

TEAMSTER REBELLION



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*To the men and women who
gave me unshakable confidence
in the working class,
the rank and file of
General Drivers Local 574*

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Farrell Dobbs (1907–1983) joined the Communist League of America (predecessor of the Socialist Workers Party) in 1934 while working in a Minneapolis coal yard. A rank-and-file leader of the 1934 Teamsters strikes and organizing drive, he was subsequently elected secretary-treasurer of Local 574 (later 544). In the late 1930s he was a central leader of the eleven-state over-the-road campaign that organized tens of thousands of workers in the trucking industry. In 1939 he was appointed general organizer for the Teamsters international; he resigned the post in 1940 to become SWP national labor secretary.

In 1941 Dobbs was indicted and convicted with seventeen other leaders of Local 544 and of the SWP under the thought-control Smith Act for their opposition to the imperialist aims of the U.S. government in World War II. He spent twelve months in federal prison in 1944–45.

Dobbs served as editor of the *Militant* from 1943 to 1948. He was SWP national chairman from 1949 to 1953, and national secretary from 1953 to 1972. He was the party's candidate for president in 1948, 1952, 1956, and 1960, using these campaigns to actively oppose the Korean and Vietnam Wars, the anticommunist witch-hunt, and to support the civil rights movement and the Cuban Revolution.

In addition to his four-volume series on the Teamster battles of the 1930s (*Teamster Rebellion*, *Teamster Power*, *Teamster Politics*, *Teamster Bureaucracy*), he is author of

the two-volume *Revolutionary Continuity: Marxist Leadership in the U.S.* Other works include *The Structure and Organizational Principles of the Party*, *Counter-Mobilization: A Strategy to Fight Racist and Fascist Attacks*, and *Selected Articles on the Labor Movement*.



Farrell Dobbs speaking at New York banquet attended by 450 in June 1972 to celebrate the publication of *Teamster Rebellion*.

Jack Barnes is national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. From 1965 on, he worked closely with Farrell Dobbs organizing the party's mass campaigns and international work. As organization secretary, and from 1972 as national secretary, Barnes collaborated with Dobbs in leading the SWP to respond to renewed political openings to build communist parties in the U.S. and worldwide, parties whose members are part of a broader vanguard of workers fighting to transform the unions into revolutionary instruments of struggle along a road such as that recounted by Dobbs in *Teamster Rebellion* and its successor volumes. Barnes also worked with Dobbs in editing *Revolutionary Continuity: Marxist Leadership in the United States*.

Barnes is the author of numerous books, pamphlets, and articles including *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions*, *Capitalism's World Disorder*, *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, *Their Trotsky and Ours*, and *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*. He is a contributing editor to *New International*, a magazine of Marxist politics and theory.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SPANISH EDITION

by Jack Barnes

It was graveyard shift on the picket line near the entrance to the Co-Op coal mine outside Huntington, Utah. In mid-October, nights are already cold in the mountains. The icy blasts of wind through Bear Canyon cut to the bone. The locked-out workers had tied down their picket shack, made of plywood and blue tarp, to keep it from taking flight. Inside seven or eight miners—most in their twenties, plus a couple of old-timers, including a woman and a veteran in his fifties, almost all from the state of Sinaloa in Mexico—huddled around the wood stove, donated by a retired union miner from nearby East Carbon.

A month earlier the company had fired seventy-four miners for protesting the suspension of a fellow worker and union supporter who had refused to sign a disciplinary warning. Acting to crush the miners' effort to organize to win recognition of the United Mine Workers of America, management then locked them out.

One of the miners in the picket shack was a Nicaraguan immigrant who worked in the Deserado mine in western Colorado, several hours away. He had gotten union time off to come over and help out. Before leaving home, he had stuck in his pocket a well-worn copy of *Teamster Rebellion*, the story of a bloody, hard-fought union organizing battle that took place almost seventy years ago in Minnesota, carried out by workers many of whom were Scandinavian in origin—Swedish, Norwegian, Finnish, or

Danish—with a substantial mixture of Irish. The author, Farrell Dobbs, whose forebears came from Ireland, had become the youngest leader of that strike. Like so many others facing Depression conditions in the early 1930s, Farrell had been struggling to find steady work, feed his family, and pay the rent.

The Nicaraguan miner, Francisco, began reading a few of the opening pages aloud, sight translating into Spanish as he went. The paragraphs described the working and living conditions and wages in the Midwest at the depth of the Depression. Amid expressions of surprise and sympathy, the strikers asked for more of the story, and soon were listening to other passages, page after page. The account was interrupted only to check the occasional late-night car going by, or to replenish firewood and survey the area outside.

Above all, the men and women from Sinaloa, trying to make their lives in the mountains of Utah, identified with the individual struggles of the men and women of *Teamster Rebellion*. Dobbs's description in the book's early pages of how his family lost their entire winter's stock of canned vegetables and fruits one night when the weather suddenly dropped below freezing and they didn't make it home in time to move the jars indoors elicited expressions of sympathy and understanding of what that blow must have meant for Farrell, his wife Marvel, and their children.

The photos of strikers battling the cops and bosses' deputies, of the large, disciplined funeral cortege for one of the pickets gunned down in cold blood by the cops, of strike leaders being hauled away to jail by the National Guard—all were looked at with interest. When the miners learned that inside the Teamster strike headquarters they were seeing in the photos there was a round-the-clock commissary for meals and a hospital to treat the wounded,

interest grew. And after discovering from Dobbs's narrative how the drivers organized in the Minneapolis market square to beat back the cop and employer assaults—with courage, discipline, and above all a detailed battle plan—and went on to *win* the strike for union recognition, the pictures were studied with even more attention.

Few proletarian scenes underscore better the value of the publication of *Rebelión Teamster*, the first Spanish translation of *Teamster Rebellion*, some thirty-two years after it first appeared in English.

It is possible that among the striking Minneapolis Teamsters who laid the foundations for the transformation of the labor movement throughout the entire Midwest in the 1930s there was not a single worker who had been born in Mexico. (What a change a few decades have wrought!) But across the span of years, nationalities, languages, and lifetime experiences, the story told in *Teamster Rebellion* also belongs to the growing ranks of Spanish-speaking workers in the United States today as they enter into struggle. They can see themselves in those earlier generations of workers—many of them likewise first- or second-generation immigrants—who finally said “enough,” and began to take their own future in hand.



Teamster Rebellion is a book that stands on its own. It tells a hell of a story. It is at the same time an introduction to Farrell Dobbs, the worker in his twenties who emerged in the course of those battles as a leader of his class.

He was twenty-five years old, with two children to support, when he turned his back on a secure and well-rewarded future as part of the supervisory personnel of Western Electric working out of Omaha, Nebraska. He

was repelled by the horror of the person he would have to become, by the class values and attitudes he would have to adopt, if he sold his soul to stay in such a job. Without a backward glance, he unconditionally cut himself “adrift” from alien classes, as the *Communist Manifesto* puts it, and “joined the revolutionary class” in the fullest sense of the word. The “miserable halfness” of the petty-bourgeois spirit was the class attribute Dobbs came most to despise.

He quickly found himself in the ranks of the “great army of the unemployed.” Shoveling coal a couple of years later in a Minneapolis coal yard, he met Grant Dunne, a seasoned cadre of the Communist League of America, the forerunner of the Socialist Workers Party, who enlisted him in a union organizing drive. The story unfolds from there through the pages of *Teamster Rebellion* and the subsequent volumes, *Teamster Power*, *Teamster Politics*, and *Teamster Bureaucracy*, as well as numerous pamphlets, booklets, and the two volumes of *Revolutionary Continuity: Marxist Leadership in the U.S.* that Dobbs was to live to complete in the early 1980s: *The Early Years, 1848–1917*, and *Birth of the Communist Movement, 1918–1922*.

As his political awakening unfolded, Dobbs became a citizen of the world, a proletarian internationalist, living the present as part of history—apart from which communism does not exist. He describes the impact on him of pictures in the Omaha newspapers of Imperial Japan’s 1931 invasion of China. The photos showed scenes of U.S. troops stationed in Shanghai protecting, with Tokyo’s assent, the wealthy “international settlement,” while nearby Chinese working-class districts, with a casual racist nod from the U.S. army brass, were devastated, often burned to the ground, and their inhabitants slaughtered by the Japanese imperialist forces.

In describing his developing class consciousness, Dobbs gives the news photos of those events a weight similar to the impact on him of being asked by his bosses to go along with the firing of a fellow worker a few months short of retirement and a pension, in order to cut costs and increase “productivity.” In the later volumes of the Teamster series, we see the newspaper of the Teamsters Joint Council in Minneapolis, the *Northwest Organizer*, carrying lead editorials demanding the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Asia and the Pacific and condemning preparations by the administration of President Franklin Roosevelt for the great imperialist slaughter of World War II.

The young Farrell Dobbs we get to know in the pages of *Teamster Rebellion* became one of the great mass organizers of the U. S. working class. Barely thirty, he was the chief architect and leader of the campaign—stretching from Texas, to Detroit, to Canada, to Seattle—that organized some quarter million over-the-road drivers into a powerful union and transformed the upper Midwest into union territory, the legacy of which is felt to this day.

The leading cadre of General Drivers Local 574 (later Teamsters Local 544) became the class-struggle left-wing of a much broader militant labor leadership. They showed in practice how the unions, equipped with such leadership, can and will be transformed into instruments of revolutionary struggle capable of leading growing layers of workers, employed and unemployed, and their allies—farmers, devastated small producers—to political independence from the ruling class. They showed how class-conscious union militants begin to recognize themselves as part of an international class whose interests are diametrically opposed to those of their own bosses and the bosses’ government. And to rest easy in the history they are a living part of.

Dobbs more than anyone, however, knew that what he

was accomplishing was possible only because he was part of the broad leadership cadre of the communist party founded in 1919 to do in the United States what the Bolsheviks had just done in Russia, the party that in 1938 took the name Socialist Workers Party. By 1940, with World War II fast approaching, reaction was growing in the trade union officialdom, the ranks were being prepared for war, and the prospect of further political progress either in the Teamsters or the wider industrial union movement had been virtually eliminated for the time being. In January of that year, Dobbs resigned his post as general organizer for the Teamsters international. He did so to become labor and organization secretary of a party whose membership, under the impact of the labor movement's retreat and the petty bourgeoisie's capitulation to patriotic hysteria, would soon drop well below 1,000. The next year the leadership of that party that would not bend to war pressures and many cadres of Local 544's combat, including Dobbs himself, would be indicted on conspiracy and sedition charges, convicted, and sent to prison by federal prosecutors making the first use of the soon-to-become-infamous Smith "Gag" Act—an earlier ruling-class application of "homeland security."

It was as a party man, especially shouldering responsibility as a national officer of the Socialist Workers Party for almost three decades, the majority of that time as national secretary, that Dobbs made his greatest leadership contributions—setting an example of working-class integrity from prison during World War II; charting an unwavering communist course for party cadres in the unions and in political action through the postwar witch-hunt; encouraging by word and deed the communist and labor movements to join in the mass proletarian fight for Black rights; helping lead the party in responding to and

embracing the Cuban Revolution as its own; collaborating in mapping a military policy for the proletariat carried out by young socialists within the broad movement opposing U.S. imperialism's war in Vietnam; and actively pursuing the recruitment of a new generation of cadres that grew out of these momentous world political events.

Dobbs helped lead the communist movement through the retreat and decline of the labor movement from the late 1940s through the mid-1970s. He gave unstinting support and counsel to the younger party cadres who, in the latter seventies, led a turn to the unions as new struggles and openings developed, beginning in the coal mines and steel plants especially, and organized the party to respond as proletarian internationalists to triumphant revolutions in Nicaragua, Grenada, and Iran.

From World War II to Korea to Vietnam, Dobbs oriented the movement to reach toward our fellow workers in uniform, the GIs, those U.S. residents who pay the highest price of all for Washington's unending quest for world dominance. And he helped politically arm communist workers and youth to unflinchingly recognize the inevitable necessity of organizing to combat and defeat intensified state repression, forms of military rule, and capitalist-sponsored fascist gangs as the imperialist order in the United States—through unknown twists and turns, and over a duration impossible to predict—once again entered into a period of world crisis comparable to that of 1914 through World War II. “To the members of Local 544's union defense guard,” reads his dedication to the third volume of the series, *Teamster Politics*.

Dobbs often pointed to the special contribution to the labor movement made by veterans of the armed forces. An example among the militants we meet in *Teamster Rebellion* is Ray Rainbolt, one of several field organizers of the

cruising pickets during the 1934 strikes, later elected by members of Local 544's 600-strong union defense guard to serve as their commander. For workers in the mid-1930s to choose a Sioux Indian to lead them in combat—to issue them orders, to discipline them if necessary—was far, far from an everyday occurrence in this country, especially in the Upper Midwest or Western United States. The standing Rainbolt achieved among the ranks of fighting workers is a demonstration of the depth of the changes in political attitudes, battle discipline, and human solidarity forged in the course of the class combat described in Dobbs's Teamster books.



In an August 1966 talk, presented to an audience substantially composed of members of the Young Socialist Alliance at a West Coast Vacation School held in California, Farrell Dobbs summed up the world historical view that best describes his lifetime political course; the class characteristics indispensable for any proletarian revolutionist; and what the working class demands of its leaders, above all.

We must be constantly aware of the key role of the United States in the world. United States imperialism is today the powerhouse of world reaction, as the war in Vietnam is abundantly demonstrating.

It is an iron fact that until capitalism is overturned here in the United States of America, the gang of imperialist mad dogs that rule this country are going to remain a mortal threat to all humanity. We must never forget that.

That means the showdown battle for world socialism is going to be fought right here in the United States of

America. And when the revolutionary victory is won, outlived, decadent capitalism is going to disappear literally overnight from the face of our planet. Humanity is going to march forward to the building of an enlightened socialist society where people for the first time can really live together on this planet in peace and in security and with freedom. Humanity will finally realize the type of rewarding life that human intelligence is so abundantly capable of making, even at the present level of technological development. Once humanity learns how to conduct itself politically, organizationally, and socially, it can take advantage of these wonders.

That's what we dedicate our lives to. We of the party, we revolutionaries in the United States—acting as best we can in solidarity with revolutionary fighters across the world—must always keep in mind that in the last analysis the fate of humanity rests on the socialist revolution in the United States. Our task is to build a party capable of leading that revolution, going up against the most heinous of the reactionary, monstrous ruling class regimes that exist on the face of this planet: the imperialist ruling class of the United States.

The road ahead in that struggle is going to be strewn with obstacles, and there are going to be many pitfalls. There's no roadmap, no way you can find some kind of a detailed handbook that's going to tell you what to do at each juncture. Our task is to chart a revolutionary course, based on a fundamental understanding of our program—a basic feel of our revolutionary strategy—and to hammer out the tactics in that direction as we go along.

There's no timetable. Nobody can say how long it's going to take or when it's going to happen. I personally feel that those of you sitting in this room today,

who have got all your youth going for you, have got at least Damon Runyon's six-to-five chance of seeing that explosion.

But in saying so I want to add immediately: *don't make that a condition. Don't adopt the criterion that the revolutionary change must happen in your time.* Don't take as a guide to your active life that narrow, provincial, self-centered notion that if it doesn't happen during the time of your own subjective existence on this planet, it's not important.

Always remember that history is magnificently indifferent to the problems of the individual. History doesn't care whether you die at six or live to be seven hundred, if that were possible, or what happens during your particular lifetime. As the German poet Goethe once said, "History marches like a drunken beggar on horseback."

A lot can happen during your limited lifespan, or you can live a dull existence. Some people have had the good fortune to live more in a year than others at a different historical juncture could live in their whole lifetime. Or, as Plekhanov once put it, "If it hadn't been for the French Revolution, Napoleon would probably have ended up as a corporal in the French artillery."

Don't make it a condition that the socialist revolution must come in your lifetime. Be not only a citizen of the planet; be a citizen of time. Recognize that what's fundamental is to be in rapport with the human race from the dawn of history, on to heights we can only vaguely begin to dream of.

And what's the alternative? The alternative is to make a compromise with this rotten capitalist system. Do you know what people who do that are like? You remember the movie, *The Devil and Daniel Webster*? Jabez Stone,

you know, sold his soul to Scratch, the devil. He did so on the promise that his personal ambitions would thus be served. Later he regretted the action and asked to have his soul returned. Scratch, who was played by Walter Huston, that magnificent actor, finally said all right, he'd give it back.

So Scratch took a small matchbox from his pocket. He opened the box and began poking around in it with his stubby finger trying, and trying, to find the mean little soul of Jabez Stone so he could give it back.

That's symbolic of what you do to your own soul if you make a compromise with this rotten system.

Our job is to build a movement of men and women who emulate the seasoned fighters of the Continental line in the first American Revolution. Learn to be professional revolutionary fighters. Don't be summer soldiers. Don't dabble; don't vacillate. Put nothing above the considerations of the movement. Maintain your place in the front ranks of the revolutionary fighters, and stand in that place for the duration.

There is no other way in which you can find so rich, so rewarding, so fruitful, and so purposeful a life.



Farrell Dobbs would have toasted the translation into Spanish and publication of *Rebelión Teamster* with great pleasure. Above all he would have relished the story of young, fighting miners in Utah listening to a sight translation page by page during a long night in their picket shack. That would have struck a familiar chord.

He often pointed out how difficult it was in the 1930s, when he started searching for political answers, to find even one book that gave him the kind of historical per-

spective he was thirsting for, how he scoured the public libraries looking for something, anything. And he described the lightning-bolt impact on him of the first Marxist books and pamphlets he was given to read by cadres of the Communist League of America who recruited him, revolutionists like Vincent Ray Dunne, known as V.R., and Carl Skoglund, affectionately called Skogie by all his friends and comrades.

At that time, many fewer of the classics of Marxism had been translated into English, and those that had been published were hard to come by. This was true not only of the works of Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, V.I. Lenin, and Leon Trotsky, but also those of leaders of the communist movement in the United States. During the frequent, long hours of driving that were part of the over-the-road campaign, Dobbs was often accompanied by Skogie, who had become a trustee of Local 544 and later its president, an “illegal” immigrant from Sweden under deportation orders on the day he died in 1960! One of the most widely respected leaders of both the union and the Communist League of America, Skogie was fluent not only in English and Swedish but also in German—the first language of Marx and Engels, the language of outstanding revolutionists such as Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, and the political language of Lenin, Trotsky, and other leaders of the early Communist International. Over decades Skogie had accumulated a sizeable Marxist library, one that he put to use. As they drove the roads on union organizing assignments, Skogie would often read to Farrell—sometimes from English translations, sometimes sight translating from the German as they went along—giving Farrell access to works of Marxism he so eagerly sought.

A worthy celebration of this first-ever publication of *Rebelión Teamster* would be the completion of this effort—

the translation of the other three volumes that make up the Teamster series, plus a good start on *Revolutionary Continuity: Marxist Leadership in the U.S.*—by 2009, the ninetieth anniversary of the founding in this country of Farrell’s movement, the communist movement.



Teamster Rebellion is not a “manual” or a handbook. It is the record of a concrete experience in the class struggle—one that can be studied and absorbed by class-conscious workers and farmers who find themselves in the midst of other struggles, at other times, in other conditions, speaking many different languages.

In a new century, increasingly marked by looming economic catastrophe, and an accelerating drive toward bloody wars unleashed by the final imperialist power attempting to extend its life, the concrete experiences of the men and women of Local 574 will prove ever more current and valuable. In a world where vanguard workers and farmers, and youth attracted to their struggles, are daily seeking solidarity from and extending it to fellow combatants, *Teamster Rebellion* will be read in a growing number of picket shacks in mountains and prairies, in the middle of large cities and small towns, and translated into other languages, too, across the Americas and beyond.

Teamster Rebellion is dedicated “To the men and women who gave me unshakable confidence in the working class, the rank and file of General Drivers Local 574.” It is their story, the record of what they were able to achieve when they could count on the leadership they deserved.

Today, those seeking to emulate the commitment and seriousness of the Teamster vanguard of 1934 will read it in anticipation of both present and future battles. Through

it they will come to understand the truth that lies at the heart of the *Communist Manifesto*—communism is not a set of ideas, but the constantly renewed generalization of the line of march of a class fighting for its emancipation. And they will join that line of march, becoming a more and more conscious, and more and more battle-savvy part of its vanguard.

December 2003

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Although as the author of this work I bear sole responsibility for its contents, it is in large measure a team project. Foremost among my collaborators has been Marvel Scholl, who shared with me the experiences recorded in this story. I have drawn extensively from a diary she kept during the Teamster strikes in 1934. She has also supplied valuable information about the role of the women involved in these strikes. In more general terms Marvel has helped to recall the circumstances surrounding various events I have described. As each chapter was dictated into a tape recorder Sharon Lee Finer transcribed it. She did so accurately, speedily, and with contagious enthusiasm about the project. Harry DeBoer and Ray Rainbolt read the manuscript, chapter by chapter, to verify the account given with their recollection of events. In doing so they also supplied helpful information, including the quotations used from Harry DeBoer. Jack Maloney furnished background data about prestrike wages and conditions in the Minneapolis trucking industry, as well as the quotations from him on other matters that appear in the text. Max Geldman gave consultative aid concerning passages dealing with the unemployed. V. Raymond Dunne, Jr., helped in preparing the sketch of his father's early life. After the rest of the team had done their part, George Novack took the whole manuscript in hand to give it final editing.

Both V.R. Dunne, Sr., and Carl Skoglund, who played a large part in this story, are now dead. They left behind considerable historical material in the form of tape recordings and written memoranda upon which I have drawn. As a former official of the Teamsters Union I have considerable union material in my files, especially minutes of various meetings, copies of official correspondence, and public statements. This material has been used to refresh my recollection and to assure accuracy in factual matters. A complete file of General Drivers Local 574's official paper, *The Organizer*, has also been available for reference. Use has been made as well of the Trotskyist weekly paper, *The Militant*, for the period covered. In addition there has been occasional reference to the *Minneapolis Labor Review*, official organ of the AFL Central Labor Union, and to issues of the capitalist daily papers at the time of the 1934 strikes.

The making of a revolutionary

This story began for me on a November afternoon in 1933. I was working as a yard man for the Pittsburgh Coal Company in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Grant Dunne, a driver from another company whom I had not met before, came in for a load of fuel, and the foreman assigned me to help shovel it onto his truck. As we plied the No. 10 scoops Grant talked about our need for a union. He had in mind getting into General Drivers Local 574 of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. Although I knew little about unions at the time, his remarks fell on receptive ears. A brief sketch of the path I had traveled up to that point should help to explain why.

I was born into a working-class family on July 25, 1907, in Queen City, Missouri. The family soon moved to Minneapolis where I grew up and graduated from North High School in January 1925. During the following year I worked at various jobs, including hosiery dyer, auto mechanic's helper, and truck driver. An economic slump

in 1926 made jobs scarce so I beat my way to North Dakota where I worked in the harvest fields. Returning to Minneapolis in the fall, I got a job with the Western Electric Company as an installer of telephone central office equipment.

In April 1927 Marvel Scholl and I were married, after having gone together since we were seniors in high school. The following year Western Electric transferred me to its Iowa district where I was promoted in 1930 to the position of job foreman. Then in 1931 I was sent to the company's division office in Omaha, Nebraska. There they hung the label "planning engineer" on me and set me to work estimating the labor costs of telephone installation projects. The following months brought two events that affected me deeply, one in a faraway country and the other here at home.

At that time the Japanese were invading China and one day the Omaha newspaper carried a shocking picture of a Shanghai scene. Running diagonally across the picture was a high, barbed-wire fence buttressed at the base with sandbags. United States troops were stationed along this line guarding what was called the "international settlement," an obviously well-to-do district. Opposite them lay what was described in the caption as a working-class quarter. It had been reduced to a mass of rubble by Japanese artillery, but the wealthy district stood unscathed. As a worker I felt instinctive sympathy for my Chinese counterparts who had been attacked so brutally. It made me feel that something was basically wrong with a world in which such a terrible thing could happen.

The second event took place on the job. I had been assigned to the division office primarily for supervisory training which included sitting in on the division superintendent's conferences with his district supervisors—not

to participate but to listen and learn. By that time the post-1929 economic depression had become severe and a session was held to compile a list of employees for a general layoff. Among those named was John Staley, a worker who had been with the company a long time and who would soon be eligible for retirement under the company's stingy pension plan. The points were made that his layoff would enable the company to keep a younger, more productive worker and save some pension money later on. Because I had worked with John and drank with him, he was more than just a name to me. What was being done to him filled me with revulsion. It also became clear that they were trying to make a tool out of me through their training and I wanted no part of it.

As we have always done when something came up that affected our joint lives, Marvel and I talked about what was happening and came to an agreement that I should leave the Western Electric. By that time we had two daughters, Carol and Mary Lou, and our third daughter, Sharon Lee, was born during the following year. Our family economic problem was not a small one, but we thought we had a solution.

My position with the company entitled me to a termination allowance of several hundred dollars. We planned to use that to get a small business started back in Minneapolis. Once it was under way Marvel would take over the management. I would then go to the University of Minnesota to study political science and law, hopefully to become a judge and dispense some justice. When our finances permitted, Marvel would also enter the university so that eventually we could act as a team in carrying out our new course.

Naïve though our plan now appears in retrospect, one thing can be said for it. More a dream than a plan, it

reflected our desire to live as constructive and humane members of society.

The die was cast in September 1932. While driving from Omaha to Minneapolis we lightheartedly made up a song about joining the great army of the unemployed. After our arrival we set out on step one, trying to make a start in a small business, but we didn't get to first base. Soon the termination allowance was used up and I couldn't get any kind of a paying job. Nothing was to be found except come-ons for salespeople at a time when buyers were at a premium. We were brought face to face with the harsh reality that the day I left Western Electric we had indeed joined the great army of the unemployed.

Left to rely upon my parents for what help they could give, we lived with them on a small piece of land just outside Minneapolis. I contributed what I could for the household by raising what turned out to be a good crop of vegetables. As the harvest came in, Marvel and my mother worked long hours over a coal-burning stove in summer heat canning much of the crop for use during the following winter. That was in 1933, and in September I got the Pittsburgh Coal job through my father, who was mechanical superintendent for the company.

Once again having our own means of support, Marvel, the children, and I moved into our own quarters inside the city. At the start I worked sixty hours a week, bringing home about eighteen dollars, which had to cover rent, food, clothing, and whatever else we needed. My parents still gave us a little help when they could, and we could rely on our part of the canned vegetables, which had been shared with them.

We were just squeaking by when suddenly I was cut to forty-eight hours a week. It was a welcome physical relief since coal heavers had to work like mules, but there was

also a two-dollar cut in weekly pay. Then we got another economic blow. One night when we were away from home a severe cold wave typical of Minnesota winters suddenly struck. By the time we got home, the cold had ruined a great part of the canned food which was stored in a closed-in but unheated porch. The thin flesh of mere subsistence was being scraped down to the bare bones of outright poverty.

On top of all that, I could expect to be laid off in the spring, like coal drivers generally, since the work was seasonally confined to the colder months of the year. And I could be fired at any time without recourse merely at the employer's whim. Something had to be done to improve the situation, and that's why I told Grant Dunne I would join the union.

It wasn't quite that simple, he explained. The Local 574 business agent, Cliff Hall, had signed a closed-shop contract involving a small number of workers in one coal yard. In return for the union's promise to urge all organized labor to patronize him as a "fair" employer, the owner had agreed to employ only Local 574 members. Fearing that the deal would fall through if an attempt was made to organize the whole industry, Hall had lined up a majority of the executive board against letting other coal workers into the union.

We needed to break through this obstacle, Grant stressed, because it was important to be in the American Federation of Labor, and Local 574 had the AFL jurisdiction in our industry. A volunteer committee of coal workers had been formed to fight for admission into the union. Important help was at hand from the Local 574 president, William S. Brown, and the vice-president, George Frosig, who favored organizing all coal workers. Brown was arranging for the volunteer committee to meet with the union's executive board to press the issue. Grant emphasized the need for

representation from Pittsburgh Coal, which was a key yard in the industry, and asked me to participate in the forthcoming meeting. I agreed to do so.

Our meeting with the executive board took place a few days later. Brown opened the session by inviting us to state our case, which we did, emphatically. After quite a hassle, the board reversed itself and decided to take us into the union. A general organizing campaign was launched through open meetings sponsored by Local 574. Before long an impressive number of workers were recruited into the union. A representative committee was then chosen from the various yards to draw up a list of demands for submission to the employers. By January 1934 the demands had been prepared and ratified by the union membership. They centered on union recognition, increased wages, shorter hours, premium pay for overtime, improved working conditions, and job protection through a seniority system.

When presented with these demands, the employers refused to negotiate. A meeting of all coal workers was called for the evening of a work day to discuss the union's course of action. Several officials from other AFL unions came to the meeting and ganged up with Cliff Hall to prevent the taking of a strike vote. As a result many coal workers tore up their union cards in frustration and disgust. After having tried to deny us membership in the first place, union officials had once again done damage to our cause. A way had to be found to repair the situation.

The committee that had drawn up the demands forced another general membership meeting to be called for the following Sunday, when the yards would be closed. That made it possible to have more workers present. The committee worked hard to promote a big turnout, asking workers who had torn up their cards to give it another try, and

when Sunday came the union hall was packed. Decisions were made to give the employers forty-eight hours to begin negotiations, to hold another meeting on the day of the deadline, and in the meantime, to set up a strike committee. The employers stood pat in their refusal to negotiate, and the industry was struck on Wednesday, February 7, 1934.

