

ROOSEVELT'S FIRST NRA EXHIBIT--MISERY IN THE TEXTILE MILLS

How NRA Operates in the Silk Mills Around New Jersey

Worker Says "We Are Organizing for Strike," As Cost of All Food Goes Up, Cutting Down Living Standards Sharply

By CARL REEVE

"We are organizing and preparing a strike against the conditions and wages under which we are working." This is the statement of a worker in the Weidmann Dye Company in Patterson, a month after this concern began to run under the National Recovery Act Dye Code. The 20,000 dye workers and 15,000 broad silk workers (mostly weavers) in the two main branches of the silk industry in and around Patterson are dissatisfied with the terms of the code under which they have been working since the end of July. The minimum wage of 13 dollars a week and the 8-hour day, which is in the blanket textile code, applies in the silk industry. But even this small minimum wage and the reduction of hours tells only a small part of the story of the workers bad conditions. A worker can buy half with his dollar what he bought early this spring, before the code went into effect. The silk concerns already have their shelves stocked with unsold goods, and wholesale shutdowns and mass unemployment can be expected in the immediate future. The few important concessions that have been won, have been forced out of the silk concerns as a result of strikes.

Food Prices Way Up

"In February, a twenty-four and a half lb. sack of flour cost me 59 cents. The same sack of Hecker's flour now costs me one dollar and ten cents," the wife of a worker said. "Yes," the warper interjected. "I am supposed to have received a 25 per cent increase in wages. But my wages are really less than they were before the code. In cash, I get about \$2.00 more pay, considering the reduction in hours. The warpers are the most skilled craft in the broad silk industry now around 18-20 dollars a week. But my wages would have to increase 50 per cent to keep up with increased prices."

Code Reduces Wages

These high prices work greater hardship on the weavers who form the bulk of the workers in broad silk. The weavers now get around 15-17 dollars a week. For the weavers and the other workers in the broad silk industry no separate code has been finally ratified by the NRA. The code finally presented however by the Silk Association of America made public on August 8 calls for a minimum wage for all Northern silk workers of \$13.00 a week, the same as the blanket code now operating. The competition between the small northern mills in the association and the large silk and rayon companies caused a disagreement as to the provisions as to who should administer the code the small shops demanding a say. But there was no controversy among the employers as to the 13 dollar a week minimum for the weavers, quillers, warpers, etc. The employers, the government and the A. F. of L. textile unions have maneuvered into a position whereby, according to the provisions of the code now in effect, they can reduce wages, now averaging sixteen-seventeen dollars a week, to \$13.00 a week and receive the protection of the Roosevelt code. The silk manufacturers and dye houses will again try to make the workers bear the burdens of the glutted market, and reduce wages to the minimum and lay off workers.

Dyers Preparing Strike

How the eight hour provisions in the code now in effect works out among the dyers, can be seen among the Weidmann dye house workers. "What is the use of the eight-hour day for us when we only work an average of five and a half hours a day anyhow?" this worker said. "The silk workers this spring through their nation wide strikes and threat of strike and organization, forced the manufacturers to grant increases. Now I get the code rate of 45 cents an hour. My last two weeks pay was \$36 or 18 dollars a week. This is less in many cases than we got working longer hours at the rate of 37 cents an hour. Often workers get below that in the dye houses. The Weidmann Co. is a part of the United Dye, the biggest dye works in New Jersey, which has a dye house near Passaic with several thousand work-

Hathaway Mill Tells Workers to Make \$13 Minimum or Quit

(By a Textile Worker Correspondent)

NEW BEDFORD, Mass.—The National Industrial Recovery Act is being used as an excuse for making the young workers in the New Bedford textile mills speed up. The first week that the N.I.R.A. was put through, the bosses in all the weave rooms at the Hathaway Mill told the workers to either make the minimum wage, which is \$13, or they shall get fired.

