

WHO ARE THE ? MURDERERS ◆

WHO PAID FOR PLACING THE BOMB
THAT KILLED MORRIS LANGER?

*The ring of racketeers in
the fur industry exposed*



Morris Langer

*Facts about the racket that the notorious Lepke and
Gurrab gangsters, bosses, "Socialists" and A. F. of L.
officials are carrying on in the fur industry.*

By Ben Gold

General Secretary of the N. T. W. I. U.

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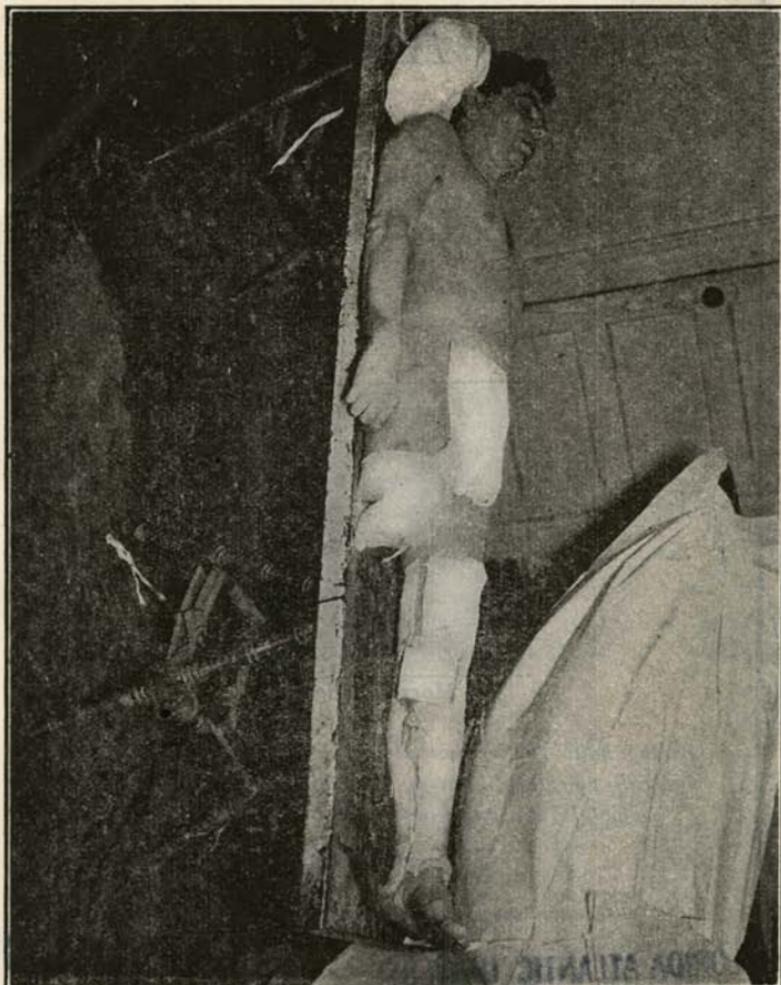
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Issued by the GENERAL EXECUTIVE BOARD
NEEDLE TRADES WORKERS INDUSTRIAL UNION

131 West 28th Street, New York, N. Y.

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MORRIS LANGER, AFTER THE EXPLOSION OF THE BOMB

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*Who Murdered Morris Langer and
Harry Gottfried?*

*Who Paid the Gangsters for Their Attack
on the Industrial Union?*

*Who Was Planning and Carrying Through
the Attacks Upon the Needle Trades
Workers?*

THE dastardly murder of Morris Langer is still fresh in our memory. On the 22nd day of March, 1933, a bomb placed in Langer's automobile exploded and tore his body to pieces. One month later, April 24th, while their hands were still soaked with Langer's blood, a gang of murderers, armed with revolvers and iron pipes, broke into the office of the Industrial Union where hundreds of men and women were assembled in the early forenoon. They pounced upon these unarmed workers and staged a bloody orgy, which, because of its open brutality, caused considerable comment even in the capitalist press.

