

J. B. Matthews, Strikebreaker and Vigilante, Hired Armed Guards to Attack Girl Strikers

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By Art Shields

James B. Matthews, strikebreaker and vigilante organizer, who attacked the New Deal Government, the Communist Party and Snirley Temple yesterday at the hearings of the Dies Congressional Committee, is "an adventurer pure and simple," said Arthur Kallet, a well known scientist and the head of Consumers' Union last night.

Kallett knew Matthews intimately. He was secretary of another organization, Consumers' Research, Inc., when Matthews was its vice-president. He broke with Matthews when the latter repudiated his labor pretensions and hired guards to break an A. F. of L. strike of Consumers' Research employes at Washington, N. J.

Matthews showed signs of turning against the union — Federal Local

20055—some weeks before the firing of the local president and two other members. His final break came when the Warren County Labor Council of New Jersey refused to endorse his candidacy for state assembly on a labor ticket.

The disappointed political adventurer then became a violent labor-baiter. He joined forces with Director F. J. Schlink of Consumers' Research against the union, fired President John Heasty and two other members and forced Dewey Palmer, a pro-union member of the board of directors out of the organization.

The strike of 70 technicians and other employes followed.

DUCKING BULLETS

Matthews pretended to attack the vigilantes in writings published

shortly before the strike. But he lost no time in mobilizing gun-toting vigilantes against the Consumers' Research employes.

First armed guards were hired from the Foster Detective Agency of Newark, N. J.

Next Matthews rounded up a group of farmers, some of whom were related to scabs working in the plant. Armed with shot guns they fired at strikers, men and women.

HATES NEW DEAL

"Girls were kept busy ducking bullets," said Allen Crosby, a Consumers' Research striker, who now manages the Eastern Bureau of Federated Press.

It was not Matthews fault that he did not become a murderer.

More than one hundred pickets

were arrested during the five-months' strike. A constable's horse knocked down a striker's daughter; tear gas was thrown against pickets and Matthews procured an anti-picketing injunction from Vice Chancellor Buchanan, one of Hague's stooges on the Chancery bench.

"Matthews acted just like Tom Girdler," said Crosby.

Matthews used the same red-baiting attacks against the A. F. of L. strikers then that he uses against the CIO and the League for Peace and Democracy and the New Deal Administration today.

He began hating the New Deal when Examiner Charles Wood of the National Labor Relations Board ruled that Heasty and his fellow

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members had been illegally discharged.

Now month by month he attacks the New Deal in the "Consumers' Digest," organ of Consumers' Research, Inc., which he edits. In a recent issue, quoted in the monthly Labor Notes of the Labor Research Association, he called the National Labor Relations Act one of "the greatest pieces of legislative chicanery . . . ever to find its way to the statute books."

BROKE WITH LABOR

And the New Deal is his main target in his testimony before the Dies Committee. Starting out with attacks on alleged Communist activity he winds up with attacks on the New Deal.

One of his latest attacks was against the WPA forum—a government educational project—in Washington, N. J. The reactionary Washington Star says Matthews described the forum as "nothing but New Deal propaganda."

Matthews was expelled from the Socialist Party several years ago. He was not admitted to the Communist Party, though he participated in various united front activities for a time.

His career began as a Methodist missionary in Java, and his future is not promising. The Consumers' Research has been having difficulties since it broke with Labor. Its place is being taken by the Consumers' Union, of 55 Van Dam St., a militant pro-labor institution, headed by Kallet, which sends technical advice monthly to 60,000 subscribers regarding consumers' goods.