

Both Miners and Needle Trades Workers Are Facing the Same Enemy

By ROSE WORTIS.

Two unions are today engaged in a bitter struggle, the outcome of which will have a far-reaching effect on the future of the American trade union movement—the miners and the needle trade workers. To the casual observer it would appear that these two struggles are of an entirely different character. The needle trade workers are apparently engaged in an internal conflict, while the miners are fighting the bosses. Those, however, who have followed the struggles of both the miners and the needle trade workers, know that the crisis now facing them can be traced to one and the same cause, namely, the cowardice and treachery of the official leaders of these unions.

The Struggle in the Needle Trades.
One year ago, after the Furriers' and Cloak & Dressmakers' Unions of New York under left wing leadership carried thru successful strikes in their respective industries, resulting in the establishment of the 40-hour week, increases in wages and other important gains, the right wing bureaucrats of the International Unions, fearing these accomplishments of the left wing administrations would greatly enhance their prestige among the workers, and so constitute a serious menace to right wing control, launched an attack on the New York organizations. They expelled the Joint Boards, representing more than 70 per cent of the New York membership and precipitated the present civil war which has gone on unabated for the past 14 months.

Aid of Bosses.

Having no support from the workers, the bureaucrats invited the aid of the bosses in their efforts to wrest the unions from the control of the left wing administrations, which had the enthusiastic support of the great mass of the workers. The bosses readily enlisted in the crusade against the left wing, seeing an opportunity to weaken the organizations thru internal strife and win back the concessions they had been forced to grant in the recent militant strikes. Before long the workers realized that the struggle against the bureaucracy was not merely for the right to democratic administration of their unions, but a

struggle for the preservation of their unions and union conditions, in which they would have to encounter the most determined opposition of the combined forces of the union bureaucrats, the bosses and the state authorities. The months that followed are a record of the most shameful provocation and treachery ever practised by so-called union leaders against workers.

Gave Up Workers' Gains.

In order to force their domination on the needle trade unions, the bureaucrats had not hesitated to work in fullest cooperation with the bosses. They gave up the most important gains of the workers in order to get the assistance of the bosses in their attempt to force the cloak, dressmakers and furriers at the point of a gun to join their dual unions. The 40-hour week has been abolished, wages have been reduced, and piece work, the speed-up system and general sweat-shop conditions have been re-established in the industry.

The bureaucrats of the needle trades, who had at one time professed at radical views, had gone over completely to the camp of the bosses and have in conjunction with the associations taken out the most sweeping injunctions, agitated for and caused the wholesale arrest and imprisonment of workers who insisted on their right to strike and picket. The ruinous war that has been on in the needle trades for the past year has practically destroyed the unions and has brought conditions of abject slavery in its wake for the workers.

No Struggle Possible.

Even the most backward workers realize to-day that so long as the reactionary bureaucrats will have a vestige of power in the industry, no effective struggle against the bosses is possible. The workers have come to realize en masse that they can make no distinction between the bosses and the bureaucrats, that both have but one object, which is to force the yoke of slavery on the workers and use them as tools for their personal aggrandizement. The internal struggle of the needle trade workers is now recognized by all class-conscious workers as a struggle against the bosses and their labor lieutenants, the officials of the International. The needle trade workers, who had tasted

the benefits achieved thru organization, stand ready to continue the struggle until the union is freed from the control of the bosses.

Altho the circumstances in the miners' struggle are somewhat different, the plight in which the workers find themselves at present can be traced directly to the same source as that of the needle trade workers.

The Struggle of the Miners.

The United Mine Workers but a short time ago was one of the most powerful and militant unions.

The militancy of the rank and file of the miners did not chime in with the plans of the Lewises or the Greens. It interfered with their policies of class collaboration. It fostered a spirit of hatred toward the coal barons. Therefore the Lewis machine in a systematic manner undertook the struggle against the militant workers of the union.

Simultaneous with the struggle waged against the workers in his union, Lewis adopted an ever more compromising policy toward the bosses. Time and again the Lewis administration betrayed the workers in the unorganized fields. After the latter had responded to strike calls, Lewis made settlements in the union fields leaving the workers in the unorganized fields to return to the mines beaten, demoralized and at the mercy of the bosses.

Officials Responsible.

It was these treacheries of the union officials that made possible the attack of the bosses on the mine workers. For 10 months thousands of workers have been on strike, fighting most heroically against an organized regime of terror in the coal fields in spite of the demoralizing influence of the Lewis machine that made every attempt to stifle the revolt of the workers; fighting injunctions; fighting the coal and iron police; fighting persecutions; suffering evictions from their homes during the bitter winter months; suffering cold and hunger.

