

mills and we have come to the conclusion it is better to starve idle than to starve working."

The Strike Committee has issued a statement which we quote in part as follows:

The textile workers of Lawrence are on strike to secure a 48 hour week with 54 hour pay. The 8 hour day has been won by practically all the skilled workers of the country without a reduction in total wages. It has been recognized by the National War Labor Board as an efficiency standard even under the necessities of war production. It has resulted in increased production wherever put into operation under favorable conditions. Textile workers need the 8 hour day even more than other workers because their work is mostly monotonous machine work. To accept the 48 hour week without the 54 hour pay would prevent them from earning money which they sorely need for their families as soon as the mills become busy enough to need them.

To those who argue that the workers could strike for higher wages when the mills do become busier, we answer that the workers will not be in so good a condition to strike after the period of unemployment which we are facing, as they are right now. To accept merely a 48 hour week now, when we are in a strong position to endure the difficulties of striking, is to use our strength for nothing and to waste it without securing a real betterment of our condition.

That the real struggle of the Lawrence workers is a struggle for a living wages may be realized from the following facts: The 31st Annual Report of the Statistics of Manufactures for Massachusetts reports that in 1916, 70% of the adult male wage earners in the cotton industry of the state and 63% of the adult male wage earners in the woolen industry earned less than \$15 per week and that 54% of these cotton workers and 47% of these woolen workers received less than \$13 per week.

Taking the American Woolen Company as a representative corporation in the textile industry and we have the following facts presented by Amos Pinchot in his open letter to Claude Kitchin of Aug. 10, 1918, urging heavier taxes on excess war profits. The pre-war average annual net earnings (i. e. for the years 1911, 1912, 1913) of the American Woolen Co. were \$1,754,793. The net earnings of this company in 1917 are reported as \$13,883,156. If we deduct 50% of this total to cover war taxes, contributions and all other possible war time expenditures, there remains still over six millions of excess profits which the workers of Lawrence have helped to produce.

Under these conditions it may readily be seen that the strike is really a protest against unemployment and the denial of work to those who need it to buy bread for their children. Today from 50% to 75% of the mill workers of Lawrence are idle or on part time with greatly reduced incomes. Without going into the question as to the exact source of the blame for this condition, the fact remains that thousands of workers are denied the opportunity to sell their labor power, when the cost of living is unusually high. If we were chattel slaves, food, clothing, shelter and work would be provided. As wage earners we are the victims of the most cruel form of sabotage which modern society can impose. We know that the world needs immense quantities of woolen and cotton goods. We know that the raw material and the labor is available to produce these goods. We protest against an economic system and against economic conditions which allows this kind of treatment of the workers. We believe that it is unnecessary and we plan to unite the workers of Lawrence into one large local union in order that we may have the power to win a living wage and the right to be considered and consulted in the vital affairs of the industry of which we are a part.

The real cause of the present condition of the textile workers, from North Carolina to the Canadian border, is in our opinion, that the organization functioning in this industry is unsuited to the development of the industry. It might have been suitable in the early days of the hand loom period but it is not fitted to cope with the highly centralized factory and machine production of the present day. The so-called leaders of the textile unions are one-eyed men in a kingdom of the blind. They have less than twelve per cent of the workers in this industry organized, they have neither capacity or vision and so long as they can get sufficient dues collected from the brow-beaten workers to pay their office expenses and provide them with fat salaries these leaders (moryah) are perfectly satisfied with the present order of things.

Steps must be taken immediately to get this industry organized on a proper basis. That is the task facing the revolutionary working class movement of this country. The workers are ready. All that is required are teachers and financial backing. The field is un-

tilled but the harvest will be worthy of the laborers. A conference should be called in Boston or some other central point, the militant rebels in the industry should be invited to such a conference and plans should be formulated to take up this essential work.

Comrades who are interested and who can give themselves or their money for this purpose should immediately communicate with this paper.

An Open Letter to Katherine Breshkovskaya

This open letter to Catherine Breshkovskaya, "the grandmother of the Russian Revolution," is written by a Russian woman, who has already reached an age when the women of the working class are old, the age of 57. She has suffered in Russia for opposing the regime of the Czar. In Russia she was a member of the working class, in America she still belongs to that class, and although she is not one of the leaders, still she knows whereof she speaks.

Breshkovskaya is entitled to her opinion regarding the Bolsheviks and the Soviet Government, but if she still loves Russia, the Russia for which she suffered, she must not allow herself to be made a tool of those interests who would restore the Czar, return the land to the land barons and the factories to the industrial barons.

