Join the “Daily Worker Boosters”

November, 1923

THE LABOR HERALD

In spite of the monster difficulties which we encountered, we did not become discouraged in the least by the attitude of the reformists. Determined to see ourselves at the head of the movement, giving it voice and expression. In one recent meeting of the 12,000 factory councils of greater Berlin, of which at last one-half were Social-Democrats, the spontaneous movement was organized and placed under the control of a central strike committee. The bureaucracy was so overwhelmed by the growth of the movement and by the submission of the fighting masses of workers to the direction of this central strike committee, that they abandoned the effort to save the Cuno government. They sought to save what they could. Cuno fell, and with him the Ministry. The workers were no longer repudiated with contempt, but great concessions were made. This was a triumph, but great concessions were made. This can best be done by the submission of the fighting masses of workers away from the hands of the reformist bureaucracy and to strengthen them for better struggles against the employing class, was adopted without opposition.

Already in many parts of the country, in which the workers carried on the fight, the news came that a big increase in the trade union membership has taken place. In this, however, the reformist bureaucracy finds no pleasure, for out of millions of workers, only a few are considered as unions of all reasonable functions. The German workers are determined to win their trade unions for the revolutionary struggle. And they will prove that the way which the Red International of Labor Unions recommends to its followers is not only possible but leads quicker to the end sought than the boldest dared believe.

THE proposed publication of The Daily Worker in Chicago, pledged "to fight for the program of the Trade Union Educational League, was greeted by a resolution at the Second General Conference, Sept. 1-2, which pledged our 'undying support of the Daily Worker Campaign Committee in its efforts to raise a $100,000 fund to establish The Daily Worker.'

It is now the task of all members and sympathizers of the League to put this resolution into effect. This can be done be following the methods. (1) Each member of the League should subscribe to at least one share of stock. (2) Each local general group and industrial trial group of the League should send delegates to the City Committee in each center which has charge of the campaign. (3) League delegates to Daily Worker city committees should assist in forming a trade union sub-committee, the duty of which shall be to make a survey of the trade unions in their locality, to organize an intensive campaign to sell stock to all sympathizers, and to prepare a general campaign to sell stock to the unions to sell the union.

We issue this statement in the full confidence that every member of the League will work with unceasing energy and determination to make the Daily Worker a complete success and, especially to develop the full support of friendly trade unions.

NATIONAL COMMITTEE

November, 1923

THE LABOR HERALD

Reactionaries Smashing Ladies Garment Workers

By Earl R. Browder

CYNICALLY and cold-bloodedly, the reactionary officialdom of the International Ladies’ Garment Workers’ Union have engaged in a campaign of expulsions, disfranchisement, and expelling the joint board, Perlstein succeeded, through coercion and corruption, in getting 11 of the remaining 19 to overthrow the decision of the trial committee. Then he expelled the members by executive order. Immediately after he expelled 9 more, including Dora Lipshtiz, I. Litinskky, J. Terry, J. Goldeman, Jennie Schwartz, Charley Green, Sam Cohen, Nathan Bosen, and Hynen Fogel, all of them without trial or even pretense of trial.

This opening gun in the war against progress was quickly followed by a general letter from the International Executive Board, signed by Sigman and Baroff, president and secretary, calling upon all locals to expel members of the Trade Union Educational League. But everywhere the rank and file refused to follow the reactionaries. In not a single instance did any local union take action against the left-wingers—and a logical thing that is, because in the local unions the left wing is respected and trusted. So the bureaucracy swung into action again. In New York they arbitrarily removed Rose Wolkowitz from the Joint Board. In Chicago, they rushed about concocting up charges to place against the advocates of amalgamation. The whole union was thrown into a turmoil of protest.

Carmen’s Hall Shooting

The expelled members in Chicago appealed to their local unions to enter protest against Perlstein’s strong-arm methods. His answer was the appointment of a “Committee of Ten” without any discussion of his traitor’s methods. His agents broke up the local union meetings to prevent motions of protest from being adopted. As a final recourse to bring their case before the membership, the expelled members called a mass meeting in Ashland Auditorium, also known as Carmen’s Hall.

The meeting in Carmen’s Hall was an historic one. Those in charge had not expected more than 400 or 500 members, about the number of regular attendants at local meetings. Instead of that, and in spite of the most strenuous efforts of the left-wing advocates of amalgamation and the labor party, were elected in a majority of the offices, all of them members of the League, standing and trusted in the work of the union. Perlstein immediately began his destruction. He brought charges against L. L. Davidson and Alex Kanovsky, and had a trial committee of eight. In the proceedings that followed, Perlstein violated every safeguard thrown up for protection of the membership by the Laws of the Union. In spite of his threats and violations of the law, the Committee returned a verdict in favor of the left-wing militants by a vote of 5 to 1. But by disfranchising 16 out of 35 members of the Joint Board, Perlstein succeeded, through coercion and corruption, and in getting 11 of the remaining 19 to overthrow the decision of the trial committee. Then he expelled the members by executive order. Immediately after he expelled 9 more, including Dora Lipshtiz, I. Litinskky, J. Terry, J. Goldeman, Jennie Schwartz, Charley Green, Sam Cohen, Nathan Bosen, and Hynen Fogel, all of them without trial or even pretense of trial.