This shows that the NRA is nothing more than a National Industrial Slavery Act for all learners who are just beginning to run the same

National Textile Union, Built Thru Strike Struggles

Story of NTU from the Gastonia Strike to Present Day

Militant struggles for a living wage and better conditions for workers mark the history of the National Textile Workers' Industrial Union. From the first large strike in 1929, the Gastonia Strike, shortly after the formation of the union, to the present series of struggles against the NRA and its slave code, the story of the Textile Union is the story of struggle.

Jack Stachel, acting secretary of the Trade Union Unity League, with which the N.T.W.U. is affiliated, in an interview today, listed some of the more important of these struggles. Among those he mentioned are the Gastonia strike in 1929; the struggle of 10,000 textile workers in Lawrence, Mass., in March, 1931; the strikes throughout Rhode Island, Connecticut, Massachusetts and New Jersey; and the present strike wave throughout New England against the vicious slave codes adopted under the NRA.

The union was founded in Patterson in October, 1929, by a left-wing group who led the Passaic, Patterson and New Bedford strikes in that same year.

Ann Burak, heroic working class leader, now under threat of deportation, is National Secretary of the Union. Jim Reid is president and Nat Kaplan national organizer. The National offices are at 1775 Westminster St., Providence, R. I.

Jack Stachel said that, due to the recent struggles of the N.T.W.U., over 2,000 new members had been recruited during the last six weeks.

Help improve the "Daily Worker" send in your suggestions and criticism! Let us know what the workers in your shop think about the "Daily."

Three Providence Mill Strikes

By NAT KAPLAN, Organizer, N. T. W. U.

Three important textile strikes took place in Providence, R. I., involving 1,850 workers, between July 13 and August 7. They included: International Braid, Charles St. mill (cotton narrow fabrics) 800 workers; Colored Worsted Mill 350 workers, American Silk Spinning Co., 1,200 workers.

The important features of these strikes were:

- 1.—Each strike broke out spontaneously. The National Textile Workers Union (NTWU) came in on the first day and won the leadership of the workers.
- 2.—The strikes were offensive struggles for higher wages and shorter hours and hence were objectively against the textile employers slavery code and for a real workers textile code.
- 3.—Both during the strikes and immediately after, the workers kept out the strikebreaking officials known as the "United Textile Workers Union (A. F. of L.)."
- 4.—Thus the selfish of the strikes were prevented and they all ended in partial victory for the workers.
- 5.—The strikes resulted in thorough unionization of the struck mills and the spreading of organization to a fourth mill. Four locals were established. Over 1,690 workers signed up in the NTWU, 1,245 paid initiations up to August 7th (250 of these workers were transferred to the independent local to keep the unity of the workers).

Strikebreaking Cry Against "Reds"

In every strike the employers try to smash the ranks of the workers by dividing them along political and religious lines. In the three Providence strikes the workers did not allow themselves to be divided on this issue. We were able to prove to them that the so-called red leadership of the National Textile Workers Union are the most experienced, honest and practical trade union officials. It is significant that while the Boston press and the A. F. of L. officials were shouting from the housetops against the "reds" the Providence boss controlled press kept a stony silence on this issue. They were afraid that it would prove a boomerang against them; that it would convince too many workers that it is a good thing to be a red, a working class fighting in the ranks of the Communist Party.

Destroyed Old Fairy-Tales

The three Providence strikes destroyed a number of old fairy-tales that the employers have been peddling for years among the workers. They are:

- Fairy-Tale No. 1:** That the industrial unions affiliated with the Trade Union Unity League (TUUL) believe in long drawn out strikes. All three strikes were settled at the right moment, when it was clear that the workers had won everything they possibly could win for the time being. The strikes lasted from 2 1/2 days to 11 days. In each case the workers themselves voted to settle the strike upon the recommendation of their strike committees and the N.T.W.U.
- Fairy-Tale No. 2:** That we believe in provoking fights between workers and police, that we like to make martyrs of

Picking Slim Pockets with NRA



Evens Pay Rise By Taking It Out of Workers' Hide

BALTIMORE, Md.—"Take it out of the hide of the worker," is the slogan of the textile bosses where by the application of the N. R. A. textile code wages are actually increased and hours reduced.

