

N. Y. Furriers Win Strike Under Left Wing Leadership

By BEN GITLOW.
(Special to The Daily Worker)

NEW YORK CITY, June 11.—The four months' struggle of the 12,000 furriers, which was declared by the New York Joint Board of the Fur Workers' International Union following the lockout of the workers by the Fur Manufacturers' Association has ended victoriously for the workers. The long and bitter struggle that started Feb. 17, has come to a close. It was a victory for the 40-hour, five-day week.

At four o'clock Friday morning Ben Gold, chairman of the general strike committee and Samuel E. Samuels, of the Fur Manufacturers' Association, signed the new agreement which expires Jan. 31, 1929. The strikers win not only the forty-hour week, but ten per cent increase minimum raise and a substantial reclassification of minimum scale, no overtime, no sectional contracting and no discharge during a week preceding a holiday, and the union to permit work on Saturday during four autumn months of September, October, November and December, with extra pay.

The strikers waited all night for news of settlement, then paraded thru the fur manufacturing section singing and thronged to meeting halls where the celebration continued all morning. The agreement was presented to the shop chairman at a meeting Friday afternoon at Manhattan Lyceum. It will be brought before the workers for ratification of mass meetings Monday morning, at nine o'clock, at Webster Hall and the Manhattan Lyceum. The majority of the workers will be back in their shops by the end of next week.

PICK UP

The Original Demands.

The original demands of the union presented to the manufacturers early in January were as follows:

1. Forty-hour week.
2. Thirty-two hour week during slack period.
3. Equal division of work throughout the year.
4. Unemployment insurance fund to be raised by contribution from the bosses at the rate of 3 per cent of wages paid, distribution of the fund to be completely in the hands of the union.
5. Manufacturers to be punished for failing to obey the agreement.
6. A 25 per cent increase in wages over the present minimum scales.
7. All skins must bear the union label.
8. Foremen must not be permitted to work in the shops.
9. Shops to be inspected by union representatives.

Strike Was Significant.

The Furriers' strike is significant because it marks the first strike in

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FARM RELIEF PUZZLES BOTH OLD PARTIES

Iowa Upheaval Still Haunts Politicians

(Special to The Daily Worker)

WASHINGTON, June 11. — While the Iowa political explosion continued to detonate around the capitol today, it appeared better than an even money bet that congress will fade out of Washington in a few weeks without having done anything to placate the rebellious corn belt in the way of farm relief legislation.

A vote on the McNary-Haugen bill, which president Coolidge has characterized as "economically unsound," and which Vice President Dawes has pronounced an estimable piece of legislation in every respect, is now scheduled for the middle of next week in the senate. It has already been defeated in the house by a coalition of eastern republicans and southern democrats, and a similar fate probably awaits it in the senate, altho the vote is expected to be close.

Expect Coolidge Veto.

Even if the bill is passed by the senate, it stands little chance of enactment, as it must then go back to the house which already has rejected it, and even should the house reverse itself, with an eye on the November elections, it still must run the Gauntlet of the White House. And President Coolidge has clearly intimated a veto awaits it there.

There remains only the revamped

NEW YORK FURRIERS WIN FOUR MONTHS' STRIKE UNDER LEFT WING LEADERSHIP

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the needle trades of major importance that was led by a left wing administration. The bosses tried to use this fact to make an alliance with the right wing forces and the Forward, the New York Jewish socialist daily, to smash the strike. Even this unholy alliance did not help the bosses.

Early in the strike their nefarious schemes were exposed with the result that the Forward and the right wing opposition were repudiated. It was schemes of this character that aroused the indignation of the workers. These right wing forces together with the agent of the Jewish Daily Forward in the office of the International of the union, agreed to the following plot:

The Right Wing-Forward Plot.

1. That the Forward shall print news to the effect that the workers are dissatisfied with the strike leadership and the manner in which the Communist leaders are conducting the strike.

2. That Abraham Beckerman, manager of the New York joint board of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers' Union, shall supply sluggers who shall beat up innocent strikers and that then the Forward should charge that the non-Communist strikers are being beaten up by the express orders of the Communist strike committee.

3. That the officers of the International who are right wingers, shall take over the leadership of the strike.

4. That the strike funds shall be attached so that the Communist leaders shall not have the wherewithall to carry on the struggle.

