Struggles of Mexican Textile Workers

By ELLA G. WOLFE.

THE growing class consciousness and militancy of the Mexican textile workers is a good example of what effective shop nuclei can do when properly organized and disciplined. The Mexican textile workers are in the main controlled by the General Federation of Workers (Anarcho-syndicalist) but the entire Orizaba region has for many years been affiliated with the Mexican Federation of Labor (the Crom.)

About three years ago a group of active Communists began to work in the Rio Blanco mill (just a few hours from the City of Orizaba.) They talked with the workers, they sold El Machete, the Communist paper, they taught the workers to question every order sent them by the Crom leadership, until little by little they built up a strong progressive group that began issuing its own paper, Pro-Paria, constantly criticising the class collaboration policy of Luis Morones and the rest of the leaders of the Crom.

On Jan. 3, the 20,000 textile workers of Orizaba seceeded from the Crom in protest against the anti-Soviet attitude of the leaders, especially Luis N. Morones, present minister of labor. Various Crom leaders were immediately despatched to Orizaba to induce the workers to return to the organization. At first they refused, but on the advice of a Communist leader, Enrique Flores Magon (nephew of the anarchist) they submitted conditions for reaffiliation. These conditions included tactical autonomy, no support of the Mexican labor party, the removal of certain Vrom officials, and other minor tactical matters. Owing to the difficulties the Crom is having with the textile workers in other places, in its attempt to break the control of the C. G. T., it could not afford to lose the Orizaba workers. The leaders therefore, accepted the proposals of the seceding unions.

The textile workers agreed to reaffiliate at an enthusiastic mass meeting which was followed by a parade in which were conspicuous banners with "Long Live Soviet Russia," and "Long Live Communism."

After the parade, Eulalio Martinez, recently returned labor attache of the Mexican government in Moscow, was scheduled to report on his trip, but when he discovered the Communist Enrique Flores Magon was present, he refused to report and was hissed from the platform.

The Orizaba workers, enthusiastic with the success they had won, decided to organize a giant celebration of Lenin memorial day in the Union Theater. When the Crom leaders got wind of this they decided to prevent the celebration from taking place, by calling a temporary strike and assembling the workers in the Union Theater. A skirmish followed, when the Communists attempted to turn the meeting into a celebration. With the aid of federal troops, one comrade was murdered and several severely wounded, and the celebration prevented from taking place.

This steadily growing influence of the Communists and the resulting loss of control of the Crom is leading to violence against the workers by the reactionaries. Luis N. Morones has just sent into Orizaba 150 armed thugs under the leadership of Eulalio Martinez with orders to go the limit and clean up on the Communists. Due to this pressure 45 Communists have already been fired by the Rio Blanco mill. They secured jobs in another factory but after a day or two, were again bounced. The Communists have wired President Calles that unless the thugs are at once removed and the fired workers reinstated that they will hold him responsible for any violence that might occur.

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