The coal business was based mainly on the delivery of fuel to heat homes and buildings. In an effort to induce their customers to stock up on fuel the employers had been peddling strike rumors ever since the unionization drive began. After a time people decided it was just a trick to sell coal and many had little on hand that February day. To top it off, the thermometer fell way below zero as the walkout started. Since people couldn't do without fuel in such weather, the union was in a good strategic position.

After the AFL officials blocked the first attempt to take a strike vote, many workers had taken a standoffish attitude toward the union. They intended to wait and see whether or not it meant business. Now that the battle had started they began to pour into the strike headquarters. It was located in the AFL center at 614 First Avenue North where Local 574 had an office and held its meetings. My own experience illustrates the situation at that point.

After the first talk with Grant Dunne I had sounded out other workers in the Pittsburgh yard about joining the union. A few responded favorably but most of them held off to see what would happen. The first morning of the strike I went to the yard, told the foreman we were walking out and got the other yard men to go with me to the company garage. There we found the Pittsburgh drivers gathered. They were wondering what to do and a short discussion brought a general decision to support the

union. We marched in a body to the strike headquarters which was nearby and everybody signed up for picket duty. I'll never forget the happy welcome we got from the other strikers.

About 600 workers were available as pickets. Most of them fanned out to cover the larger coal yards and skeleton lines were maintained elsewhere. As the struggle developed, picket captains shifted the forces around according to need. Among the strikers were drivers who owned their own trucks and hauled coal on a commission basis. These vehicles were used for a shuttle service at the disposal of the picket captain. Before noon of the first day, the picket detachments had swept the scab drivers off the streets, and all but a couple of the sixty-seven yards had been closed.

It didn't take long for us to run into trouble with the police. They mobilized to eject the pickets from a big yard that had been closed down and we were harassed generally by arrests. The strikers refused to be intimidated. In defiance of the cops, two truckloads of coal were dumped in front of one yard. Other picket detachments fought a three-hour running battle along a main thoroughfare to prevent the cops from convoying a scab delivery of coal to a greenhouse owned by the county sheriff.

This battle reflected a new picketing technique developed through rank-and-file initiative during the heat of action. A number of strikers had secondhand cars, often so worn that the owners had to be backyard mechanics to keep them running. These cars gave the pickets a high degree of mobility that had several tactical advantages. Constant patrols could be maintained on the lookout for scab drivers on the streets. When trouble developed at a given yard, reinforcements could be brought in quickly. If a scab delivery under police escort got through the picket

line at a yard, as in the case of the sheriff's coal, the fight to stop it could be continued as it moved along the streets toward its destination.

My first knowledge of the development came when I heard some strikers talking excitedly about cruising pickets who were sweeping through the north side of town. "A guy named Harry DeBoer is leading them," one said, "and they sure are hell on wheels." This picketing technique, known at the time as cruising picket squads, was a forerunner of the flying squads later made famous by the auto workers.

Picketing day and night with little sleep, the strikers fought hard to keep the industry tied up tight. We were spurred on by the big stake we had in the outcome of the battle and our militancy was further stimulated by a growing awareness of organized labor's inherent power. With subzero weather hanging on, people were clamoring for coal, but the employers and their minions in government could find no way to break the strike. Finally the employers indicated they were ready to negotiate a settlement. The word came indirectly on the third day of the tie-up through the Regional Labor Board which had been set up under Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration.

On February 9, the Local 574 officials called a membership meeting to report a proposal for ending the strike that would take the form of a Labor Board order. The employers had agreed to recognize the union's right to represent its members, pending the outcome of an election of bargaining representatives to be conducted by the Labor Board. If the union won the election, it was reported, the employers would then negotiate a wage settlement. Cliff Hall had lined up quite a parade of speakers for the membership meeting: a judge, an alderman, a labor lawyer, and several AFL officials. They lauded the proposed settlement

as though it represented the second coming of Christ. The union had made a wonderful start in the industry, they told the strikers, even though not all the demands had been won. "You have to learn to crawl," they advised, "before you can learn to walk."

After an hour or so of such talk, Miles Dunne got the floor. He was a dynamic speaker, good at thinking on his feet. The proposed settlement was meaningful, Miles said, mainly because it showed that we had the bosses on the run. They were now maneuvering in the negotiations to cheat us out of what we had won on the picket line. Toward that end they wanted to avoid dealing directly with the union. Local 574 could surely win a collective bargaining election, he pointed out, but we were asked to go back to work without assurance of a wage increase or of action on any of the other demands. Our answer to the bosses should be that the strike would continue until they made a direct settlement with the union. I thought Miles had argued cogently and I voted accordingly. However, a majority of the strikers voted to accept the proposed settlement and we went back to work the next day.

An intensive campaign followed in preparation for the mid-February collective-bargaining election in which Local 574 won a sweeping victory. Then, as Miles Dunne had predicted, the employers refused to talk about wages or anything else, except through the Labor Board. In the end they simply filed a stipulation with the Board setting a new uniform wage scale with relatively small increases and providing for time-and-a-half after forty-eight hours. All the workers made some gain in their earnings. For example, I got a six-dollar raise to twenty-two dollars a week.

Although we could surely have done better through a direct union-employer contract, significant concessions

had been won from the bosses. We now had a strong union, at least in terms of its battle-tested ranks and in the useful role played by two Local 574 officials, Bill Brown and George Frosig. An important victory had been gained despite narrow-minded incompetents like Cliff Hall in the leadership. He and his kind had made it necessary for the coal workers to fight their way into the union and then to battle for the right to go on strike, only to lose much that we had won on the picket lines through bungled negotiations. Quite a few of us had become aware that this called for some drastic changes in the union officialdom.

After the strike, Hall and his henchmen began to make snide remarks around the union hall about the Dunnes being communists. Their talk interested me, but not for the reasons they intended. I was impressed by the way Grant and Miles had handled themselves during the strike. They appeared to know what had to be done, and they had the guts to do it.

One night after a meeting, I went into a beer joint across from the union hall and saw Miles Dunne standing at the bar. I took a place next to him, and after engaging in a little small talk, I came right to the point.

"Are you a communist?" I asked.

"What the hell's it to you?" he shot back.

"I heard that you are," I told him. "If it's so, I guess that's what I want to be."

I reasoned that if I joined a communist organization, I might be able to learn some of the things they knew.

A few days later Miles and Grant took me to a private meeting at the home of Carl Skoglund with whom I had developed a speaking acquaintance during the strike. There for the first time I met V.R. Dunne. At that session I finally got a start on the political education I had been seeking. The outcome was that in March 1934 I joined the revo-

lutionary socialist party, then known as the Communist League of America, which later evolved into the present-day Socialist Workers Party. Considering that I had voted for the Republican presidential candidate, Herbert Hoover, in the 1932 elections, I had come a long way politically in a little over a year under the impact of my experiences in the social crisis of that time.

In the thirty-seven years since then, I have learned a good deal from my participation in the trade-union and revolutionary socialist movements. From that standpoint I undertake this study of Minneapolis Teamster history across the turbulent years from 1934 to 1941. The coal strike was only the opening skirmish in a growing conflict that soon developed into virtual civil war. The broader Teamster strikes that followed the coal walkout set an example for all labor and helped generate militancy in the massive struggles waged later on in basic industry by the newly formed Committee for Industrial Organization.

Although Minneapolis had none of the basic industries in which the most definitive trade-union actions of that period took place, the Teamster strikes in that city were of major significance nationally because of certain special factors. A key aspect of the local situation was, of course, common to industry as a whole, namely, radicalization of the working class under the impact of severe economic depression. The main difference lay in the presence locally of revolutionary socialist cadres who proved highly capable of fusing with the mass of rebellious workers and adding vital know-how in the struggle against the capitalist ruling class. That circumstance must be comprehended in its direct relationship to the union's history in order to grasp the full meaning of the story.

Another special factor was the peculiar development of the region. For several reasons an unusual degree of trade-

union consciousness and even political class consciousness had grown up within the working class, especially among older and middle-aged layers. Regional political trends had in turn given rise to a state government that was exceptionally subject to mass pressures, making it difficult for the governor to act as an outright strikebreaker.

It follows that the full meaning of the Teamster strikes of 1934 cannot be grasped without examining more closely these special factors in the situation, beginning with the background history.

Seeds of revolt

Minneapolis lies at the edge of a vast agricultural prairie-land extending westward across the Dakotas into Montana. In the nineteenth century lush pine forests reached from north of the city to the Canadian border. After the region was seized from the Indians, capitalist economic development began around wheat and lumber. By the time the lumber barons had despoiled the virgin timber, iron ore was discovered on the Mesabi range in northern Minnesota and strip mining of the ore for eastern steel mills opened a new sphere of capital investment as the lumber trade waned.

As the hub of the economic setup, Minneapolis knew the hum of saw mills while the lumber boom lasted, and for many years it remained the flour-milling center of the country. Iron foundries sprang up to produce farm implements. Wholesale houses were established, dealing in hardware, food, clothing, and other consumer products for the region. A network of railroads fanned out from the

city, as did later a complex of truck lines. Freight rates for hauling the farmers' grain to market were dictated by the railroads, and the millers decided how much would be paid for it. This exploitation by the city-based tycoons was supplemented by somewhat more subtle financial manipulations carried on through the local grain exchange and the banks. It was a capitalist bonanza allowing everybody to wax fat except the workers and small farmers.

Labor-power for agriculture, industry, transportation, and commerce came from a combination of native-born and immigrant forces. Because of the seasonal nature of many jobs the native-born component was made up in considerable measure of itinerant workers drawn from other parts of the country. They toiled in the main as harvest hands, lumberjacks, miners, and railroad construction laborers. The Industrial Workers of the World arose primarily as a union of such itinerant laborers. In Minneapolis the IWW set up Local 10 in the Bridge Square district, the town's skid row. From about 1910 until World War I it was one of the largest and most important IWW locals in the midwest. Tens of thousands of itinerant workers cleared through it on their way to various jobs in the region.

A high degree of class consciousness existed among IWW members, derived from the organization's record of heroic struggles. Some of them became "double headers," that is, they also belonged to one or another AFL craft union. As a result, the Minnesota labor movement in general became influenced by their militancy and their class-struggle outlook. The movement was further influenced by railroad workers who came to Minneapolis and found jobs on the trains and in the railway repair shops. Among them were followers of Eugene V. Debs, the great socialist and rail-union leader, who schooled them in fundamentals of class

politics. Their strike experience gained elsewhere in the country and their political knowledge had an impact within the local AFL.

Parallel to the influx of native-born itinerants, waves of immigrants arrived in the region from the late nineteenth century on. They came mainly from Norway, Sweden, Germany, Finland, and Denmark. Lured by the prospect of homesteading land or buying it cheaply, most came with the hope of making a better life for themselves in this country as farmers. To make out on the land they had to have seed, implements, and livestock. There were mortgage payments to be met. Since they were usually cheated out of a fair price for their produce and sometimes faced an outright crop failure, the need often arose of finding a way to get some ready cash. This frequently brought immigrant farmers into Minneapolis looking for work. Many had been skilled factory workers and building-trades mechanics in the old country and were able to find employment at their trade. Others simply did the best they could to find jobs at common labor.

Some decided to settle down in the city where in time they were joined by thousands of other immigrants who had been forced off their small farms. A considerable number of them were already socialists when they arrived in this country. They tended to join the Socialist Party of Debs's time in which they were organized into language federations according to the country of their birth. They had also gained significant trade-union experience in the old country. Consequently, as part of the city's labor force, they became trade-union militants and socialist activists in both the AFL and the IWW. This fusion of native-born and immigrant workers in labor militancy is illustrated by the careers of V.R. Dunne and Carl Skoglund, who were to emerge as central leaders of the 1934 Teamster strikes.

Vincent Raymond Dunne was born April 17, 1889, in Kansas City, Kansas. While Ray was an infant his father, a streetcar mechanic, was injured so severely he could no longer work and the family moved to the grandparents' farm at Little Falls, Minnesota. After getting only limited formal schooling, Ray went to work at fourteen as a lumberjack in the Minnesota woods. A year later he hit the road, stopping first in the North Dakota harvest fields where he joined the IWW. From there he moved to Montana, on to Washington, down the Pacific coast, and across the Southwest. Along the way he worked as a lumberjack, harvest hand, or at whatever he could find as an itinerant laborer.

During his travels he accumulated rich experience in strikes and free-speech fights conducted by the IWW. In 1908 he was sentenced to an Arkansas chain gang on a vagrancy charge, but it didn't stick. Seeing a chance to escape one day, he took off and didn't stop until he got to Minneapolis.

There he married Jennie Holm in 1914, and two children were born to them: a son, Raymond, and a daughter, Jeanette. In the city, Ray Dunne first got a job driving for an express company. While on that job he worked alongside Ray Rainbolt upon whom he had a strong political impact. Its lasting effect was shown by the prominent part Rainbolt later played in the 1934 strikes. He always credited Dunne as the one who pointed him in the right direction on the class-struggle road.

This experience shows how a revolutionary can be building toward the future in what may appear at the time as uneventful association with one's fellow workers. Later their paths separated temporarily when Ray Dunne changed jobs to become a clerk for a firm that delivered ice to be used for refrigeration in people's homes.

By this time he had developed beyond the syndicalist outlook of the IWW, which focused one-sidedly on the general strike as the key to the transformation of society. Although still loyal to the IWW, Ray had gone ahead of it politically in his understanding of the nature of the capitalist state. He was beginning to grasp the importance of building a Marxist vanguard party and he had come to consider himself a revolutionary socialist. Such was the nature of his political views when in 1915 he first met Carl Skoglund at a Minneapolis street meeting.

Carl Skoglund was born April 7, 1884, on an ancient feudal estate in Sweden where his ancestors had been serfs. As Carl entered his teens his father died, making it necessary for him, as the oldest child, to leave school and earn a living for the family. He found a job in a pulp mill where in time he became a skilled hand. Wages were low and working conditions bad in the mill, so Carl helped to organize a union and lead a strike for its recognition by the employer.

Through these experiences in the class struggle he became politically class conscious, learned many fundamentals of Marxism from other advanced workers and joined the Social Democratic Party. Later on he was called up for service in the Swedish army. When the conscripts were kept in uniform beyond the legal period of compulsory service, he became one of the leaders of a soldiers' protest movement demanding that they be demobilized. The ruling class called it "mutiny" and added this mark against him to their record of his activities as a trade-union and political militant. Having become so thoroughly black-listed that he could scarcely find a job, in 1911 he decided to go to the United States. His intended wife remained behind and they were never rejoined; except for a brief marriage toward the end of his life, he remained single.

Upon arriving in Minnesota, Carl spent a short period on a railroad construction gang after which he went into the woods as a lumberjack. There he suffered a serious foot injury. Since he would be laid up for an extended period, the lumber company decided to scrap him as useless. He was given perfunctory emergency treatment by the company doctor and then fired. He went to Minneapolis where he sought medical care, maintaining himself by working as a janitor and boiler tender. As the injury mended and he could get around better, he worked as a building-trades mechanic, later on moving from that to a job as a car repairman in the railway shops. Having joined the Socialist Party in 1914, Carl had become one of the left-wing leaders of the party's Scandinavian Federation when he first met Ray Dunne a year later.

In a personal memorandum to me written long afterward, Ray spoke of their early association: "Skogie, as he was affectionately called from the earliest days by his comrades and intimate friends, was my teacher and close comrade. He was not only a skilled mechanic; he was an intellectual of considerable stature. He had a fine library of Marxist literature and in most of our spare time we were together. . . . I spent a good deal of time reading books and pamphlets in between short 'curtain lectures' from Carl. At times there would be six or eight other comrades with us in his room, or in the IWW headquarters, or in the I.O.G.T. (International Order of Good Templars) on the north side in the sawmill district, which was the headquarters of the largest Socialist Party local in Minneapolis or St. Paul. He explained the strong and the weak sides of the IWW. Even in those days he was as much at home with Wobblies as he was in the Socialist Party. Both recognized him as a leader. But he was a party man, first and always; an internationalist, of course."

Revolutionary internationalism came in for a serious test when the United States entered World War I in 1917. The ruling class seized the occasion for an assault on the militant workers and farmers. A seven-member Commission of Safety was set up by the Minnesota legislature, armed with dictatorial powers and a million-dollar budget. It led a systematic attack on the radical movement, the trade unions, and the small farmers' organizations. A sustained propaganda campaign was set in motion to whip up war hysteria. The intent was to unleash blind, chauvinistic rage against anyone accused of being "unpatriotic." Yellow paint was splashed on the houses of German immigrants. Radicals named in the capitalist press were subjected to mob harassment, some even being tarred and feathered.

The IWW, especially, was dealt severely crippling blows through legal frameup and imprisonment of its leading figures. Despite everything, militants staunchly opposed to imperialist war stood up against the pressures, waiting and looking for a chance to fight back. Among them were Ray and Carl, whom the experience further steeled as revolutionary fighters.

On the heels of the 1918 armistice the country entered a new stage of class struggle. Several major strikes took place in basic industry, most of which were lost. The radical movement had been shaken up by the 1917 Russian Revolution and a split resulted in the Socialist Party of the United States. Through this split, the left wing of the SP provided the main forces to found the Communist Party in 1919, which became affiliated with the Third International led by Lenin and Trotsky.

In Minnesota the Scandinavian Federation took the lead in opting for the CP and almost all the SP left wing in the state followed suit. Through this process Carl became

a founding member of the new party and Ray joined it in 1920. Both of them became members of the Minneapolis central committee of the party.

For the next few years, before the Communist Party became Stalinized, it played a generally positive role in the trade unions and the farmers' movement. The activities of Carl and Ray enabled them to get elected as delegates from their local unions to the Central Labor Union (CLU), a body made up of representatives from all AFL locals in the city. Ray had gotten a job after the war as a weigh-master in a coal yard. His function was to assign drivers for delivery of fuel orders and to weigh each load to see that the order was properly filled. This position enabled him to take the initiative in helping to organize an AFL union of office workers. That in turn put him in line for the delegateship to the CLU.

Properly led, the central body had the capacity to further the workers' cause through the combined strength of all trade unionists in the city. In practice, however, the AFL officialdom frequently used it instead to impose their dictatorial control over dissident local unions. Even so, revolutionists could work to good advantage within the body. Efforts could be made to block unjust acts by dictatorial AFL officials and influence could be exerted to promote the building of a left wing throughout the local union movement.

Carl's delegateship to the CLU stemmed from his role in the railway carmen's union, an AFL craft unit. The various railway shopcrafts were well organized in Minneapolis, which was a large rail center, and he had earned recognition as a leader throughout the left wing of the shopmen's unions. He was elected district chairman of the strike committee in the national shopmen's strikes of 1919 and 1922. In both struggles, the workers were defeated

through company strikebreaking, aided by the government, and because of misleadership in top union circles. After the 1922 strike Carl was blacklisted on the railroads, as he had been in Sweden, and he turned to driving a coal truck for a living.

After World War I a witch-hunt was set in motion, highlighted by the Palmer raids, named after the U.S. Attorney General who ramrodded the attack on the labor movement. Radicals were jailed on a wholesale scale and many noncitizens among them were deported. Carl had a narrow escape when he went as a delegate to a Communist Party underground convention in Michigan. They were meeting in a rural wooded area when word came that a government raid was in the offing. Carl and another delegate were assigned to bury some papers and it turned out that the “comrade” helping him was a government agent. No greenhorn by this time, Carl escaped the dragnet and laid low until things cooled off a bit. To cap the climax, the government witch-hunt had led by 1926 to a “red” purge within the AFL. Both Carl and Ray were expelled from their unions and cut off officially from all union connections.

A more harrowing experience was soon to follow, stemming from a conflict inside the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. After V.I. Lenin died in 1924, Joseph Stalin headed up a privileged bureaucracy within the Soviet Union which grew steadily. In time it succeeded in carrying out a political counterrevolution, which stripped the masses of their democratic rights in the first workers’ state. The Stalinist bureaucracy also steered the parties of the Third International into reformist collaboration with the capitalist ruling class in other countries.

Leon Trotsky organized an opposition to the Stalinist gang but it was ruthlessly crushed and its members perse-

cuted and jailed. Trotsky himself was exiled to Alma Ata in Central Asia. But an echo of this momentous struggle was heard by some delegates at the Sixth Congress of the Communist International in 1928 even though Stalin had an unchallenged majority there.

One of the delegates to the Moscow congress from the Communist Party of the United States was James P. Cannon, who accidentally came upon a document by Trotsky criticizing the Stalinist draft program. The document was suppressed at the congress on the pretext that Trotsky had been expelled from the Russian CP in 1927. Cannon and Maurice Spector, a leader of the Canadian CP, smuggled a copy out of Russia. Then, with the help of Max Shachtman and Martin Abern, Cannon sought to make Trotsky's views known in this country. On October 27, 1928, Cannon, Shachtman, and Abern were expelled from the Communist Party on charges of "Trotskyism."

Ray Dunne and Carl Skoglund had first met Jim Cannon in 1924 when he visited Minneapolis as a national CP leader. After that Ray became a member of the Cannon caucus in the party. Carl had been closer to the trade unionist William Z. Foster, also a national CP leader, than to Cannon up to 1928. When Foster backed Stalin's line, Carl joined with Ray in supporting the Cannon group. They demanded that the local CP officials explain why Cannon, Shachtman, and Abern had been expelled. For this they were summarily thrown out of the party themselves, along with some other comrades who felt as they did. That outrageous treatment was followed by a Stalinist campaign of slander, ostracism, and gangsterism against them.

Ray later described their situation at that time: "Our expulsion from the CP was to both of us, Carl and me, not alone to be sure, something like the 'cruellest cut of

all'. . . . We were, after November 1928, truly outcasts from the viewpoint of the 'leaders' of the union movement, the Farmer-Labor Party and the quite numerous membership of District No. 9, the third district in membership in the CP of that time. It may be a bit difficult to believe but it would be totally wrong to say or indicate that we were dismayed, crushed, without confidence, or without plans for the necessary tasks that had been so unexpectedly thrust upon us. The record I'm quite sure bears me out, at least on that matter."

The tasks to which he referred centered on striving to support the small and poverty-stricken Trotskyist movement that emerged from the split. As a first step toward the new movement's growth they sought to influence wavering Communist Party members who were disturbed about the Stalinist policies. To meet their new tasks they spent a good deal of time studying the Marxist classics and discussing how to shape their revolutionary course. The Trotskyists organized themselves nationally as the Communist League of America (Left Opposition). The parenthetical designation signified that they were fighting for readmission into the CP with the normal democratic rights of a minority to express its views during internal discussion periods in a disciplined way, as Lenin had taught was the correct procedure. With the passage of time and events they hoped to win the CP back to a correct political line. The Communist League's key instrument for this effort was its weekly paper, *The Militant*. Recognizing how it could boost their political work, the Minneapolis comrades strove mightily to give the paper badly needed financial support and to build its circulation.

In 1933 the Communist League made a turn toward the building of a new revolutionary party. The German Communist Party's failure to oppose Hitler's seizure of power

in Germany that year had demonstrated the political bankruptcy of the world Stalinist movement. It was clear that a revolutionary revival of the Third International was no longer possible. This imposed the task of constructing new parties throughout the world and uniting them in a new revolutionary international.

By that time, the Communist League branch in Minneapolis had grown to about forty members and close sympathizers. Among them were comrades with long and varied experience in the trade-union and radical movements. With these forces the branch was in fairly good shape to turn toward mass work as the keystone to building the new party. Objective conditions were becoming more and more favorable for that perspective as the mass radicalization of the day intensified under the pressures of economic depression. The time was ripe, Carl and Ray thought, to speed up the tempo of the Teamster campaign, which they had already been contemplating before they were thrown out of the Communist Party in 1928.

Plan of battle

General Drivers Local 574, through which the Communist League launched its trade-union campaign, bore the stamp of business unionism. The concepts involved had been imprinted upon the American Federation of Labor by Samuel Gompers, the founding leader. When Gompers died in 1924 he was succeeded in the AFL presidency by William Green who continued the founder's policies. Business unionism was designed to win acceptance in ruling-class circles by practicing class collaboration. Toward that end AFL officials sought to conduct themselves as "labor statesmen."

Ignoring the great bulk of the nation's workers, who were left to shift for themselves as best they could, the AFL moguls focused on the organization of narrow, privileged craft unions. These were based on various strata of skilled workers. As the better paid component of the working class, their outlook could most readily be warped to the concepts of business unionism. This objective was imple-

mented by setting up little job trusts, through closed-shop contracts with employers, under which only members of the given craft union were hired. AFL officials anxious to get ahead in the movement were taught to accredit complete sanctity to these contracts. Strict control over strikes was maintained and one craft often scabbed on another.

The AFL officialdom grew into a complacent bureaucracy enjoying high salaries and lavish expense accounts. Living in a lush world of their own, the bureaucrats took a dispassionate view of the labor movement. Oftentimes they sided with the employers against the workers. They were quick to take disciplinary action against dissidents within the unions. Distrusting and fearing the workers, they sought to regiment the rank and file on a dictatorial basis. In the process they rigged the union structure and procedures so as to perpetuate themselves in office. Thus oriented, with their faces turned firmly to the past, the AFL officials presided over a steady decline in national membership strength as the social crisis of the 1930s gathered momentum.

In 1933 Minneapolis had only a small and struggling AFL movement. It was composed of unions in construction, printing, railway shops, service trades, trucking and a few miscellaneous trades. Most of these were only skeleton organizations. Local unions in the AFL were affiliated with parent bodies set up along craft lines and usually called "International Unions." The latter term did not at all imply an internationalist working-class outlook. It simply meant that these bodies had a few local affiliates in Canada.

The parent body of the Minneapolis drivers locals was known in 1933 as the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Stablemen, and Helpers. At the time the IBT had around 80,000 members nationally. Daniel J. Tobin had been general president of the organization since

1907 and he was a simon-pure representative of business unionism. He boasted in the *Teamsters Journal* that IBT members were “not the rubbish that have come into other organizations.” The union didn’t want people to join, he added, “if they are going on strike tomorrow.”

Apart from teamsters and stablemen, by then more or less a thing of the past, IBT membership was confined pretty much to truck drivers, helpers, and platform workers at loading docks. Not only was the overall craft structure a narrow one, there were even narrower craft subdivisions within the organization. Members were divided up into separate local unions more or less according to the different commodities they handled. Each local union in turn zealously guarded its jurisdiction over the given subcraft on which it was based. By dividing the workers organizationally in this manner Tobin was able to run the union with an iron hand. For that purpose he also maintained a staff of general organizers who were directly responsible to him. Their primary duty was to enforce Tobin’s dictates and to report any signs of dissidence within the organization. Tobin, himself, remained aloof from the rank and file. He laid down the law through the *Teamsters Journal* and called offenders onto the carpet at his headquarters in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Where the IBT had a few local unions in a city, a Teamsters Joint Council was usually formed. It was a delegated body made up of the executive board members of the various locals, which made it cozy for those involved. An official who came under membership fire in a local union could count on understanding and support from the council. As a rule an organizer was chosen from among the delegates to administer council affairs. The council had considerable leeway in supervising IBT locals within the city, provided it followed official IBT policy and carried

out all specific directives from Tobin.

A Teamsters Joint Council had been formed in Minneapolis. Within it were separate locals of ice distributors, drivers handling milk routes, tea and coffee peddlers, drivers of city-owned trucks, and general drivers. There was also a taxi local whose handful of members drove individually-owned cabs. The combined membership of these locals in 1933 was less than a thousand and not a single Teamster strike had been won in the city for some twenty years.

Local 574 was chartered around 1915 as a “general” local. Although the designation meant that 574 could take in members not specifically coming under the jurisdiction of another IBT local, it was not intended to become an all-inclusive drivers’ union. If enough members of a given subcraft happened to be organized into Local 574, they were to be reorganized into a local of their own. The problem had not arisen in practice, however, because Local 574 didn’t prosper. It had only about seventy-five members prior to the fall of 1933. Seven officers were elected by the membership and together they constituted the local’s executive board. These included the president, vice-president and a recording secretary, who kept minutes of meetings. There was also a secretary-treasurer, who was supposed to keep financial records, handle correspondence, and take care of general union affairs. Three trustees were elected to audit the financial accounts.

Except for the president, William S. Brown, who was full-time organizer for the Teamsters Joint Council, all Local 574 officers worked in the industry. Cliff Hall had, therefore, been hired as part-time business agent to handle the local’s affairs. Hall, a milk driver “on loan” from his organization, took the job as a step toward realization of his personal ambition to become a union bureaucrat. The local had four or five closed-shop contracts with small

companies which had been obtained in return for a promise to get union patronage for these firms. Fulfillment of the promise was undertaken by adding these firms to a “fair” list of employers posted at the AFL Central Labor Union headquarters. If difficulties developed with one of these companies, a threat was made to take it off the list, thereby implying injury to its business.

The scheme didn’t work too well, as Cliff Hall explained in a letter to Tobin dated April 22, 1930. “About two weeks ago,” Hall wrote, “I was called to the office of a transfer company and he told me that . . . a non-union concern went to one of his largest stops and cut the price of hauling their merchandise in approximately half, and here is the result: the first thing he does is tell me to ask the employees if they will be willing to take a \$1.00 cut per week in their wages. . . . rumors are being passed about that one of the other transfer companies is going to do likewise, unless we take steps to stop the proposition. . . . On April 21 . . . a meeting was called by members of the Local for the two transfer companies who are concerned in this proposition. I might say there were quite a few remarks passed around to the extent that . . . there was only one way to organize the city of Minneapolis, that is by presenting an agreement to the concerns that are now favorable to the Union, and if these concerns do not want to sign this agreement it is the sentiment of the organization that the General Drivers #574 will consider very much going on strike.”