5. That the Fur Manufacturers' Association in whose interest the moves were to be made, shall contribute \$100,000.

The meetings that followed the exposure greeted the condemnation by speakers of this plot with thunderous approval. The Fur Workers' strike was marked by numerous spontaneous demonstrations against the Jewish Daily Forward and by cheering demonstration in front of the Jewish Daily Freiheit, the Communist daily.

Sought Green's Aid.

The right wing attempted to betray the strike by bringing in President William Green of the American Federation of Labor. He was to speak as announced by the International at a mass meeting in Carnegie Hall on April 16th. In announcing the mass meeting by mail the International officials have sent a referendum out to the strikers asking them to allow the officials to settle the strike by accepting satisfactory proposals.

The right wing had intended to use President Green to enable them to get rid of Ben Gold and the New York joint board leadership of the strike.

To the surprise of the right wing the strikers attended the meeting en masse. Furthermore the left general strike committee issued a declaration in which they stated that they would gladly accept any satisfactory proposals for a settlement provided the workers themselves would be permitted to make the final and decisive decision on their acceptance. All known Communists and left wingers were debarred from the Carnegie Hall meeting. Police kept Gold, the leader of the strike and Gross, one of the vice-presidents of the International, from gaining admission.

Rank and File Present.

The rank and file, however, gave the right wing and all those who desired to betray the strike, a very definite answer. The workers who jammed Carnegie Hall demanded that their leader, Gold, be admitted and given an opportunity to speak. The call for "Gold! Gold! Gold!" became a thunderous demand that was raised by thousands of workers that picketed

Carnegie Hall outside because they could not gain admission. Hugh Frayne, organizer of the American Federation of Labor, unwilling to give in to the demand of the masses, had to adjourn the meeting.

Green Endorses the Strike.

The result of the Carnegie Hall meeting was to force President Green to make peace with the New York joint board leadership and to endorse the strike. A meeting was subsequently held in the 69th Regiment Armory at which President Green spoke together with Gold. At this meeting the striking furriers gave a fitting demonstration of what they think of their young, fearless leader and Communist. For 15 minutes they gave rousing thunderous cheers for Gold.

The famous eight points presented by Hugh Frayne following the adjourned Carnegie Hall meeting played a very important role in the strike. The eight points accepted by the right wing and by President Green were as follows:

1. The old agreement shall form the basis for a settlement.

2. Elimination of overtime work as much as possible.

3. A three-year agreement

4. No apprenticeship from Feb. 1st 1926 to Feb. 19, 1928.

5. No sub-contracting.

6. A ten per cent increase over the present minimum wage scales.

7. At the end of two years there shall be one minimum wage scale instead of two.

8. A 42-hour, 6-day week, 4 hours' work to be done on Saturday.

Eight Points Rejected.

The workers categorically rejected the eight points. When Green came to New York a few weeks later to settle the furriers' strike on the basis of the eight points, he failed to bring about an agreement and following the break-up of the negotiations he came out in favor of the forty-hour week, the main demand of the fur workers.

The bosses claimed that President Green double-crossed them. The fur strikers took good advantage of President Green's indorsement of the forty-hour week. A referendum resulted in overwhelming indorsement of the forty hours and pledged the workers to continue full support of the general strike committee until that demand was won.

Support For Shorter Work Week.

The furriers issued an appeal for support of the strike on the basis that it was a struggle to establish a shorter work-week, a forty-hour week. Labor unions, central trade and labor councils, joint boards and labor organizations of all kinds indorsed the forty-hour proposal. The forty-hour week meeting held by the fur strikers in Madison Square Garden was a big success.

The manufacturers have conceded the forty hours together with other demands. The great strike marked by splendid mass picketing and magnificent courage has ended in a great victory not only for the fur workers but for the whole working class. Great credit is due the splendid generalship, courage and ability displayed by the leadership of Gold and his associates and the general strike committee. The greatest credit is due the militant rank and file of the furriers' union and especially the picket committee. They faced the gangsters and police who carried guns, clubs and knives. They were arrested by the hundreds. In spite of the many scars of battle that they displayed they continued the struggle with renewed enthusiasm and courage every day. It is the rank and file that made the victory possible.

The left wing through the furriers' strike has demonstrated that not only can it be an opposition to a reactionary right wing machine but also that once it becomes the leader of the masses that it can lead those masses successfully in struggles against the capitalists.

We all hail the victory of our fellow fur workers. It marks the beginning of great forward strides not only in the needle trades but throughout the American labor movement.