Fifteen innocent workers were wounded by the gangsters. A bullet was fired into the stomach of Harry Gottfried, which resulted in his death. Their attack was carried through in such a beastly manner that a stray bullet hit one of their own gangsters who died instantly.

These murderous attacks were not accidental. They were carried through in line with a carefully formulated plan.

Who planned these murderous attacks and who paid the price?

Well-Dressed Woman Visits Union for a Working Card on Day of Attack

A few minutes before the gangsters invaded the Union office, an unusually well-dressed woman came up to the second floor of the building where the Fur Department is located and asked Jack Schneider, one of the organizers, for a working card for the firm of Fox & Weissman.

The visit of this woman is not accidental, but is part of the planned attack. It has never been the practice for any furrier to ask for a working card from the Industrial Union when they received jobs. Such procedure is only followed in the "Socialist" Union, the Joint Council, where the working-card system has been installed, in order to force the workers to belong to their Union.

The shop of Fox & Weissman, for which the woman asked for a working card, happens to be one of the few shops controlled by the Joint Council and not the Industrial Union.

That this attack was not accidental, but well-planned, is proven by the fact that the leaders of the Associated Fur Manufacturers together with the leaders of the American Federation of Labor and the Socialist Party, have been secretly calculating their plans for an attack against the furriers of the Industrial Union. The capitalist newspapers, the *Times*, the *Women's Wear*, printed news items on the eve of this attack in which they stated that the American Federation of Labor unions, supported by the bosses and the police, are planning to begin a campaign in the fur market in the near future in which they will use "strong methods."

Immediately after the well-dressed woman, mentioned above, left the Union, the gangsters invaded the office and began their shooting affray. It is evident that the woman was a messenger or a "pathfinder," as such peo-

ple are termed in the language of the detectives. It is very important to note that this woman was never again seen in the Industrial Union or in the fur district. The Industrial Union has undisputed evidence to prove that this woman was in the office of the "Socialist" Joint Council immediately after the attack.

It is also important to note that during the month of April, when the murder was carried through, a certain gentleman by the name of Harry Yurman was engaged to "work" in the Council. This gentleman is well known amongst the furriers. He is a very famous and influential person in the underworld circles. For three years he was the leader of strong-arm squads and the contact man with the underworld for the Furriers Union under Kaufman's leadership. The same Harry Yurman is even now an "official" appointed by the Joint Council and is receiving the "measly" sum of One Hundred Fifty (\$150.) Dollars per week. He is of the trustworthy contactmen of the infamous Lepke and Guerra gang, the owners of the racketeering business in the fur and other trades.

In addition to the above enumerated facts which clearly show the close connections between the murder of Morris Langer and the murderous attack on the Union, as well as the connections between the gangsters and the leaders of the Joint Council, the Union has in its possession, concrete facts which remove any doubt that the "Socialist" Union leaders are a party to the conspiracy against the fur workers. Our Union is ready to turn over these facts at any time to a committee of honest workers, which shall be ready and competent to make a thorough investigation of the murderous conspiracies against our Union and its leaders.

The furriers will smash attacks of the bosses, A. F. of L. racketeers, socialist fakers and Lovestoneite renegades.

How Does the Lepke and Guerrah Gang Come to the Fur Trade?

Lepke and Guerrah are leaders of a gang of cut-throats, bootleggers, opium smugglers, murderers and thieves. Lepke and Guerrah are the heirs to the throne of their well-known chiefs of the underworld, Little Augie and Curley, after the latter were put out of the way, or taken for a ride, as is the customary language of the underworld.