Hall enclosed a proposed wage agreement which he asked Tobin to approve, stating that it had been “read at the local organization, three readings [as required under the IBT bylaws—FD], and passed at each one. It has also been approved by the Teamsters Joint Council No. 32.”

In granting the requested approval, Tobin wrote to Hall

the following day. "You, of course, understand that the approval of a wage agreement is not the endorsement of a strike, and before allowing your men to become involved in anything like a stoppage of work, it will be necessary for you to communicate with this office stating what the difference is between your local and employers, number of men that will be involved, and all other information surrounding the situation so that I, in turn, may submit same to the General Executive Board for consideration and approval. I trust you will not have to enter into trouble of any kind and that I will hear from you that a satisfactory settlement has been reached." This exchange of letters does much to explain why the union was so impotent.

The local was also poverty-stricken financially. Its main asset was a small iron safe which one of the officers said must be guarded "because it holds our books." Two sets of books were kept, one to be shown to Tobin's traveling auditor and the other for more refined use. From time to time the local put on an organizing drive that brought in a few new members, usually temporarily. Payments of initiation fees and monthly dues in such cases were recorded informally at first. In this way the local could avoid shelling out per capita tax to Tobin on these newly recruited workers if they dropped out after a time. Tobin sometimes complained that the local didn't send in adequate membership reports so that the International could tell how much tax it had coming. His gripes didn't change the local's procedure, however, because it was a way to put a little something extra into the iron safe.

The flavor of life inside the local can best be described by recounting a story told by Bill Brown. On one occasion the secretary-treasurer, who had little formal education, was reading a financial report to a membership meeting. Whenever he came to an item listed as miscellaneous he

pronounced it “missmullaneous.” Finally a member, who was a bit in his cups, interrupted to demand, “Who’s this damn woman you’re spending all our money on?” Sputtering angrily, the secretary-treasurer threw his books into the air and stalked out of the meeting.

On balance, there was little more in Local 574 than an IBT charter with which to begin an organizing campaign. However, this in itself was of paramount importance. Workers becoming newly unionized tend to gravitate toward the official labor movement, no matter what its condition may be at the time. In Minneapolis the AFL was the dominant labor organization and Local 574 was affiliated with it. Any attempt to bypass the AFL and set up an independent union would have been self-defeating. The AFL officialdom would automatically oppose such a step by taking counter measures to draw workers into the existing union structure. Confusion and division would result from which only the bosses could benefit.

By putting a reverse twist on the “general” jurisdiction, it would be possible to derive some advantage from the nature of Local 574’s charter. A successful organizing drive could flood the local with new members from all parts of the industry. Before Tobin could get around to cutting them up into subcrafts, a situation could develop that was beyond his power to control. Such potential was inherent in the trucking industry because it was strategic to the whole economic complex in a commercial city like Minneapolis. This factor made the truck drivers the most powerful body of workers in the town. Their power was further enhanced by the fact that it was difficult to use strikebreakers, since the trucks had to operate on the streets.

To get started in this promising situation two steps were necessary: first, Local 574 had to be induced to accept new

members beyond its existing job-trust circle; then a drive could be launched to organize the mass of unorganized workers in the industry and open a struggle for union recognition.

The leaders of the Communist League in Minneapolis approached these tasks with a well-thought-out conception of the dynamics of the class struggle based on a study of the interrelationship between the situation's positive and negative features. Workers were radicalizing under the goad of economic depression. To mobilize them for action it was necessary to start from their existing level of understanding. In the course of battle a majority could be convinced of the correctness of the Communist League's trade-union policy. They would come to understand that misleadership within the AFL was largely responsible for the fact that not a single strike had been won by any union in the city during the previous decade. To drive the point home it was imperative to show in the opening clash with the bosses that a strike could be won.

The key to all this was the infusion of politically class-conscious leadership into the union through the cadres of the Communist League. Of course, they could not assume immediate leadership of the union. Their role as leaders would have to develop and be certified through the forthcoming struggles against the employers. To facilitate that objective it was necessary that all party members in the city understand and support the projected Teamster campaign. Toward that end the whole concept was thoroughly discussed in the party branch and firm agreement was reached on the steps to be taken. It was also necessary to decide in advance who would speak publicly for the party and lead its members in the union during the campaign.

In his memorandum mentioned previously, Ray Dunne explained how that was thought out: "Skogie proposed

that I, rather than he, accept the role of party public spokesman and leader of the party fraction. The reasons for Carl's proposal were as follows: We both knew, and he argued, that it was a touch-and-go matter. If we were successful the employers would pick up the matter of his noncitizenship. If he were a public spokesman for the union, this could add additional dangers. . . . I was a native-born citizen. In addition I was well known to quite a large section of the prospective recruits. I had been a candidate of the Communist Party for U.S. Senator in 1928 and was therefore known quite widely in several important sectors of the state. . . . We came to agreement, after long discussion and consideration of the local and state political climate."

Also to be noted is the salutary fact that Ray and Carl always acted as a team. Neither was given to strutting about as an individual star or posturing as the fount of all wisdom. Both were serious revolutionists, organization men, who knew how to teach younger leaders by precept and example.

Under their guidance a broadening leadership team was gradually forged. In the opening stage of the Teamster campaign the team was reinforced by Grant and Miles Dunne, both party members who worked in the coal yards, as did Ray and Carl. Key supporting roles were played by two other party members in the trade unions: Oscar Coover, Sr., a skilled electrician in the building trades; and C.R. Hedlund, a locomotive engineer on the Northwestern railway. Soon to be added to the team were militant young workers who began to develop as leaders during the struggle in the coal industry.

The campaign was opened in that particular industry for specific reasons: Communist League members were employed there; the coal yards were the strategic place to start the action because of the subzero Minnesota winters.

If the yards could be effectively closed down in a strike, the employers would be unable to sit tight in the hope of starving the strikers into submission. Such a course was more or less excluded by the fact that people would have to be supplied with coal during the cold winter weather. This circumstance was accentuated by the fact that under the depressed economic conditions of the day many people could afford to buy only a small quantity of fuel at one time. It was, therefore, possible that a well-timed and properly conducted strike could win a relatively quick settlement in the union's favor, even though it might be only a partial victory.

This, of course, would have to be accomplished in the face of stiff employer resistance. If the effort succeeded, the stage would be set to organize the rest of the trucking industry. In the process, the paralysis that afflicted the AFL unions generally could be overcome and the whole town could be organized.

It would take a class war to achieve these objectives and the outcome depended on the capacity of the Communist League to play a key role in guiding and inspiring the whole movement. The lingering effects in the Minnesota AFL of a previous period of radical influence could be counted on as a favorable factor. In Minneapolis there were numerous trade unionists who retained memories of radical unionism in the past. Some considered themselves socialists in a loose sense. Others had kept alive a spark of militancy from their IWW days. Once a real strike struggle got underway in the city, many of them could be expected to rally to the cause like old warhorses responding to the sound of a bugle.

Development of the struggle required the surmounting of bureaucratic obstacles in the Central Labor Union and the Teamsters Joint Council. Within Local 574 this

problem centered on Cliff Hall, who worked hand and glove with the rest of the bureaucrats sitting on top of the city's unions. These worthies had somehow existed in their posts for years without winning a strike. For that shortcoming they smugly blamed the workers. Steeped as they were in collaboration with "fair" employers, they could be expected to be hostile toward the projected strike action. Yet it would not do to open a frontal attack on the bureaucrats. Such a step would give the mistaken impression that the main objective of the campaign was to win union posts. As that would hamper the organizing drive, it was necessary to develop a flanking tactic.

The key to such a tactic lay in a contradiction faced by the union bureaucrats. In their fundamental outlook they were oriented toward collaboration with the capitalists, but they were of no value to the ruling class unless they had a base from which to operate in the unions. To maintain such a base they had to deliver something for the workers. In the campaign about to begin, however, they would be put up against leadership responsibilities that they couldn't meet. Thus the indicated tactic was to aim the workers' fire straight at the employers and catch the union bureaucrats in the middle. If they didn't react positively, they would stand discredited.

Another factor to be considered was the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party. Based on an alliance of trade unions and farmers' organizations, the party had been launched in the aftermath of World War I. As it gained momentum a number of supporters also came forward from within the urban middle class. Thanks largely to the role of left-wing trade unionists, the founding of this independent political movement marked a break from earlier attempts in the region to capture a capitalist party. Although the FLP put up candidates against both the Democrats and Repub-

licans, its program was limited essentially to demands for reform of the capitalist system. As a result, confused patterns of class political consciousness developed among the party's rank-and-file supporters. Organizationally these forces were drawn together through a federation of local clubs, which existed in city wards and rural communities. In addition, trade unions constituted a principal component of the federation.

From the outset the Farmer-Labor Party candidates for public office tended to assume control over the party. Their primary aim was to get themselves elected, and they played fast and loose with principles to achieve that goal. The party's first major victory was the election of a U.S. Senator and a couple of congressmen in 1922. Then in 1930 it captured the governorship of the state, making it the only party of its kind ever to win such a seat of power in this country. The year 1933 saw the FLP governor begin his second term in office. In the state legislature at that time the FLP made a bloc with liberal capitalist politicians to control the lower house, but the senate remained predominantly conservative.

It should be noted in passing that the Communist Party had played a role in the emergence of the Farmer-Labor Party. Then in 1928 the CP decided to run its own candidate against the FLP nominee for U.S. Senator. Ray Dunne, who for years had been secretary of the 12th Ward FLP Club in Minneapolis, was chosen by the CP as its candidate. This brought about his expulsion from the Farmer-Labor Party, and soon thereafter he was thrown out of the Communist Party on charges of "Trotskyism."

Because of its base among the workers and farmers, the Farmer-Labor Party had a dual nature. In contrast to the unprincipled political conniving of its candidates on the electoral arena, the party was also a mass movement with

a membership that took part in farmers' struggles and in trade-union activities. For one thing this meant that its representatives in public office had to show sympathy toward the trade unions in conflicts with the employers. Since many unorganized workers supported the party at the ballot box, these officeholders also had to favor unionization of such workers as both a right and a necessity.

Floyd B. Olson was the FLP candidate who had been elected in 1930 as governor of the state, and reelected in 1932. A lawyer with some early trade-union experience, he had previously been county attorney of Hennepin County, in which Minneapolis is situated. Olson considered himself bigger than the movement he represented. This led him to act more or less as a free-agent politically, making self-serving deals with politicians in the capitalist parties.

So far as the Communist League's objectives were concerned, Olson's presence in the governor's chair was both good and bad at the same time. On the plus side was the fact that the governor, who had based his political career on the FLP, couldn't afford to act openly as a strikebreaker. Instead he would have to give some measure of open support to a unionization campaign. On the minus side was the expectation that in a showdown fight with the employers, Olson and the trade-union bureaucrats would try to take over the leadership of the union forces.

This was a real danger because the governor was a persuasive person, clever in his actions. He was respected in the union ranks and no union official had ever dared to cross him. To the Communist League leaders this meant that any question of sympathy strikes by other unions in support of a Local 574 walkout would have to be carefully handled. Otherwise the way could be opened for Olson to step in and take command by way of the officials in other

unions. It was therefore necessary to build up Local 574's strength so that, even in the toughest going, it could make a strong showing on its own against the enemy class.

In confronting the employers, Local 574 would be up against the Citizens Alliance. This was an employer organization that took its inspiration from the crushing of a 1918 streetcar strike through the use of wartime home guards. It was dominated by the wealthiest and most powerful local capitalists. In matters of labor relations they rode herd over the smaller-fry employers of whom there were some 800 in the organization. The Citizens Alliance tolerated no defections from its policy, and reprisals were taken against employers who violated its labor code. It maintained a full-time staff, had stool pigeons planted in the trade unions, got full cooperation from city hall, and had the police at its service. The enemy class was well organized for strikebreaking, and it was extremely cocky.

All in all, the projected trade-union campaign was a big undertaking with many pitfalls and dangers. Nevertheless, sound reasons existed for setting it into motion. There was also good cause to begin on a note of optimism. In the coal yards, where the first steps would be taken, workers with radical backgrounds could be counted upon to help the project along.

The opening wedge

An attempt to get the Local 574 campaign started was first made in the winter of 1930–31. Carl Skoglund and Miles Dunne were sent into the union to feel out the possibilities of promoting a drive to unionize the coal industry. Before long internal gossip was spread about Carl being a “radical troublemaker” and the business agent refused to accept dues from him. Miles, who was less well known than Carl, was not bothered, but he had to take it easy inside the union in order to be there later on if things should take a turn for the better. Meantime, some way had to be found to overcome this initial setback.

A more circumspect approach to the task was set into motion, beginning in the DeLaittre-Dixon Fuel yard. Ray, Miles, and Grant Dunne, along with Carl Skoglund and Martin Soderberg, were employed there and they initiated the voluntary organizing committee that I was to join two years later. A careful method of procedure had to be devised in order to avoid victimizations on the job. It was not

possible to issue leaflets and hold open meetings as could have been done through Local 574. Instead individual workers would have to be sounded out in a careful way.

Although the process would be a slow one at the outset, objective conditions indicated that gradual headway could be made. Tactically, the rate of development had to be considered secondary to a cumulative record of progress. As additional forces were thus gathered, they in turn would give fresh impetus to the campaign, and at the proper stage the workers could be led into action.

The first big break came when DeLaittre-Dixon merged with a few smaller yards to form an expanded firm known as Fuel Distributors. With a larger body of workers brought together in the new setup, improved prospects were at hand for winning support for the unionization project. Among the new supporters gained through the change were Harry DeBoer and Kelly Postal, who were later to play important roles in Local 574. C.B. Carlson, a worker at a nearby yard, also volunteered to help. This reinforcement of the organizational staff enabled the recruiting campaign to gain steadily in momentum.

A stage had now been reached where it was important to bring the prounion forces together for a collective discussion and recruitment session. The problem was how to swing it when there was no official union framework available and the bosses would be quick to take reprisals if they got wind of what was going on. A unique solution was found. Utilizing his position as weighmaster for the purpose, Ray Dunne got the employer's approval of a plan to hold a beer bust for employees only. Pointing out that the bosses held such affairs among themselves, Ray argued that an employee gathering would be a good way to build up "company morale." The employer was so impressed with the plan that he not only okayed it—he paid the hall

rent and bought the beer. The affair was a big success that gave the union drive a substantial forward push.

When word of the beer bust got around in the Communist League, criticisms were made by a few armchair strategists who were stronger in book learning than they were in class struggle know-how. They hinted darkly that a company union was in danger of being formed, which meant a setup wherein the boss had direct influence. The foolish charge stemmed from the report that the employer had financed the beer bust, a matter that the workers involved had thought quite humorous.

This small episode demonstrates how important it is to be careful about making sweeping tactical judgments from afar. In such circumstances too little is usually known about the complex factors involved to justify forming a categorical opinion. If it is a slow-moving situation, long and fruitless argument can ensue without an early opportunity to subject the opposing views to the test of events. Fortunately, in the case of the coal yard action, the tempo was picking up and it didn't take long for the beer bust tactic to be proven valid for the given specific purposes.

It does not follow, however, that use of an employer to unwittingly help along a trade-union campaign is a device to be applied generally. Such an interpretation would imply that the tactic in itself was viewed as a clever and quick way to organize workers. Nothing could be further from the facts. The beer bust was arranged simply as a unique solution to an unusual problem.

Things continued to move along reasonably well until Ray Dunne was suddenly fired from his job at Fuel Distributors. Fears immediately arose that the employers were opening a counterattack in an effort to scotch the unionization campaign. However, that did not turn out to be the reason for his discharge. As a spokesman for the

Communist League, he occasionally made public speeches on political topics, some of which had been mentioned in the press. "This embarrasses us," the employer said, "and we must let you go."

Ray's discharge led to talk among some militants in the yard about organizing a protest strike. The situation was carefully discussed in the party fraction, and it was decided to dissuade the workers from taking such a step. Spring had come and the coal season was about over. The action could take place in only one yard and it would involve the case of a weighmaster, a position that was looked upon as semisupervisory. After considering these factors, the workers generally came to an understanding that it was best to let the matter ride. Since no other job was available, Ray and his family had to go on public relief which thrust them into very hard times.

Despite this setback the campaign moved ahead, experiencing further ups and downs along the way. By the fall of 1933 the situation had developed to the point where things were ripe for a qualitative leap forward. Several objective factors were operating to make this possible. For one thing deplorable conditions within the industry had imposed upon the workers a strong need to find some means of defending their interests. My own problems as a coal worker, described previously, were more or less typical of those faced by all workers in the industry. Low wages and long hours made it bad enough, even when one had steady work as a yardman or a driver of a company truck. For some workers things were even worse.

Most firms had a policy of keeping surplus trucks on hand by hiring individually owned rigs. A commission was paid by the ton for coal delivered in this manner. Covering both the driver's labor and the use of his truck, it was figured at peanut rates. Carrymen were underpaid by

the ton for toting heavy baskets of coal on their shoulder when it could not be delivered directly from the truck to the bin. Sometimes they had to climb two or three flights of stairs with their burden.

Since commission drivers and carrymen went payless between deliveries, earnings in these categories were so low that some workers had to seek supplementary public relief. When they were idle they sat at the coal yard in a little heated shack aptly called a “doghouse.” Since there was usually a card game and a lot of talking going on, it was a good place for union organizers to get in some points.

Wiseacres of the day spoke pontifically about the “passivity” of the working class, never understanding that the seeming docility of the workers at a given time is a relative thing. If workers are more or less holding their own in daily life and expecting that they can get ahead slowly, they won’t tend to radicalize. Things are different when they are losing ground and the future looks precarious to them. Then a change begins to occur in their attitude, which is not always immediately apparent. The tinder of discontent begins to pile up. Any spark can light it, and once lit, the fire can spread rapidly.

In Minneapolis the flames were bound to become widespread because it was not only the coal workers who were being driven toward action to correct an increasingly intolerable situation. Conditions were bad throughout the entire trucking industry. Wages were as low as ten dollars and rarely above eighteen dollars for a workweek ranging from fifty-four to ninety hours.

To cite specific cases, drivers for wholesale grocery houses received fifty-five to sixty-five dollars a month for which they put in fifty-four hours a week with nothing extra for overtime. Workers employed at jobs inside the grocery

warehouses got ten to fifteen dollars a month less. Employees of the multiplicity of firms in the wholesale fruit and vegetable market were paid as little as ten dollars a week to start. If an oldtimer earned as much as eighteen to twenty dollars he was considered lucky. They worked from as early as 3:00 A.M. to as late as 6:00 P.M., six days a week. If a worker complained, he was fired and the Citizens Alliance employment office supplied a new hand.

Drivers operating the big fleet of taxis owned by the Yellow Cab Company worked on a commission basis which brought them six to eight dollars for an eighty-four-hour week. Many had to obtain public relief in order to get by. All the workers in every category had to accept whatever job conditions the employers imposed, and deep-seated grievances were widespread among them as a result. Once an effective union struggle got underway, the bulk of these workers, who stood outside the union movement, would be ready to move swiftly into organized action. The tycoons who ran the Citizens Alliance had sown the wind and they were about to reap the whirlwind.

Another objective factor impinging upon the Minneapolis scene was the general working-class upsurge then beginning to take place throughout the country. Seeking help from the official labor movement to defend their class interests, workers were pouring into the AFL in growing numbers. During 1933 a mounting wave of strikes developed nationally. This trend arose primarily because of low pay, long hours and a general feeling of insecurity. It got further impetus from one aspect of Roosevelt's "New Deal" which had been in operation since the spring of the year. Section 7(a) of the newly adopted National Industrial Recovery Act (NRA) purportedly guaranteed the workers the "right to organize." This official declaration helped along the process of unionization, even though the

workers were to find themselves mistaken in their belief that the capitalist government would actually protect their rights.

At root the NRA was devised for the benefit of the capitalist class. To stimulate production for profit, Roosevelt had adopted an “easy money” policy leading to what was called the “sixty-cent dollar.” The resulting climb in prices struck a new blow at the workers who were already suffering the dire effects of economic depression. As a consequence, organized labor intensified its pressure for government assistance through wage and hour laws. To sidestep labor’s demands, the NRA provided for self-organization of “fair competition” among employers who would voluntarily set minimum-wage rates and maximum hours. To give them a free hand, antitrust laws were suspended. NRA labor codes for each industry were thereby decided by the employers alone. The workers had no voice in the matter.

Regional Labor Boards were set up by the Federal government, staffed by employers’ agents and “labor statesmen.” Their chief function was to prevent strikes by whatever means possible. When a work stoppage took place despite their efforts, they were to “mediate” a settlement as quickly as they could. In practice this meant trying to get the workers back on the job with a vague promise of subsequent action on their demands through some form of continued intervention by the Labor Board. The whole scheme operated in favor of the bosses, and brought the workers many bitter experiences.

Hailing Roosevelt as labor’s savior, the top AFL officials made a no-strike agreement with the NRA administrators. They also agreed to a clause in the NRA labor code recognizing company unions as legitimate organizations. This entitled such boss-controlled setups to bid for certification

as the workers' bargaining agent in union-representation elections conducted by the Labor Board.

In Minneapolis, however, the Citizens Alliance leaders took the view that the NRA didn't go far enough in their favor on the collective-bargaining issue. A directive was issued to the employers of the city that no union whatever was needed, in any form, for bargaining with their labor force. Workers should be urged, the Citizens Alliance said, to "bargain" with the employer as individuals concerning the terms of their employment. This hard-nosed employer policy caused the local AFL officials to lean all the more heavily upon the Regional Labor Board.

A problem resulted for the insurgent workers, especially the younger militants who spearheaded the radicalization. Their youthfulness freed them from the inhibiting effects of earlier labor defeats and they moved toward battle with the bosses as though they were inventing something new. It followed, however, that they were inexperienced and didn't know just how to conduct the fight. This made them vulnerable to AFL misleaders trained in the Gompers school. A saving factor existed in the workers' objective need to find leaders with a correct policy and the fighting ability to carry it out. To meet this need, the help of a revolutionary socialist party was required.

As the political vanguard of the class, the revolutionary party constitutes a bridge in historic consciousness for the workers. It absorbs the lessons of the class struggle, victories as well as defeats, preserving them as part of its revolutionary heritage. The party's cadres are the mechanism through which this "class memory" is infused into labor struggles on the given contemporary scene. The Communist League cadres could fulfill this role in the trucking industry if they could link themselves with the militant workers through the trade-union movement. In their ap-

proach to this problem the comrades made a distinction between formal and actual leadership.

Holding an official post does not automatically make one a leader. A semblance of leadership authority can be maintained for a time through bureaucratic abuse of official powers, but in the long run one must actually meet the responsibilities of a given post or a leadership void will be created. In the latter case someone else can step into the void and begin to exercise actual leadership authority without necessarily holding an official post. A contradictory situation develops, the outcome of which has to be determined by the course of events. In the end the more competent leader, as proven through performance, can wind up with the official authority as well.

It follows that the ultimate gaining of such official authority marks the end of what has been a war on two fronts. The central object all along will have been to lead an effective struggle against the employers. When incompetent union officials hold formal authority it becomes necessary to fight them at the same time. Once the incompetents have been replaced in formal authority by capable leaders, however, the way is clear to concentrate on the struggle against the enemy class.

The Communist League leaders realized, that if it became necessary in the case of Local 574, the whole executive board would have to be confronted head on. Yet it would have been unwise for them to proceed as though this was the only available course of action. As every good tactician knows, it is important to seek a way to split the opposition. A way to do so was found with respect to the Local 574 problem by exploiting a situation common to all union bureaucracies.

These formations are not as wholly monolithic as might appear at first sight. The most hidebound component is at

the very top. Under that top crust there are layers of lesser officials who are closer to the union ranks and more subject to influence by the workers. Although these lesser officials are under pressure from the top to act as police against the union ranks, they are sometimes disinclined to do so when the workers are up in arms against the employers. How they may act in a given situation depends upon the direction from which the strongest wind is blowing at the time.

In Local 574 a means of developing the desired tactic arose from the fact that Miles Dunne had been able to continue inside the union since joining it in 1931. During the interval he had struck up a close acquaintance with the local's president, William S. Brown, who showed interest in the idea of a general organizing drive. Bill Brown, who was in his middle thirties, had worked for years as both a teamster and a truck driver in the transfer industry, which had to do mostly with hauling freight. He had held the presidency of Local 574 for ten years and in 1932 he was made organizer of the Teamsters Joint Council.

Bill was a fighter by nature and a gifted speaker, one of the best mass agitators I ever heard. As an activist in the Farmer-Labor Party, he was somewhat above average in political consciousness, even though he lacked a revolutionary understanding of the class struggle. A career as an AFL official was open to him and he might have gone on in that direction if the campaign launched by the Communist League hadn't affected his life.

As it was, Bill's sound class instincts came to the fore. He wanted to give the bosses a real battle and he welcomed help from people who knew how to organize the fight. Within Local 574 Bill won support for such a course from George Frosig, the vice-president. However, the other five members of the executive board were unable to lift themselves out of the mire of business unionism. They remained under the

influence of Cliff Hall, the business agent, who sat as an ex-officio member of the board and opposed the organizing project. The door had been opened only a crack; it would take the pressure of the coal workers to push it wide open.

The needed push came from the volunteer organizing committee, which began to mushroom in the fall of 1933. It broke the resistance of the executive-board majority. Hall became isolated within the Local 574 officialdom and he had to go along with the organizing drive in coal. When the demands upon the coal employers had been drawn up and ratified by the union membership, Hall submitted them to Tobin for approval. Tobin's reply of January 6, 1934, showed that he had sharpened up his no-strike line since his 1930 exchange of letters with Hall.

"I trust you understand the law of the International Union," Tobin wrote, "which is that the approval of a wage scale is not the approval of a strike, or does not give you the right to strike even if there is no agreement with your employers on the contract. It is your duty to proceed to negotiate, and if after negotiations end or are broken up by the employers and you can reach no agreement, it is then your duty under the law [of Tobin's making—FD] to offer to arbitrate the questions at issue, or the differences between you. If the employers refuse to arbitrate and there is no other alternative, you may proceed to consider the question of a strike. In order to comply with the International laws and obtain sanction of a strike, you must report the entire proceedings at a regular or special meeting of your organization, explaining every detail as to the conferences, etc.

"After the discussion on same has taken place you will then proceed to ballot as to whether the men want to strike. The question should be answered 'yes' or 'no.' Blank slips of paper, numbered, should be passed amongst the

members and the vote should be taken without any intimidation on the part of the members. When the vote is taken it is necessary to have two-thirds of the members present vote in the affirmative, or in favor of the strike, or by using the word 'yes,' in order to obtain sanction of the International Executive Board. As soon as this is done, if there is a Joint Council in your district it is necessary for you then to submit the matter for approval to the Joint Council. When the Joint Council gives their sanction you will then proceed and ask the International Union for its sanction, giving them the facts in the case, or in other words the differences between yourselves and the employers. You must then wait until the International Executive Board has had a chance to vote on same. If you go on strike before you receive the sanction of the International Executive Board you will not receive any benefits whatsoever from the International Union."

Obviously it would take a near miracle to get Tobin's official sanction for a strike. If the employers won't negotiate a contract, he decreed, try to get them to arbitrate. Only if they reject that step should a strike vote be taken, and that should be done in a way calculated to curb militancy and magnify conservative hesitations within the union's ranks. "A strike is a serious situation," Tobin said in another part of his letter, "and should not be attempted unless there is at least 75% of the men working at the craft organized and willing to answer the call. It is also very well to remember that a strike does not last usually for only two or three days. . . ."

If in spite of everything the local membership voted to strike, there remained the obstacles of a Teamsters Joint Council endorsement and final approval from Tobin himself. Failure to observe this procedure meant that no strike benefits in the form of financial aid to the striking workers

would be paid by the International. As later events will show, Tobin was not above publicly attacking an embattled union for actions which he deemed to be "illegal."

With the aid of Brown and Frosig the volunteer committee bypassed Tobin's procedure which would have brought the whole campaign to a grinding halt. A strike decision was made by Local 574; through Brown's influence some backing was won in the Teamsters Joint Council; and without further ado the local went into action. In accordance with sound tactical methods, plans were made to overcome stiff employer resistance, even though there was reason to assume that a well-conducted strike could catch the bosses unprepared. Tactically, it is always better to be prepared for the worst variant and not have to face it, than it is to expect the best breaks and suddenly run into unexpected obstacles.

A broad strike committee was organized to assume command of the picketing. Before the walkout began, mimeographed picketing instructions were prepared, along with maps showing the location of all coal yards.

The strike hit the industry with a bang. Characterized by militant mass picketing from the outset, the whole operation was both audacious and efficient. The pickets, mainly young workers in their first labor struggle, reinforced the careful planning by experienced leaders with courageous actions during which they came up with some innovations of their own. Development and use of cruising picket squads was an outstanding example of the rank-and-file ingenuity.

While all this was being prepared, Hall had reported the situation to Tobin. On February 5, 1934, he received a telegraphed reply from Tobin's assistant, John M. Gillespie. "You will have to write full particulars as to what you want to strike for," he said, "also the number of men that will be

affected. Would advise that you wait until Brother Geary [Tobin's general organizer in the area—FD] gets back to your district before going further with the strike. Your telegram gives practically no information, only that you want endorsement. You can appeal your case to the Labor Board in Washington and try to have them force the coal dealers to meet you."

Just as the walkout was beginning on February 7 Gillespie mailed another communication to Hall. "As these men have not been members of your organization for six months," he ruled on Tobin's behalf, "strike endorsement, including financial benefits, cannot be granted, as in accordance with our laws men must be members of our organization six months or over in order to be entitled to strike benefits." By the time this letter arrived in Minneapolis the strike was about to be settled.

