

NRA Brought More Slavery to Women Workers in U. S. A.

Women Joined in Strikes Against Blue Eagle Misery and Discrimination Codes

By ANNA DAMON

March 8, International Women's Day, finds the American working class women suffering untold misery under the N. R. A. of the Roosevelt administration. On March 4, 1933, President Roosevelt took control of the U. S. government. Millions of women who had voted and helped elect him really thought that Roosevelt would make good his election campaign promises "That not a man, woman or child would starve under his administration." They especially welcomed the fact that in Roosevelt's Cabinet at the head of the Department of Labor a woman, a "humanitarian," "liberal," Miss Frances Perkins, was chosen. Surely this lady would help the "Forgotten Women." They would get work. Sweatshops would be abolished. Wages would rise. Killing speed-up would be eliminated. Such was the hope of the women.

Now one year after Roosevelt and Perkins have had the run of things we can readily see that Roosevelt lied. The U. S. Government is not interested in improving the lot of the workers. It is now preparing feverishly for war, spending billions of dollars in building an army, navy and air fleet; while at the same time it refuses to appropriate anything for unemployment relief.

False Promises

The promises made by Roosevelt have not been carried out. Starvation has not been abolished. Conditions of the Negro and white working and farm women have become worse.

The New Deal proved a raw deal for the workers. Outstanding in the New Deal was the N. R. A. This program, intended to save big business at the expense of the workers, was heralded by Miss Perkins, William Green, Norman Thomas and Rose Schneiderman of the A. F. of L. and the Socialist Party, as a "savior" for the workers. They and many more traitors of the working class joined in chorus praising the N. R. A. The purpose was to create false hopes among the workers, to divert them from struggles against starvation and to lower further their standards of living.

Not since the world war has there been such a vicious drive by the government against the workers. An actual war mobilization of all industries under government control. In this drive the government hit hardest the weakest and most exploited section of the working class. The women came in for the greatest share of misery under the N. R. A. Women have always been discriminated against in the way of wages and jobs. However, the Industrial Codes gave the government's official sanction in the drive for lower

wages, which will further bring down the standards of living of all workers.

Let us look into the N. R. A. and what it means to women.

Wages

In all of the Industrial Codes under the N. R. A. there is discrimination against women. One quarter or twenty-five per cent of all of the codes allow lower wages for women. The Negro women are receiving thirty per cent less than the white women. Of the two million wage earning Negro women the majority are servants. In New York seventy-two per cent are domestics. For these exploited workers no code at all has been set. Hundreds and thousands of these work for four or five cents an hour and in many cases without any pay whatsoever.

The minimum wage of twelve to fourteen dollars a week has become the maximum, while at the same time the cost of living through inflation has risen sky high. The dollar buys only sixty cents worth.

Unemployment

In spite of the ballyhoo of the N. R. A., the C. W. A. jobs, etc., there are still sixteen million unemployed workers. Three million of these are women. Hundreds of thousands of these are wandering the streets without shelter or food. Single women are given practically no relief. The additional year of starvation of the Roosevelt administration has further broken down the health of the women and their dependents. According to the American Journal of Medicine over six million children in the U. S. A. are now undernourished. Ten million school children are defective in health. Child mortality, death of women at child birth, has increased manifold. Many women turn to prostitution to keep from starvation.

HOURS

No special provisions have been made in the codes to make work easier for women. On the contrary, the meagre labor laws which have existed before the N. R. A. have been wiped out under pretense of unfair competition by states. Women in the textile, clothing, metal, food, shoe industry, work as many as sixty and seventy hours a week. Night work for women has been re-established in Massachusetts. For women workers night work is the greatest curse. It destroys their vitality and health, making it much harder to carry on the double duties of factory and home.

TRADE UNIONS AND STRIKES

The right of the workers to organize into unions and to strike "guaranteed" by the N. R. A. has been interpreted by Roosevelt, William Green and Frances Perkins as something unnecessary, because the Government will take care of the workers' welfare. Roosevelt in a speech over the radio stated: "The workers of this country have rights under this law which cannot be taken away from them, but on the other hand no aggression is now necessary to obtain these rights."

