

Harmful Influences Slow Up Garment Union's War Effort

This is the second of two articles on the International Ladies Garment Workers Union.

By Rose Wortis

By its inaction the dominant leadership of the union has placed additional obstacles in the way of achieving international labor unity, has spurned the hand of solidarity extended to them through Sir Walter Citrine from the embattled trade unionists of Britain and the Soviet Union. The "silence" of the GEB on this issue was not a simple oversight. It is a policy imposed on the union by a small group of die-hard red-baiters within the Social-Democratic Federation, with which Mr. Dubinsky is allied.

There was not a word said about President Roosevelt's 7-point anti-inflation program now under discussion in Congress, at the GEB meeting. Only a few days before the Board meeting, Mr. Dubinsky, who refused to go to Washington, where price control in the garment industry was under discussion, to present the program of the union in a cooperative spirit, publicly criticized the OPA.

Neither was there any consideration given at the meeting to the all-important Congressional and State elections.

It is a generally accepted fact that the coming elections in New York State will be of a most decisive character in relation to the war. The defeatist forces in our state are girding themselves for a battle to win away the Empire State, the home state of President Roosevelt, from the national administration and to send a defeatist bloc to Congress to hamper the war effort of the country. It is a well-known fact that the ALP holds the balance of power in the State, that its weight can decide the election for the Roosevelt Administration. A victory of Dewey would be taken by all opponents of the war as a blow to the President and the war.

In order to unite all progressive forces around win-the-war candidates, it is necessary for the ALP itself to be united. But the leadership of the ILGWU, influenced by narrow partisan considerations, is opposing unity in the ALP irrespective of the dangers involved.

On labor unity, the board associated itself with Lewis' red-baiting attack against the outstanding pro-war leader in the ranks of labor, Philip Murray, a member of the Labor Victory Committee, and close collaborator and supporter of President Roosevelt.

The special letter addressed by President Roosevelt to Murray commending him for the decisions adopted at the last CIO Board meeting was a vote of confidence on the part of the President in Murray's leadership during these crucial war days.

In following Lewis' line of attack against Murray, President Dubinsky is giving aid and comfort to the enemies of the President, to the appeasers and defeatists. This direct and open support of Lewis is not a new phenomenon for Mr. Dubinsky. When Lewis, a few months ago, came out with his "shot gun" proposal for unity, in order to turn the labor movement away from the correct course of unity in support of the war, the first to fall in line with Lewis was Dubinsky. Emil Schlesinger, the official attorney of the ILGWU, was engaged as attorney for John L. Lewis when he came to New York to disrupt the CIO, and Schlesinger today is still on the payroll of the notorious District 50, after Lewis has been openly repudiated by the entire CIO. This association poses some pertinent questions which certainly are not clarified in the least by the Board's recent statement on labor unity.

Mr. Dubinsky's call for Labor Unity has a false ring when compared to his deeds—throughout the entire period since Pearl Harbor. There is a growing trend toward unity between the AFL and CIO in support of the war—the Labor Victory Committee, numerous united local actions throughout the country, the huge June 13th parade in New York initiated through the efforts of labor, etc., are expressions of this trend towards unity in the ranks of labor.

Did the President of the ILGWU greet these encouraging developments? On the contrary, we have shown above that Mr. Dubinsky has continuously sounded a discordant note and placed every obstacle in the way of unity.

At the previous Board meeting of the union, he tied the hands of the local leaders by a formal decision against united fronts, forcing a partisan election in the union when unity of the entire membership was most urgent.

The present unfortunate primary fight in the ALP; the attempt to defeat the outstanding progressive Congressman, Vito Marcantonio, is another proof of the motives behind the Board's call for "labor unity."

There is a small but powerful bloc of Soviet-haters in the Social-Democratic Federation that is associated with the President of the ILGWU, which is the power behind all splitting anti-Soviet, anti-Communist, anti-progressive, anti-unity maneuvers. They throw grist to the mill of the defeatists, the Dieses, the Hearsts, the Coughlins. They



Union Dressmakers Honor China:

Three members of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union display one of 42 Chinese flags made for United China Relief. The flags will fly along Fifth Ave. today, Wednesday and Thursday. Photo shows Anthony Arcara, production man for I. Edisen and Sons, and Frances Messina.

give aid and comfort to the enemies of the nation—the Lewises, Hutchesons—in the ranks of labor.

Just where such a policy leads to we see in an editorial on Labor Unity in the Jewish Daily Forward of June 21st which reads in part:

"Lewis and Hutcheson, it is true, are anti-Roosevelt, and before America entered the war they were also isolationists. But no one seriously believes that in a united trade union movement Lewis and Hutcheson would play a greater role than each one plays in his own Federation today.

"Furthermore, Lewis and Hutcheson have already abandoned their isolationism. In the American Labor Movement there are no longer any isolationists at all."