The whirlwind action had indeed caught the bosses unprepared. They were put in a further bind by the frigid cold wave that accompanied the walkout and led to stiff public pressure for fuel deliveries. With the yards tied up tight, the employers had to make a settlement which brought the workers limited material gains. Most importantly, however, they had been compelled to recognize the union. Even though the recognition came indirectly through the Labor Board, it marked a fundamental departure from the open-shop precepts of the Citizens Alliance.

For the first time in many years a strike had been won in Minneapolis. Electrified by the victory, union members throughout the city gained self-confidence and thousands of unorganized workers lifted their eyes toward the union movement with a new sense of hope. The stage was now set for the main conflict, and both sides began to gird for the showdown that was soon to begin.

General mobilization

Life itself was verifying the Communist League's trade-union policy. Its strategy and tactics had enabled conscious revolutionists to unite with the workers in an effective mass action. Despite weaknesses in the official union leadership, the coal workers had been able to test their organized strength and win a contest with the employers. They were learning to have confidence in themselves as a class. They also began to absorb some basic lessons about the class struggle as these were revealed in the heat of battle.

Illusions about the police began to be dispelled when the workers found the whole force on the side of the bosses. There were comparable experiences with the Labor Board. When the union demands were first presented the board's role had been simply to transmit the employers' arrogant refusal to negotiate. Then it sought to postpone the strike beyond the cold season to the union's disadvantage. In the collective bargaining election held after the strike, the

board ordered that the vote be taken yard by yard, instead of on an industry-wide basis as the union demanded. The obvious intent was to help employers weasel out of recognizing the union in at least a few yards if they could. Though none of these capers did the employers much good, they did help teach the workers whose side the “neutral” Labor Board was really on.

A correct strategic and tactical course had made these results possible. To transform such a possibility into reality, however, it had been necessary for the Communist League members to conduct themselves in action as a disciplined combat force. Within the union the party fraction functioned as a cohesive unit, harmoniously united in carrying out party policy. Intimate contact was maintained between the fraction and the local party branch.

The results obtained through this disciplined course of action gave a big new lift to party morale and efforts were stepped up to recruit new members into the Communist League. Toward that end a public meeting was held after the strike to discuss the need for a new revolutionary party to replace the politically bankrupt Stalinist movement. It proved to be one of the biggest gatherings of its kind in the city in years. Most notable was the presence of a considerable number of coal workers, some of whom were to join the party relatively soon.

Meantime the Communist League was mapping out plans for continuation of the trade-union campaign. The victory in the coal industry had been uniquely important, since it did a lot to overcome existing obstacles to a larger mass mobilization for the next action. Many workers elsewhere in the trucking industry harbored resentment over the way the unionization campaigns of the past, none of which ever brought any meaningful results, had been handled. It was more than a case of once bitten, twice shy.

They had little confidence in the weak craft unions that had a long record of lost strikes.

Now, however, the workers saw the first signs of a new approach. Unlike the piecemeal nibbling of the past, the whole boss setup in coal had been struck, with all the coal workers involved in the struggle. The employers had been forced to recognize the union while it was on strike. This fact was dramatized by the unprecedented appearance of Local 574 buttons on coal drivers after the strike, as they made deliveries throughout the city. Favorable changes in attitude toward the union were bound to follow among workers throughout the whole trucking industry.

The first step in taking advantage of the improved situation had to be the shaping of the necessary leadership to carry out a general organizing drive. New forces for the purpose were at hand among the young militants who came to the fore during the coal strike. They were capable recruiters who, as they campaigned, would also be on the lookout for new volunteer organizers. More than that—in the next strike they would make up the hard core around which a broader combat leadership could be formed. If these campaigners were to function effectively they had to have a reasonably free hand.

The indicated device for this was to upgrade the informal organizing committee developed in the coal actions to the status of an official union body. This was readily accomplished at a general membership meeting of Local 574 because coal workers now predominated in the union and they tended to look upon the organizing committee as their real leadership.

A passage in the minutes of its first meeting records the composition of the new body: "The Voluntary Organizing Committee met in the office of the General Drivers, 614 First Ave. No., Friday, March 16, at 8 PM. Committee

consisted of the following volunteer members, together with all of the members of the executive board: Harry DeBoer, Floyd O'Berg, C. Quick, Pete Bove, M. Dunne, C. Skoglund, F. Dobbs, G. Dunne, A. Brace, Chris Moe, S. Fredericks, E. Sunde, W. Thompson, S. Baumgartner, C. Nelson." The executive-board members to which the minutes refer were at that time: W.S. Brown, G. Frosig, H. Esler, S. Haskell, W. Gray, J. Nolan, and M. Hork. The business agent, C. Hall, sat in *ex officio* at committee meetings, as he did at executive-board sessions.

As the minutes note, the full executive board attended the meeting. Hall seemed to have in mind official monitoring of the organizing committee but that wasn't exactly the way things were to work out. Actually a new stage of dual leadership control was being developed. The strength of the organizing committee in the union ranks was about to be counterposed to the formal authority of the executive board. In the process the volunteer organizers would gain added weight from the solid support they were given by Brown and Frosig, both of whom were members of the executive board. Further advantage derived from the formal status now accorded to the organizing committee by decision of the union membership. These combined factors enabled the committee to bypass the executive board on some matters and to force it into line on others, according to the given situation. In short, the committee became a sort of special executive authority heading up the work of the volunteer organizers who were to grow quite rapidly in number.

Through this specific form of rank-and-file democracy, bureaucratic obstacles to the organizing drive were overcome, but another leadership problem remained unsolved. Negotiations with employers were still largely in the hands of incompetent union officials. This meant that gains won

on the picket line could still be lost at the conference table. Even though nothing much could be done about it as matters stood at the time, the problem required close attention with a view toward taking effective action at the first opportunity.

Changes already taking place in the leadership structure were reflected in the nature and scope of the organizing drive. The contrast between the old and the new was illustrated by differing views set forth in joint meetings of the organizing committee and executive board. Hall and his cronies, who thought in terms of old-time campaigns conducted by Local 574, considered what had happened in coal a fluke. Their idea was to peddle a few leaflets, bring in some new dues-payers, and keep two sets of books on the project so Tobin wouldn't get any per capita tax on those who dropped away after a time. In fact one executive-board member didn't even want to spend money for leaflets. "They know where we are," he said of the unorganized workers, "if they want to join the union, let them come to the hall and sign up."

The organizing committee had a different concept. Its aim was to build a strong union force to battle the bosses throughout the trucking industry as had already been done in coal. A partial list of the sections into which the industry was subdivided for campaign purposes will give an idea of the scope of the operation. These included transfer companies; building material firms; wholesale houses handling fruit, produce, and groceries; package delivery outfits; fleet drivers in the taxi field; the delivery end of department and furniture stores; oil companies, including filling stations; oxygen and acetylene suppliers, and others. Employees whom the committee set out to organize included drivers, helpers, yard workers, platform hands, shipping-room employees, packers, and other

inside workers on jobs loosely connected with trucking services. Not only did the organizing committee ignore Tobin's dictum that the workers be divided into separate locals according to the commodities they handled; it also passed beyond the narrow jurisdictional limits set by him for the IBT as a whole.

This had broader significance for the future of the entire Teamsters Union. *For the first time a Teamsters local was about to move toward the industrial form of organization, taking all the workers in a given enterprise into a single union.*

Just as the union campaign was getting under way it received an unintentional boost from the coal bosses. Having been unable to break the February strike, they set out to defeat the union another way. Spring was coming and the coal season would soon be running out. The employers decided to weed out the union militants by hitting them first in the seasonal layoffs that were soon due. In this way, they figured, the rest of the workers could be intimidated, and by the time business picked up again in the fall open-shop conditions could be restored in the industry.

The scheme boomeranged. A life-and-death question was posed for the workers hit by discriminatory layoffs. If they didn't help to push the union forward, it was obvious that they would never get back into the coal yards; and other jobs were very scarce in those depression times. On the other hand, if the union's summer campaign succeeded, it would take only a mopping-up operation in the fall to entrench Local 574 in the coal industry and put the victimized workers back on the job. Consequently there was a sudden increase in voluntary union organizers.

I was among those who got the ax in coal. Pitching into the union campaign full time, I was teamed up with Carl Skoglund on an organizing assignment. Working with

him proved to be a golden opportunity for a new Communist League member to learn a lot. In addition to what he taught me about union organizing, we also found time to talk about revolutionary politics. One of Carl's foremost talents was his ability to teach young people the lessons he had learned. A Marxist worker with a high level of intellectual development, he understood the importance of theory and its use as a guide for action. He started me on a reading course in Marxist classics; then we would discuss what I had read and he would patiently explain points I didn't understand. The experience was twice rich for me because, in addition to having a capable teacher, my lessons were enhanced by the intensive class struggle in which I was participating.

In the union work, organizing teams like ours went to garages, docks, warehouses, market areas, everywhere in the trucking industry. Wherever we went we found the workers waiting for us, and union recruitment proceeded with accelerating momentum. A class was organized to train volunteer speakers who then appeared before meetings of other unions to explain Local 574's campaign and ask their support. Although not all the officials in other unions were happy about these visits, Local 574 speakers were usually well received by the memberships. Efforts were also made to get publicity for the campaign in *Labor Review*, the official organ of the AFL Central Labor Union. Through these combined activities the Local 574 campaign soon became a prime topic of conversation within the city's working class and most everybody watched to see what would happen next.

In their recruiting work the organizing teams not only talked about joining the union; they also raised the question of demands to be made upon the employers. No greater authority on the subject could be found than the

workers on the job. Collectively they have rich practical knowledge of the industry in which they are employed; they know all the employer's tricks and about the only secret he can keep from them is how much profit he is raking off from their labor. Meetings were held with each group of workers to formulate specific demands for their particular section of the trucking industry. They made the decisions on all items relating to wages, hours, and working conditions. The organizing committee simply added special clauses on points such as union recognition, job protection, grievance procedures, and comparable matters.

Wage demands, as formulated by the workers themselves, varied from eighteen to thirty-five dollars a week, according to job classifications. These ranged from tomato strippers in the produce market to drivers of heavy hauling equipment. Demands on hours called for a workweek varying from forty to forty-eight hours, with premium pay for overtime. Job conditions against which the workers were rebelling were eloquently described by some of the demands: no split shifts; garage-to-garage time; guarantee of a half day's pay when called to report for work; regular brake tests at company expense; no chiseling on pay by juggling job classifications; workers not to be liable for loss of, or damage to, merchandise; full wages to be paid each week on a regular pay day.

With the completion of this step in the organizing drive the time had come to turn toward the showdown with the bosses. Quite a fighting force was being put together for the purpose. A leadership with a firm class-struggle program was gradually gaining command within the union. It was pressing vigorously for rank-and-file control over all union affairs; close ties were developing between the membership and the organizing committee; and in shap-

ing the union demands, the workers had written their own ticket. With these strong incentives, virtually every union member became a volunteer recruiter and a frontline fighter in the Local 574 campaign.

Careful organizational preparation had cleared the way for a public demonstration of the union's growth—which could have several good effects. A mass assembly would give the workers an image of their developing strength. Those experiencing doubts and hesitations about the union could be favorably influenced. The stage would be set publicly for presentation of the union's demands on the employers; and Local 574 would be shown to represent the workers. For this occasion the organizing committee proposed to rent the Shubert Theater, a downtown entertainment center designed for stage productions that was frequently used by other big organizations.

There was resistance to the proposal, as was noted in the March 21 minutes of a joint meeting of the organizing committee and the executive board: "Report of committee on securing theater and speakers. Brother Brown reporting, that committee recommends the securing of Shubert Theater which can probably be rented for \$66, including two stage hands. . . . Brother Hall reporting for the executive board, that it was in favor of not spending much money at this time and recommended that the number one hall at Labor Headquarters be secured for mass meeting instead of Shubert Theater. Brother Gray also spoke in support of Brother Hall's position. Brothers Brown, Skoglund and M. Dunne spoke on the necessity of securing a larger hall. . . . Brother M. Dunne proposed that a collection be taken up at mass meeting to defray expenses. Brother Brown proposed that other unions contribute toward this expense." Hall's objections were overridden and the Shubert was rented for the mass meeting.

The organizing committee also started a pressure campaign to line up Governor Olson as a speaker at the meeting. This was done for two main reasons: advance publicity listing the governor as a speaker would help in getting a big turnout for the meeting; and if Olson addressed the workers, he would have to go on record in support of the union campaign. The governor tried to duck the assignment but so much pressure was put on him that he finally agreed to speak. A leaflet was then distributed throughout the industry announcing that Olson would address the workers on "The Right to Organize." The workers were also informed that speakers from Local 574 would outline a definite program of organization for their approval.

When the meeting was called to order on Sunday afternoon, April 15, 1934, the big theater was packed. Grant Dunne made a report for the organizing committee. Bill Brown and Miles Dunne gave fighting talks that really whipped up the workers' enthusiasm. I, too, had been assigned to give what would be my first public speech, and the prospect of facing that big crowd scared me stiff. Before the rally I had asked Carl Skoglund for help. "When you get up there just be what you are," he counseled, "a young worker with family responsibilities in hard times. Most of those in the audience will be young workers like yourself. Just describe what you think needs to be done and they will feel that you are speaking for them." I followed Carl's advice as best I could and managed to get by.

Governor Olson did not appear at the meeting. Instead he put himself on record in a way that was even better for the union. His private secretary, Vince Day, came to the gathering and brought with him a letter signed by the governor. Day, who called himself a philosophical anarchist, first made a rather militant talk on his own behalf. Then he read Olson's message, dated April 13, to the assembled

DRIVERS, ORGANIZE!

Because of the depression, wages of all workers have been reduced, and this has resulted in the general lowering of the standard of living.

The increase in the cost of living has resulted in further wage cuts.

WHAT MUST WE DO?

The Only Answer Is **ORGANIZATION!**

DO YOU KNOW?

That under Section 7-A of the N.I.R.A. workers are not only granted the right to organize, but are guaranteed the right to exercise this privilege without discrimination?

DO YOU KNOW?

That the coal drivers of Minneapolis took advantage of this privilege to organize and through our organization gained a 25% wage increase?

Monster Mass Meeting
Shubert Theatre, Sunday, April 15
at 2 P. M.

will open the big campaign to organize

**ALL Minneapolis Drivers, Helpers, Filling Station
Attendants and Platform Men**

Governor Floyd B. Olson

Will Speak on "The Right to Organize"

Speakers from your union will outline a definite program of organization for your approval.

**Auspices of Minneapolis General Drivers and Helpers
Local Union No. 574**



Leaflet calling for April 15 mass meeting to which Governor Olson sent his representative.

workers, after which he handed it over to Brown for the union file.

Key passages in the governor's letter stated: "The union idea, and I don't mean the company union, is fundamentally sound. . . . Vested interests have gone the limit in their attempt to defeat the union idea because they knew that complete unionism meant the end of their reign of exploitation of the working man and woman. However, labor has weathered gun fire, injunctions and prosecution by malicious propaganda and has built up a network of unions that forms the most powerful single organization in our country. . . . It is my counsel, if you wish to accept it, that you should follow the sensible course and band together for your own protection and welfare."

After Day had finished, a recess was called to take applications for union membership. The response was good and Local 574's strength climbed to over 3,000, as compared to about seventy-five members a year earlier. When the meeting reconvened, Carl Skoglund led off with an explanation of the next steps to be taken. The assembled workers then voted to strike if the bosses refused to meet the union's demands; a broad strike committee was elected; and the deadline for a strike was referred to the committee.

Parallel to the union campaign the Citizens Alliance had been shaping its own battle plan. On the heels of the coal strike a propaganda drive was launched to downgrade the significance of the union victory. It was stressed that no direct contract had been signed, or ordered by the Regional Labor Board, between the coal dealers and Local 574. According to the coal bosses' story, they had simply filed a "voluntary" statement of uniform wage scales with the Labor Board. When the union had demanded a direct contract at a Labor Board hearing, a spokesman for the coal employers had flatly refused the demand on the

ground that “we have a deep-lying principle involved.” In line with that “principle” all trucking bosses were being urged to concentrate on making individual agreements with their employees.

Then during March the union got wind of an organizing rally scheduled by the Citizens Alliance. Being an unknown figure, I was assigned to cover the affair, posing as a cockroach boss. The main theme of the meeting was the “communist plot” to take over the city by imposing union control over all businesses. All employers were urged to rally around the Citizens Alliance to save the town from the union threat. It was announced that steps were being taken to assure cooperation from the mayor and the police. Three classes of membership in the Citizens Alliance were offered to prospective recruits according to the service to be rendered. None of this information came as a surprise to the union leadership, but it was useful to know what was going on.

When the union demands were presented to the bosses after the Shubert membership meeting, a sparring match developed. Committees from the two sides met at the Labor Board’s offices. The employers stated that they had come to the sessions only as “a courtesy to the Labor Board.” They concentrated on requests for evidence that the union represented their employees. The union spokesmen countered by asking who the employers’ committee represented and what they proposed to do about the union demands. The meeting ended on dead center. Then on May 7 the employers addressed a letter to the Labor Board focusing on the union recognition clause in Local 574’s demands. The letter stated that “the demand for such closed union shop agreement is hereby definitely rejected.”

On May 11 the Citizens Alliance issued a special bulletin to its members warning of an imminent truck drivers’

strike intended to tie up all transportation in the city, including gasoline filling stations. It reported that an "Advisory Committee" for employers was establishing a headquarters at the West Hotel. Employers were urged to call this headquarters for information and to report any developments they learned about. "The principal issue involved in this strike is now clearly and definitely brought out into the open," the bulletin asserted. "Officers of the General Drivers Union have frankly stated through the press that their main objective is unionization of every truck driver in Minneapolis and closed shop union control of all primary transportation."

As in the coal situation, union recognition was pinpointed as the key issue, and a victory for Local 574 was vital for all unions in the city if the open-shop rule of the Citizens Alliance was to be smashed. When Hall reported the developments to Tobin, however, an indifferent reply was received to the effect that the union should proceed to negotiate through the Labor Board. It should be added that matters were not helped by Hall's continued practice of holding back per capita tax on new members, when Tobin knew that the local was experiencing some kind of growth.

In any case it was clear that we were heading toward what could become serious trouble with Tobin, who was basically opposed to what we were doing. When it came we would at least have seasoned troops capable of standing up against him. In the meantime some protective steps could be taken by involving the local AFL officialdom in our fight. The latter step was accomplished by getting the Central Labor Union on record in support of Local 574's demands. This implied that all AFL officials were taking some responsibility for the pending strike and were, therefore, obligated to support it.

Fears were voiced among the old-line labor skates that a general walkout in the trucking industry would be jeopardized by the unemployed taking the strikers' jobs. Their apprehension stemmed from the magnitude of the unemployed rolls. At that time some 30,000 workers were jobless in Minneapolis. Together with their families they comprised almost a third of the city's population. These thousands of social outcasts, within a city of less than half a million, were trying to subsist on a stingy government dole. The impossibility of their situation was making them fighting mad. Their mood was reflected in a protest demonstration on April 6, 1934, against the federal "work relief" program which was being operated on a pauper basis. Over 10,000 unemployed marched on City Hall in the protest. When they got there the police assaulted them with tear gas and clubs but the demonstrators stood their ground. In the hand-to-hand fighting that followed seven workers were injured—and eight cops.

As the Communist League saw it, these unemployed militants could be made allies of the union rather than a danger to it. To accomplish this aim something more than rhetoric was needed. It was necessary to give them a direct role in the union walkout and to show that the alliance would not be a one-sided affair. This was accomplished through the medium of Communist League members who had long been active in the unemployed movement. Word was spread that Local 574's strategy included the organization of an unemployed section of the union once it had been consolidated. In addition, the union made preliminary arrangements to fight for public relief for needy members as a safeguard against the strikers being starved out. This put direct union weight on the side of the unemployed and helped to cement the desired alliance. Leaders of the unemployed were consulted in shaping the union's

plans for picketing, an act that gave assurance they were not to be treated like country cousins.

Since picketing in an extensive truck strike would amount to a virtual dragnet on the city's streets, problems that could arise with farmers had to be considered. Farm trucks came to the city hauling such things as fruit and vegetables to the produce market, raw milk to creameries, and livestock to the meat-packing plants. In general the union had no reason to interfere with them, but at the outset of a large-scale trucking tie-up some of the farmers would most likely run into difficulties that might antagonize them. A way had to be found to quickly solve any problems that arose and for that purpose advance consultation with the farmers was needed.

Here again the Communist League was able to make the necessary connections. It had contacts within the Minnesota Farmers' Holiday Association, a militant organization that had acted to prevent foreclosure sale of farms, conducted milk strikes for higher prices from creameries, and in general was hostile to the city-based capitalist overlords. Close working relations were established with John Bosch, president of the association, who assured the union of full cooperation in the pending strike.

Another step in preparation for the walkout was initiated by Carl Skoglund, who proposed to the organizing committee that a women's auxiliary be formed. The aim would be to draw in wives, girl friends, sisters, and mothers of union members. Instead of having their morale corroded by financial difficulties they would face during the strike, he pointed out, they should be drawn into the thick of battle where they could learn unionism through firsthand participation. His plan was approved by the committee, and I was assigned to present it at a union membership meeting. The proposal was adopted, although not with

much enthusiasm. Afterward I got some needling, especially from men who saw in their union activity a way to get an occasional night out, but all this stopped suddenly when the women went into action later on.

Launching of the auxiliary project was undertaken by Marvel Scholl, who was married to me, and Clara Dunne, Grant's wife. They began by speaking at meetings of various sections of the union where demands upon the bosses were being drawn up. At first they were received with an air of courteous toleration. Then some men began to ask questions about the project, wanting to know what the women could do in a strike. Clara and Marvel explained that staffing a union commissary, handling telephones, helping in a first-aid station, were only a few of the many things women could find to do during the fight. After a time the men began to talk to their wives about it, and to the surprise of some, they found the women were interested. Before long a number of the women telephoned Marvel and Clara, asking for more details about the proposed auxiliary. They also volunteered information about special skills they had as cooks, waitresses, nurses, or office workers.

This development coincided with other preparations for the strike. A big garage building at 1900 Chicago Avenue was rented to serve as an operational headquarters. Besides its capacity to handle picket mobilizations, the building was large enough for a commissary, the necessary offices, and a mechanical repair department. It was also to house a field hospital which was being organized with the help of Dr. H.P. McCrimmon, whose services had been acquired by the union. This step alone showed that the union was determined to fight and that it would take care of its wounded. A garage had been rented because the strike would be a mobile one, with expanded use of

the cruising picket squads which had been developed during the coal strike. In that department, charts of the city were being made up, picketing instructions drafted, and picket captains selected. On the whole the union was pretty much ready for action.

The careful organizational spadework had a salutary effect on the workers as was shown when the union called a meeting at Eagles Hall on the evening of May 15, 1934. The membership turnout was massive; many women were present from the auxiliary; and in general a confident fighting mood prevailed. Although she was probably as scared as I had been at the Shubert Theater, Marvel Scholl got up before the meeting and pledged the auxiliary's support to Local 574. The negotiating committee reported the insolent refusal of the bosses to deal with the union and Bill Brown made a stem-winding speech sounding the call to battle. When a motion was made to go on strike the membership gave unanimous approval in a standing vote, not entirely in keeping with Tobin's prescripts. The meeting then adjourned to 1900 Chicago Avenue where women and men alike joined in putting the finishing touches on preparation for the walkout.

Organizing the strike

Local 574's combat leaders, acting through the organizing committee, had no illusions about the gravity of the impending conflict. They were fully aware that the bosses would try to smash the strike. If the union was to win, a tremendous battle would be necessary. Under the pressures of such a fierce struggle, maneuvers detrimental to the union could be expected from the Labor Board and from Governor Olson. We could also anticipate weakness on the part of the city's AFL officialdom, which was bound to be squeamish about physical combat and prone to urge the workers to rely completely on Olson. In the last analysis the outcome of the strike would hinge on the fighting capacity of the union ranks.

Seeking to impart this understanding to the membership, the combat leaders prepared to teach the workers the ins and outs of fighting for their rights. This circumstance made the strike quite exceptional. Fighting spirit in the ranks was usually restrained and dampened by the AFL

officials, while in this case a militant struggle was being organized by what had become the key section of the top union leadership.

Seldom anywhere, in fact, had there been such a well-prepared strike. When the sun rose on May 16, 1934, the headquarters at 1900 Chicago Avenue was a beehive of activity. Union carpenters and plumbers were installing gas stoves, sinks, and serving counters in the commissary. The Cooks and Waiters Union sent experts on mass cooking and serving to help organize things and train the volunteer help. Working in two twelve-hour shifts, over 100 volunteers served 4,000 to 5,000 people daily. Sandwiches and coffee were always available and a hot meal was served whenever the commissary's resources and the circumstances of the strike permitted. In addition, arrangements were made so that key personnel could sleep in or near the headquarters for the duration.

Committees were set up to promote material aid. They solicited friendly grocers for staples to be used in the commissary and to help out the needy families of strikers. Similar donations were also received from sympathetic farmers. The committees fought city hall to get public relief for union members and the facts of life were explained to landlords who pressed the workers for rent payments. Money donations from other unions helped to stock the commissary, as well as to buy gasoline for the cruising picket squads and medical supplies for the union's emergency hospital. Even Governor Olson contributed \$500 to Local 574.

The union's medical staff included Dr. McCrimmon and two interns from the University of Minnesota hospital who volunteered their services during their off hours. Three trained nurses headed up a larger volunteer staff that provided such efficient care that, despite the many

open wounds treated, not one bad infection developed. The hospital was supervised by Mrs. Vera McCormack, a skilled technician whom everyone fondly called "Mac." To avoid air pollution in the hospital and commissary, picket cars were pushed into and out of the headquarters.

About a score of skilled auto mechanics had turned to, bringing their tools with them, to keep the strikers' cars in working order. The former tool crib and supply room in the big garage was turned into a general office where volunteers did the typing and mimeographing and signed up new members pouring into the union. An organized guard was maintained in and around the headquarters to watch for police intrusions, prevent drinking, cool down temper flareups, and keep order. Except at critical times, when everyone worked to the point of exhaustion, the various assignments were rotated.

Special attention was given to keeping the workers informed about the strike's progress and helping them to answer lies peddled by the bosses. Each evening a general assembly was held at the headquarters for this purpose. Reports were made by the strike leaders, guest speakers were invited from other unions to help morale through expressions of solidarity, and some form of entertainment usually followed. A loudspeaker system was installed so that packed meetings could hear what was said, as could the overflow crowds outside, which often numbered two to three thousand.

There were also regular meetings of the strike committee of seventy-five, which had been elected by the union membership. This body, which made the general decisions about strike policy, had in turn designated a small subcommittee to handle complaints. Most of the complaints had to do with requests from cockroach bosses who asked for special permission to operate their trucks. Usually the

requests were unjustified and were automatically turned down, but having a special committee to handle these matters saved unnecessary wear and tear on the picket commanders.

Another subcommittee was charged with the responsibility of arranging legal assistance for pickets arrested during the strike. The first lawyer obtained proved to be a shyster whose method was to make a deal with the public prosecutor. In return for dismissal of cases against a few pickets he would plead a larger number guilty. He did that just once and the union fired him. We didn't expect our lawyer to win every case, but at least we wanted him to fight for us. The union committee went in search of one who would.

Picket dispatching was assigned to Ray Dunne and me. This was Ray's first official function in Local 574, although he had headed the Communist League fraction in the union from the start of the organizing drive in coal. Previously he had been handicapped by loss of his coal job which stripped him of a formal basis for union membership. Now, however, he was able to step forward as a volunteer supporter of the strike, along with hundreds of other individual workers. Many in the strike committee were aware of his impressive trade-union credentials, and he was given an important assignment accordingly.

Working beside Ray, as had been the case earlier with Carl Skoglund, impressed upon me the experience and education one gains through membership in a revolutionary socialist party. He knew a lot about conducting a strike, and like Carl, he taught me a lot about the team concept in leadership. Ray was a superb combat leader with a clear sense of purpose, backed up by strong willpower and the ability to keep a cool head in critical situations. He not only taught by the example he set, never shirking either

hazardous or minor tasks; he also gave others leeway for initiative, seeking only to safeguard against serious blunders. His criticisms were presented constructively with the aim of helping others to learn. Never a dabbler at anything he did, Ray tried to find some role for everyone who wanted to help. "Don't write people off lightly," he often said. "It's not the mark of an organizer."

As dispatchers, Ray and I were in charge of all picketing assignments and it was our responsibility to direct tactical operations. We had a special staff at our disposal to handle the telephones and operate a shortwave radio used to monitor police calls. Teenage volunteers with motorcycles were organized into an efficient courier service. Scooting around the city under strict orders to stay out of the fighting, they served as the eyes and ears of the picket dispatchers and as a swift means of contact with picket captains. So many cars and individually owned trucks were volunteered that we had more than enough to achieve the high degree of mobility required in the strike. Trucks were used to transport stationary picket details and their relief shifts to truck terminals, the market area, wholesale houses, and other places where trucks normally operated. Picket crews also kept a vigil at points where the main highways crossed the city limits.

Cruising squads in autos were assigned, district by district, to sweep through the streets on the lookout for scab trucking operations. A captain was designated for each of these squads and for each detachment of stationary pickets. At all times a reserve force with the necessary transportation was kept on hand at the strike headquarters. In situations where large forces were involved, a field commander was appointed and a command post set up to coordinate activities and keep in touch with the headquarters. Special cruising squads with handpicked crews were

constantly at the disposal of the picket dispatchers. They were captained by qualified leaders who carried credentials authorizing them to supersede all other authority in the field. These squads were used for special assignments on their own, and they were sent into tense situations to marshal the union forces and lead the fight.

