

PLUCKY GIRL OF PICKET LINE BRAVES KNIVES OF SCABS AND “GUERILLAS”

DOROTHY DAY

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Picket lines can be just as cheerful on a rainy day as when the sun burns balmily and Junily down. Ona Budveiciute, generally known as Anna Budweiser by her striking shirt making comrades, still pickets for the rest of the strikers, although her shop, Levine's of 764 Greene avenue, has come to terms. As soon as she finishes work at 5:30 o'clock she rushes over to the Burkowitz shirt factory and joins the picket line. Last night there were eight plodding up and down in the rain: only eight, because the four policemen who stand guard on each corner shoo away all the rest that come near the place.

To protect their scabs from the persuasive oratory of the strikers Mr. Burkowitz has munificently provided taxis for his employees. After one taxi goes down into the basement of the building to load up and speeds away with blinds drawn, another takes its place. And all evening this goes on.

“Gee, I'd rather ride in a pushcart than in one of the scab taxis,” comments one of the pickets.

“He'll provide 'em with taxis to keep them working for him, but he'll take it out of their pay and make them work longer hours for it,” says another.

Pickets Follow Scabs

Many of the girls whose homes are near at hand, and who do not like to wait for a returning taxi, brave the pickets and go home by twos and threes. Two pickets then leave the line and follow them. To “protect” the scabs, an equal number of “bums,” “guerillas,” or “gorillas,” as the strikers term them, employed by the manufacturers, follow the pickets. Altogether, a strike is an expensive affair for the employers.

“We had a thrilling time last week,” said Anna. “Talk about enthusiasm! It was great. There were 150 pickets at one time. That was before they had the taxis and there were more to manage. There are Italian and Yiddish and Lithuanian girls working in the factories, and, when we couldn't speak their language, we followed them all the way home to scare them. They get scared all right. Once an Italian girl went home and told her sister that I was trying to kill her, and the sister went for me.

Faced Girl's Knife “ ‘You killa my sister!’ she yelled, and I was scared stiff that she was going to pull a knife out and do for me. There were lots of policemen around, but they wouldn't stick up for a striker. Luckily, she could talk English, and I told her that I wouldn't kill a fly, let alone her sister. So she calmed down.

“Lots of times the scabs go for us, and we have to fight back. But I can’t stand to hurt them. I just pull their hats off and muss their hair up, and that makes them madder than if I really hurt them.

“I’m the only one of the crowd who can talk Lithuanian, and I follow the Lithuanian girls and try to persuade them. They’re afraid that the rest will stay in if they go out and that they won’t be able to get any other job. I usually go around with them to the union shops and get them in. See, there is a lot of work attached to a picket’s life.”

Miss Budveiciute worked first as organizer and speaker, then as picket. In addition to this, she wrote up the strike for the Lithuanian papers. Last week, when she broke down for two days and stayed in bed, some of her girls that she had converted to the cause of labor went back on her and she had to begin all over with them.

“I won’t give up,” she cried. “I learned when I was 16 and worked in a cigarette factory for \$3 a week that the labor cause was worth fighting for, and I’ve been fighting ever since.”