

MINERS' STRIKE POSED NEED FOR LABOR SOLIDARITY

Although the coal-strike truce announced Friday promises to restore Chicago's industry to normal in the experiences of the past 10 days a valuable opportunity has been lost to demonstrate working class solidarity.

In the second week of the power dimout the increasing industrial and commercial paralysis of Chicago completely revealed the power of united working-class action. The coal miners are only 400,000 of 50 million employed in the U. S. — less than 1%. Yet, in Chicago, as in other industrial centers, the bosses were forced to cut production 33 1/3 %.

By Thursday, May 9th, 1,150,000 workers out of 2 million and a half in Cook and Du Page Counties were either fully or partly out of work (Illinois Department of Labor).

The miners' blow against the profits of Chicago's industrialists and financiers has been extremely severe. The Chicago Daily News reported, "The business setback in Chicago was so pronounced that none of the usual authoritative sources dared to estimate it."

To meet this situation Mayor Kelly organized an "emergency committee" consisting of George B. Harrington of the Chicago and Frankfort Coal Co., James C. Fitzpatrick, Chicago

area chief of the Solid Fuels Administration: Andrew Murphy, editor of the Black Diamond, coal industry magazine; and other city officials.

While these representatives of the coal industry and the government enforced a coal rationing, the capitalist propaganda machinery moved into high gear to discredit the miners' strike. It deliberately reported the strike as the act of one man, John L. Lewis, instead of 400,000 men—miners.

But who is Lewis? He is the miners' "leader" who, after twelve years of negotiating contracts for the miners, has finally discovered their need for accident and death benefits. He is like a rider who manages to stay with his horse only by hanging onto its tail. The chief reason that the capi-

**"WE MUST
MAKE PROFIT"**

Spiegels, Inc. should have given exactly that answer, and it would have been the truth, when it was recently fined \$25,000 for over-working 14 to 16 year-old children.

"After all," the company could have pleaded, "The mail-order business — ask Ward's and Sears — is run on low wages and high speed-up, and when the government drafted millions of youths, and many of our employes went into war plants, what else could we do?" Spiegels certainly didn't intend to be different from the other corporations, and not cash in on the war profits.

But when the judge said, "\$25,000, please," Spiegels must have smiled and whispered under its breath, "For that price we'd do it again." You see, in April, Spiegel's net sales were \$9,718,072 or 77.89% over April of 1945.

talist press attacks Lewis is that he is one very convenient road of attack against the militancy of the miners.

Meanwhile, Senator Lucas (Ill.) called for legislation to permit the government to seize "public industries" affected by strikes.

What was the answer of Chicago's labor leaders to this boss-Government pressure against the miners?

First, they did a little talk (on page 2)

NO SPEED UP in Contract: Ford Workers

At a well-packed meeting in Fenger high school on May 5th, the Ford workers, members of Local 551 of the U.A.W. - CIO turned thumbs down to a speed-up contract. This came after the International representatives of the UAW had come to agreement with the Ford management covering the 2,000 workers in the assembly plant in South Chicago.

A wage increase was agreed to but the company had figured out a dozen angles for making it up by demanding "control of the production line". This neat arrangement would make a worker subject to discharge if he failed to meet the production schedules and can Ford make that line hum, But this was only half the story.

The management, and the International reps too, know that militant workers would not take it on the chin with a smile so they attempted to put across a "union security clause". Under this clause when the men struck against the speed-up or to settle other grievances, they could be fired.

But the insulted Ford workers answered, "Nuts to you!" They told their negotiating committee to go back and get them good vacations and seniority rights without a speed-up in the production line and without the "union security clause."

Miners' strike

ing to the newspapers:

Grant W. Oakes, President of the United Farm Equipment Workers Union (CIO) was quoted: "The discounts are a part of the NLM - inspired campaign.... utilizing extreme public inconvenience to discredit union workers."

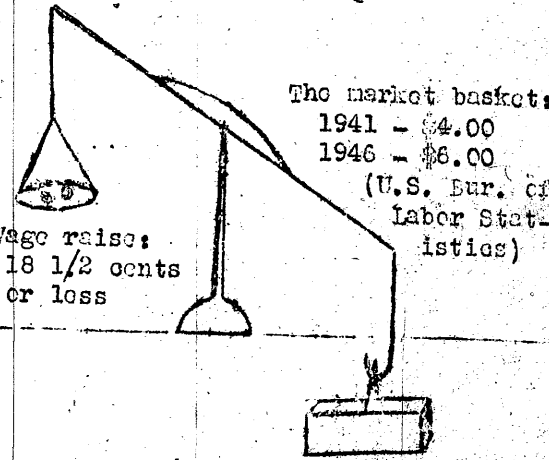
Victor A. Olander, secretary-treasurer of Illinois State Federation of Labor (AFL): "The miners are fighting against death and injury in the nation's most hazardous and disagreeable occupation."

Roid Robinson, President of the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers (CIO): "It is the operators and not the miners who are to blame for the continuation of the strike."

And that was all they did. As it was, even these few quotes were only prompted during interviews with the Chicago Daily News.

What should a really militant union leadership have done in support of the miners? This crisis presented a rare opportunity for a lesson in labor solidarity. To achieve this a systematic campaign should have been waged to acquaint Chicago workers with the issues of the

The Boss Will Always Short-Weight Us



IS 18 1/2 CENTS A RAISE? miners' struggle.

The leadership should have brought these issues to the floor of the local unions.

It should have organized city-wide demonstrations of sympathy and solidarity with the miners.

Chicago workers lost \$25,000,000 in wages during the coal strike. But from these demonstrations of unity the entire labor movement in Chicago would have breathed a new, smashing strength which during future struggles would have more than compensated for this loss.

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