Assembling the mass forces for such extensive picketing proved to be no problem at all. As soon as the strike was called, new members poured into Local 574 from all sections of the trucking industry. In no time at all the union almost doubled its mid-April strength, reaching a figure of nearly 6,000. The union's approach to the unemployed workers brought spectacular results. Hundreds upon hundreds of jobless poured into the strike headquarters, volunteering their services; and they fought like tigers in the battles that followed. Unorganized workers from other industries came forward. Together with women and men from other unions, they came to the strike headquarters at the end of their day's work, ready to help in whatever way they could. Deep in the night they would finally stretch out wherever they found a place to get a little sleep before returning to their jobs. A significant number of college students pitched in to help the union. All in all, pickets were on hand by the thousands.

A majority of the city's population proved sympathetic to the strike and soon a spontaneous intelligence service was in operation. People telephoned reports of scab activities, and other information was mailed in anonymously, often with the postage having been paid by some unknowing employer. Typists, even personal secretaries, slipped in an extra carbon to make a copy for the union when a boss dictated something they felt the strikers should know about. Material arrived that had obviously been salvaged from wastebaskets, some of it coming from the offices of

the Citizens Alliance itself.

As matters now stood, the union had its strategy worked out, the necessary forces had been mobilized and picketing operations were planned with military precision. The next step was to begin the big push against the employers. Trucking operations had to remain tied up, despite all attempts to use scabs working under police protection, until the employers agreed to deal with the union. At the outset the coal heavers were about the only ones who had experience in Local 574's picketing techniques—in fact, many of the pickets had little or no previous experience at all. Whenever they found a truck on the streets they escorted it to the strike headquarters. Soon the area around 1900 Chicago Avenue was crowded with a motley assemblage of vehicles loaded with milk, coal, tobacco, tea and coffee, hogs, cattle, and diverse other things, including a few loads of hay.

Policy briefings of the green pickets soon corrected this and thereafter when doubt arose about what to do in a given situation they communicated with headquarters instead of bringing the rig in. Farmers caught in the dragnet were especially indignant, but with the help of the Farmers' Holiday Association the union worked out a policy agreeable to them, except in the case of the market gardeners with whom we were to have some difficulties. For a couple of days there was trouble with a few filling stations that tried to operate. They attempted to play a cat-and-mouse game with pickets, closing down and then reopening, until the special cruising squads stepped in and definitively settled the matter.

While all this was going on, talk about joining Local 574 spread rapidly among fleet drivers at the Yellow Cab Company. When the employer got wind of it he tried to set up a company union and the drivers reacted angrily. On the

second day of Local 574's walkout they sent a delegation to the strike committee asking that they be allowed to take a hand in the fight being waged by the truck drivers and other workers. Despite the existence of a miniscule local union of individual cab owners and their relief drivers, the strike committee agreed to sign up the Yellow Cab drivers. Cruising squads were sent out to notify all taxi drivers of a meeting at strike headquarters that night. Upon coming together they voted to go on strike, and within hours not a cab was to be found in operation.

As this episode graphically demonstrated, Local 574 had become a power to be reckoned with. Its effective picketing activities had become stabilized. Nothing moved on wheels without the union's permission.

Warfare begins

The scope and power of the strike had taken the trucking bosses and the Citizens Alliance leaders completely by surprise. While figuring out what to do, they had simply kept their trucks off the streets and the union had held sway with little opposition. Now, however, the workers were about to get a taste of the measures the capitalists resort to in a showdown—repressive force and violence.

The capitalist press stepped up its attacks on the union, twisting and distorting the facts about the strike. Proclaiming their intention to “keep the streets open,” the bosses recruited scab drivers and thugs. At the command of the Citizens Alliance, the cops jumped into action against the union. The court records showed only eighteen arrests during the first two days of the strike; on the third and fourth days, by contrast, 151 pickets were hauled into court. Fines of as much as fifty dollars were levied against them and seventeen got workhouse sentences of from ten to forty-five days. On Friday, May 18, 1934, a “citizens rally”

of the employing class was held at which a "law and order" committee was chosen. As reported in a Citizens Alliance bulletin obtained by the union, the committee was set up to organize special deputies, acting in consultation with the sheriff and police chief. A special headquarters for the deputies was rented at 1328 Hennepin Avenue and equipped with a commissary and hospital, emulating the arrangements at the union's strike headquarters.

In their first attempt to break the picket lines, the Citizens Alliance strategists resorted to a flank attack, using a peculiarity about the city market which had not received sufficient attention from the union. Small truck farmers rented stalls in the market area where they put their produce on display and corner grocers came to buy it from them. Since chain stores were not yet crowding out the little grocers, trade of this kind was quite brisk. These farmers belonged to the Market Gardeners Association which had no connection with the Farmers' Holiday movement. The union had made no direct arrangement with them and, as a result, they were unintentionally hurt by the strike. Aware that the truck gardeners were quite upset about it, the Citizens Alliance strategists sought to use them as a front for a strikebreaking attack on the union.

Reports were published in the capitalist press that the "market gardeners have organized against the strike." A convoy of farmers' trucks was started toward the market, escorted by about seventy sheriff's deputies. They were soon intercepted by cruising picket squads and an hour-long running battle followed along the route toward the market. Caught in the middle of a fight between the pickets and deputies, most of the farmers turned around and went home; only three trucks got through to the market.

After this experience the union assured the Market Gar-

deners Association safe-conduct to peddle their produce directly to small grocers throughout the town. In this roundabout way they could do business without injuring the strike and the union could keep the market closed without hurting them. The truck farmers accepted the proposal and became neutral, some even friendly, toward the strike.

Having failed in their attempt to use the farmers against the strike, the bosses came out in the open in their attack on the union. Scabs were used on the morning of Saturday, May 19, to load two trucks at the Bearman Fruit Company in the market under the protection of a big gang of cops and hired thugs wielding clubs and blackjacks. Union cruising squads were sent to reinforce the picket line and in the ensuing battle the barehanded strikers used whatever means they could hastily find to defend themselves. A number of the pickets were badly injured, as were a few of the cops and thugs. A written account of the fight was later given to me by one of the picket captains, Jack Maloney. (He is listed in the strike records as Severson, his stepfather's name, which he used for a time.)

Jack wrote in part: "... we had quite a beef, several of us were clubbed by the police. I, for one, was dragged into Bearman's unconscious. When I came to, Harold Beal and Louie Scullard were also in custody inside there and the patrol wagon came shortly. I was bleeding quite heavily from the head and after Harold and Louie were put in the wagon, the cops took me out and when they let go of me at the wagon I fell down. In the ensuing melee the pickets picked me up and carried me over toward Sixth and Hennepin. They called an ambulance and I was taken to the General Hospital, as were some of the other pickets. After the doctors had patched up my head I was placed in a room, waiting to go to jail. The business agent

of the steamfitters union came to where I was sitting and said to the woman at the desk, 'I will take this man.' We walked out into the hallway and he said, 'Get the hell out of here quick.'"

Jack's experience shows how hospitals are used against strikers. When an injured picket is brought in they notify the police and cooperate in holding the victim for arrest. That is one reason why the union had its own hospital at strike headquarters. Whenever possible our wounded were brought there for medical care. They were taken to regular hospitals only when necessary for treatment of serious injuries. By the time Saturday's events were over, every picket understood the need for this policy and thereafter it was scrupulously followed.

In the evening of that day a deadly trap was sprung on the union. It had been set in what was called Newspaper Alley at the loading docks of the two main dailies which were housed in neighboring buildings. Reports began to reach strike headquarters about preparations to deliver bundles of newspapers under strong police protection. As picket dispatchers, Ray and I were feeling out the situation, not wanting a repetition of the morning's experience at Bearman Fruit. Then an agent provocateur got on the loudspeaker and asked for two or three truckloads of pickets, calling for women to pile into the trucks with the men. Up to then he had worked hard and loyally in the strike, ingratiating himself to a point where he was fully trusted. Pretending to be relaying orders from the dispatchers he sent the pickets to Newspaper Alley. It was an ambush in which they were beaten viciously by police clubs and by saps in the hands of the hired thugs.

Soon the picket trucks were back, carrying bleeding victims who were rushed into the hospital at strike headquarters. Some with broken bones, five of them women,

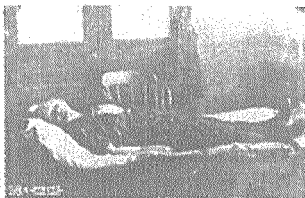
had to be sent to a regular hospital for more complete care. A search of the provocateur and his car produced membership cards in various unions and Farmer-Labor Party clubs along with a Burns Detective Agency badge and credentials. As word of the vicious attack got around sympathetic druggists donated medical supplies to the union. Shocked doctors and nurses in the regular hospitals began to help spirit pickets away after they had been treated so that the cops couldn't grab them.

Shortly after the Newspaper Alley victims had been brought in, two city police barged into the strike headquarters claiming that the pickets had kidnapped a scab driver. If he wasn't handed over, they threatened, the strike leaders would be arrested and, clubs at the ready, they started for the picket dispatcher's office. All the pentup wrath against police brutality was vented on them. Within minutes they lay unconscious in front of the headquarters where they stayed until an ambulance came for them in response to a call put in by the union. So many pickets had gone for the two police that they got in one another's way. Sherman Oakes, a coal and ice driver, swung a club at one cop and accidentally hit another striker, Bill Abar, breaking his arm. Sherman burst into tears. We couldn't figure out whether it was because he hit Bill or because he missed the cop.

In its Saturday evening edition, the *Minneapolis Journal* said, "Fierce rioting broke out Saturday as 425 special officers went into action to break the Truck Drivers strike." A common trick of the capitalist press is illustrated here. With a simple wiggle of the editor's pencil, criminal police assaults on peaceful pickets are transformed into "fierce rioting" by the victims. Also to be noted is the flat statement of the intention "to break the Truck Drivers strike."

The Sunday morning papers dealt with the strike in a similar vein, claiming that hundreds were volunteer-

Working Men and Women of Minneapolis



This is what the police and gunmen of the Citizens' Alliance do to workers when they ask for a living wage.

**Every worker—every believer in Decency and Justice
for the working class MUST**

Support This Strike!

For the first time in the recent history of Minneapolis the big proportion of the working class are organized into unions and are demanding for themselves recognition of their organization and a living scale of wages. The General Drivers No. 574 is asking for the truck drivers and helpers of Minneapolis a minimum of \$22.50 per week and a maximum of \$27.50. With the terrific increase of living cost that has taken place in the past few months, we know that this is only a just and reasonable demand. We are demanding also the recognition of our organization. This is the only guarantee we can have that these wage scales we are asking for will be permanent. We asked the employers (times without number) to correct the abuses that exist in the transportation industry. They have refused. We have now resorted to the only weapon that we have to enforce our demands, the strike. In the process of this just struggle for our rights we have met the most infamous and brutal treatment from the police, the Citizens Alliance, the employers in their gunmen and doggers. We do not advocate violence, a strike is. But we must protect our lives and our rights as workers. The Police Department in conjunction with the Citizens Alliance have sworn to and depainted the lowest and the most degenerate human beings that exist, criminals, drug lords, drug peddlers and discredited

former police officers and any and every person, who is willing to sell themselves for few dollars per day for which the taxpayer is compelled to pay. The police and the employers have turned those in Minneapolis gangs of thugs deposited as police, used as strike breakers that would make Dillinger an angel by comparison. These are the forces the workers meet when they organize to demand their rights. The hospitals are full of our wounded, the jails are filled with innocent workers, victimized by the Citizens Alliance and their gangsters. Women, the wives of strikers, have been dragged by the police and their gangsters in the most brutal and indescribable fashion. We call upon every Minneapolis Working man and woman to protest against this brutality. We say, that this is a fight to the finish. A fight that will determine whether workers' organizations can survive or whether the Citizens Alliance and the employers will force us downward to the social scale to degradation and slavery. We call on every employed worker in Minneapolis not under contract to lay down his tool. To declare a holiday. To join with the General Drivers in this struggle that is so vital to all our interests. We call upon every unemployed worker to put himself in the demand of the Strike Committee.

HOW YOU CAN HELP WIN THE STRIKE

**Join the Mass Picket Line—Report for Picket Duty at 1900
Chicago Ave—Donate Food for the commissary—Raise money
for the strike fund**

General Drivers and Helpers Union, Local 574

Leaflet distributed by Local 574 during the May strike.

ing as special police. All day long, late into the evening, radio broadcasts continued the scare campaign started by the newspapers. By the day's end, over 2,000 deputies were reported mobilized. In reality, according to official records obtained later by the union, only 544 deputies were enrolled as of Monday, mainly among such types as businessmen, professional people, and salesmen, with a few workers being suckered in. These facts, of course, did not deter the authors of the published reports, which were deliberately exaggerated in order to throw fright into the strikers by making them believe that the whole town was mobilizing against them.

Contrary to the bosses' hopes and expectations, the strikers were not exactly paralyzed with fear at the prospect of facing an army of cops and deputies. Instead they began to show the positive side of the workers' illusions about capitalist democracy.

The negative side of their beliefs lies in the assumption that they have inviolable democratic rights under capitalist rule. It is a mistaken assumption that can remain intact, in the long run, only until they try to exercise such rights in the class struggle. When that happens the workers learn that they have been the victims of an illusion. Yet they still feel entitled to the rights involved and they will fight all the harder to make them a reality. A negative misconception then becomes transformed into a positive aspiration, as was about to happen in Minneapolis.

Up to now the workers had gone about their activities barehanded; but they found that attempts to exercise their right to peacefully picket were being repressed with police clubs and blackjacks. They decided to take steps to enforce their democratic right to prevent scabs from grabbing their jobs. It would have been a tactical blunder for members of an isolated vanguard to attempt measures

such as the strikers were about to take; they would only get themselves clobbered by the police. In this case, however, the means used in self-defense had their origin in a spontaneous mass mood that had been generated by capitalist repression. Since these means were appropriately limited in the given situation to matching the police club for club, the tactics employed were completely valid.

All day Sunday the strikers equipped themselves for battle. Baseball bats appeared; garden hoses were cut into short lengths, lead washers were tamped into the hollow and the ends closed with friction tape to make an improvised sap. Volunteers from the Carpenters' Union sawed two-by-twos into club lengths. A sympathizer came to the strike headquarters pulling a child's coaster wagon loaded with bannister posts taken from the stairway at home, his wife steadying the load. To make improvised helmets, heavy cardboard was stuffed inside the sweatband of hats. A fellow striker would be asked to test it out with a club, and if the result was negative, more cardboard would be added.

In the fighting that was to follow a division of labor was made; men did the picketing where combat was involved while the women helped the strike in a whole series of ways. Most of the headquarters functions were taken over by women. They picketed the newspaper buildings to denounce the boss press for its lies about the strike; protest actions were conducted by them at City Hall; and they went to other unions soliciting support. Before long, delegation after delegation from other unions began appearing at the strike headquarters asking what they could do to help. In his account mentioned before, Jack Maloney gave a description that reflects the general mood in Local 574's army.

He wrote: "In my opinion the weekend activity at 1900

Chicago was prompted not only in anticipation of what was ahead but actually by what had [occurred]. It was not just speculation and leadership counseling that spurred the activity but actual events, in my way of looking at things. This is a very important factor because, to me at least (and I was very young, twenty-two), the employers were ready and determined to kill if needed to maintain their control. I was determined to make them prove it and so it was with so many men at that time. They knew what to expect on Monday or the next day and they were ready to 'go for broke.' At Bearman's the pickets had a sample of what to expect. The cops won that battle but on Monday the pickets gave their receipt for Saturday."

In the Monday confrontation, to which Jack referred, two organized and disciplined forces were to face each other, club against club, in a battle fought along military lines. We didn't know how many different attempts the bosses would make to begin moving trucks on Monday, but a major effort could be expected in the market district. Perishable foods were handled there, and this gave the Citizens Alliance propaganda cover for a strikebreaking attack. In fact, the union was receiving tips from friendly sources about plans to open the market houses on Monday. Since, from the union's viewpoint, the market was a good battleground, we were not disturbed by the news. We simply concentrated on preparations for a fight there.

A "coffee-and" station for cruising pickets had been set up in the AFL building at 614 First Avenue North, right at the edge of the market district. An unusual coming and going of pickets at this place began early Sunday evening. On the surface it seemed to reflect increased cruising squad activity but of each carload of five or six who entered the building only two or three came back out. In this surreptitious manner about 600 men had been

concentrated in the AFL hall before morning, all armed with clubs.

Around four A.M. Monday small picket lines appeared in front of the market houses. Larger numbers of pickets, their union buttons temporarily concealed, fanned out in strategic positions around the district. An example of their ingenuity was shown by Steve Glaser, a short, stocky warehouseman who walked on a stiff leg. He looked quite harmless before the fight started. Then he jerked a big club out of his pants leg and moved around with great agility. In addition to these forces a reserve of some 900 was kept at the strike headquarters, ready to move at a moment's notice. All in all, the union had a strong army deployed for battle and it had been done in a way that would give the cops some surprises.

Several hundred uniformed cops were on hand in the market, along with comparable numbers of special deputies. The cops were on the prod, feeling cocky after their Saturday exploits. Among the deputies was a wealthy playboy garbed in a polo hat. Like the rest of his ilk, he anticipated having a bit of a lark as he went about the business of clubbing down working-class sheep. About nine A.M. scab drivers backed six trucks up to the loading dock at the Gamble Robinson Company on Fifth Street. Large numbers of pickets quickly gathered there and, as a loaded truck started to move out, a cop slugged a striker. The union men charged in and the fight was on.

With the cops deployed on the assumption that they knew the union's strength, the 600 pickets waiting at the AFL hall were ordered into battle and they moved out in military formation. Fighting soon spread to three or four other market houses where preparations were being made to open for business. Cops and deputies alike were falling, amid cheers from among the many bystanders,

some of whom pitched in to help the strikers. With the workers challenging them, club against club, most of the deputies took to their heels, leaving the uniformed cops on their own. More police were rushed in from posts in the main business district. The union quickly countered this move by summoning hundreds of reserves from the strike headquarters.

In an act of desperation, the cops drew their guns, threatening to shoot; but they seemed hesitant to resort to such extreme measures, and that gave us a little time to do something about it. As matters stood they were pretty well bunched up, with an open field of fire against the strikers. To solve the problem they had to be scattered among the pickets. The remaining reserves at strike headquarters were loaded into trucks, the lead truck driven by Bob Bell, a huge man and utterly fearless. He was told to rush to the market, ignoring all traffic rules, and to drive right into the midst of the cops. Bob did just that. The pickets jumped out of the truck onto the cops who, being unable to shoot without hitting one another, had to continue fighting with clubs. After that, Police Chief Johannes decided to call it a day.

No less than thirty uniformed cops and a number of deputies had to be hospitalized. Union wounded were taken to strike headquarters where all were taken care of, except for a few with broken bones who needed regular hospital treatment. The strangest wound on our side was received by Harold Beal, who was virtually scalped by a glancing blow from a club. Despite our casualties we were in a favorable position. In a three-hour slugfest the union had fought the trained police to a draw, and not a single truck had been moved.

As warfare raged in the market, 700 members of the women's auxiliary, led by Marvel Scholl and Clara Dunne,

marched on city hall. Crowds gathered on the sidewalks to watch them pass with their Local 574 banner at the head of the column and many onlookers joined the procession. When they got to city hall their way was barred by nervous cops with guns. Finally, a small delegation was allowed to go in to present their demands upon Mayor Bainbridge. Meanwhile the rest of the women carried on a protest demonstration outside the building. Bainbridge refused to see the delegation but the evening papers reported their demands: that the mayor fire Chief Johannes, withdraw all deputies, and stop interfering with the pickets.

Trade unionists throughout the city were enraged about the police brutality and they were stimulated by Local 574's heroic fight. This led to a highly unusual course of action in the building trades. Demands to call a strike arose in the ranks, this time not in their narrow craft interests, but in solidarity with the embattled truck drivers. The pressure became so great that officials of the Building Trades Council recommended a sympathy strike. Craft by craft, the building-trades unions voted to call a holiday for the duration of the drivers' walkout. One of these unions, the Electrical Workers, marched in a body to 1900 Chicago Avenue and put themselves at the disposal of Local 574's strike committee. This action had been inspired by two members of the union, Oscar Coover, Sr., and Chester Johnson, both of whom also belonged to the Communist League. Although sympathy strikes were more or less limited to the building trades, financial and moral support for Local 574 was voted by the executive board of the AFL Central Labor Union.

Early Monday afternoon Police Chief Johannes ordered the whole police force on twenty-four-hour duty, and he asked the American Legion to provide 1,500 deputies. Strikers found on the streets wearing bandages were picked up

by the cops. The "Citizens Committee for Law and Order," operating from the Radisson Hotel, rushed a request to businessmen for help in recruiting deputies "personally known to you for their integrity." The written request stated: "Every citizen of this type possible must be deputized either as a special police officer or deputy sheriff. Report and have others report, with credentials from you, if possible, to headquarters at 1328 Hennepin Avenue, in rough clothes and ready for service." Having been frustrated in its first major strikebreaking attempt, the Citizens Alliance was desperately looking for more police muscle, still confident that the union could be beaten into submission.

Tuesday morning the market district was filled with people. Spectators came by the thousands, packing the sidewalks and peering from the windows and roofs of buildings, hoping to see a repetition of Monday's fighting. A local radio station, KSTP, had portable equipment on the scene with an announcer ready to broadcast a blow-by-blow account of the day's happenings.

Local 574 was there in force, supported by many volunteer pickets from other unions. During the night the battleground had been studied to determine the best strategic placement of the union forces. Little more than that could be done, however, concerning overall guidance of the fighting because of the huge numbers of people present. The union cause would have to rest entirely on the readiness of the strikers to give battle and the ability of their picket captains to lead them. There proved to be no cause for concern on either count.

Most of the city's uniformed cops were present as well as several hundred deputies. Some of the deputies had gotten a bellyful Monday and failed to show up again, but these were replaced by new ones who had been recruited overnight. Since the deputies had run away the day be-

fore, uniformed cops had now been put in charge of each contingent in an effort to make them stand and fight. All told, the repressive force numbered over 1,500.

The morning paper had announced that the produce houses were going to move perishables, and a few scabs surrounded by cops, started to load a truck. Unlike Monday's events, however, they didn't get to the point of trying to move the rig. Tension was so thick that one could almost touch it in the air and anything could trigger the pending battle. Suddenly a sound of shattering glass was heard, as someone threw a produce crate through a window, and before the echo died away a free-for-all had started.

The pickets charged the deputies first and soon noticed that many uniformed cops were tending to hang back. Obviously these cops resented being deserted by the deputies Monday and they didn't seem to relish another clubbing match. Sensing this mood among some of the cops, the pickets continued to concentrate mainly on the deputies. Soon even the bystanders were getting in licks in support of the strikers. Finding themselves mousetrapped, many deputies dropped their clubs and ripped off their badges, trying with little success to seek anonymity in the hostile crowd. By this time the pickets were also zeroing in on uniformed cops who had gotten into the thick of the fight. The scene of battle spread as cops and deputies alike were driven from the market. The deputies were chased clear back to their headquarters, the strikers mopping up on stragglers along the way.

In less than an hour after the battle started there wasn't a cop to be seen in the market, and pickets were directing traffic in the now peaceful district. For good measure all police were run out of the vicinity of the strike headquarters and they were kept away for the duration of the walkout. Injuries in the fighting were heavy on both sides

and two special deputies were killed: Peter Erath and C. Arthur Lyman, the latter a member of the board of directors of the Citizens Alliance.

While the struggle was going on in the market, a telegram came from Tobin, ordering the union to seek arbitration of the dispute. At the time the strike leaders were quite busy and the telegram lay on the dispatchers' table at headquarters. Francis H. Shoemaker, a sympathetic U.S. congressman, was snooping around and he came upon the message. Shoemaker, who had already proven to be irresponsible, adventurous, and an exhibitionist to boot, took it upon himself to send Tobin an answer. It said: "Keep your scabby nose and scaly face out. This is a fight for human rights. Your rat job not involved."

The big catch was that he signed Bill Brown's name to the reply, making it appear to be an official union response. We had trouble enough on our hands without going out of the way to antagonize Tobin. So Shoemaker's message was officially repudiated and the strike headquarters was declared off limits to him. Tobin appeared to accept the explanation, since he attacked Shoemaker editorially in the next issue of the *Teamsters Journal*, but the episode nevertheless added to his mounting grudge against Local 574.

Considerable nervousness had developed in the upper echelons of the local AFL officialdom about the course the strike was taking. So they decided to make a bid for a truce in the fighting and try to bring the situation under Governor Olson's control. Toward noon on Tuesday a joint committee from the Central Labor Union, Building Trades Council and Teamsters Joint Council called on Chief Johannes, asking him to call off the cops and stop trying to move trucks. He took the committee to see Sheriff Wall, and there it was agreed to call in the governor. Olson soon arrived, bringing along General

E.A. Walsh, Commander of the National Guard. Representatives of Local 574 and the trucking employers were then brought into the discussion. Speaking for Local 574 were Bill Brown, Grant Dunne, and Ed Hedlund; for the bosses there were W.M. Hardin, M.A. Lehman, and G.F. Williams.

The meeting was told that the Labor Board was readying a proposal for settlement of the strike, and after some argument a twenty-four-hour truce was agreed upon. It provided for suspension of truck traffic and the complete closing of the market place. In return, Local 574 agreed to suspend picketing except for observers to see that the truce was carried out. The representatives of the employers and Local 574 signed the truce, as did Walter Frank of the Lathers, and Joel Anderson of the Steamfitters on behalf of the building-trades unions, which had declared a sympathy strike.

Before the truce period had ended Johannes announced that trucks would be moved under police protection and Local 574 quickly responded with a statement that picketing would be resumed. Mayor Bainbridge then called on Olson to mobilize the guard and the governor promptly did so, asking at the same time for a twenty-four-hour extension of the truce. Local 574 denounced the calling up of the National Guard as an act of intimidation and demanded that it be demobilized. Olson was told that extension of the truce would be acceptable to the union only if there was a continued ban on all truck traffic by the struck firms. The governor decided to keep the troops off the streets, the initial terms of the truce were extended and a basis was established for some form of contract negotiations to begin.

Due to a regional peculiarity within a nation under firm capitalist rule, a local condition approximating dual power

had temporarily arisen. The authorities could exercise control over the class struggle then raging only insofar as they proceeded in a manner acceptable to Local 574 and its allies. A combination of factors had brought about this situation. Being fearful about relying on Olson to get their strikebreaking done, the bosses had decided to depend on the local police apparatus, which was controlled by old-line capitalist politicians. However, the cops proved incapable of doing the dirty job so the mayor then tried to put Olson on the spot by demanding help from the National Guard.

This demand could not be met by the governor without raising a danger to him from another quarter. If he ordered the troops into naked strikebreaking action, it would jeopardize vital political support that he enjoyed from the labor movement. Olson was sharply reminded of the political threat from this quarter when Local 574 promptly denounced his action in calling up the Guard and demanded that it be demobilized. He decided to back away from any idea of using the troops and this kept things at a standoff in local class relations.

If a comparable situation had existed nationally, what began as a simple trade-union action could have broadened into a sweeping social conflict leading toward a revolutionary confrontation for state power. As matters stood, however, the conflict did not reach beyond the city limits. On that narrow scale nothing more could be accomplished than to fight to a finish in the battle for union recognition. Considering the existing conditions, a victory on that issue alone would be a matter of no small consequence. The oppressive open-shop rule of the Citizens Alliance would be definitively broken, and the way would be opened to make Minneapolis a union town.

This perspective was advanced to the workers at a mas-

sive labor rally held on Wednesday evening, May 23. It took place at the Parade Grounds, a big open field opposite an armory, which was available for public functions. Over 5,000 were on hand before the scheduled starting time and people kept coming by the hundreds. Many had quickly bolted an evening meal and hurried to the rally in their work clothes, some bringing their children with them. Those present included women and men, young and old, employed and jobless, organized and unorganized. Together they made up a cross-section of the working class. When the speaking program began a hush fell over the throng, people straining to hear what the strike leaders had to say.

“If we don’t get full union recognition and an acceptable settlement,” Bill Brown declared, “Local 574 will continue the strike and we will call upon all the workers to support us.” The huge audience roared its approval.

Trickery in the negotiations

When heavy fighting broke out in the market on Monday, May 21, 1934, Local 574's struggle in Minneapolis became headline news throughout the country. Wire services flashed reports of the conflict to all newspapers. Radio networks broadcast excerpts from KSTP's on-the-scene account of the routing of the uniformed cops and deputies on Tuesday. Newsreels, which were then a feature of motion picture entertainment, showed combat scenes filmed during the Tuesday battle. Workers everywhere reacted enthusiastically to the news. Audiences in movie houses broke out in cheers at the sight of pickets clubbing cops for a change, since in most strikes it was entirely the other way around. It did the workers good to see unionists standing their ground against the police and, in fact, giving more punishment than they received.

These reports gave the central leaders of the Communist League in New York their first inkling of the full scope of the Teamster strike. They were especially disturbed by

news accounts of Governor Olson's mobilization of the National Guard which could become a serious threat to the union. A decision was quickly made to send Jim Cannon, the party's national secretary, to help the Teamster comrades. He made the trip to Minneapolis by plane, a quite expensive mode of travel in those days. This put a heavy strain on the meager budget of the small Communist League; but since it was the fastest way to go and speed was decisive, the means to buy a ticket were scraped up the hard way.

This action corresponded with the duty of the national leadership. When any section of a revolutionary party is involved in a critical action, the local comrades should not be left to their own resources. The national leadership must give them all possible assistance and, in the last analysis, take the responsibility for the party's role in the action.