The Lepke and Guerrah gang are important pillars in the "Socialist" unions. They helped Sigman to carry through the "reorganization" in 1927. In the Amalgamated these two gang leaders were the real power behind the throne of the "Socialist" managers, Knock-out Beckerman, for whom "Comrade" Vladeck wrote a song of praise in the pages of the *Forward*, declaring himself ready to wash the feet of this great leader. The Lepke and Guerrah gang is the actual power behind the throne of the rulers of the Pocketbook Makers Union and a number of other unions. With the aid of the underworld cut-throats, the American Federation of Labor, and "Socialist" leaders are retaining their powers in the unions, and suppress and oppress the workers and "discipline" the lefts and Communists. These murder bands help the bosses carry through their treacherous settlements and fake strikes. They help to elect the corrupt union officials to the most important positions in the Unions at scandalously high wages at the expense of the workers.

These gangs, to be sure, are not doing their work for pure principles, but receive good pay for every job they carry through. The price is decided in accordance with the importance of the job. They have even applied a scientific method of price settlements and have established standard prices for different "jobs," which are classi-

fied into various categories, beginning with *wet* jobs (meaning stabbing, lead pipes and murder).

That the Lepke and Guerrah gang has played a very important role in the fur trade, especially in the recent period, is proven by the following facts. When Genosse Knockout Beckerman parted company with his chief, Mr. Sidney Hillman, in 1931, and organized his own Cutters Union in partnership with Orlofsky, the Lepke and Guerrah gang, which was then under the leadership of Curley, was the backbone of the Beckerman Cutters Union. The gang later sold the new "union" to Hillman for Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000).

When Beckerman remained without a job and the means of earning a livelihood, the gang showed their appreciation to their former ally and, through their connection in the fur trade, placed Beckerman as manager of the bosses' association in the fur dressing trade. Here Beckerman met all his friends and comrades. Morris Kaufman at that time was appointed by the bosses as President of the Furriers International. Sam Cohen, who a few years ago had been Vice-President of the Furriers International, and a member of "Comrade" Beckerman's "Socialist" branch of the Sixth District, was an important leader and member of the Fur Dressing Association.

These three "Socialist" chiefs, Abe Beckerman, Sam Cohen and Morris Kaufman, together with the Lepke and Guerrah gang and the biggest manufacturers who for a long time looked for ways and means of doing away with their business competitors, used their ingenuity and together organized the famous official racket under the name of the Fur Factors Dressing Corporation.

This triple alliance of bosses, union officials and underworld saw in this racket a chance for advancing their joint interests.

The Union members of the locals which are still affiliated with the International did not have the least idea of the entire conspiracy. They were not consulted whether such a combination should be organized and knew nothing of the scandalous actions of their leaders. Nevertheless, they were forced to pay dues and taxes which amounted to thousands of dollars. This money was extorted from the workers by intimidation under the pretence that it was being used for organizational purposes. We want to show to what extent the racketeers succeeded in intimidating and terrorizing the workers.

In 1932 the union officials of Locals 2 and 3 of the International in the fur trade carried on a strike against an open shop by the name of Competent Dressing Co. The firm employed between 25 and 30 workers. The strike was lost. After the strike, Pietro Lucchi, the President of the International, reported at a meeting of Local 3 that the strike had cost the local \$66,000; \$50,000 in strike benefits and \$16,000 for other organizational expenses on which he cannot report to the workers.

Aims and Methods of the Fur Racket

It is important to note that just as the members of the fur dressing locals 2 and 3, who are still in the International, did not know about the unity with the racketeers, many of the bosses, the rank and file members of the association, did not know of the plans and deeds of their leaders who made an alliance with the racketeers. The racket was organized and administered by the ringleaders of the association, the ringleaders of the Union and Beckerman and his aides, the leaders of the underworld, Lepke and Guerrah.

The aims of the racket were:

Help heroic struggle of furriers, contribute to the \$10,000 defense fund.

1) To force all bosses to become members and pay dues to the Fur Factors Dressing Corp., controlled by the racketeers.

2) The racketeers were to prevent new shops from coming into existence.

3) To drive out of business a number of firms who refused to join the racket.

