoring" the strike.

An Augury of Future Battles

Concomitant, they have unleashed the most violent terror seen in Detroit since the Ford massacre 5 years ago. An imposing army of mounted police, squad cars and motor cycle details patrol the plant gates daily, harass and attack the strikers in an attempt to break their spirit and crush their morale. The mounted police enter inside the plant gates; the squad cars carry the scabs to work and police are stationed in the plant proper to browbeat and terrorize the scabs working inside! Mayor Couzens insists the reign of terror is necessary for the preservation of peace.

This pioneering skirmish in the great struggle to establish auto unionism, furnishes a foretaste of what ferocious labor struggles await (Continued on Page 2)

Workers Sit Tight

The mass protest caught both the company and the union leaders unaware. When shift changing time came at 6 p. m. and the workers refused to leave the factory, word was passed around of the seriousness of the situation. Night workers coming to the plant joined in the movement and likewise sat down at the firebuilding machines. Meanwhile, the milling rooms, and other departments whose work leads up to the actual building of the tires were forced to shut-down.

The effect of the action is comparable to the effect of the closing of the Toledo Chevrolet transmission (Continued on Page 2)

Labor Skate Disbands Militant San Diego City Labor Council

SAN DIEGO, Calif., Feb. 2, 1936.—The San Diego Labor movement during the past few weeks has been suffering from a severe attack of growing pains. Joseph Casey, Pacific Coast A. F. of L. Organizer, top bureaucrat, is the principle pain. Arriving in town three weeks ago he proceeded, as an opener, to dissolve on a technicality the entire Labor Council during its weekly session on Jan. 15.

Since that time there has been complete chaos throughout the local labor movement due to the bureaucratic gauntlet used by William Green's latest "personal representative, Casey, in his attempt to break up the Federated Trades Council.

Through a gradual process the more progressive elements have been shifting into the Federated Trades Council until last Fall they were able to muster an overwhelming majority in the election, sweeping out the reactionary control. At the State Convention of the A. F. of L. held here last Fall the delegates from San Diego unions almost

to a man stood solidly with the bloc which raised a cry for industrial unionism that was heard throughout the A. F. of L. Harry Steinmetz, of the Teachers Union was installed as the progressive President of the local Federated Council. Since that time there has been a constant organizational drive which had many of the elements of an authentic left wing movement.

And then came Casey! This attack is the continuation of a vicious campaign of reactionaries started a short time ago by Green through his agent, Meyer Lewis, in his attempted "purge" of the militant Minneapolis Unions. The next point of attack is the West Coast where the voice of the rank and file is beginning to be heard. The San Diego Federated Trades Council and the West Coast local of the Seamen's Union are being attacked simultaneously.

An Open Shop Town

San Diego is a notoriously open shop town, the boast of the Chamber of Commerce to Eastern industrial-

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Green Succeeds Where Bosses and Tear-Gas Were Powerless

Maintaining his San Francisco strikebreaking record, William Green stepped into the Pekin strike in order to club it over the head. A representative of Green persuaded or coerced the unions to call off the strike before an agreement could be reached in the distillery strike. It goes without saying, that Police Chief Donahue, the Mayor and the employers were overjoyed.

February 5, 1936. Pekin adds its name to San Francisco and Terre Haute, to a new tradition and weapon of American labor forged in recent years—the general strike.

This small mid-western city (population 17,000) on the outskirts of the Illinois coal fields is feeling the power of aroused and enraged workmen.

Industrial paralysis grips the town. Nothing moves, plants are shut down, stores and banks are closed, the streets are deserted. A new power is superseding the capitalist city administration—the general strike committee which gives "permission" as to what necessities, milk and fuel are to be delivered, which closes down drug stores and "allows" pharmaceutical departments to fill out prescriptions.

The workers of Pekin, and through them the workers of the rest of the country, will begin to grasp the might of organized labor. More than that, they will begin to see in vague outlines the workers' government of the future.

Causes of the Strike

The general strike at Pekin grew out of the soil of economic and political conditions. As far back as August of last year a conflict ensued between the union and employers at the American Distilling Company over the firing of a union engineer. A strike followed and the struggle simmered until about a week ago when Chief of Police Harry Donahue and his deputies hurled tear gas into the picket line before the plant.

Labor solidarity rose to counter the attack. The Pekin Trades and Labor assembly protested the strike-breaking efforts of Mayor W. E. Schurman for his "settlement" efforts and demanded the removal of the chief of police. Failure to comply with these demands brought on the strike.

Braving the sub-zero weather, crews of pickets are patrolling the city, enforcing the closure order on shops and plants and preventing unauthorized deliveries. The strikers are swelling; 600 workers at the Corn Products Refining Co. voted to join the general strike; pickets prevented the night shift from entering the Fleischman plant—the manager yelled out but he was powerless against the workers' determination.

Looking for Plug-Uglies

Donahue is at his wits end in seeking devices to break the strike. The forces of the Trades and Labor Assembly, militant and aggressive, admittedly outnumber and out-weight those of the police department.

"What this town needs," he says as so many reactionaries have said before him, "is a vigilante committee of about 100 tough citizens." Unfortunately, the underworld of Pekin, Ill., has not yet reached the proportions of that of Chicago or St. Louis, otherwise Donahue would have found comrades to enforce "law and order" for him.

Meanwhile in Peoria, seven miles away, where negotiations have failed, seven companies of militiamen have been held in readiness for several days awaiting a call to go into Pekin to break the strike.

Why the hesitancy? Is it because the authorities believe the very presence of armed men in Peoria would over-awe the strikers? Or do they fear a reception for the militia such as was accorded them in Toledo a year and a half ago? Or are they awaiting a convenient provocation, some frame-up instigated by the chief of police?

Whatever the reason may be, the delay in sending the troops to Pekin is testimony to the power of the general strike and a sign of the combustibility of the labor situation which the bosses and authorities fear to ignite.