

ILGWU Membership Will Fight To Make 1943 a Victory Year

By Rose Wortis

(Continued From Yesterday)

Instead of taking its rightful place as the driving force for labor and national unity, the leadership of the ILGWU has come to be regarded as an obstacle to unity in the eyes of the progressive movement as well as of its own membership.

In the critical days ahead it is only those forces in the life of our nation that are big enough to discard their past prejudices, to forget their narrow group interests in the interests of the common cause that will earn the leadership of our people.

It is time that the leaders of the ILGWU awaken to the new situation and shake themselves free from the stagnant and harmful influence of the Forward clique.

Now as to Mr. Allen's Washington correspondence—the writer reviews the domestic situation at the opening of the 78th Congress. He calls attention to the planned conspiracy against labor and the New Deal by the defeatist Republican Congressional bloc and the Southern Democrats, correctly warning labor against any strike provocations.

There is much we can agree with in this article. What is disconcerting is his approach to these problems and his conclusions.

COMPLACENCY

He shows a certain aloofness and defeatism in the face of these burning issues as though it were an academic discussion and not a matter affecting the life of millions of Americans in common with our allies. Very complacently, without any alarm, he accepts defeat at the hands of reaction for the next two years, basing his hopes for a comeback in 1944. Mr. Allen writes:

"According to most New Deal thinkers, there is little or nothing that can be done at this point to prevent Congress from taking some powerful swings at New Deal legislation. The next Congress will be thirsting for New Deal blood. President Roosevelt may veto most of this legislation, but the reactionary elements in Congress may be powerful enough to pass some of it over his veto . . . labor should stoke up its righteous anger and bank its political fires in anticipation of 1944."

This is a very dangerous analysis, very dangerous advice of the so-called New Deal thinkers. In substance, it calls on the labor movement to accept defeat at the hands of the reactionaries as inevitable. There is no program of action outlined in this article as to how labor can fight these planned attacks of the reactionaries. No reflection at all of the growing movement of AFL, CIO and progressive New Deal forces for united action to beat back the attacks of the reactionaries and the defeatists. No recognition that these planned attacks are directed not only against labor but against the whole nation, the basic needs of the war.

The members of the ILGWU—and I hope the leaders—will not follow the advice of Mr. Allen. They

have never passively submitted to the attacks of reaction. They were always in the forefront fighting the enemies of labor and the nation. They have often blazed the path for other trade unionists. In this year 1943 when so much is at stake, when not only the gains that labor has made through many years of struggle and sacrifice, but the very fate of our nation, are at stake, the members of the ILGWU, representing more than 300,000 organized workers will not accept defeat with their hands folded. They will insist on a program of struggle in unison with the rest of organized labor and the people. They will use their own strength to help beat back the attacks of the reactionaries, take the offensive on all fronts to turn the year of 1943 into a year of advance, on the military and on the home front.

LABOR CAN WIN

The experience in 1940 has proven that labor in common with the people have the power to defeat the schemes of the reactionaries and defeatists in Congress. Thus through the united effort of labor, supported by all other win-the-war forces, the anti-labor drive was defeated in Congress in 1940. What was accomplished in 1940 can be done with even greater effectiveness in 1943, when labor on the production lines and in every other war front has proven to millions of other Americans that it is in the forefront of the struggle for the preservation of our American way of life.

The militant note sounded by the legislative conferences of AFL, CIO and the Railroad Brotherhoods, calling on their members to throw

themselves into the struggle against the defeatists and reactionaries with all their force and energy, with might and main, has stirred labor to action. The efforts of Congressman Coffee, Gov. Poletti to unite the liberals for common action with labor shows the fighting spirit of our people. The Communist Party, in unison with all other labor and progressive forces, will throw its full strength and influence into this struggle.

BROWDER'S CALL

At the Madison Square Garden on January 11th, Earl Browder, general secretary of the Communist Party, expressed the thoughts not only of the Communists but millions of other Americans in his ringing call to the American people to rally to the support of the President:

"There is an old vice, however, which is most dangerous now, namely, the tendency merely to approve the President's policies and then leave him to fight his battles against the reactionaries without the support of the people. The correct policies stated by the President must be fought for by the people or they will not be realized. Too often these policies are being defeated and destroyed in the course of their application, to the great damage of the war effort."

This call to action, we are sure, answers the needs of the members of the ILGWU as of all other loyal, patriotic Americans. This is the policy around which millions of Americans are rallying. This is the program that will bring victory to our people at home and abroad.