A startling letter is published here by the Baltimore Sun, from its special Washington correspondent, M. Farmer Murphy, in which a Southern textile boss tells how he makes the workers pay back whatever raise they get—and more.

An extract from this letter, written to the New York representative of a Southern cotton textile mill, follows:

"As you know, we have had to advance the wages in accordance with the N. R. A. and also shorten the hours. We have done several things to offset this increase. We have adjusted the rents. (Meaning raising the rents of company houses.) Second, we have installed electric meters in all the houses, and we charge the tenants for the current they use the approximate rate prevalent in Birmingham and other fair-sized cities. As you know, we secure this power at the manufacturing rate, and by letting it out at the domestic rate we should pay for the installation of these meters within a few months, and from then on it should work to our advantage."

We can be sure that these are not the only methods used by the Southern textile mill owners to keep the wages of the workers actually below what they were before the textile code was passed.

Here Is the Code Roosevelt Refused to Sign for You

June Croll Presented It at Washington for N.T.W.U.

When the National Textile Union, through its representative, June Croll, exposed the slave code of the textile bosses in Washington, she presented the following demands:

- 1.—That industry and the government assume the responsibility for a fixed minimum weekly and yearly wage for every worker in the industry. This is to be achieved through provisions that no worker shall be given less than 40 weeks net year of employment—no less than 30 hours per week and a maximum of 40 hours per week; that wages shall be set at a minimum of 60 cents per hour. This would provide a minimum wage of \$720 yearly for every worker. Only such a proposal, if embodied in the provisions, would represent a minimum wage provision as against the present proposals which are a fraud upon the masses and guarantee nothing.
- 2.—That where the industry does not provide workers with this minimum of yearly earnings the government shall pay unemployment insurance equal to this amount, and for part time workers the difference between the amount (\$720) and the actual earnings. Workers who receive higher than the minimum at present shall be paid insurance equal to their present average wage.
- 3.—That the wages of workers receiving at present above this minimum shall be increased immediately by 25 per cent.
- 4.—That wages shall be adjusted for all workers regularly as prices rise so that there shall be no lowering of the living standards due to inflation.
- 5.—That the labor code shall provide for democratically elected shop committees controlled by the workers, in all mills, to be recognized by the employers. These committees to deal with the employers in the enforcement of wages, hours, discharges, conditions of work, etc. The right of the workers to belong to any union of their own choice shall be fully stated. The right of the workers to strike whenever any demands are not granted shall be stated in the code.
- 6.—No night work for women in any part of the country.
- 7.—No child labor under 16; shorter hours for youth between the ages of 16 and 18.

Southern Workers Hard Hit by NRA

CHARLOTTE, N. C.—The skilled textile workers in the South find themselves particularly hard hit by the NRA code.

Fourteen hundred workers struck at the Tubize-Chatillon Corporation, a rayon plant, in Rome, Ga., when they found that the wages of the skilled workers had been reduced by the code. Another strike occurred at the Lane Cotton Mills in New Orleans, when the wages of all workers making more than the minimum specified in the code, were cut. Machinists' pay was reduced from \$34 to \$27. The workers in Rome won increases in pay. The workers in New Orleans were bamboozled by the Trades and Labor Council into going back.

4,000 Strikes

The very day the textile code went into effect, four thousand workers struck at the High Point, N. C., seamless hosiery mills; 1,000 at the W. F. Poe Manufacturing Co., in Greenville, S. C.; 800 at the Ariel and Alice Mills at Easley, S. C., and 850 at the Appleton Mills at Anderson, S. C. Skilled workers in all these mills found their pay cut as the result of the application of the textile code.

A master weaver in Charlotte said he had a big reduction in pay since July 17, and that his status had been reduced to that of apprentice by the mill management.