4) The dealers of the racket decided on how many "units" every shop was permitted to make. Of course, the leaders of the racket were assigned more work, which meant more profit for themselves. The unimportant bosses, the rank and filers, had to be content with less business. They had no other way. They knew what rebellion against their racketeer leaders would mean.

They had numerous methods for driving the firms out of business or forcing them into the racket. They destroyed shops, threw bombs, took workers out on "strike," threw acid in the faces of their competitors and used other such "civilized" methods. It all depended on how serious the breach was, which one or another manufacturer committed against the racket.

The Conditions of the Workers Under the Racket

It can easily be understood that under the rule of such bloody racketeers the conditions of the workers grew worse from day to day. The racketeers extorted hundreds of thousands of dollars from the Union treasury of the fur locals of the International. The rich treasuries of Locals 2 and 3, which were always considered among the best financially situated, were emptied out in a short period. The members paid tens of dollars taxes for weeks and months, at the time when the largest number of workers, who at one time were well paid, were actually starving. This was especially the case of the members of Local 3, because these workers are less skilled than the members of Local 2. Many of the older workers were

It was always the policy of the International to keep the fur dressers' local isolated from the other locals. Because of the racket, this separation went even further than in the past.

It is understood, of course, that the Union officials ("Socialists," as is the rule) were the most bitter and vicious fighters against the left wingers and Communists, and are loyal members of the American Federation of Labor and great patriots.

The Racketeers Are Spreading Out Their Domination

The racketeers have also taken into their hands the Protective Fur Rabbit Dressing Association. They organized that trade along the same lines, under the same rules and regulations as their first racket. The new racket was conducted under the leadership of the triangle: the Board of Directors of the Association, the Union leaders and the gang. The new racket adopted the same program as the first racket and made the same murderous attempts to entrench itself. An undesirable shop was torn to pieces by bombs. The night watchman, an innocent worker, was killed by the explosion. But this did not stop the murderers. They continued their game of murder and destruction and have thrown fear into the hearts of their competitors.

The Ambitions of the Racketeers

Enthused by their success and encouraged and drunk with their power, the racketeers became very ambitious. Their ravenous appetites increased. They aimed to take into their bloody paws the entire New York fur coat and fur trimming trade which employs 10,000 workers and does a business amounting to hundreds of millions of dollars yearly.

This would mean a gigantic source of riches for the racketeers. It would mean that they would be able to

entrench their brutal power and spread their control over the entire fur trade, becoming the undisputed rulers over the workers. This would be a real kingdom for them.

But here the murderers and racketeers encountered unforeseen difficulties. The New York fur workers belong to a class struggle Industrial Union. The gangsters and racketeers know from experience that the left wing Communist Union leaders are not "practical people" and business cannot be done with them as with the right wing bureaucrats.

The racketeers therefore planned to put the Industrial Union and its leaders out of the way. A few New York fur bosses, just as the "Socialist" union officials, were interested in bringing the gang into the New York fur coat and trimming trade. The leaders of the Associated Fur Coat Manufacturers were in need of the racketeers. Their Association was on the point of disintegration. They saw in the gang the only instrument through which they could force the bosses to become good-standing dues-paying members of the Association. The right wing union bureaucrats depended entirely on the underworld gang to force the workers to belong to the Joint Council. It was clear that the Associated could serve the purposes of both. The gang began to prepare itself. The leaders of the Association were ready. The "Socialist" union leaders were ready to place this situation into the hands of the racketeers. The only one that interfered with this plan was the Industrial Union. The interested parties, the bosses, the gangsters and the "Socialist" union leaders therefore looked for plans how to wipe out the interference of the Industrial Union.

The industrial union has won great gains for the workers, that's why the union is being attacked now.

The Strained Relations Between the Industrial Union and the Bosses Cement the Unity Among the Racketeers

In the beginning of 1933, during the months of January and February, the Industrial Union carried on official negotiations with the Associated Fur Manufacturers about an agreement.