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Out-Czaring the Czar

But with arbitrary ruling, disregarding all constitutional limitations on their power, the administration continues to lay charges against members, deprive them of office, rule them off the union floor, place fines of $25 to $100 against them, and terrorize them in every conceivable way. Locals 10 and 18, for instance, were fined $50 by ruling of Perlstein for signing a petition for reinstatement of the expelled, and M. Kreindell was fined $25 for handing out a circular. Both were deprived of the floor and privilege of holding office for 2 years. This is but a sample of a thousand happenings of a similar nature, unexampled in their audacity and cynicism, occurring throughout the I. L. G. W. U. In Local 22, New York, 19 out of 25 members of the Joint Board recently elected, have been removed by executive order.

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Lewis “Settles”

By Thomas Myerscough

WHEN the Tri-District Convention, composed of districts 7, 8, and 9, was reconvened at Scranton, September 17th, to pass upon the negotiations that had been carried on with the mine operators, and the agreement reached through the mediation of Governor Pinchot, the United Mine Workers of America was faced with another betrayal. In spite of the smoke-screens thrown out by Lewis and his cohorts, in spite of their efforts to disguise the apparent fact, the miners are getting less than the settlement promised them; Lewis had fooled the men.

Lewis told the miners that the Union has been “recognized through collective bargaining”-although the check-off ballot that recognition means, a recognition for the purpose of getting the men back to work but giving them nothing in return, is seen in the inability of the union to enforce a uniform application of the settlement. Each company is giving its own interpretation to the contract and the result is chaos.

In the matter of the wage increase, again Lewis compromised for less than the demands and the men get less than the settlement promised them. Instead of $2. per day flat increase for day men, the settlement calls for 10% or 25c to 50c per day. In the application of this increase it is reported that some of the companies are, first, reducing the former wage for 12 hours by one-third, to pro rate for the new 8-hour schedule, and then adding the 10% only to that reduced wage, so that some of the day men have actually had their earnings reduced. This is the great wage victory,” which Lewis put over on the anthracite miners.

The 8-hour day was supposed to have been won. But in many instances reports show that the 8-hour day being applied on the split-shift basis have not increased wages four hours work, four hours layoff, and then four hours work again, forcing the miner to actually spend the same 12 hours as he formerly did. And while it was so understood, we hope on this point that strikes are still reported in the endeavors of the local unions to get what they “won.”

The 1922 strike found the hard and soft coal miners standing together for the first time, as their contracts had expired together. It was the solidarity brought about by this situation that enabled the U. M. W. A. to wage such a magnificant battle and force a triumphant victory upon the mine operators. But the settlements which were made then, under the direction of John L. Lewis, allowed this solidarity to be broken up by overlapping the district of the contracts for the anthracite and bituminous fields. This defeat for the solidarity of the miners was continued in this newest “best” settlement made by John L. Lewis.

One of the clying evils in the anthracite fields has been the irregular wages and scales. There has never been a serious effort at equalization of conditions in this branch of the industry, and the consequences have been very detrimental to the miners. The new settlement does nothing to remedy this. There is such irregularity that practically every company has its own scale of wages. In district from Pittston to Schellspring, for example, particularly in the mines of the Pennsylvania Coal Co., the men are getting about $2. per ton besides having check-weighmen on the tipple to guarantee honest weights; but in the other sections the scale runs from $1.90 to $2.25 for 3-ton cars.

This lack of equalization is most demoralizing. Rinaldo Capellini, president of District 1, knows this problem well, and he should have been the very last man in the world to agree to a settlement which did not even tackle this problem. Capellini spoke out strongly against this evil, during the period when the Lewis administration was calling him a “disgruntled, deposed organizer.” He surely could not have forgotten it during the negotiations with the operators in which he took part. And while many anthracite miners believe that the compromises made at their expense were delayed by opposition from Capellini, and that Lewis went along with Lewis administration for fear of a protest, yet on this question of the equalization of conditions they see that nothing whatever was done.

Capellini was complicated by going Lewis’ interpretation of this issue he doubtfully compromised himself.

There was not the slightest reason for the United Mine Workers of America to thus give in to the coal operators on this point of the wage. The anthracite miners could have won all their demands if their leadership had been determined. John L. Lewis has admitted this himself. He once stated, while in New York in an effort to supplement the latter’s announcement of the settlement, that he had sacrificed the demands of the coal miners in order to gain the good will of the mythical “public.”

The anthracite settlement is in line with the same diabolical policy of the Lewis administration. It is to form a united front with the employers and with the capitalist Government against the rank and file of the United Mine Workers of America. Because the progressive forces within the Union are fighting against this policy of betrayal, the Lewis administration is engaged in war against the Progressive International Committee. It fights the progressives for the same reason that it abandoned the anthracite miners’ justified and reasonable demands for the reason that it has entered into a definite and open alliance with the employing class and against the working class.

A united front of the “labor leaders” with the employers and Government, against the rank and file of labor and to destroy the effectiveness of strikes before they start, is the ultimate aim of the capitalist mine owners and exploiters. We must stir ever fearlessly and continuously, for the improved conditions demanded by the members of the U. M. W. A., for the nationalization of the mines, for the Labor Party, and for the power of the work-