Writing to me years later about this aspect of the situation, Ray Dunne recalled: "We, that is the local party fraction, were as confident about the May outcome as we were about the coal strike. We had good reasons, because out of the coal yards we had recruited [into the union—FD] hundreds of mostly young, eager, battle-tested activists and organizers. They recruited and trained hundreds of other new drivers and inside workers. Most important, we recruited by the threes and tens for our party. . . . I'm quite sure—here looking backward—that we made a grievous mistake in our failure to keep the party center informed of the fast-developing situation in Minneapolis. This must be registered as a bad error in judgment. We talked about this, Carl [Skoglund] and I, but agreed that to do so would be loading onto New York local problems that would only add to troubles in the center with which they were confronted, due to an already developing faction fight with a

petty-bourgeois grouping.

“This error was brought home to us when Jim made his trip *by air* to Minneapolis at the end of the May strike. His attitude and grasp of the local situation was something almost completely new and strange. [Here Ray appears to be contrasting his appreciation of Jim’s visit to unhappy experiences in the past with top leaders of the Communist Party who had come to intervene in local situations—FD]. Being the Bolshevik he was, he grasped several things that reinforced the party and its role both locally and, still more important, nationwide. . . . By reason of Jim’s visit, [projection of a national] outlook for an escalation, for an organizational advance—which did not cross but fitted in with our local outlook—did, in fact, lift the whole struggle to a higher political and strategic plane.”

The national outlook to which Ray referred had to do with the relationship of the Minneapolis strike to the political work of the Communist League as a whole. Up to then a lot of wiseacres had sneered at the Trotskyist movement and dismissed its role because it was small and weak. Now, Communist League members were leading a tremendous union struggle, proving in action that size is not the basic criterion of a revolutionary party’s worth.

Events were showing that the Trotskyists possessed the really fundamental revolutionary attributes: program, strategy, tactics, and the fighting capacity to lead workers in battle against the capitalist class. It was the relationship of these considerations to the national party-building activity of the Communist League that Jim had been quick to see. At the same time his presence in Minneapolis proved helpful to the Teamster comrades in the negotiations for a settlement of the strike.

To give a clear picture of the negotiations it is necessary to backtrack a bit. On the eve of the strike, Local 574 with-

drew the closed-shop demand around which the bosses had built up their antiunion propaganda. Instead, the local asked for simple recognition of its legal right to represent the union membership in collective bargaining, a right that was purportedly guaranteed under Section 7(a) of the NRA. The Regional Labor Board had no alternative but to endorse the legitimacy of this modest demand for union recognition. Caught by surprise, the bosses avoided any discussion of the subject, simply ignoring the Labor Board while they tried to figure out a new propaganda line. As a result, the central issue in the strike became clear to the whole city. Everyone could see that the union was merely demanding its legal rights, at the same time being reasonable and flexible about the form of recognition, and that the bosses refused to recognize the union in any way whatever. Thus the shift in union tactics had outflanked the Citizens Alliance strategists on the propaganda front and added new dimensions to mass support of the strike.

After the walkout began, Governor Olson stepped in as a mediator. Spurning his efforts to get them to meet with the union, the bosses refused to make any concessions whatsoever, and told the governor that it was his duty to use the militia to help them resume their trucking operations. On the union's side it was, of course, logical to cooperate with Olson in his mediation efforts. However, a complication arose due to the differences within the Local 574 leadership. Cliff Hall and executive-board members influenced by him, along with the general run of AFL officials, were inclined to give the governor a free hand in any negotiations. This danger was only partially offset by the presence of Miles Dunne and Bill Brown on Local 574's negotiating committee.

A way had to be found to demonstrate to Olson himself that no shenanigans could be put over on the union

membership. An opportunity came on Saturday, May 19, when our pickets were assaulted by the cops at Bearman Fruit. At the time Olson had a negotiation session going at the Athletic Club in which he was shuttling back and forth between the union and employer committees.

Local 574 addressed a message to the governor which read: "At a mass meeting held at 10 o'clock this morning at Strike Headquarters, our members instructed us to make the following ultimatum: A special survey was made by members of the Strike Committee of the situation on the market. After we have been informed that the cops were brutally breaking the heads of our workers with the use of clubs, blackjacks, and lead pipes. We have twelve men seriously and maybe fatally injured in the hospital. We are protesting this violence and unless the Governor instructs the Heads of the Police Department to call the cops off our necks, we will refuse to go on with this conference. Failing to enforce this, Mr. Governor, we will throw our entire force with instructions into the battle and will refuse to arbitrate or negotiate until there is a decisive conclusion in the situation. We will throw out a general call for every worker in Minneapolis and vicinity to assist us in protecting our rights and lives. Pending your action and reply, our delegates to this conference are hereby withdrawn."

If the message had grammatical flaws, it should be kept in mind that it was written hastily under conditions of great tension. Certainly there was no weakness or ambiguity about the contents. As soon as the message had been approved by the membership, a couple of the union's special cruising squads were assigned to deliver it to the governor personally at the Athletic Club and to bring the union negotiators back to strike headquarters. Both assignments were carried out promptly and firmly. The governor had gotten his warning, as had his cronies within

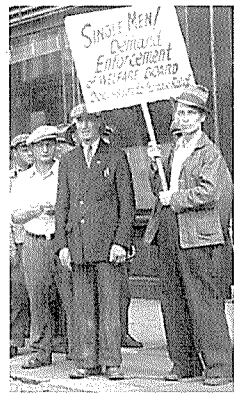


MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**“There was a war in Minneapolis:
a conflict of poverty against
wealth, of labor against capital.”**



ST. PAUL DISPATCH / MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



PHOTOS: MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

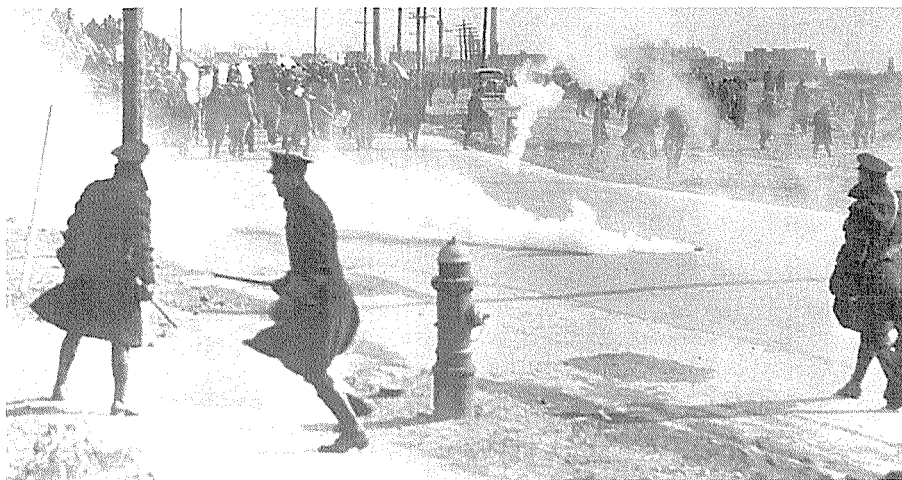
This page, top: Farmers, who became the workers' allies during the 1934 strikes, demand government assistance at Minnesota's capitol in St. Paul, March 1933. **Bottom:** 10,000 unemployed workers demonstrated in Minneapolis, April 6, 1934, protesting below-poverty-level federal "relief" benefits. Cops later teargassed the demonstrators.

Facing page, top: Washington, DC, July 1932: 15,000 jobless World War I veterans encamped near the U.S. Capitol, demanding bonuses scheduled to be paid only in 1945. General Douglas MacArthur deployed mounted troops and tanks to drive the veterans from the camps, killing two and wounding several others. **Center:** Dearborn, Mich., March 1932: Cops attack march of 3,000 unemployed at Ford Motor Co.'s River Rouge plant, killing 5 and injuring 60. **Bottom:** Shanghai, China, Feb. 1932: Workers district in flames during brutal invasion by Imperial Japan, as U.S. troops guard city's wealthy international settlement nearby. Pictures such as these in the Omaha newspapers drove home to Farrell Dobbs the class inequalities and intolerable brutality of the world capitalist system.

“A key aspect of the situation in Minneapolis was common to the country as a whole: radicalization of the working class under the impact of severe economic depression.”



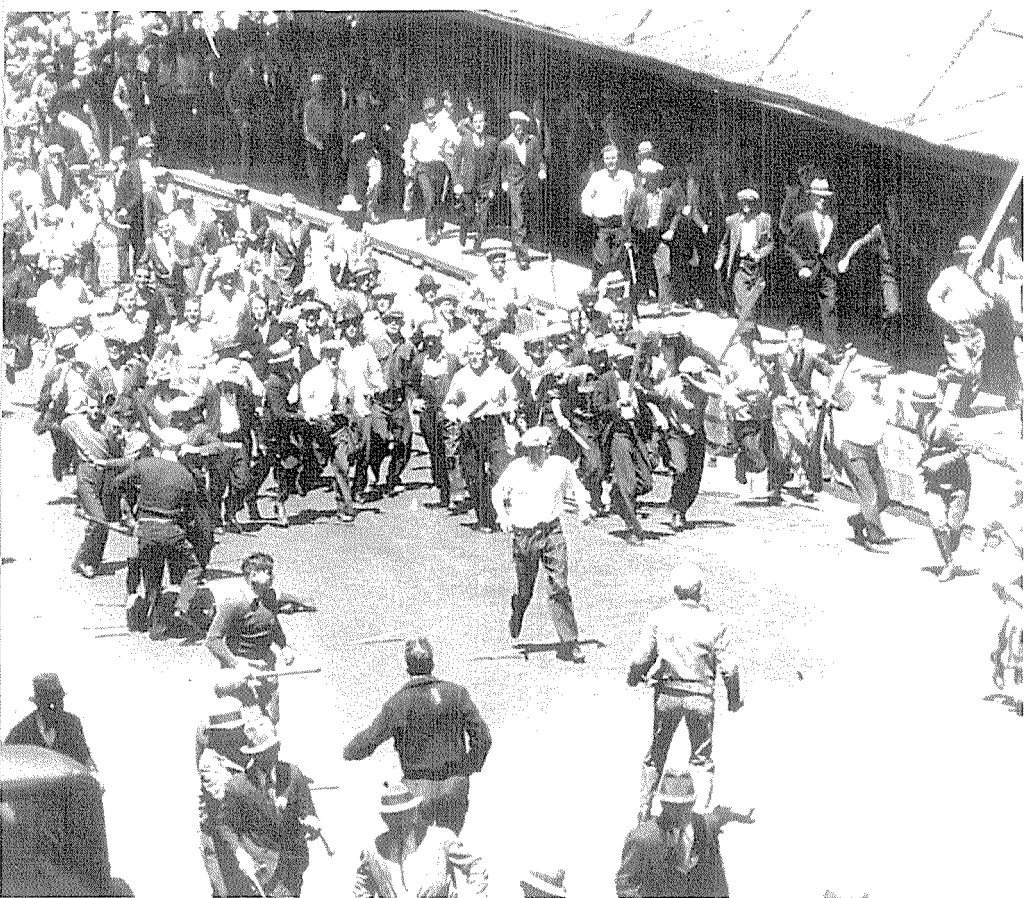
CORBIS BETTMAN



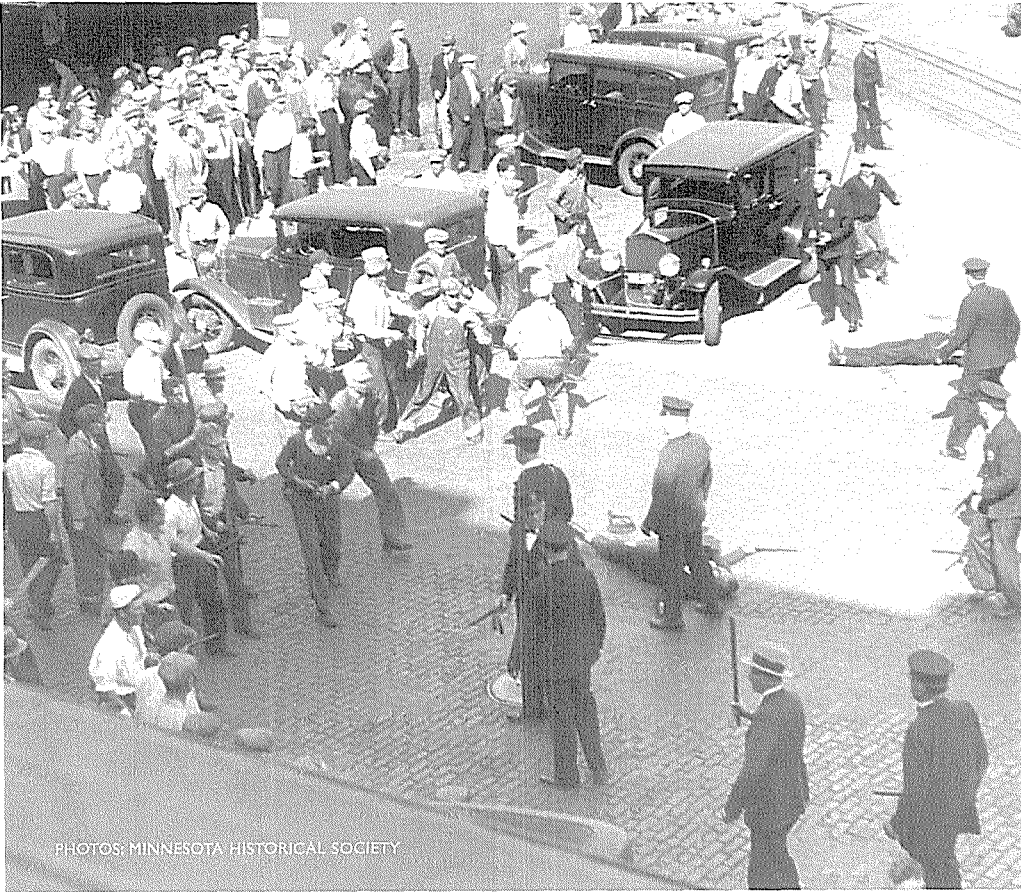
BOTTOM PHOTOS: DOUGLAS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



**“It did workers good to see unionists
standing their ground against the cops,
giving more punishment than they received.”**



“Battle of Deputies Run”: Illusions about cops began to be dispelled when workers found the whole force fighting on the bosses’ side. From the outset, striking workers had to defend themselves from bloody assaults by police and special deputies organized by the bosses’ organization, the Citizens Alliance. On May 21–22 hundreds of workers in the Minneapolis market district routed the cops as well as the deputized company personnel who had come out on a lark to teach the workers a lesson.



PHOTOS: MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

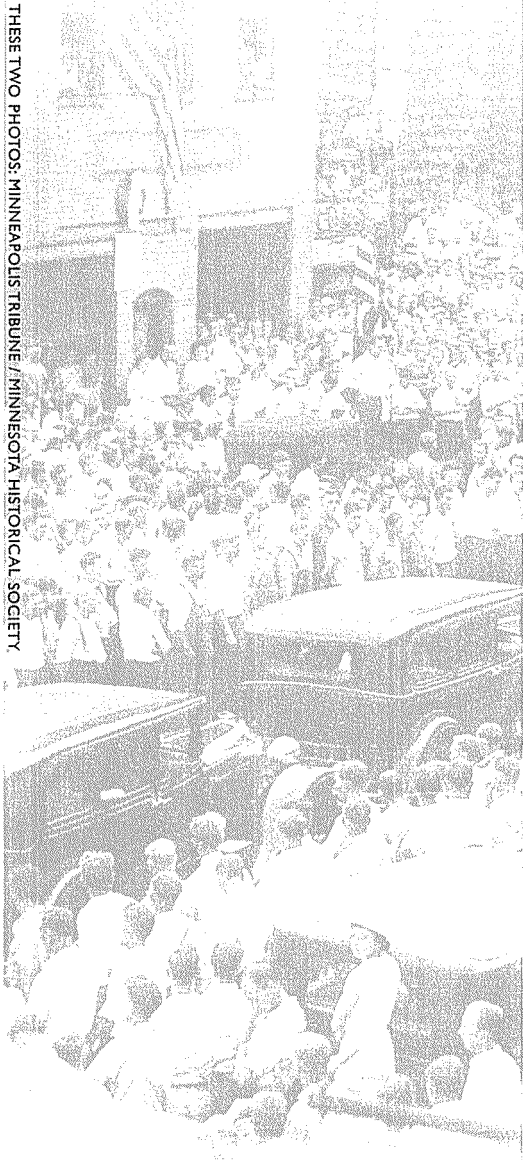


Bloody Friday, July 20, 1934: "Suddenly, without any warning, the cops opened fire on the picket truck, and they shot to kill. In a matter of seconds two of the pickets lay motionless on the floor of the bullet-ridden truck" (**sequence below**). Among the 67 pickets and bystanders shot by the cops, striker Henry Ness died two days later and John Belor on August 1.

Full page: Over 40,000, including hundreds of cruising pickets, join funeral for Henry Ness, July 24, 1934. **Facing page:** Ness's comrades honor him with wreath and plaque above entrance to Local 574 strike headquarters. Plaque quotes his last words: "Tell the boys not to fail me now."



THESE TWO PHOTOS: MINNEAPOLIS TRIBUNE / MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



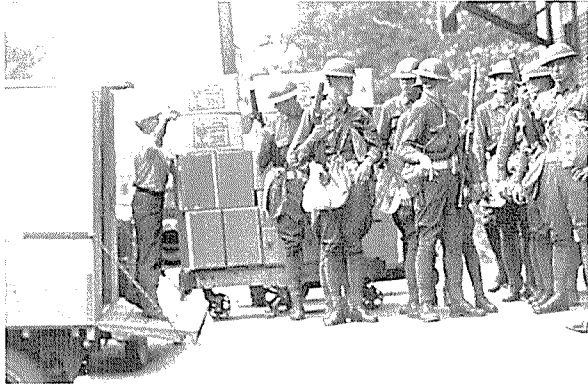
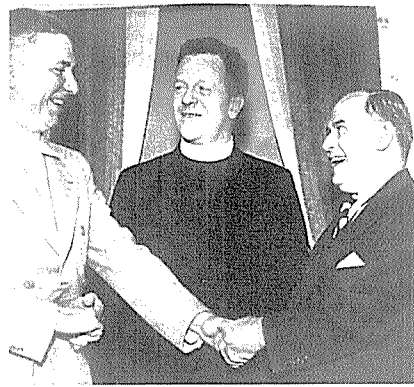
**“Under capitalism,
the main police function
is to break strikes and repress
other forms of visible protest
against the policies of the ruling class.”**



**“I will make the city of Minneapolis
as quiet as a Sunday school.”**

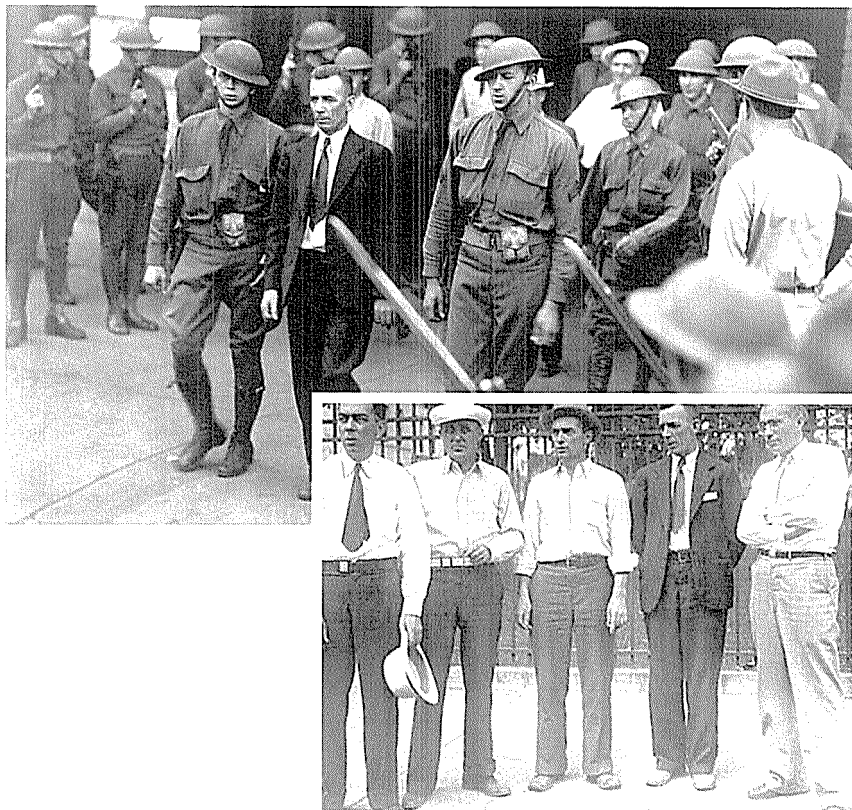
—FARMER-LABOR PARTY GOVERNOR FLOYD OLSON
ON EVE OF IMPOSING MARTIAL LAW

MINNEAPOLIS STAR & TRIBUNE / MHS



**“Release our leaders from arrest,
return our strike headquarters to us,
and get your troops off the streets.”**

—LOCAL 574 TO GOVERNOR OLSON



Facing page, top left: Gov. Floyd Olson (left) joined with federal mediators Rev. Francis Haas and Eugene Dunnigan in trying to sell workers a “fair settlement.” On July 26 Olson imposed martial law—declaring that a “state of insurrection” existed—and called out 4,000 National Guardsmen. **Right:** Olson’s troops protect scabs unloading trucks.

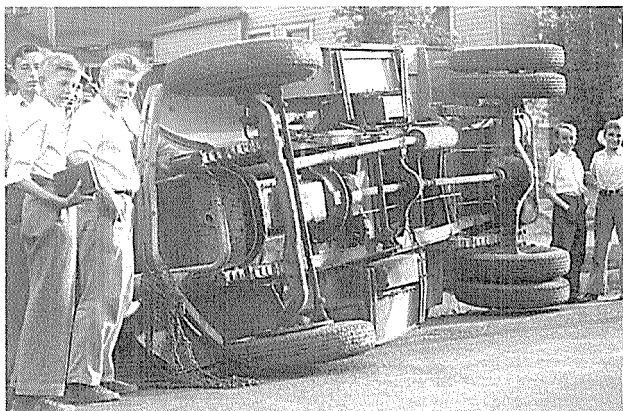
This page, top: On August 1, guardsmen raided Local 574’s strike headquarters, arresting union leader Ray Dunne, shown outside State Fair Grounds where he and other strikers were jailed. Later that day troops with fixed bayonets raided the AFL offices (**facing page**) and Teamsters hall. When Local 574 mobilized their cruising pickets and ended any talks until its leaders were freed, the governor backed off, ordering their release within hours. **This page, bottom:** Grant Dunne (left) and 574’s attorney Albert Goldman (right) welcome Bill Brown (white cap), Miles Dunne, and Ray Dunne upon their release.

**“We will fight it out on the picket line
if it takes all summer”**

—‘THE ORGANIZER’, LOCAL 574 STRIKE DAILY



ST. PAUL DISPATCH / MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



MINNEAPOLIS JOURNAL / MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

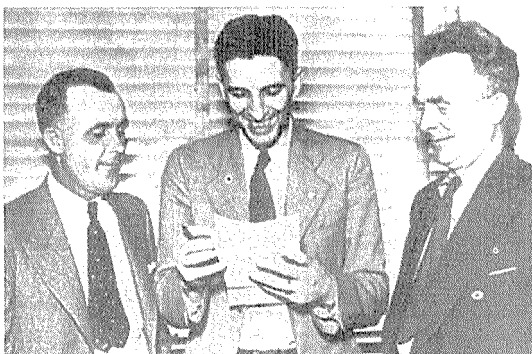
Local 574's cruising pickets controlled the streets throughout the renewed strike. **Top:** Strikers check union-issued circulation permit. **Bottom, right:** Scab trucks were put out of commission. On August 1, after troops raided union headquarters and jailed strike leaders, in just a few hours National Guard officers reported more than 500 calls for help from scabs. **Left:** Chief picket dispatcher Kelly Postal.

Top: An alliance with working farmers—themselves slaves to banks and monopolies—was one key to victory. In an act of solidarity, Local 574 leased a parking lot for use by market gardeners, farmers who sold their produce to small grocers. When the local launched a women's auxiliary, some strikers didn't like it at first, "but all this stopped suddenly when the women went into action." Running the commissary (**bottom**) was one of the auxiliary's tasks. Its members staffed the strike hospital that treated wounded pickets, and organized trips all over the region speaking to win support for the strike.

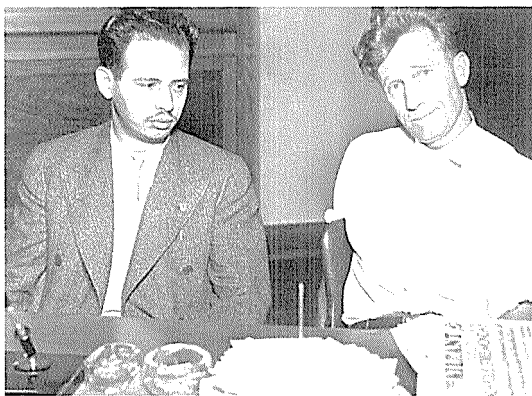
INTERNATIONAL NEWS PHOTOS



“A special factor in Minneapolis lay in the presence of revolutionary socialist cadres who proved capable of fusing with the mass of rebellious workers.”



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Top: Local 574 strike leaders (from left) Bill Brown, Farrell Dobbs, and Carl Skoglund. **Center:** The Dunne brothers (from left), Ray, Grant, and Miles. **Bottom:** The Communist League sent James P. Cannon (right), the party's national secretary, and editor Max Shachtman to help the Teamster militants. Shown here in Minneapolis, they were arrested and held by police for 48 hours in late July 1934.

the AFL officialdom, and the experience had a salutary effect on Local 574's negotiating committee. In addition, it was a useful way to help the workers understand they couldn't rely upon Olson as mediator.

On Tuesday, May 22, shortly after the truce was declared, the Labor Board came forward with a proposal to settle the strike. Olson called a conference that evening at the Nicollet Hotel to get negotiations started on the basis of the Labor Board proposal. A large force of cruising picket squads escorted the union committee to the hotel. When they got there they found the place swarming with police and another ultimatum was sent inside to the governor: "We refuse to meet with you or discuss any settlement unless you take the cops off our neck." The union's action prevented the springing of a trap prepared by the Citizens Alliance, as we learned later when news leaked out that the cops had warrants for the arrest of the Local 574 negotiators. Olson arranged for the police to be withdrawn; negotiations got under way in indirect form, the union and employer committees being in separate rooms, with the governor acting as a go-between.

Three days of hard bargaining followed. In the end the bosses agreed to recognize the union in the indirect form of a Labor Board consent order, which upon the union's acceptance was signed by 166 employers in the general trucking industry. After trying unsuccessfully to exclude pickets convicted of alleged "crimes" during the walkout, the bosses agreed unconditionally to the reinstatement of all strikers to their regular jobs. They promised not to discriminate against workers because of their union membership, and agreed to deal with representatives of Local 574 on specific matters concerning its individual members. A seniority system was established to prevent the bosses from weeding out union members. In general, the form of

recognition was sufficiently firm to give the union a solid basis from which to move forward in a fight to win steady improvements in wages and conditions.

At one point the negotiations almost foundered on the question of the scope of union recognition. The bosses said flatly that inside workers would not be included, and thereupon the union negotiators walked out of the conference, returning to the strike headquarters. Soon the governor's chauffeur arrived at the headquarters, saying that Olson wanted them to return to the conference in his limousine to consider a new proposal on the question. The new formulation extended union recognition to drivers, helpers, and "such other persons as are ordinarily engaged in trucking operations."

The key term in this formulation was "operations" related to trucking, since such operations reached inside the establishments employing drivers and helpers. Because job classifications within these establishments varied considerably according to the type of business, there was a certain advantage in having a somewhat abstract definition of the scope of union representation. In every case where such categories of employees were organized, the union could automatically claim its right to represent them. That was why Local 574 used the blanket term "inside workers." Substitution of an alternate formulation made no big difference, provided the recognition clause was understood to include all members of the union. Olson assured the union negotiators that it did, intimating that he was merely trying to give the employers a face-saving formula. On the basis of the governor's guarantee, the union accepted the formulation.

Prior to the strike, the employers generally had raised the truck drivers' pay to fifty cents an hour and comparable increases had been given to other key workers. Their

aim was to defuse the organizing campaign and head off a walkout, but the scheme backfired. A clause was included in the agreement that these already significant pay increases must be continued for at least one year. Provision was also made for post-strike negotiation or arbitration of further wage adjustments. A seven-member arbitration board was established, consisting of two Local 574 and two employer representatives, one labor and one employer member of the Regional Labor Board, and the six to name a seventh "neutral" person. It was agreed that hours of labor would remain for the time being as then set by the NRA codes.

On Friday evening, May 25, the proposed settlement was submitted to the union membership with a recommendation from the leadership that it be accepted. Unlike the snake-oil seller's pitch with which the AFL officials had presented the coal settlement the previous February, this proposal was frankly described as a compromise with the bosses. What it did and did not accomplish with respect to the original union demands was forthrightly and fully discussed at the May 25 meeting. Recognizing that they had won a limited victory, primarily in the foundation laid by gaining union recognition, the strikers voted to accept the settlement. On the following morning all went back to work, except the cab drivers.