The gang leaders and right wing union leaders were on edge. They saw clearly that if the Associated leaders sign an agreement with the Industrial Union, the chance for the gangsters to establish the racket in the rich fur trade would be a thing of the past.



THE FUNERAL

The conferences between the Industrial Union and the Associated were broken off. The agreement was not

signed because the Associated leaders refused to give in to the demands of the Union. The relations between the bosses and the Industrial Union became more strained from day to day. The Union prepared to strike for the demands of the workers.

Under these circumstances the long-sought unity between the bosses, the gangsters and the right wing union leaders against the Industrial Union was completed.

The Lights Are Put On in the Joint Council

Certainly a miracle occurred in the "Socialist" Joint Council. The Council had already been breathing its last. There were no electric lights, no coal to heat up the deserted Joint. A special committee was sent to the "Socialist" *Forward* to plead for a few dollars to buy coal. The boys were compelled to play cards by candlelight. Everything seemed to be lost, but suddenly — a miracle. Just as soon as the conferences between the Industrial Union and the Associated were broken, the electric was reopened in the Joint Council. A telephone was put in. A stenographer was engaged; and business started. The well-known Harry Yurman, one of the lieutenants of the Lepke and Guerrah gang, became the official manager of the right wing union. The plan for unity among the racketeers, Associated bosses and right wing union leaders finally became a reality and they began their work.

Why They Murdered Morris Langer

Comrade Morris Langer was the manager of the Rabbit Dressing and Dyeing Department of the Industrial Union. The rabbit dressing trade was controlled by the racketeers. The so-called "official" president of the Rabbit Dressing Association demanded of Comrade Langer that he help drive out of business those bosses who refused to join the racket.

The President, Mr. Mittelman, pressed Comrade Langer with his demand that the Industrial Union shall take its workers out of the shops in Gloversville and thereby drive the firms out of the trade. The official president of the cut-throat racket argued that the Gloversville shops are competing with the bosses organized in the racket and therefore must be done away with.

Comrade Langer, of course, informed the president that the Industrial Union is not a partner to any racket; that the leaders of the Industrial Union are not racketeers and that our methods are very different from the "Social-



GOTFRIED—*Died after the attack on the
N.T.W.I.U. offices*

ist" union leaders. We are interested in the wages and conditions of the workers and not in racketeering, and since the Gloversville workers are receiving union scales and all other union conditions, the Union will not call these shops on strike.

The president of the racket became more insistent with his demand that Langer take the workers out of the shops that do not belong to the racket after the Gloversville shop, which was destroyed by a bomb, was rebuilt. Langer answered all these demands with an energetic NO! The president began to threaten, but the threats were of no avail and Comrade Langer persisted in his refusal to carry out the orders of the racket.

When the Lepke and Guerrah gang with its partners undertook to force their domination on the New York fur coat and trimming manufacturing trade, Comrade Langer was leading the strike against the firm of Hollander & Sons in Newark, N. J.

The Hollander firm has a bloody record in the fur trade. In 1915, two workers, Reuben and Novick, were murdered on the picket line in front of the shop. In the strike of 1932-33 the striker, Natalie Bollero, from the Hollander shop was shot dead.

Because of this strike, conducted by the Industrial Union against this firm, these rich and brutal exploiters joined in the war against the Industrial Union and its leaders.

The enemies of the Industrial Union forged a chain with which they hoped to destroy the Industrial Union. This chain included all the leaders of the Fur International, the leaders of the locals and the Joint Council, the leaders of the fur bosses association (with the exception of the Trimming Association with which the Industrial Union is in contractual relations. This chain of course included the gang of the underworld, the Lepke and Guerrah gang. There was plenty of money and plenty of murderous hirelings.

The Murderous Plans Are Carried Through

The first victim whose limbs were torn from his body in his automobile was Comrade Langer. On March 22,

1933, the gang carried through this brutal murder. One month later, April 24, they carried through the attack on the workers and leaders of the Industrial Union.

