

APOLLO GIRLS WIN STRIKE

Girls Get Pay Raises and Shorter Hours After 24 Hours Picket

Harlem — happy hunting grounds of showfolk, of entertainer and musician, witnessed the phenomenon this week of Negroes winning a strike against the Apollo Theatre, long believed impregnable to the demands of labor.

And while the strike ended with advantages for the victorious, the issues at stake were far greater than the mere parading up and down in front of the theatre by the chorus girls and their supporters.

Organized by the American Guild of Variety Actors, the strike hinged upon a refusal of Frank Schiffman, manager of the West 125th street house, to bargain with the union in its demands for wage increase and adjustment of working hours for the chorus girls. The settlement negotiated at 7 p. m. Sunday after 22 of the 32 performers in the Apollo show walked out Saturday night, raised the chorus pay from \$25 to \$30 a week; set 30 shows as a week's work and limited rehearsals to 4 hours a week. In addition, members of the show must join the A.G.V.A. as must any new members of the show hired by the theatre.

One sour note, however, was sounded in the strike. While the pickets were walking in front of the theatre, nearly every white patron who saw what was taking place, refused to cross the line and went home. However, many Negroes, disregarding the signs, crossed the line, causing one white person to observe:

"They don't stick together in anything."

The Apollo theatre has long been the focal point of protests from performers against condi-

tions obtaining there. For years the management has been accused of exploitation of talent; overworking members of the show and of other things which have served to make it the target of criticism not only of the theatrical profession, but also of Harlem citizens who feel that the theatre is a part of them, yet alien to their standards of fair play. The Apollo is one of the last theatres that blossomed during the 1920's when the Negro performer found his greatest expression.

Situated as it is in the heart of Harlem, it has employed actors, actresses, singers, dancers, musicians and others whose names are magic in showlife. For that reason, when the movies supplanted flesh entertainment in most theatres throughout the country and the Apollo maintained its living entertainment in defiance of the vogue which changed theatrical standards so much that the whole complex situation was changed, the 125th street house was left almost alone as a medium of work for performers.

Following the squabble last summer in the American Federation of Actors, the A.G.V.A. was organized and, differing from other A.F.L. theatrical union affiliates, it decided that all performers, white and black, had the same right to protection from exploitation. For that reason, organizers were sent into Harlem several weeks ago and the framework of the union spread into this community.

Subsequent meetings saw Schiffman, himself, in attendance at one of the AGVA Harlem sessions. Later, a committee from the AGVA made up of Honi Coles, the Rev. B. C. Robeson, Arthur Harris, Leigh Whipper and Leslie Litomy met in Schiffman's office to discuss a change in working conditions and salary raises for the chorus girls. Schiffman told Litomy and the committee that they would have to prove that the union represented a majority of his employees and that conditions were such that the theatre could ill afford wage increases or much change in working conditions.

Apollo Chorines Win Strike



Jackie Bass and Bertie Lou Wood, chorus cuties from the Apollo line, who were among the 22 girls who walked out of the theatre Saturday night in a strike sponsored by the American Guild of Variety Actors for higher wages and better working conditions. The strike was won by the girls.

As the
CROW

HARLEM LABOR UNION

Athlete Held