

The Working Women Takes Her Place in the Class Struggle

By ROSE WORTIS.

From the remotest corners of the world to the United States, the citadel of world capitalism, the workers in every part of the globe are celebrating the 12th anniversary of the Russian Proletarian Revolution.

The Russian Revolution has a particular significance for the working women of the world. It has torn away the bourgeois mask of hypocrisy regarding woman's position in society, where on the one hand the rich women live in luxury and idleness, while the women of the working class bear a twofold burden of slavery both in the homes and in the factories. The Russian revolution has placed woman in a new role shorn of all bourgeois sentimentality, a proud and independent worker, the builder of a new life and a new society, women with a broader vision who is just as ready to take up a rifle in defense of the revolution as to devote her time and energy to the daily task of reconstruction work in the Soviet Union.

The emancipation of the Russian woman from her age-long slavery has had a profound effect on the working women the world over, and has given rise to a new trend in the movement for the freedom of women. Inspired by the accomplishments of the working women in the Soviet Union, to whom the proletarian revolution meant not only economic but also social emancipation, the working women in the capitalist countries are gradually realizing that not in allying themselves with the women of the master class can they gain their emancipation; that their problems are identical with that of the men of their class, and can only be solved to the extent that the problems of the working class as a whole can be solved. This was best illustrated at the International Women's Congresses held in Moscow in recent years, where delegates from the most backward as well as the most highly developed countries came together to relate their experiences in the class struggle and gain new inspiration from the accomplishments of the women in Russia.

The women of the United States do not lag behind. Here too the women are entering the ranks of the militant working class side by side with the men workers. Here too we have our women labor heroines, who, like the women of the Russian Revolution risk their all in defense of their class. A recent striking example of our women martyrs in the class war was Ella May Wiggins, a victim of the Fascist terrorism in Gastonia.

During the past year the most bitter struggles waged by the working class of the United States against the speed-up system, low wages and long hours, have been in those industries employing women in vast numbers. In the strikes of the textile workers in Passaic, New Bedford, Little Falls, and the present gigantic struggle in the south, the women workers (many of native American stock), forced by economic necessity, have cast aside their superstitions and prejudices and have come out as the leaders and champions of their class interests. The women in the food industry, the needle trades, the shoe industry, etc., are playing a leading role, fighting in the front ranks.

These struggles of the working women have brought to light the hypocrisy of the ruling classes who parade about the sanctity of womanhood and motherhood. They have proven that where the class interests of the bosses are at stake no distinction whatever is made between man and woman workers; that both men and women alike are but a means for profits to the bosses.

These revolts of the women workers in every part of the country have been carried thru against the will and over the heads of the official trade union bureaucracy, whose strike-breaking role has opened the eyes of the women workers to the effect that their only hope for organization lies with the militant trade union movement of the country—in the new industrial unions based on the class struggle. The splendid representation of 72 women delegates at the Trade Union Unity Conference in Cleveland is a convincing demonstration that the women workers are ready for organization and are in a fighting mood.

The strike-breaking brutal role of the entire capitalist state machinery in these struggles waged by women workers has not only opened the eyes of these women to the need for militant action on the economic field, but has also served to awaken their political consciousness. They have come to recognize the role of the capitalist parties thru their state administrations. They have also become acquainted with the role played by the socialist party, as expressed by its mayoralty candidate, Norman Thomas, who, while the Gastonia leaders were on trial solidified himself with all the enemies of the workers.

These women have also learned that in all their struggle the Communist Party and its press has championed their interests, has helped to organize the defense of their prisoners, has guided and encouraged them. They have come to learn that not only in their struggles, but in every fight of the workers against the bosses the Communist Party fights for the interests of the workers. They have come to know that the Communist Party is the only political party of the working class that is really fighting against capitalism, that is unmasking the pacifist propaganda of the capitalists and their lackeys of the Socialist Party.

The working women of this country are beginning to realize that the finely phrased speeches of the Miss MacDonalds on the pacifist aims of the imperialist governments of Great Britain and the United States are but a smoke-screen to cover up the real facts from the working women; that behind these phrases the roar of cannon can already be heard, particularly directed at the Soviet Union, which is successfully going on with its work of social reconstruction.

The time is fast approaching when the women workers, who have been regarded by the bosses as a reactionary force, an instrument to be used against the men workers, will assert themselves, and just as the women of Russia will take their place in the struggle to overthrow capitalism.

In the present election campaign that is going on in this city the women workers, who have fought bravely and heroically on the economic field, must give expression to their spirit of militancy on the political field by supporting the only political party of the working class—The Communist Party.