One month later, on May 24, the "Associated" bosses locked out the workers from the shops and ordered them not to return to work without books and working cards from the right "Socialist" union.

At the same time, the "Socialist" union, in accordance with the well worked out plan, began its attack on the Industrial Union and applied to the courts for an injunction against the Industrial Union.

The gangsters, together with a few misled Ypsels, ran through the shops in an attempt to force the workers, by means of violence, to go to the right wing union. In the shops where the furriers conducted strikes against the lockout under the leadership of the Industrial Union, the Joint Council sent scabs.

At the same time, the president of the Fur Rabbit Dressing racket gave an ultimatum to our Union. Comrade Potash was informed by the same person that if he will not declare strikes in the shops which the racket association desires to drive out of business, he will get the same deal as Langer. "Be careful," this individual warned Potash, "because you know that we get after the chiefs of the Union."

At the same time the right wing International with the aid of the bosses and guerillas attacked the workers in the dressing shops which were controlled by the Industrial Union and forced some of the workers to register in the International.

Many active Union leaders, amongst them Potash and Jack Schneider, were arrested. Detectives continually raided the offices of our Union and arrested active workers without any reason.

Edward McGrady, the A. F. of L. organizer and official strike-breaker, the present Assistant Secretary of the

Federal Labor Department, came specially to a meeting of the Associated bosses to encourage them in their struggle against the Industrial Union.

The discredited and despised Lovestoneites carried on propaganda for the furriers to register with the underworld scab agency, under the pretence that they are against dual-unionism.

With this cooperation of enemies: McGrady, persecutions, gangster attacks, mass arrests; the bosses and A. F. of L. "Socialist" union leaders surrounded the Industrial Union and gloried in their coming victory.

The Furriers Beat Back the Attacks

The results are well known. The furriers, under the leadership of the Industrial Union smashed this conspiracy.

The gangsters that attacked the Industrial Union got their deserved answer from the furriers.

The bosses' association was smashed and the bosses were compelled to settle with the Industrial Union and give in to all the demands of the workers.

The Joint Council was smashed.

The injunction, which the "Socialist" union leaders together with the bosses have taken out against the furriers, was of little avail.

The leaders of the Industrial Union defied all the threats that they will be murdered. They organized and led the furriers through victorious struggles and with the aid of the workers destroyed the possibility for the gangsters and racketeers to become the rulers of the fur coat and trimming trade.

Twenty-eight Union Leaders Indicted

The Union made public the facts about the murderous deeds of the racketeers, carried on by the racket in the fur industry. Special letters were sent to the District

Attorney in which we gave all the facts about the murderous deeds of the gangsters. The facts were made public in the *Morning Freiheit* and the *Daily Worker*. The Union declared a strike against the rabbit dressing firms which were connected with the underworld racket. Militant unions cannot work with the underworld and cannot be partners to their racketeering business. Militant, revolutionary unions must carry on a struggle against gangsterism which is sometimes used by the bosses against the racketeers, but at all times against the workers. The gangsters are very important for the bosses in their struggle against the workers, against strikers, against pickets.

The A. F. of L. "Socialist" corrupt and degenerated union officials retain their positions with the aid of guerillas which are hired by the union officials to "discipline" the members who revolt against their misleadership.

The older furriers will surely remember the famous slogan which dominated the meetings of the A. F. of L. and "Socialist" union, "Sit down, or I'll knock you down!" This form of democracy is the rule in all A. F. of L. "Socialist" unions where the desperate members raise their voices in revolt against those who are betraying the interests of the workers at every step. When the struggle of the revolting workers against the treacherous union bureaucrats becomes sharper, especially in those unions where there are organized oppositions who mercilessly expose the treachery of the officials, or in such trades where the members, driven by mass expulsions and treachery built their own unions to defend their own interests and often their very lives,—in all such instances the unity between the bosses, "Socialist" union officials (A. F. of L., Socialists and Lovestoneites) and gangsters, becomes very close and open. The attacks on the workers and their leaders become more brutal. The police and

the courts are of course on the side of the bosses and always against the workers.