The government legally sanctions the Open Shop and the formation of company unions as exemplified by the clause in the N. R. A.:

"No employee and no one seeking employment shall be required as a condition of employment to join any organization or to refrain from joining a labor organization of his own choosing."

The bosses pounced upon this clause and began a drive for the organization of company unions to be used against the workers.

The U. S. Government knew very well that in order to put across the N. R. A. and the inflation policy the women who make up ninety per cent of the consumers had to be won over. Towards this end, special patriotic appeals were made by General Johnson, Frances Perkins, Mrs. Roosevelt and many others. The great boom of the N. R. A. at first startled the working class women. They were willing to give the New Deal a try-out. However, eight months of the N. R. A. made the working women realize that the N. R. A. was not intended to help them, but was rather an instrument to keep them from struggle.

Women in Strikes

In spite of the N. R. A., the women did fight back and struck against their misery in the shops by the hundreds of thousands. The strike wave since the N. R. A. has been greater than in any year since 1919. In these strikes the women workers played a most important role. Over 300,000 factory women struck for improving their conditions. Tens of thousands of women, wives of workers in steel, coal, and auto, joined their men on the picket lines against the N. R. A.

A few days ago hearings on the N. R. A. were held in Washington, D. C. An "examination" was made by the government on how the experiment was working out. Now we are told that the blessings of the N. R. A. are to remain with us. President Roosevelt declared the N. R. A. to be a permanent feature in the New Deal.

Working class women, carry further the struggle against the N. R. A. and the entire Roosevelt program of fascism and war. Weld an iron chain of unity between the Negro and white men and women workers in the fight for equal pay for equal work, against discrimination of all sorts, against the high cost of living, for unemployment insurance and immediate relief.

Organize in the shops and factories, join the militant unions, support and become members of the only political party that fights in your defense, The Communist Party of America

Greet Working Woman, Many New Features

The new March issue of "The Working Woman," featuring International Women's Day, is a clenched fist smashing the democratic mask which hides the face of American capitalism. Every class conscious worker, man and woman, will be interested in this concentrated attack upon the enemies of the working class. It is packed with vital action stories of the class struggle from Anna Damon's exposure of the seventy cents out of every government dollar spent from the United States Treasury for war preparations to Erma Stams' fine inside story on the fraud of Hitler's over-advertised marriage subsidy.

Fascist Attacks on Women

Mother Bloor strikes at the fascism of preparedness parades in a pointed attack on the Vinson War Bill. Grace Hutchins summarizes the fascist attacks on the workers of Vienna in a class conscious interpretation in "Women on the Barricades." The N.R.A. discussion against women and the fascization of the Department of Labor, under Frances Perkins, is the contribution of Ann Burlak, national secretary of the National Textile Workers Union. F. Borich, secretary of the National Miners' Union tells the story of the growth of the women's auxiliaries in "Miners Who Fight."

The Paris Commune

There is living history in Sasha Small's outstanding biography of Louise Michel, heroic leader of the Paris Commune.

There is a final chapter from Grace Lumpkin's famous novel, "To Make My Bread." Clara Bodian carries on the fight against fascism and war and Esther Lowell has her usual readable page of notes and anecdotes, "You're Telling Me." Dr. Lone discusses birth control and child birth.

Build the Working Woman

The back cover is entirely given up to greetings for International Womens' Day, from 35 organizations representing every section of the United States from the Bay Section Womens' Club at Los Angeles and the Finnish Womens' Club of Hanna, Wyo., to Cleveland, Detroit, New Haven, Baltimore, and New York City. It is a free, bold issue of the only proletarian womens' magazine in America. In the struggle against Fascism and War, the Working Woman is an invaluable weapon. Send for free sample copies. P.O. Box 87, Station D, N.Y.C.

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