The main taxi employer, the Yellow Cab Company, was acting independently of the trucking bosses. After the trucking settlement, Yellow Cab began serious negotiations with the union and on June 4 a one-year agreement was signed. Important wage gains were registered and the workers were on the way to establishing union control on the job. Soon the union embraced other taxi workers besides drivers, including starters, telephone operators, garage floor men, baggage drivers, and helpers. Indepen-

dent taxi drivers obtained a similar agreement. After the settlement a meeting of all the city's taxi drivers voted almost unanimously to stay in Local 574. This action had the effect of liquidating the tiny union of independent taxi owners and their relief drivers which had previously existed. Once again, Tobin's organizational norms were being reversed.

As the victorious workers returned to their jobs, the Communist Party, which had played no part in the struggle, attacked the strike settlement as a "Trotskyite sellout" to the Citizens Alliance. The Stalinists were then on an ultraleft binge. This was a switch from their pre-1928 line of conciliating reformist union bureaucrats and collaborating with capitalist politicians, a course to which they were to return in 1935. Stalinist tactics in 1934 stemmed from their so-called third-period line which had been promulgated at the Sixth Congress of the Communist International in 1928. It was based on predictions that economic crises in the capitalist countries would cause revolutionary situations to spring up virtually overnight. With that expectation the Stalinists charted a sectarian course to give the masses "revolutionary" leadership. As openers they set out to split the labor movement internationally and reorganize it under Communist Party control.

In this country the Communist Party cadres were directed to split the AFL on an utterly artificial basis, sucking whatever workers they could into their adventurous course. Their aim was to build a "red" federation of labor, which ironically enough, they called the Trade Union Unity League. In practice the "red" unions remained paper organizations with few members other than the Stalinists themselves and their direct followers. These "revolutionary" setups were unable even to win recognition from an employer, to say nothing of leading a struggle for power.

As a consequence of this ultraleftism and the adventurism attending it, the CP cadres were isolated from the living class struggle. In Minneapolis they had no influence whatever in Local 574. They were left with no alternative but to seek a way to muscle in on the union action from the outside, using mimeographed propaganda material for the purpose.

At the May 15 meeting where Local 574 voted to go on strike the Stalinists appeared with leaflets denouncing Carl Skoglund and the Dunne brothers as “traitors” and “agents of the bosses.” During the walkout they demanded, as a price for their support to the union, that agents of their paper organizations be included on the strike committee. When the demand was rejected, they put out more leaflets denouncing the union leadership as “undemocratic.” The strikers were so angered by the attack that they would have assaulted the CP distributors if the union leaders had not intervened to prevent it. Bill Brown, who was adept at coining a pithy phrase, said, “The Communist Party has discredited the mimeograph machine.”

After the strike was over, Earl Browder, who was then general secretary of the CP, came to Minneapolis and made a public attack on the settlement. The main hatchet job, however, was assigned to William F. Dunne, an older brother of Ray, Miles, and Grant. In the 1928 split, Bill Dunne, who had previously belonged to the Cannon group within the Communist Party, elected to stay with the Stalinists. Now the CP hacks were demanding that he prove his loyalty to them by undertaking the dirty job of attacking his brothers in Local 574. He accepted the assignment. Writing in the CP paper, the *Daily Worker*, Bill Dunne asserted, “The exposure and defeat of Olson should have been the central political objective of the Minneapolis struggle.” He attacked the union leadership for making a compromise settlement

with the bosses instead of holding out for a “sweeping victory.” A general strike should have been proclaimed, he insisted, “over the heads of the AFL officials.” On these grounds he charged that the strike had been “defeated” and “betrayed.”

Answering the attack in the columns of *The Militant*, Jim Cannon pointed out that, unlike the muddleheaded Stalinists, the workers correctly understood the “central objective” to be recognition of the union. Consequently, an attempt to call a general strike for the “exposure and defeat of Olson” would also have been “over the heads” of the workers. The facts were that the workers had seen the government in operation and they had learned some practical lessons. As in the coal strike, they found the police lined up solidly on the side of the bosses. Olson’s mobilization of the militia had been understood as a threat against the strike—a realization that would prove helpful to the union later on. The real central objective of the strike was explained by Jim Cannon in *The Militant* of June 16, 1934.

“It is self-understood that the struggle for economic demands is indissolubly joined with the fight for a union,” he wrote, “*but the union is the instrument of the fight* and the guardian of the economic concessions. Every worker who joins the union understands this instinctively. The worker wants an improvement in his conditions, but he wants also security in his job while fighting for these improvements. That is what the formula ‘recognition of the union’ means concretely. . . . Every strike settlement is a compromise in the sense that it leaves the bosses in control of industry and free to exploit the workers. The best settlement only limits and checks this exploitation to a certain extent. Realistic leaders do not expect justice from the capitalists, they only strive to extract as much as possible for the union in the

given situation and strengthen their forces for another fight.”

Concerning the provision for arbitration of wage rates, he added: “This is a serious concession which the union officials felt it necessary to make under the circumstances in order to secure the recognition of the union and consolidate it in the next period. . . . An adverse ruling of the board of arbitration would undoubtedly galvanize the union membership for action again. The board will meet under the direct impression of the 10-day strike and with the consciousness that the union is strong and militant. That, in our opinion, is the fundamentally decisive feature of the results of the Minneapolis strike—the indubitable establishment of a new union where none existed before. All the plans of the leaders and organizers were directed to this end as the first objective in a long campaign. The struggle was centered around the issue and was crowned with success. On that basis further steps forward can be made. To speak of such an outcome as a ‘defeat’ is simply absurd.”

Jim Cannon’s appraisal of the outcome of the strike was shared generally by the workers involved. As they returned to their jobs Local 574 buttons were proudly displayed throughout the trucking industry. Filling-station attendants, with whom there had been considerable trouble during the strike, began to join the union. There was also a steady influx of package-delivery drivers, some of whom had tried to scab early in the walkout.

Before long Local 574 had over 7,000 members, and it continued to gain new recruits daily. Job committees were set up to handle grievances and collect union dues. Besides this, the size of the union and the scope of its activities now required a staff of full-time organizers. On June 1, the executive board adopted a motion by Moe Hork to assign

this function to Ray, Miles, and Grant Dunne, Carl Skoglund, and myself at salaries of twenty-five dollars a week, the average wage of truck drivers. The action was another step toward according official status to what had become the real leadership of the union.

Our first task as organizers was to deal with poststrike grievances which could not be settled by the union committees on the job. These included surprisingly few refusals to put strikers back to work. In most cases the individual bosses showed a readiness to meet with union representatives and settle the dispute.

In one case Ray Dunne and I, who were working together on the union staff, had a bizarre experience. A market firm had made a deal with a competitor to split a carload of oranges that was to be unloaded at the regular starting time of a certain work day. Then the boss ordered one of his drivers to get there early and haul away something more than his half of the carload. The driver refused, saying that he now belonged to a union and he didn't have to do things like that anymore. He was fired for "insubordination." We gave the boss the alternative of putting the man back or facing a strike. He just sat back and looked at us for a few moments and you could see in his eyes that he was reviewing the scene of the fighting in the market. Then he decided to return the driver to his job.

About mid-June the grievance situation suddenly changed. It resulted from Citizens Alliance pressure on the bosses to discriminate against union members by chiseling on wage rates and firing them in violation of their seniority. Within a short time over 700 cases of such discrimination piled up; the union met stubborn refusals in most instances to make any redress of the workers' grievances. Clearly the Citizens Alliance was looking for a new opening to challenge the union.

This intention was made doubly plain by the attitude of

the employer committee when the union sought through the Labor Board to negotiate or arbitrate further wage increases in accord with the provisions of the strike settlement. The employer representatives hemmed and hawed, saying neither yes nor no, and nothing happened. With the Labor Board failing to enforce the terms of settlement, the union tried to deal directly with the bosses as individuals. They referred us to their committee, saying they couldn't act on their own. Meantime they were handing out a few piecemeal wage increases with the aim of creating dissension in the union ranks.

Only one thing was plainly stated by the employer representatives. They refused to deal with the union concerning inside workers, saying that they were empowered to bargain with Local 574 simply on matters relating to truck drivers and helpers. Their intent was to split the union membership by inducing the drivers and helpers to turn their backs on the inside workers. Such an outcome would minimize the actual gain in union power and limit the scope of any concessions they might have to make to their employees. Having done their homework well, the bosses were fully aware of Tobin's organizational concepts and knew that he would be sympathetic with their stand in limiting the scope of union recognition. Local 574's industrial-union course would be reversed and the union restricted to a narrow craft structure. This would facilitate cleaning out the radical leadership in order to put the local under the control of "labor statesmen."

Such a reversal of the union's course would also have been congenial to Governor Olson's needs, since Local 574's militant struggle had put him on the political hot seat. Being a slick maneuverer, Olson may well have anticipated that a dispute over the scope of representation would follow when he assured the union negotiators that

the strike settlement gave full union recognition, including inside workers. Such a probability flows from the obvious fact that his main aim at the time was to get the strikers back to work at all hazards. In any case, he now tried to straddle the issue when the Labor Board asked for his interpretation of the union-representation clause in the settlement. In a letter of June 21, 1934, he suggested that the clause should be construed to include such categories as shipping and receiving clerks, stevedores, and freight-elevator operators. Then he negated even this limited concession to the union by advocating that the final determination be left to arbitration.

Olson's letter brought a harsh response from the bosses, who bought a big newspaper ad in which they claimed that the union had a right to deal for only truck drivers and helpers. Emulating the bosses in brushing aside the governor's statement, the Labor Board handed down an interpretation of the union-recognition clause in the strike settlement. It ruled that the union had the right to represent only drivers, helpers, and platform workers "directly engaged in loading and unloading trucks." The bosses quickly accepted this antilabor decision which denied the union its legal right to represent members employed as inside workers. In a statement rejecting the ruling for the swindle it was, the union added with a touch of irony: "The Labor Board has 'generously' ruled that Local 574 shall have the right to represent almost half of its membership."

Meantime, on the day the governor's letter had been released to the press, Local 574 held a membership meeting to take stock of the deteriorating situation. The meeting voted to press demands for recognition of the union's right to represent all its members and for immediate wage increases. To back up the demands it was decided to begin

preparations for another tie-up. At the same time a letter reporting the situation was sent by Cliff Hall to Thomas L. Hughes, general secretary-treasurer of the IBT, written on this occasion in consultation with the rest of the union leadership. As a diplomatic gesture, it was explained that the international executive board had not been asked to sanction the May strike because most of the local's members were new and were not entitled to strike benefits under the IBT bylaws. No mention was made of the new dispute over union representation for inside workers, since both Tobin and Hughes would be cold on that subject. Instead the letter stressed the employers' refusal to arbitrate the wage question as provided in the strike settlement.

Because of the heavy expenses incurred in the strike, a request was made of Hughes that the local be exempted from the initiation-fee tax for the 3,000 new members taken in during May. This was a reasonable request, Hall wrote, "as we feel that we did not derive any benefits from the International during the eleven-day strike." Assurance was given in return that the per capita tax of thirty cents on the monthly membership dues would be paid regularly to the International Union.

In his reply Hughes stated: "The laws of the organization are very plain on this matter and we must receive \$1.00 for each man who paid his initiation fee into your local." He said nothing at all about the difficulties the local was having with the employers. As later events will show, when a statement was made on the subject, it came from Tobin himself and took the form of a blow against Local 574.

Turning to a quarter from which help could be counted on in a new battle with the bosses, the union set out to consolidate the women's auxiliary. Since the end of the May strike the auxiliary had been aiding families of pick-

ets who had been injured in the fighting or were still serving terms in the workhouse. Now there was an even bigger job of securing economic assistance for the many workers victimized in the new Citizens Alliance offensive against the union. Besides fighting to get them on public relief, the women organized a tag day to secure public donations on behalf of the class-war victims. They also went before other unions seeking contributions. With the threat of another strike looming, there would soon be much more to do and more hands would be needed, so the auxiliary launched a recruiting drive. The response was good, applications for membership even coming from outside Local 574 circles. Once again a key detachment of fighting women was being mobilized for the pending battle, built around the experienced veterans of the May struggle.

Parallel to the union preparations for renewed conflict, the Communist League began to gear itself as a national organization to give all possible support to the Minneapolis Teamsters. To finance the effort a party-wide fund drive was launched. A campaign was also conducted to expand the circulation of *The Militant*, especially by reaching out for subscribers among workers nationally who had been inspired by the May strike.

Once again Jim Cannon came to Minneapolis and in consultation with the local comrades it was decided to bring in some additional party members who were especially qualified to play key assisting roles. These included two top-notch journalists: Max Shachtman and Herbert Solow, who later became an editor of *Fortune*. Albert Goldman, a prominent Chicago labor attorney, came to serve as general counsel for the union. Hugo Oehler, a talented leader of mass actions, soon arrived to help mobilize support for Local 574 among the unemployed.

Several factors served to promote good working rela-

tions between these comrades sent to Minneapolis by the national organization and the local party members who were leading the union struggle. As a consequence of Jim's visit in May, the national party leadership could now act with a much surer grasp of the local situation than had previously been the case. At the same time the party fraction in the union was fully aware that valuable help could be received from the comrades who had come to offer special assistance. We were involved in a highly complex struggle, fraught with many hazards of a political nature. As in the case of all modern strikes, we could profit from competent political consultation and the help of journalists who were politically class conscious. It was also invaluable to have the services of an experienced organizer of unemployed workers and an able lawyer who was a revolutionary. These were precisely the main forms of aid received from the comrades the party sent to help us. A new dimension was thereby added to the union's general staff, an accomplishment that was bound to yield important dividends.

As had been the case since action began in the coal industry, members of the local Communist League branch played an important assisting role. Their efforts centered around work in other unions than Local 574, among the unemployed, and in the women's auxiliary. They also strove to build up *The Militant's* readership, thereby serving to promote class consciousness among the workers by means of the paper's political analysis of the union struggle. Those playing outstanding roles in these activities included Fannie Barach, Si Barach, Goldie Cooper, Oscar Coover, Sr., William Curran, C.R. and P.G. Hedlund, Chester Johnson, Louis Roseland, and Joe Ross. Taken as a whole, the local party branch had been gradually increasing in size since the beginning of the organizing drive in

coal. A consequent rise of its effectiveness in the labor movement was shown by the fact that most of the new members had been recruited within Local 574, and there was now a substantial party fraction in that union.

An extraordinary effort was made to strengthen Local 574 in the vital sphere of publicity and propaganda. On June 25 the local launched its own newspaper, *The Organizer*. Through this medium the union could refute the lies of the boss press, give the true facts about its own aims and policies, and expose the antilabor schemes of the bosses and the government. The paper was enthusiastically received by the workers, who read it carefully and helped to distribute it widely. At the outset *The Organizer* appeared as a modest semitabloid of four pages with a press run of 5,000. It came out weekly, but plans were made to begin daily publication if the union, as anticipated, was again forced on strike.

I was listed as the editor, even though I was too busy at other tasks to get out a paper and besides I didn't know how to do so at the time. This was done because it was useful to formally name a union leader for the post. The actual editors were Max Shachtman and Herbert Solow, assisted by Carlos Hudson, a local comrade with journalistic ability. Jim Cannon also pitched in on the editorial writing. Editorial policy was decided through joint consultations between the union leaders and the party journalists. With the kind of teamwork that we were able to establish, the union had a powerful new weapon in its arsenal.

The strike resumes

With another strike looming as a certainty, attention was turned to shoring up Local 574's alliances. An agreement was reached with three farm organizations: The Farmers' Holiday Association, the National Farm Bureau, and the Market Gardeners Association. It provided that the union pickets would not interfere with farm trucks during the strike if they carried permits from Local 574 and the farm organization to which each operator belonged. To prevent chiseling on this arrangement farmers' committees undertook to picket roads leading into Minneapolis. When put into practice later on, the procedure worked well. Difficulties experienced during the May action were largely avoided, and the union enjoyed general sympathy among the farmers. Sentiment favorable to the union was further enhanced by the fact that the dual character of the permit system enabled the farm organizations to conduct effective recruitment drives of their own.

Since the commission row in the city market would

again be closed in the upcoming walkout, it was necessary to keep the market gardeners clear of this potential battle area. Toward that end the union leased a big parking lot a few blocks away from the regular market district. Market gardeners were allowed to use it rent free for their commerce with small grocers, thus giving the gardeners an added incentive to cooperate with us in view of the rents gouged from them on commission row. Small grocers were permitted to pick up produce at the new market in passenger cars, but they were not allowed to use trucks. This presented no problem for them since their purchases were not very bulky. The system proved to be so successful that it was continued even after the next strike was over, and appreciation was shown to the union by donations to its commissary.

Steps were also taken to give further assurance to the unemployed that their alliance with the union would not be a one-sided affair. Local 574 joined in signing a call for a united labor conference on unemployed problems. This action by what had become the city's most respected union helped to emphasize strongly the duty of employed workers to back the demands of the unemployed. It gave fresh impetus to a growing trend toward practical union cooperation with the unemployed in fighting to improve the public relief system.

At the same time Local 574 moved to establish closer organizational coordination with the unemployed in the next strike through the medium of the Minneapolis Central Council of Workers. The MCCW was a delegated body of representatives from various workers' organizations such as unemployed formations, trade unions, labor political groups, workers' fraternal associations, cooperative movements, youth, and women's organizations of a working-class nature. It had been created for the

express purpose of fighting in behalf of jobless workers. Arrangements were made for this organization to register volunteers among the unemployed who wanted to support Local 574 in the pending battle with the trucking bosses. They were issued MCCW buttons, which it was understood would give them official picket status under the direction of the union's strike committee.

As in May, special measures were again needed to line up the city's trade-union movement in support of our struggle. A campaign was launched to get public backing from unions in all the various trades. Virtually every member of Local 574 participated in the effort, pressing our case among other rank-and-file unionists and thereby helping to bring pressure on the AFL officialdom. Local 574's leadership was thus enabled to push through an official AFL call for a joint conference of all unions in town. This conference scheduled a united labor march and protest rally against the union-busting tactics of the trucking bosses, to be held on July 6, 1934.

By 6:00 P.M. on the evening of the demonstration, working people gathering for the parade filled the marshaling area in the Bridge Square district. For over an hour steady streams of men and women continued to pour in, forming columns that extended along adjacent streets. At 7:30 the head of the parade swung up Nicollet Avenue, a principal thoroughfare in the heart of the city, on the eighteen-block march to the Municipal Auditorium where the protest rally was held. A squadron of motorcycle couriers from the May strike made sure that the way ahead was cleared for the marchers, who were led by Grand Marshal Ed Hudson, a Farmer-Labor Party alderman. The union had obtained a fine horse for Hudson to ride. This seemed to please him greatly and we, too, were happy about it because such a prominent display of support would make it harder for

him to chicken out on us when the going got rough. He was followed by a band from the musicians' union.

Then came Local 574, the ranks of its long column striding proudly under the union's banner. Behind us marched the women's auxiliary, other Teamster locals, the building trades, streetcar workers, printers, brewers, railroad workers, machinists, unemployed organizations, laundry workers, upholsterers, city and county employees, garment workers, and other labor contingents, including a detachment of trade unionists from St. Paul, an adjacent city. Members of the Farmers' Holiday Association also marched with us, as did a number of students from the University of Minnesota. Banners carried in the parade proclaimed: "We support 574;" "Down with the Citizens Alliance;" and "Down with the red baiters." Two small planes bearing Local 574's insignia circled overhead. They belonged to sympathizers who volunteered them for the union's use in sending representatives about the state to appeal for aid. Over 6,000 onlookers, mostly sympathetic, flanked the line of march and the rolling advance of especially loud cheers from them marked the progress of Local 574's passage up the avenue.

Picket captains from the May strike monitored the parade, and they firmly enforced the union ruling that those who marched would be the first to enter the auditorium for the protest rally. By the time the rally began, over 12,000 were packed into the auditorium, and thousands more stood outside listening to the loudspeakers. A.H. Urtapees, president of the Building Trades Council, presided over the meeting. Roy Wier spoke for the Central Labor Union, Emery Nelson for the Teamsters Joint Council, and Robert Fleming for the St. Paul Teamsters Unions. John Bosch of the Farmers' Holiday Association pledged support to Local 574 on behalf of the farmers.

The union speakers stressed that the trucking bosses had broken the May agreement with Local 574, calling this a challenge on the part of the Citizens Alliance that had to be met by the entire labor movement. Bill Brown and Miles Dunne spoke for Local 574.

As recorded in a stenographer's transcript of the meeting, Miles Dunne answered a smear attack on the union leadership which had been launched by the bosses, saying: "They have now raised the red issue and accused us of being reds and radicals . . . of wanting to substitute a new form of government and I say to you here frankly . . . when a system of society exists that allows employers in Minneapolis to wax fat on the misery and starvation and degradation of the many, it is time that system is changed, it is high time that the workers take this from their hands and take for themselves at least a fair share of all the wealth they produce."

Bill Brown declared: "I say tonight, and say we should go on record, that either this union movement is going to move out or else the Citizens Alliance, and we like this place [Very heavy applause]. . . . I want to say there is not a fair employer unless we are burying them [Laughter from the crowd]. . . . I contend this, that the working class, they are the taxpayers. We don't want to have our agency, the Police Department, used against us. If they do, if they do, God damn it, we have enough people to remove the Police Department."

Without a dissenting voice the rally adopted a resolution containing four main points: that Local 574 had the right to represent all its members; that all the local's members should get a wage increase retroactive to May 26; that the bosses must sign a written agreement with the union; and that a deadline for compliance with these demands be set for Wednesday, July 11. Thus spoke the

massive single-issue coalition, united around the slogan, "Make Minneapolis a Union Town."

At precisely this high point in the labor mobilization for struggle against the Citizens Alliance, Tobin hurled a poisoned dart at Local 574. It struck in the form of editorials in the July 1934 issue of the official IBT magazine. In one editorial, written primarily to take a crack at Congressman Shoemaker because of the telegram he had authored during the May strike, Tobin declared the May walkout to be "in violation of all our laws." In another item he asserted: "No matter how much a few radicals in our union may rave about the laws of the International, let it be distinctly understood now, until our laws are changed, this International Union will not sanction a sympathetic strike, nor will it in any way, shape or manner, approve the violation of a signed contract. As I have repeatedly stated . . . unless we keep our contracts and protect ourselves, we would be continuously in trouble on account of the inside workers, or others, going out on strike."

Really venting his spleen, Tobin wrote in the lead editorial: "We see from the newspapers that the infamous Dunn[e] Brothers . . . were very prominent in the strike of Local No. 574 of Minneapolis. . . . All we can say to our people is to beware of these wolves in sheep clothing. . . . Never was there freedom in any country for the workers equal to that enjoyed by the workers of this country. That freedom is liable to be endangered by those semi-monsters who are creeping into our midst and getting into some of our newly organized local unions, creating distrust, discontent, bloodshed and rebellion. The officers of local unions who do not guard themselves and their unions against a human monster of this kind are making a mistake. If you love the union which you have worked to build

up, get busy and stifle such radicals, because they do not belong in the union. . . . This International Union cannot watch them, but you men, who are closely in touch with your membership, should be on the watch for them and, believe me, when we find out that you are after one of the mob of hounds described above, the International Union will help you in every way it can . . . to protect our people from these serpents in human form.”

What a propaganda package Tobin had handed to the bosses! Inside workers made “trouble” for truck drivers. Local 574’s impending walkout, like the May strike, would obviously be deemed “in violation of all our laws.” Other Teamster locals were warned against taking sympathetic action in support of the walkout. Radical “monsters” were blamed for the bloodshed in May, a truly monstrous statement that indicted the union in advance for whatever violence the bosses chose next to use against it. A purge of the Local 574 leadership was urged, and Tobin promised to help do the dirty job.

Eagerly grabbing this apostate’s gift from the head of the IBT, the bosses republished Tobin’s editorials as a paid ad in the *Minneapolis Daily Star* of July 7, 1934. Some of the more scurrilous terms used by Tobin were coyly left out, with an explanatory note that “Words omitted are not acceptable for newspaper use.” The ad appeared the day after the huge labor demonstration in support of Local 574. It was then reproduced in leaflet form by the bosses for mass distribution among the workers. Ad and leaflet alike were headlined: “Communists and radicals in local unions, says President Tobin.” Aided by this windfall from Tobin, the Citizens Alliance now went all out in its smear attack on the union. Taking a tip from Stalinist red-baiting of Local 574 leadership, the bosses’ attack centered on “Trotsky Communists.” It was charged that the Trotskyists

were out to make a revolution in Minneapolis, not to build a union. Unctuously deploring harm done to “legitimate unions,” the Citizens Alliance called for support against “Communist-led” Local 574.

At this juncture, E.H. Dunnigan, a “Commissioner of Conciliation” from the U.S. Department of Labor, stepped into the picture. Probably at Olson’s suggestion, he soon appeared at Local 574’s headquarters which had been moved after the May strike to 225 South Third Street. His visit was described by Marvel Scholl in a diary she kept at the time: “Today the federal mediator—I am almost tempted to say meditator, as Harry DeBoer calls them—arrived in town. Mr. Dunnigan. I don’t believe he had any idea of the situation here when he came to town. Pompously he came to headquarters—and deflated he left! And Mac [Mrs. McCormack] and I had our share in the deflation. It was early in the afternoon while we were working on the order for our hospital at the new strike headquarters that a short, fat, elegantly dressed creature, replete with four fat cigars in his coat pocket, pince-nez glasses with a wide black ribbon dangling to his lapel and a huge umbrella, suddenly thrust himself upon us. ‘I’m Dunnigan, federal mediator. I wish to see the organizing committee,’ he announced, leaning on the umbrella. ‘They are busy right now,’ he was told. ‘Do you care to wait?’

“Impatiently he seated himself. ‘Will you announce me?’ he demanded. ‘Oh yes,’ we told him. And we announced him. Returning with instructions that the committee would be able to see Mr. Dunnigan in fifteen minutes, Mac eased herself back into her chair and, with a twinkle in her eyes which presaged fun, proceeded to dictate a list of supplies for the hospital which would have sufficed for a six month civil war. Mr. Dunnigan’s eyes began to pop. He sweated, he squirmed, but we went right ahead. Mac

made comments as she enlarged the order, specifying instances where we might need the item mentioned. And Mr. Dunnigan continued to sweat, squirm and tap his umbrella on the floor. At last someone came out to usher him into the meeting. Mac and I laughed until our sides ached, and then went back to our real work."

In the session with the union leadership Dunnigan tried to create the impression that he was secretly on our side. On that basis he asked us to authorize him to make "minor" concessions to the bosses concerning the union demands, stressing that he needed such leeway for "bargaining purposes." We flatly rejected the request, pegging it for what it was, a con game calculated to make suckers of the workers. After informing him of what the workers wanted from the employers, we suggested that he go see what he could do about getting some action from them. It was also pointed out that a July 11 deadline had been set, at which time the union intended to go on strike if the bosses persisted in the attitude they had taken. Dunnigan pleaded for a five-day extension of the deadline, and that much alone was granted to him.

As had been previously scheduled, Local 574 held a membership meeting on July 11. Although nothing had come of Dunnigan's talks with the employers since our session with him, we kept our promise to extend the deadline for five days. The meeting decided, by a standing vote, to go on strike for enforcement of the union demands on Monday, July 16, at twelve midnight.

The strike call, which was unanimously adopted, summed up the general situation: All efforts to establish living wages and improve working conditions had been frustrated by the arrogant attitude of the employers. By its failure to act, the Labor Board had upheld the hand of these employers. The right of the union to represent all its members had been

denied. Personal attacks were made on the union leaders in an effort by the bosses to dictate who should speak for the workers. Red-baiting had been dragged in as a fraudulent maneuver to divert attention from the real issues in the dispute.

Angry words were also directed at the general president of the IBT in the strike call: "We say plainly to D.J. Tobin: If you can't act like a Union man, and help us, instead of helping the bosses, then at least have the decency to stand aside and let us fight our battle alone. We did it in the organization campaign and in the previous strike and we can do it again. We received absolutely no help of anykind from you. Our leadership and guidance has come from our local leaders, and them alone. We put our confidence in them and will not support any attack on them under any circumstances."

The Citizens Alliance quickly reacted to the strike call, again using Tobin's editorials as ammunition for a stepped-up smear campaign against Local 574. His disapproval of the May walkout was emphasized. Then this boss outfit impudently attacked the local for making the July 11 strike decision by standing vote, instead of taking a secret ballot as "provided for in the [union] by-laws." These sharpies tried to make it appear scandalous that women were at the union meeting, hoping people would not realize that they were members of the auxiliary. Local 574 officials were castigated for attacking Tobin at the meeting, "because he fearlessly exposed the Communist leadership" of the union.

To help "Fearless Dan" in this exposure, a Citizens Alliance bulletin came up with some choice tidbits: "It has already been pointed out that five of the paid organizers of General Drivers' Union, Local #574, are reliably reported to be the moving spirits in the Minneapolis branch of

the Communist League of America, which is sponsoring the program of the Fourth Internationale [sic]; viz., a dictatorship of the proletariat. . . . V.R. Dunne and Carl Skoglund, organizers of the union . . . are reported to be on the National Committee of the Communist League of America.”

The same bulletin also quoted from Bill Brown’s speech in presenting the resolution adopted at the July 6 labor rally at the Municipal Auditorium, the bulletin’s editor supplying the underlining of passages in the quotation: “Before I read this resolution—*it is a revolution in fact*—I want to say that we are going to take a rising vote, and I don’t want to see one person sitting down. *I would like to turn this assembly loose on the Citizens Alliance in the morning.*”

This propaganda assault was designed to split the labor coalition formed in support of Local 574 and to cause a rupture within the local itself. We undertook prompt measures to ward off these twin dangers. Within Local 574 a joint meeting of the organizing committee and executive board was held to stiffen the spine of the latter body and again put it on record in support of a showdown fight with the bosses. At that session a resolution was adopted to schedule another general membership meeting on Monday evening, July 16, for the following purposes: to reaffirm the strike call adopted on July 11; to take a secret ballot on the strike so that the membership could demonstrate its sentiments finally and conclusively; and to elect a strike committee of 100 to conduct the strike. In addition the executive board unanimously declared full confidence in the organizing committee, called upon its members to remain at their posts, and asked the union membership to confirm this declaration.