It has happened more than once in the fur trade that gangsters that have beaten up workers were honorably discharged by the police and the honest workers who were attacked were arrested and sent to long terms of imprisonment. This is capitalist justice. Strikers are placed behind prison bars. Bootleggers, kidnappers, opium smugglers, thieves, racketeers, strike-breakers, cut-throats and murderers are honorable, well-known proud and free citizens. The murder affray in South River which in the last dress strike caused the death of a strikers child, the murderous attacks on the steel workers in Ambridge, the miners in Utah, the lynchings in Maryland, and with the exception of a few instances the murderers were freed, while strikers and their leaders are languishing in prison.

The murderers of Morris Langer are free. The murderers of Harry Gottfried are free. The murderers of Natalie Bollero are free. Twenty-eight leaders of the Industrial Union are indicted and are in danger of being sent to prison because they organized and are leading the furriers in a struggle for better conditions; because they dared to fight the exploiters, racketeers and cut-throats.

In the face of all this, the government pretends that it is fighting against racketeers, gangsterism and murder. There are still naive and undeveloped workers who believe all the statements of the government just as they believe that the Constitution of the United States allows the workers to organize and strike for better conditions; just as there are many workers who believed and some still believe that the N.R.A. aims to improve the conditions of the workers, wipe out unemployment and that

Needle workers, don't permit the bosses and their labor agents to rob you of your gains in the shops.

section 7 (a) of the N.R.A. guarantees to the workers the right to belong to a union of their own choosing. All this is a shameful swindle. It is a lie covered up with high sounding phrases whose main intent is to fool and mislead the workers.

The Tasks of the Workers

The workers must not permit themselves to be misled by the liars and swindlers who are loyal servants of the ruling class, the bosses. Only through their organized power can the workers win better conditions.

The Industrial Union will not give up its struggle against gangsters and racketeers. It is part and parcel of the struggle conducted by the Union for higher wages, union conditions, for the right of the workers to be organized into a workers union, for the right to strike and picket, for the unemployment insurance, against evictions, against hunger, injunctions, deportations, against terror and lynching.

The needle trades workers will not allow these murder bands to murder militant workers of the Industrial Union. The needle trades workers will not allow that the leaders of the Industrial Union shall be sent to prison. The needle trades workers will not permit the bosses, "Socialist" union officials and gangsters to rob, exploit, terrorize and enslave the workers.

In this struggle, the Industrial Union must have moral and financial support in order to defend the 28 indicted leaders. The Industrial Union appeals to all class-conscious workers to raise funds to help break the conspiracy and free the twenty-eight indicted leaders. Make collections in your shops. Organize a united front in the shops of right wing workers and left wing workers to help the

Industrial Union in its courageous and determined struggle.

Workers, free the unions from gangsterism!

It is part of your struggle for your union wages and union conditions. It is part of the struggle of the needle trades workers for a clean, militant, aggressive trade union, led and administered by the workers in the interests of the workers.

The Industrial Union has shown by deeds that loyally defends the interests of the workers and is courageously fighting against all enemies of the workers. It is for this reason that the leaders of the Industrial Union are persecuted, arrested and murdered, but the leaders and members of the Industrial Union will not be intimidated by these persecutions but will continue the struggle to defend the economic conditions of the workers, and together with the workers of other trades to fight against capitalist exploitation.

It is the duty of every needle trades worker and every class-conscious worker to do his or her share to help in this struggle.

The struggle of the Industrial Union is a struggle for every needle trades worker. The victory of the Needle Trades Workers Industrial Union will be a victory for all the needle trades workers and the labor movement as a whole.

Do your duty to help defeat the enemies of the working class!

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