

The New Wave of Struggle in the I. L. G. W. U.

By JOSEPH ZACK.

ON September 10th, 15,000 ladies' garment workers responded to a call of the New York Joint Board for a mass meeting in Madison Square Garden, New York's largest indoor meeting place.

This happened 10 months after the Sigman gang thru its expulsion policy and the resulting internal war had annihilated the conditions in the shops won thru years of struggle.

Breakdown of the Union.

The conditions in the ladies' garment shops at present are of a kind that can only be compared with what prevailed about 15 years ago and in some respects they are worse. A great number of operators who made \$55 per week as a minimum scale now make \$32 to \$36 per week. As to hours of work there is practically no limit—50, 60, 70 hours per week. Piece-work, standard of production, no overtime pay, arbitrary discharge—this is the way things are going. Some shops that have moved out of Manhattan for cheaper production are now giving up business out-of-town as the exploitation in New York is such that they cannot stand the competition. Thus it seems that one dream of the bureaucracy is coming true. The industry is returning to New York!

Chaos In Industry.

The breakdown of the union created a condition of break-neck competition amongst the employers in which the dozen or so jobbers that control the ladies' garment market are the chief beneficiaries. There is a dog-eat-dog competition amongst the contractors. The inside manufacturers are being driven to the wall more than ever. Amongst the jobbers things are not hunky-dory, either. All around,—it's a case of big dog eats small dog.

The union, which could have fully utilized this division amongst the employers in an industry which is still in a highly competitive stage was unable to do so because of the corrupt class collaboration policy of the Schlessinger-Sigman-Forward bureaucracy. As a result the standards were breaking down and the jobbing capitalists were becoming the over-lords of the industry. Now with the union broken down completely by Sigman, the union which could have been like a steel-rod in the situation and utilized the weaknesses of the employers

to build its strength has been disorganized to such an extent that at this time it is not the major factor it used to be.

Employers Want A "Suitable" Union.

Quite a few of the employers effected would like to see the union back on its feet, but under safe direction, for with all the support Sigman got from the employers he could not subjugate the workers. Thus the bosses are disappointed. Schlessinger is spoken of as the possible new Messiah by the employers and this has its effects amongst the bureaucracy. Sigman is a failure, let's get Schlessinger as a peace-maker and president with the good safe old clique of Breslauer-Ninco-Dubinsky, etc. But who wants them? The workers are beginning to talk reconstruction of the union. There is unity talk even amongst the right wing registered

workers. These are the signs of the new times. It is but natural that the left wing gave expression to this new development by getting the workers together once more, as the first expression in the campaign to reconstruct the union.

There is new hope glimmering amongst the workers. There must be a union! There will be one—and it will not be with the left wing on the outside, because in this industry such a thing is impossible. Inside the A. F. of L. if possible, outside if necessary. But the most important lesson is that the Madison Square Garden meeting, brought out the masses even to the extent of 15,000, which shows that after 10 months of fighting the left wing is still as strong as ever and preparing for a fresh struggle.

What's What in Washington

FASCIST CIRCLES RAVING BECAUSE OF TROUBLE OVER NATURALIZING MUSSOLINI'S FOLLOWERS

WASHINGTON, Sept. 27 (F.P.).—Fascist circles are astonished and angry because the issue as to whether "absolute" loyalty to Mussolini is consistent with an oath of allegiance to the United States has been raised by a federal official in the case of some Italians who were contemplating their naturalization in a federal court in Baltimore.

True, the questions were asked by a minor official—Jesse M. Thomas, director of naturalization for the Baltimore district. But when an attempt was made to have the naturalization bureau at Washington repudiate his action, it was discovered that Commissioner Crist saw no harm in finding out what the Italians understand by the Fascist bond.

"Blood Oath."

The terms of the Fascist oath of obedience and loyalty to Benito Mussolini were recently published in a newspaper at the capital, and so came to the attention of the commissioner. While he says that his bureau has no legal authority to interfere with the gaining of citizenship—since this is a matter for the court—the bureau

does question the applicants in court in order that they and the judge shall understand each other before the applicants swear allegiance to the United States.

The only conditions under which the alien must be refused citizenship, after other tests are met, are deliberate intention to violate the oath of membership in an anarchist group or belief in the use of assassination as a political weapon here or abroad. In the questions asked at Baltimore—as to whether the applicants were Fascists or intended to become Fascists—there was just a hint that one or both of these clauses might be invoked.

Frazier on Indian Committee.

Senator Frazier of North Dakota, expelled by the Old Guard from the Republican organization three years ago as a La Follette Progressive, now occupies the spacious quarters of chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. The Old Guard needs his vote in organizing the new Senate, and it has restored him to full rights as a Republican.