SOME months ago I wrote you an open letter which was published in the American-Russian Socialist papers. Many events have happened since then—Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht—two of the loftiest of the human species—have been killed by an irresponsible mob who had been incited to action by such traitors as Scheidemann, Ebert and their like.

My first letter was written with some hope and faith in your honesty and intellect. Today, again, you are being used as a tool by the ambition and power-craving representatives of Capitalism, in their wild desire to poison the minds of the American workers against the grand and glorious Soviet Republic. Hence I must use more plain language in this letter to you.

I see that you came via Siberia. That means that the invaders at Vladivostok gave you a free hand to advocate the suppression and murder of the majority of the Russian population—65 per cent of whom are workers and peasants.

You dare to say that all the lies and slander of the Capitalist Press are true and that even peasants are killed by "these murderous Bolsheviks." To explain, just as the whole humanity is divided into two classes—the oppressors and the oppressed, so are the Russian peasants divided into two factions, viz:—the plain working peasants—the majority—and the so-called "fists"—the rural usurers—who are hated even worse than the lords. No wonder those "fists" were killed as they were the "Shylocks" of Russian peasantry. Most of the peasants had to buy grain from Christmas until the next year's crop was to hand. Having no money to pay for same they borrowed the grain from the local usurers. The peasant debtors were compelled to guarantee their loan by some document pledging themselves to return the grain at extensively high interest or do some work in lieu of same. For one bushel of rhye a poor woman had to scythe about one and a half acres in the summertime or work daily for 14 or 16 hours per day for the miserable amount of 20c. Of course the usurer charged for his grain twice as much as the regular dealer

in the city did. If the debtor could not comply with his pledge then the "fist" or usurer came with the policemen and the last poor cow or anything that might be found in the house was taken away in spite of the prayers and crying of the women and children.

Now, Catherine Breshkovskaya, don't you know that the children of the Russian peasants were dying by the millions under the age of five years? Don't you know, old woman, that the babies were fed on rhye bread which the mothers chewed with salt, then took this masticated bread and tied it into a small rag thus making a kind of nipple for the babies to suck and thus be enabled to leave them to go to work in the fields? Don't you know that the Russian peasant mothers gave birth to dozens of children, and that they crossed themselves and thanked God when their babies died, believing that God had mercy with those little things and took them back to his paradise? You know all this Catherine Breshkovskaya, but still you are coming to America and begging that they send troops over to Russia to return the lands and factories to the big land-owners and bourgeoisie, taking from the mass of the Russian people what they have produced through countless ages by the sweat of their brows and under conditions which meant sacrifice of hope, comfort and even life, and at last after centuries of sweating, bleeding and dying those ignorant, helpless martyrs of their masters have awakened and have taken control of Russia in the interests of the whole of the people and not for the few parasites who have lived and enjoyed on the suffering and agony of the Russian people.

In my first letter I explained to you what is meant by the class struggle, but it appears that you have got so old that you cannot understand. Oh, you would understand though if you and your like, Kropotkin, Plekhanov, and others would be compelled like myself, to run like mad when I hear the factory whistle being afraid that I might lose my job if I should happen to be late. You too could understand like myself—a woman of 57 years—that to be able to merely exist I have to beg from the owner the privilege of selling my labor power at so much per day, crawl and cringe for the opportunity to work or I must starve. You old blind people would understand if you had to dye your hair and paint your cheeks and deck out your body for the sake of earning your daily bread, as the old folks in America have to do. They must have a job or starve and to be able to be exploited by some "kind-hearted" master they must look youthful and ensure to the master that they can stand the terrible grind of industrialism. But you Madame Breshkovskaya have successfully evaded the ranks of the proletarians and been always able to get enough money for your adventures, even to these last days when you are well subsidized by reactionary forces to enable you to reach America and poison the minds of the people with your sobbing and crying—a clever actress playing her last game.

But what is the use of such hypocrisy? The masters of the world are using you to gain their ends. The overthrow of the Soviet administration in Russia means the introduction of Capitalism in its stead and the horrors, and slums, and the filth and disease which are its concomitants.

However your sobbing and crying and appeals cannot stem the tide of Social evolution. It is now simply a question between the capitalists of the world and the workers. The former are desirous of intervention in Russia so that they can draw big dividends from their invested capital, the latter, the workers, must oppose them if they wish to survive as a happy and healthy people.

The international working class stands in your way. Mark you! The workers of the whole world are realizing that they have to do just the same as was done in Russia, that is—take all that they have produced during centuries and therefore belongs to them and them only, and then force the parasites and usurers, your friends, to go to work or to die. What is useless and rotten must vanish—this law of nature you ought to know, you intellectual servants of parasites.

MARY NICOLAEFF.

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