

Rank and File Action Can Overcome Defeat Of Building Strike

By Rose Wortis

(Concluding Article of a Series)

This strike showed that our Party has not learned how to develop a correct line and real constructive criticism, and has shown a tendency of running from one extreme of careless criticism, to the other extreme of a very uncritical attitude for fear that any criticism may injure the strike.

During the past week, while thousands of workers are out on the streets, fighting for their jobs, the Daily Worker has given little attention to the strike. Now that the workers are in the greatest need, the "Daily" should do all in its power to keep the strike before the public eye and to help build up support to win the reinstatement of the workers.

It is two weeks since the strike was called off. The leadership of the union true to its disastrous policy, has proven itself completely bankrupt, pursuing a policy which can only lead to disaster.

Enthusiasm High

Despite these betrayals and defeats, the vitality and enthusiasm of the workers, and their spirit of solidarity is still at a very high point. This is being daily illustrated by the sympathy strikes where the owners attempted to carry through discharges. A most inspiring example is the strike in the Century Apartment houses where the entire crew of 65 came out on strike in support of six active strikers who were discharged. In face of this spirit of solidarity, the union leadership has outlawed the strike. This is how the leadership capitulated before the attacks of the bosses at a moment when the Arbitration Board is to begin meeting and when the union must present a solid front in order to wrest some concessions for the workers.

This heroism on the part of the strikers, this spirit of self-sacrifice and class solidarity, this vitality shown by these workers, the lessons driven home to these workers on the relations of classes, the growth of the Communist Party fraction, which has recruited many of the best elements into the Party, gives real hope that with proper leadership and guidance, the present defeat can be overcome and that workers can be rallied around the

union, which despite all difficulties has come to stay.

What is to be done in this present situation? What are the tasks of the rank and file?

The experience of the past days has shown that the locked out workers cannot expect much help from the leadership. The rank and file has begun, fortunately, to realize this, and has taken definite steps in its own defense. These steps can be expanded upon and intensified.

A Rank and File Committee has been set up consisting of the locked out workers, as well as representatives of the Council, to lead the struggle for the interests of the men. This committee is directing itself to the labor unions of New York and the thousands of rank and file workers for financial support, and support on the picket line. The Rank and File Committee has proceeded to organize a mass demonstration of the locked out workers and their families in front of City Hall to demand that the Mayor who showed such a spirit in breaking the strike, force the realty owners to live up to the agreement and to reinstate all the men.

Campaign Begun

The rank and file has begun to develop a campaign to stop the demoralization that the bosses are deliberately spreading among the workers, telling them that there is no union. Further action is contemplated. Council meetings, shop and building meetings must be called to take the necessary steps to explain the situation to the workers. The rank and file should insist on the election of a leadership from the ranks of the workers, that will understand the needs of the workers and will mobilize the full strength of the workers and the rest of the movement to help build up the union and prepare for future struggles to attain decent living conditions for the building service workers.

As far as our Party is concerned, we must not for a moment relax in our support of these workers. On the contrary, we must utilize every effort to bring the present issues of the building service workers before the rest of the labor movement, to show to the rest of the workers the effect that the destruction of this union would have on other unions

and on the movement to organize the unorganized. We must explain to the workers in a most simple and constructive way the mistakes made in the conduct of the strike which led to the present situation, and show these workers in a most convincing way that what is wrong is not unionism, but wrong leadership of the union and the need for a militant policy and militant rank and file leadership.

To Overcome Setback

We must also utilize the present situation to show to the workers the role of the capitalist politicians of both parties, the Tammany District Attorney Dodge and the Fusion Mayor LaGuardia and rally workers behind the movement for a Labor Party.

The building service workers have shown their determination to fight against their miserable conditions. They have shown their understanding of the need of organization. With our support, the present setback can be overcome and the building service union can be built up as one of the most powerful and strategic sections of the New York trade union movement.

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