Many Complaints

Strikes and complaints against the stretch-out are numerous. In the East Marion mill in N. C., the number of looms per worker has been increased from 20 and 25 to 31, the spinning sides from 6 and 8, to 10. There have been many lay-offs because the workers were unable to keep up with the increased speed.

Non is the textile code resulting in increased employment. On the contrary, hundreds of textile workers have been added to the ranks of the unemployed since July 3.

The relief agencies of South Carolina report that the number seeking relief has been increased as a result of the textile code. Senator Byrnes of South Carolina admits receiving many letters from textile workers who have been fired since June 17.

Fire 150

In preparation for the new code, the Hudson Silk Hosiery Mill at Charlotte fired 150 workers some weeks ago.

"No appreciable increase in employment will result from the adoption by the Greenville textile plants of the provisions of the code of competition," says the Greenville News after an investigation.

Textile Workers Will Lose Jobs As Stocks Mount

Result of NRA Is Big Overproduction and a Lowered Living Standard for Workers in All Branches of Textile

Roosevelt's New Deal for labor was first applied to the textile industry, and it is here we can best see how in practice wages are slashed, speed-up increased, and the conditions of the workers made more miserable under the NRA.

Before the codes were passed first in the cotton textile mills, and later in silk, rayon and wool, the manufacturers were producing at a furious rate in order to get the benefit of the higher prices. They wanted a period for pause and "readjustment." They knew it would take a little time to work out the lower wage schedules under the act. But now they snipping at the workers on all sides.

In the meantime, stocks are piling up so that more unemployment faces the textile workers.

For example, the Journal of Commerce on August 15, made the following report:

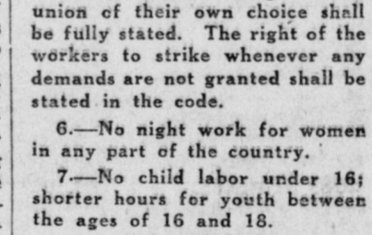
Overproduction

"Manufacturers are becoming anxious concerning the state of the gray cotton goods market where prices are weakening and demand is fitful. The long delay in getting the NRA in working order in industries outside of textiles makes it clearer each market day that it may be a long time before purchasing power can catch up with the rise in production costs and prices. Orders are beginning to expire with little promise of early renewals. Cases where seasonal spring merchandise is involved... the situation is already resulting in the shutting down of machinery, temporarily. In print cloth and sheeting markets reports widely circulated from the South lead buyers to believe that goods have accumulated far in advance of current shipment requirements."

Gives Fish to City Pond; Skins Mill Workers With NRA

NEW ORLEANS, La.—A strike is brewing in the Lane Cotton Mills here. After the application of the textile codes, wages of the majority of workers began to go down. Workers are being laid off at the rate of 50 a week.

Sigmund Odenheimer, owner of the mills, claims to be one of the originators of the textile code idea. He paid for the publication of a book called "Jobs or Revolution."



Join the Communist Party

FROM the drop of the first card in Roosevelt's New Deal for the Workers, the Communist Party has been the only party exposing what it actually meant. When William Green, John L. Lewis, and all of the officers of the United Textile Workers were telling the workers a new day was dawning for labor, the Communist Party correctly forecast that the N. R. A. was a slave act aimed to smash down the standards of living of the workers.

WHILE the A. F. of L. officials were calling for no strikes, while the Massachusetts and other state A. F. of L. leaders were trying to keep the textile workers shackled to their speeded-up machines, the Communist leaders of the National Textile Workers Union were leading and winning strikes for higher wages, better conditions and union recognition.

BEHIND the blue vulture of the N. R. A. stand both the Democratic and Republican Parties, while the Socialist Party helps the bosses to keep back strikes (Norman Thomas: "Now is not the time to strike"), praising the N. R. A. as a blessing to the workers.

The Communist Party leads the fight on the slave codes of the N. R. A. The Communist Party leads the struggle for the overthrow of capitalism and its system of hunger and starvation, no matter under what label. Workers, join the Communist Party!

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