While the workers are fighting so heroically against all odds for the preservation of their union, the Lewises, the Greens and the Wolls have not only failed to mobilize the labor movement in support of the miners, but have even officially outlawed relief work for the striking miners for many months, contenting themselves with sending appeals to President Coolidge, the representative of Wall Street, to intervene in the strike.

Challenge to All Labor.

The strike of the mine workers is a challenge not only to the Miners' Union, but to the entire trade union movement of this country. The open shop interests have chosen the Miners' Union as their first target for attack because it represented the best and most militant of the American trade unions. They knew that a defeat of the miners will pave the way for an attack on the other unions and will spell the annihilation of trade unionism in this country.

What has the officials of the American Federation of Labor, the Greens, Matthew Wolls, the Lewises, who are drawing their high salaries all along while the miners are literally dying of starvation, done to meet the crisis now facing the labor movement? What have they done to mobilize the hundreds of thousands of workers to save their unions from destruction?

While the miners were on strike facing the most brutal combination of

forces, while the injunction epidemic was spreading to every industry paralyzing every strike, while the bosses were making tremendous cuts in wages attacking one union after another, the officials of the A. F. of L. sat in high councils, deliberating on plans to destroy the needle trade unions, who under left wing leadership had been the only ones to take up the challenge of the bosses and had gained improvements in the conditions of the workers thru the strike weapon. All the financial and moral resources of the Federation (as President Green had stated some time ago) will be mobilized not to fight the coal barons, the textile kings and other exploiters of labor, but to carry on the holy war against what he termed "the Communist menace."

Aid of Lewis.

As far back as 1925, when Sigman, the reactionary president of the I. L. G. W. U., expelled 35,000 members, the Lewis administration came to his assistance by giving him a loan of \$75,000. To-day the bureaucrats are united in the effort to subjugate the workers to the bosses and convert their organizations into "company unions."

The latest statement of Matthew Woll on the question of anti-strike legislation, where he openly endorses the proposal of the Bar Association to introduce legislation that will do away with strikes, exposes the Matthew Wolls, the Lewises and the Greens as the open agents of the bosses and proves conclusively that only thru the defeat of these representatives of the bosses in the labor movement can the workers hope to successfully build organizations that will fight for the improvement of their conditions.

The struggle of the needle trade workers, the struggle of the miners, the struggle of all other workers, organized as well as unorganized, has become a struggle on two fronts,—the labor bureaucrats and the bosses, both of whom are united in their efforts to keep the workers in submission. The heroic struggle of the miners in face of hunger, oppression and brutality, the determined struggle of the needle trade workers, the spirit of revolt against the treacheries of the officialdom in the other unions, is proof that the workers of this country are alive to the present danger.

REBI

Socrates drank deep of the hemlock
And the knights took a big chance
Every window of the Bastille was
E're Marat strode through the
Five innocent men swung from
And in '27 two were burned.

Centuries of bitter reckoning
And scales that never weigh truth
For those lone souls that risk their
To make the gesture of dissent.

And a guy says to me the other
"Now that you've a good job,
Fergit this radical bunk
An' make yerself some real jacks

But, jeeze, a guys got guts
Who stands in the cold and snow
An' walks in the rain on the picket
'Cause maybe the kids aint fed
An' may be yet, a man's a man

mediated as quickly as possible. The organization must be greatly widened. It must find ways and means how to adapt itself so as to approach the great mass of working class women.

The following immediate tasks are required, if we expect real effective work among women. Regular national functioning full-time machinery, which will help establish functioning district machineries, which will be able to meet the great problems of the masses of women in industry.

The great majority of women workers do not understand that they must form a united front with the men workers. They have not advanced enough, to accept and understand his important fundamental need. The bosses are fully conscious of the dupes and fools they can make of women in the labor struggle. They, the bosses, apply all sorts of vicious propaganda in order to create poisonous illusions in the minds of women. They teach them to accept a form of class collaboration, or entire ignorance of class consciousness. They delude them with false pretend privileges grafted on the basis of sex, as extra amusements and com-

forts given in many large factories.

In order to reach these women, our plans must be very carefully laid out and we must have a knowledge of their psychology. Our tactics must be worked out in great detail for general methods cannot be applied, but each situation must be separately met with. It is of urgent importance to publish a women's paper on a national scale, at least on a semi-monthly basis, which must be made interesting to the broad mass of average working women (by mapping out some plan this paper can be supported to a large extent by individuals who would not support any other enterprise.).

Open forums, lectures, mass meetings must be utilized at least once in a while. They must pertain to the special problems of interest to women.

By intensive work carried out by the Party as a whole along systematic lines with full reorganization of the work realized, we can reach the broad masses of the American working women, and align them for an effective role in the class struggle.