While the Jewish Daily Forward recognizes that both Lewis and Hutcheson are anti-Roosevelt—and today this means that they are against America's victory—it is still ready to accept these defeatists as equal partners and legitimate spokesmen of labor.

While the die-hards of the Social Democratic Federation are opposed to unity with the British and Soviet Trade Unions, while they are opposed to the unity of all anti-Hitler forces, they publicly proclaim their readiness to accept enemies of America and enemies of labor as partners!

And Mr. Dubinsky, who is apparently allied with this die-hard bloc, is pursuing a course of action which seems to flow from these dangerous premises.

No wonder Mr. Dubinsky, who heads a union composed of members who are all-out for victory, receives glowing tribute from the defeatist and anti-labor N. Y. World-Telegram.

The victories of the Red Army, the heroic resistance of the Soviet people at Sevastopol and Kharkov, the news that soon a second European front will be opened to crush Hitler in 1942—which evoked the greatest admiration and enthusiasm amongst the free peoples of the world—is met with disappointment and aversion by these inveterate Soviet-haters and was completely by-passed by the G.E.B. meeting.

There are dangerous influences at work in the ILGWU retarding the full mobilization of the union for the war.

In following these narrow anti-Soviet policies, Mr. Dubinsky and his supporters find themselves out of step not only with the policies of the labor and progressive movement, but also with other important sections of the population who see the most vital interest of our nation closely bound up with the Soviet Union. Many sections of the population hitherto hostile to the USSR are radically revising their attitude

toward the Soviet Union not only as a military ally but as a leading nation that will play a decisive role in the reconstruction after the war. This was demonstrated at the Madison Square Garden Russian War Relief meeting. Mr. Dubinsky and his close associates seem to view these developments with displeasure and are displaying even a certain estrangement and coolness toward some of these forces in our national life, including President Roosevelt.

The last two issues of "Justice," official organ of the union, which were devoted to a review of the past ten years of President Dubinsky's leadership, did not make any mention of President Roosevelt in connection with any of these developments. On reading these issues one could hardly guess that a war is being waged in which our nation is fighting in alliance with the Soviet Union.

Is it possible that President Roosevelt's efforts to unite the entire nation and to unite America with the Soviet Union, account for Mr. Dubinsky's coolness toward President Roosevelt? All we can say with regard to these latest developments is that the leadership of the ILGWU which is anti-fascist, and wants to see Hitler defeated, is treading on dangerous ground. They are allowing prejudices, political differences and ungrounded fear of Communists to influence their thinking and actions in this critical period, to overshadow the main issues of unity to crush Hitlerism. Thus they divert the union from the course of loyal, devoted and unstinting service to our nation and its allies, without whose collaboration Hitler and his Axis partners cannot be defeated.

It is well for the union—especially those who are not poisoned by narrow partisan considerations—to give serious thought to the recent happenings in the ILGWU and not to allow narrow considerations of control and leadership, which are not challenged by any one, to obstruct their clear thinking on major questions affecting the lives of millions, including their own membership.

The membership of the ILGWU, which takes second place to no one in its hatred of fascism and love of freedom, should speak out on these life-and-death issues; make their voices heard in the councils of the union; make a halt to the dangerous trends manifested in recent developments in the unions and help steer the union to its proper course. It should make this powerful union of the International Ladies Garment Workers with its 300,000 members a powerful bulwark for the unity of labor and the people in the struggle against the mortal enemy.

Ask Use of Negro Lawyers in War

(Special to The Worker)

CHICAGO, Ill., July 7.—Euclid L. Taylor, president of the National Bar Association, and Alderman Earl B. Dickerson, two outstanding Negro attorneys, together with Martin Popper, executive secretary of the National Lawyers' Guild, have drawn up a plan for the employment without discrimination of Negro lawyers in the war effort.

The plan was evolved at a meeting in Attorney Taylor's office and was revealed a few days ago.

In addition to being a prominent Negro attorney and political figure here, Alderman Dickerson is a member of President Roosevelt's Fair Employment Practices Committee. Popper has been associated with a number of causes in behalf of the Negro people. Taylor, Dickerson and Popper are leading win-the-war spokesmen among the nation's Negro and white lawyers.

URGE COMMISSIONS

The program drafted by the attorneys emphasized that every one of the nation's 2,000 Negro lawyers stands ready to give his fullest ef-

fort to winning the war. One goal set by the Committee is the granting of commissions to Negroes in the newly created Army Specialist Service Corps, in which men from civilian life are given high commissioned ranks.

Mr. Taylor said that it is planned to point to the inadequate employment of Negroes in war and government agencies. The report will also cover the status of Negro employment in such branches as the judge-advocate general's and provost-marshal's offices in the War Department, the War Production Board, the Office of Price Administration, the Department of Justice and similar departments.