A report of these actions was published in *The Organizer*,

along with the full text of Local 574's strike call. This show of solidarity within the embattled local made it possible to get reaffirmations of support, first from the Building Trades Council and then from the Central Labor Union.

Meanwhile the bosses had come up with another diabolical ploy, an attempt to engineer a "split" of inside market workers from Local 574. A handful of men were duped into signing a call for a rump meeting at Wesley Church on Sunday, July 15, to launch a movement for a "noncommunist" union. About 500 attended the rump affair, the overwhelming majority of them being loyal members of Local 574. A Reverend William Brown—not a relative of the union president—tried to open the meeting but he couldn't make himself heard. Grant Dunne mounted the platform, took charge of the proceedings and denounced the preacher and the other stooges of the bosses for their underhanded efforts to split the union. A motion expressing confidence in the union leadership was then adopted, and thus the meeting intended to demoralize the workers turned into a demonstration in support of Local 574.

On the following evening, July 16, the union held its officially scheduled meeting at Eagles Hall. It was a hot night and the hall was packed with sweltering workers who were in a fighting mood. In response to a motion presented by Moe Hork, the membership unanimously voted full confidence in the leaders, proving the boss propaganda about an "anticommunist" revolt within the union to be a fake. Bill Brown, Miles Dunne, and I then spoke, bringing the membership up to date on developments and advocating reaffirmation of the July 11 strike decision. As presiding officer, Brown urged that any present who opposed the walkout take the floor and express their views. No one did so. When the question was put before the body, the workers brushed aside the proposal to

take a secret ballot and decided unanimously by standing vote to go on strike forthwith.

After a strike committee of 100 had been elected, the meeting ended with spontaneous singing of the union song, "Solidarity." We then adjourned to the new strike headquarters, a two-story garage building at 215 South Eighth Street, only to find that the Citizens Alliance had induced the landlord to lock us out. As indignant tenants who had paid their rent, the strikers broke into the building and began preparations for Tuesday morning's action. The garage, by the way, was across the street from the Minneapolis Club, a swank setup patronized by the "best families." They were to have some shocking experiences in the weeks ahead.

The strike committee, which served as a broad executive formation during the walkout, was not just a happenstance aggregate of 100. It was composed of militants to whom the membership had accorded leadership recognition because of their roles in the February and May struggles. As a result this democratically elected body was genuinely representative of the union rank and file. Close ties consequently existed between membership and leadership based on mutual understanding, confidence, and trust forged in the heat of battle.

Within the strike committee as a whole a central leadership formation was structured. It took shape around a nucleus consisting of the union's five full-time organizers—Ray, Miles, and Grant Dunne, Carl Skoglund, and myself. As union president, Bill Brown worked closely with us. This guiding formation also contained a strong component of secondary leaders, some of whom had come forward during the May conflict to take their places alongside veterans of the coal strike. As part of the leadership team they proved their worth time and time again at

critical junctures. Experience in the class struggle and education gained in the course of battle led a number of them to join the Communist League.

In general terms, relations between the strike committee and the union ranks were somewhat akin to the Leninist concept of democratic centralism: democracy in reaching decisions; discipline in carrying them out. Policy decisions and leadership selections were made through full and free discussion at union membership meetings. During actual combat with the bosses, on the other hand, decisions by the leaders were to be carried out without argument. When a given action was over such decisions were, of course subject to review and criticism by the membership. These norms applied not only to relations between the strike committee and the union ranks; they applied also to leadership relations within the broad strike committee itself. All in all, the union's structural and procedural norms served as the warp and woof for an internal unity that made it a formidable fighting machine.

With this new stage of internal union development further steps became possible to minimize the difficulties caused by the incompetence of the official executive board. In effect, the board was temporarily stripped of all authority. This was done by first making all members of the board and the business agent, Cliff Hall, a part of the strike committee. Then the latter body, as recorded in the minutes of its first session, adopted a motion that read: "Strike committee to be executive body in the strike, with full power to make any and all decisions." At the same meeting the committee of 100 took steps to avoid a repetition of previous difficulties with Hall and the executive board in the matter of negotiations with the bosses. It passed a motion which decreed: "The contact committee to meet with the

employers shall be small, their only function to be that of meeting with the employers. All their actions are subject to ratification of the strike committee." Ray Dunne and I were elected as a contact committee of two.

Several things about the meaning of this decision are worth noting. When serving as negotiators, AFL officials usually took it upon themselves to decide what terms the union would accept, and then they would shove their decision down the throats of the membership. To make clear that this wouldn't be tolerated, the designation "contact committee" was used, instead of employing the term "negotiating committee." In addition the committee was made a small one, formally because of its restricted function, but also to keep Hall and his kind off of it. These considerations were not the only reasons for the decision.

It is a mistake under any circumstances for union negotiators to deal with bosses or government mediators on the basis that they have authority to make a compromise. Once a concession has been made under heavy pressure, which comes especially from the boss-controlled government agents, the action can be reversed only with the greatest difficulty, if at all. A virtually irreparable injustice can thereby be done to the union membership. If a statement is made as to the minimum the union negotiators will recommend, it also automatically defines the maximum the bosses will offer. Consequently, whenever any question of a compromise arises, negotiators should always say they will have to take the matter back to the union for a decision. This procedure is not only a safeguard against bureaucratic malpractice, it is the best course for union representatives who want to do the right thing. For these general reasons it was proper from every viewpoint to require that all actions by Local 574's negotiators be subject to control by the

strike committee of 100.

In several additional respects the union was able to add improvements in preparing for the strike, profiting from the May experiences. The commissary was better organized and more efficiently operated, its larder better stocked with foodstuffs donated by farmers and merchants. Advances were registered in setting up the union hospital, again under the supervision of Dr. McCrimmon, and Mrs. McCormack. Arrangements were made for a top-notch legal staff. It consisted of Albert Goldman, Fred Ossanna, a prominent local attorney, and Irving Green, a junior member of Ossanna's legal firm. As in May, nightly meetings were held at the strike headquarters for the workers to hear reports on the day's events, listen to guest speakers, and enjoy some form of entertainment.

At the first strike committee meeting, chaired by Kelly Postal, the question of "picketing equipment" was put on the agenda. For the first time since the truce toward the end of the May strike, the bosses would be trying to operate trucks in defiance of the pickets. The last attempt had been stopped when the strikers won a pitched battle with the cops, fought club against club. At this new juncture many pickets were inclined to start where they left off in May, again arming themselves with clubs. In the changed circumstances, however, this would have been tactically inadvisable. It would have given the cops a pretext for immediate violence against strikers who were trying to peacefully picket; and the union would have lost the tactical advantage of reacting to police violence under defensive slogans.

The decision on this point was recorded in the minutes of a strike committee meeting held at 12:30 A.M. on July 17: "The Chair then brought the question of picket equipment before the meeting. Dobbs then arose and requested

that, if there be any violence, let it not be said that 574 started it, and that . . . going out on picket duty armed at this time would only create trouble. It was suggested that all picket equipment be brought to headquarters and kept there. By general agreement this suggestion of Dobbs' was accepted."

Picketing was organized in two shifts of twelve hours, and Kelly Postal, acting in consultation with Ray Dunne, Harry DeBoer, and me, served as chief picket dispatcher. Marvel Scholl recorded impressions of Postal in her diary: "Kelly has peculiar eyes. They are at once, soft and steely. His success as a general in 574's army can be attributed in part to his ability to judge a man accurately almost at once." She also described the ordinary dispatching routine: "Cars line the driveway. Each returning picket crew drives through the parking lot to the rear of the garage, to take its place in a line which extends through the garage to the front door. Sometimes there is a wait, but most of the time an incoming car reaches the door in a hurry. The picket dispatcher whispers the destination in the driver's ear." The latter practice, which involved the use of a code in dispatching pickets, had been ordered by the strike committee. It was a procedure that had been developed during the May strike to cope with problems created by provocateurs.

Sentiment was expressed in the strike committee to force other Teamster locals immediately on strike in support of Local 574. After some discussion the counsel offered by Carl Skoglund prevailed. By intelligent cooperation with them at the present stage, he argued, the various Teamster crafts could better be induced later, if necessary, to give full and willing support to Local 574. It was decided to exempt ice, milk, bakery, brewery, and city-owned trucks, if operated by union drivers. Taxis

were allowed to operate since the union now had a direct contract with the owners. For tactical reasons oil trucks and filling stations were exempted from the strike in view of the fact that the oil companies were negotiating with the union. Beyond that only individual exceptions were made when recommended by the union's complaint committee, chaired by Ray Rainbolt. He was an ideal person for the assignment, capable of fairness toward the deserving, but deaf to the wheedling of petty chisellers.

The general policy followed is reflected in the strike committee minutes of July 19, recording a report by Rainbolt: "Permit to city [requested] for gravel on the asphalt job—he recommended no permit. Permit requested for fish company to move fish to Camp Riley [a military installation]—no permit. Dental Supply Co. request for a motorcycle permit—no permit. New trucks to be used as a display at World's Fair in Chicago—request permitted." These decisions reported by Rainbolt were approved by the strike committee to the accompaniment of sarcastic references to the gall of the city fathers and the army. International Harvester was the firm involved in moving the new trucks to the World's Fair. In return for the permit it agreed that they would be paraded through town with big signs reading, "Moved with Local 574's permission." The company also made a donation to the union's commissary. As usual, Rainbolt had driven a hard bargain.

As in February and May, Local 574 swiftly demonstrated the ability to enforce its rulings. On the first day of the strike—Tuesday, July 17—the city's streets were devoid of trucks other than those the union permitted to operate. An attempt was made on the second day to move trucks in the market, but the bosses soon backed off from the effort when they were confronted with a formidable picket concentration. By this time, however,

the cops were stepping up their intervention, making the first arrests of pickets for “disorderly conduct.” It was the opening gambit of a new flareup of civil strife that was soon to rage with greater violence than had occurred in May.

Governor Olson also intervened earlier than he had in the previous conflict, once again trying at the outset to straddle the issue. At the request of Mayor Bainbridge he mobilized the National Guard for the “preservation of law and order,” meanwhile assuring the union that he would not take sides in the strike.

The union paper, *The Organizer*, blasted Olson for his action in its issue of July 18. It pointed out that the troop display could have only one purpose: intimidation and coercion aimed at the union. This move against the strike took place at a time when the only threat to public peace came from the bosses’ use of scabs, thugs, and deputized hoodlums. Such action meant the governor was already taking sides against the workers. He was not even being neutral, which in itself would also be a violation of his duty to his labor constituency. Olson was reminded that he owed his high post to support from workers and farmers. They had a right to expect support from him in their struggles, not the threat of military force against them. *The Organizer* demanded immediate withdrawal of the troops, declaring: “No truck is going to be moved! By nobody!”

On Monday, July 16, the day before the strike began, *The Organizer* had been converted to a daily and the paper continued on that basis for the duration of the walkout. *It was the first strike daily ever published by a union in the United States.* A weekly paper would have been utterly inadequate to deal with the fast-moving events. Daily publication, on the other hand, enabled the union to break the

capitalist monopoly of the press, thereby cutting through the propaganda screen erected by the bosses. The strikers and their sympathizers got an accurate account each day of key developments during the previous twenty-four hours. An analysis was made of significant moves by the bosses, the federal mediators, and Governor Olson. The whole labor movement was alerted against dangers that arose, and the way to cope with them was carefully explained. Although only a two-page tabloid, the daily *Organizer* packed a wallop and the working class of the city soon came to swear by it.

The paper's circulation quickly leaped to 10,000 and it soon became self-financing. No price was set for single copies. People were simply asked to donate what they could. Salespeople carried sealed cans with a slot in which to receive contributions. These cans were frequently stuffed with dollar bills and as much as five dollars was paid for a single paper. People who sold on a regular basis developed routes, leaving batches of the paper at newsstands, beer taverns, beauty parlors, and other establishments patronized by workers. Sales distributions were made at factory gates, in the railway yards, wherever workers could be reached at their jobs. People in cars stopped by the strike headquarters to get the paper. Unions and farm organizations throughout the state wrote to ask that copies of *The Organizer* be sent to them daily.

Quick to recognize the inherent strength of the strike daily, the capitalists tried hard to suppress it. The Citizens Alliance began to propagandize for prosecution of those responsible for its publication on "criminal syndicalism" charges. Nothing came of that effort but real trouble was made in another way. When the first issue of the daily was published, the bosses pressured the printer into refusing to handle further editions. The paper moved to

another shop and the experience was repeated. This happened with three successive printers. Each time the paper was delayed several hours in publication, which caused anxious irritation at strike headquarters. Finally Argus press took the job and it printed the paper from then on, standing up firmly against all pressures.

Ace Johnston, the linotype operator at Argus, commented on this situation in an interview with *The Organizer* after the strike: "We never knew what would happen next. We knew we stood a good chance of having our presses smashed, the building wrecked . . . we knew what kind of a fight it was. But we were working with a cool-headed bunch of strike leaders, who knew their business, and we went along." Ace also gave an example of the harassment to which they were subjected by the Citizens Alliance: "I remember one incident that almost robbed us of a whole night's work . . . that was the time a bunch of thugs hid at our shipping entrance, and jumped the truck that was pulling out with an edition of the bulletin [*The Organizer*]. There was a hell of a fight, but when the smoke of battle cleared, the 574 driver and a couple of helpers had cleaned house on the finks. After that, they kept away from the Argus."

The bosses had made their quick attack on the strike daily as part of a deadly plan they were cooking up against the union. They had no intention whatever of recognizing Local 574. Actually they still hoped to smash the strike by resorting to more extreme violence against the pickets than had been employed in May. Remaining distrustful of Governor Olson's reliability in using the National Guard as a strikebreaking force, the Citizens Alliance turned its attention to strengthening the city police. Chief Johannes, who worked hand in glove with the bosses, took the lead in pushing through a big raise in the police budget in order to

add more cops to the force and provide special armaments for them. This time there was no fooling around with unreliable deputies. Instead the trained cops were issued riot guns, a shotgun-type weapon using a special shell containing large scattershot that really tore up human flesh.

As a propaganda cover for the murderous plot, the *Minneapolis Journal* of July 19 printed a vicious editorial attacking the “communists” of Local 574. “But let them beware,” this capitalist newspaper warned, “lest an aroused citizenry here take vigorous measures against them.”

Bloody Friday

Early Thursday afternoon, July 19, 1934, Chief Michael J. Johannes issued special orders at a police lineup. As reported in the *Minneapolis Tribune*, he said: “We’re going to start moving goods. Don’t take a beating. You have shotguns and you know how to use them. When we are finished with this convoy there will be other goods to move.”

The “convoy” to which Johannes referred was actually a carefully laid plot against the workers. That afternoon about 150 cops armed with riot guns were sent in squad cars to Jordon-Stevens Company, a wholesale grocer in the market district. There a five-ton truck was loaded with a half dozen boxes weighing a total of some 150 pounds. Banners marked “Hospital Supplies” were displayed on the truck so that reporters and photographers could depict the operation as an errand of “mercy.” Special newspaper editions announcing the convoy’s “success” were on the streets even before the delivery to Eitel Hospital had been

completed. This camouflage was totally uncalled for because the union freely issued permits for hospital deliveries, and therein lay the plot.

In making a delivery without a union permit, the bosses hoped to weaken the strikers' morale by showing that the cops could move a truck in spite of them. They also counted on making people think that the strike was hurting the hospitals. Above all, they wanted to provoke union resistance so the cops could shoot pickets under a good propaganda cover. We refused to fall into the trap. All our cruising squads were recalled from the scene, and the delivery was allowed to go through without interference.

After describing exactly what had happened, the next issue of *The Organizer* pointed out: "The boss press, incidentally, unanimously reports the whole incident as a serious break in the strike front. This is an attempt to save something out of the failure of the plot. Happily, *The Organizer* can get the truth to the workers of Minneapolis. The picket lines are unbroken! The fight goes on!" This really irritated the bosses, who responded by engineering intensified police interference with *Organizer* salespeople.

The night before that trap was laid for the union, a special federal mediator, Reverend Francis J. Haas, had come from Washington to work with Dunnigan. Upon arrival he asked to talk with Ray Dunne and me, as the union negotiators, and we had arranged to meet with him on Thursday afternoon. Then the police action came at Jordan-Stevens that same afternoon. We immediately broke the appointment with Haas, telling him that we wouldn't meet while such a provocation was going on. After that Haas consulted Governor Olson. They joined in asking Johannes to hold up any further action for forty-eight hours—until Saturday, July 21—so that Haas could try to

negotiate a settlement of the strike.

Olson later claimed that Johannes “promised Father Haas and me that he would not convoy any trucks until Saturday evening.” The police chief denied having made such a promise. He admitted, however, that immediately after the Jordon-Stevens “convoy” he had met with the employers at the Radisson Hotel. “They said they would not accept any truce,” Johannes stated, “and at the same time requested me to furnish guards for the trucks.” All this came to light through reports in the *Minneapolis Daily Star* of Saturday, July 21, published in the aftermath of a police riot known in the city’s history as Bloody Friday. That grisly event was to win Johannes the epithet “Bloody Mike,” and thereafter the working class uttered his name as a curse word.

Police guards had been demanded by the bosses to carry out their own murderous plans for “settlement” of the strike. Two steps toward that end were taken on Friday, July 20. Letters were sent to all strikers giving them three days to return to work, or find themselves replaced in their jobs. At the same time preparations were made for heavily armed police to convoy another truck. On this occasion there would be no pretense of a “mercy” errand to a hospital. An outright attempt to resume deliveries on a regular commercial basis was planned, and the cops were expected to shoot anyone who might interfere with the operation. The intended message to the strikers was plain enough: “Return to work or scabs will be given your jobs. If you try to stop the scabs, you can lose your life.” As on the previous day, news reporters and photographers were invited to the intended scene of action. This was obviously done so that news accounts and pictures of the scene would convince every worker that the bosses meant business.

The union leadership expected another strikebreaking

move to be made on Friday, most likely in the wholesale grocery area of the market. Since plenty of pickets were available and some activity would be good for their morale—things having been rather quiet—large numbers were assigned early in the morning to patrol the district. Harry DeBoer was in command of the operation. Although a considerable number of cops were also on hand, they did not appear at first to be looking for trouble. Their initial attitude is indicated by a report Harry later gave to me: “During the morning a police captain approached me on the basis that it was bad for the town to have all these pickets on Washington Avenue—with tourists going through, etc. I agreed that if the police would leave, we would leave. One car of pickets and one squad car [of cops] would remain, but no trucks were to move.”

Nothing much resulted from the discussion recounted by Harry, probably because the captain soon received new orders from Johannes. Before long the police were on the prod, their change in attitude coinciding with unusual activity at Slocum-Bergren, a wholesale grocery house near Third Street and Sixth Avenue North. It appeared that an attempt was going to be made to carry out a delivery by truck. The new development was reported to strike headquarters and reinforcements were sent to the scene, bringing the picket force up to about 5,000. All the strikers were completely unarmed. We knew we couldn’t challenge the riot guns, and it was our intention to conduct a peaceful mass protest against the anticipated strikebreaking move.

About this time a group of Communist Party members, led by Sam K. Davis, tried to talk Harry DeBoer into an ultraleft adventure. The incident graphically illustrated the stupidity of their “third period” line. Harry gave the pertinent facts in his report mentioned previously: “I was

RALPH R. GAMBLE, PRES.

FRANK C. REED, VICE-PRES.

ALBERT J. BEYERS, VICE-PRES.

ROBERT G. GAMBLE, SEC. & TREAS.

Northwest Fruit & Produce Co.

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REFERENCES:
PRODUCE STATE BANK
ANY COMMERCIAL AGENCY

July 20, 1934

William Schoener

Dear Sir:

We wish to inform you that if you care to return to work, you may do so by reporting for duty on or before Monday July 23. After that date any other qualified applicants will be considered for employment on a permanent basis.

Kindly govern yourself accordingly and get in touch with us if this is not thoroughly understood.

We have lived up to the Labor Board's Order which settled the strike in May. We believe that you have been misled into going out "on strike" against us. This may cause you to lose rights granted by that Order.

Your co-operation is desired, but if it is not obtained we will be obliged to carry on without you.

Yours very truly,

NORTHWEST FRUIT & PRODUCE CO.

This letter, originally sent by Northwest Fruit Company to striking employee William Schoener, is from the files of Local 574. It bears the date of Bloody Friday, July 20, 1934.

in charge and a committee of Stalinists . . . came to me and they proposed that we go down and take over the Court House, rather than to waste our time stopping one truck. Fortunately, I already had some knowledge of Trotskyist methods, plus I was also certain that would be a sure way of personally getting shot. So I said no.”

A foot patrol of some fifty cops was on the scene, carrying riot guns as well as service revolvers and clubs. Around 2:00 P.M. they became quite tense, and within a few minutes a scab truck pulled up to the Slocum-Bergren loading dock. It was escorted by about 100 more cops in squad cars, riot guns sticking out of the car windows like quills on a porcupine. The truck had wire mesh around the cab and the license plates had been removed. A few small cartons of groceries were loaded onto it, the pickets jeering the scabs doing the rotten job. Then the fink rig pulled away from the dock and started up the street. It was followed by a picket truck, an open-bodied vehicle of the type used for dirt hauling, in which nine or ten unarmed pickets were standing.

Suddenly, without any warning whatever, the cops opened fire on the picket truck, and they shot to kill. In a matter of seconds two of the pickets lay motionless on the floor of the bullet-riddled truck. Other wounded either fell to the street, or tried to crawl out of the death trap as the shooting continued. From all quarters strikers rushed toward the truck to help them, advancing into the gunfire with the courage of lions. Many were felled by police as they stopped to pick up their injured comrades. By this time the cops had gone berserk. They were shooting in all directions, hitting most of their victims in the back as they tried to escape, and often clubbing the wounded after they fell. So wild had the firing become that a sergeant was shot by one of his own men.

The criminal nature of the police action was later at-

tested to by a special investigating commission appointed by the governor. In its findings the commission stated: "Police took direct aim at the pickets and fired to kill. . . . Physical safety of police was at no time endangered. . . . No weapons were in the possession of the pickets in the truck. . . . At no time did pickets attack the police, and it was obvious that pickets came unprepared for such an attack."

Further evidence of the police crime was implicit in the court's findings when pickets arrested on Bloody Friday were brought to trial. All were released by the judge for lack of proof that they were guilty of any wrongdoing. To round out the picture of police sadism, *The Organizer* published a report from an outraged waitress describing Bloody Mike's dinner menu after the shooting: "soup, steak, potatoes, spinach, beans, salad, pie, cheese, coffee and a big cigar!"

While Johannes was whetting his appetite on their misery, the pickets were withdrawing from the nightmarish scene in the market district as best they could. In doing so they managed to bring almost all the wounded back to strike headquarters, thanks to many individual acts of heroism. Their arrival was chronicled by Marvel Scholl in her diary. She also pictured what it was like for the women who were staffing the headquarters while the men were out facing the cops with riot guns.

"Bloody Friday," she wrote, "as those of us who lived through that awful day when death rode into the strike headquarters know it, began as a murky, cloudy day. The very air seemed charged with foreboding. The usual rush of business for the auxiliary came with daylight. The kitchen opened as usual. There was the regular amount of relief work, *The Organizer* went to press, pickets came and went on their assignments. . . . Yet everything was

different. Perhaps the fact that the men were gradually being weeded out of headquarters and sent down to the market area helped create this atmosphere. . . . When the doors of the commissary were opened for the noon meal and only a few men appeared, we were beginning to wonder. Mrs. Carle, who chaired the commissary committee, expressed herself about this, saying: 'There must be something unusual going on, Mrs. Dobbs. Kelly hasn't sent me a single cruiser car special this morning. Bill [Gray] says that hardly any of the night crews have come in. I'm keeping food ready, however. I expect an awful rush when they do come in.' There wasn't much food used that day. After the noon hour headquarters was strangely empty. It was so quiet that it was almost eerie. . . . Even the ringing of the telephone was a welcome diversion. And then, all too suddenly, the emptiness gave way to overcrowding. The stillness, to the awful siren of the ambulance. And the spotless white of the hospital quarters to appalling red, blood red.

"When the first man was carried in [by the returning pickets]," Marvel continued, "foaming at the mouth, gray as cement, unconscious, someone screamed. In less time than it can be told, 47 men lay on improvised cots, their bodies riddled with bullet wounds. Action! Water, alcohol, cotton, men and women bathing horrid blue welts from which blood oozed. Cutting away clothing. Lighting cigarettes for the men who lay there, gripping their hands, biting their lips, to keep from screaming. One of them was a red-haired boy, a messenger boy who had been a bystander. His hand shook as he accepted his cigarette. He smiled, whispered a weak 'thanks lady,' as he fainted. Another was Henry Ness. His shirt had been cut away, exposing his back, completely covered with blue welts. He raised himself in his delirium, fighting away the doctor

who was trying to help him; he collapsed. And then the scream of the ambulances. Clear the way! Stand back! Let the cars into the garage! Nothing else enters! One by one they back in, and when they come out they are loaded with their cargo of suffering humanity. Ness and Belor in the first one. Shugren, unconscious, was lifted up . . . swiftly he was carried to the ambulance. Harry DeBoer lying on a cot. Angrily he ordered the attendants to 'Take care of some of those other guys first.' Harry had a slug in his leg, embedded in the bone just above the knee. Now the ambulances were being filled to their doors with all the men who were able to stand. Full to the brim, they back out, one by one, until 47 men are on their way to beds of pain and some to oblivion."

A total of sixty-seven people were wounded, over fifty of them pickets and the rest bystanders who got caught in the police fire. The overwhelming majority were shot in the back. Dr. McCrimmon reported to the union that the thirty-four men on whom he performed surgery carried 160 pieces of lead in their bodies. Those most gravely injured were Henry Ness, John Belor, and Otis Shugren. Of the three only Shugren survived. There could easily have been more fatalities, except for the promptness with which Dr. J.A. Enright and Dr. B.I. Saliterman stepped in to help Dr. McCrimmon after the tragedy. Many people came forward to volunteer blood transfusions. No less than twenty-five registered nurses made themselves available without pay for emergency calls twenty-four hours a day. The women's auxiliary set up a special committee to make daily rounds of the hospitals, assisting the wounded. People from various walks of life came to the strike headquarters with fruit, cookies, and reading material intended for the comfort and cheer of hospitalized strikers.

As part of their propaganda in preparing for Bloody Friday, the bosses had run paid ads in the daily papers, asking: "How do you like having our Minneapolis streets in the control of communists?" After the police riot *The Organizer* countered with a headline putting the real question of the hour: "How do you like having our Minneapolis streets in the control of murderers?" Addressing itself to the bosses, the union paper declared: "You thought you would shoot Local 574 into oblivion. But you only succeeded in making 574 a battlecry on the lips of every self-respecting working man and working woman in Minneapolis. You thought you would separate the rank and file from their leaders. You only succeeded in cementing the bond that holds them together in an efficient fighting army. You thought you would alienate the labor movement from 574. You only succeeded in rallying every section of the labor movement to our cause."

There was no exaggeration in what *The Organizer* said. News of the shooting traveled swiftly along the working-class grapevine, accompanied by rumors that the police were preparing to raid strike headquarters. Soon about thirty-five structural iron workers, armed with short iron bars, came to the headquarters, ready to help defend it. Other workers followed them, carrying implements of their trade as weapons. Hundreds of people, representing every section of the working class, decided to stay through the night at the headquarters, just in case it should be raided. To show that the workers meant business, all the hated police were chased from the surrounding area and pickets directed traffic in that vicinity. There had been some indication that Johannes had planned such a raid, but that when he saw the workers' mood he had changed his mind, concentrating instead on the fortification of city hall.

After Thursday's provocation, Local 574 had scheduled an open-air protest meeting for the evening of July 20, to be held on a vacant plot of ground at Seventh Street and Fourth Avenue South. During the interim the police riot had occurred, and when the meeting began as scheduled, over 15,000 angry workers were present. Various AFL officials and a spokesman for the Farmers' Holiday Association joined with Local 574 leaders in addressing the rally. D.T. Boner, an officer of the Independent Grocers Association, also spoke, calling for a boycott of wholesale grocers in the area where the shooting took place. The rally adopted a resolution condemning Mayor Bainbridge and Bloody Mike for the police brutality and pledging unswerving support to Local 574.

By this time it had been made plain that Minneapolis was witnessing a naked class battle between workers and capitalists. Hatred of the Citizens Alliance mounted throughout the city as it tried to justify the brutal tactics of the trucking bosses. Attempts to put abstract subjects like "communism" and "revolution" above the concrete issues of the strike didn't wash. Most people now felt they had to take sides on a class basis. As for the workers of the city, they were thoroughly aroused and fighting mad. Large sections of the middle classes threw their support to the union, doing what they could to back it in the clash with the Citizens Alliance. Instead of breaking the strike, the vicious boss attack had given it new energy.

Money was donated by other unions, some of them assessing the members a day's pay in support of the strike. Several Farmer-Labor Party ward clubs in the city volunteered their services to the strike committee. The women's auxiliary recruited over fifty new members within Local 574 families, and many other women gave it backing as sympathizers. A free barber shop was set up at strike head-

quarters, operated by union barbers. People crowded the vicinity of the headquarters, eager to hear news bulletins and announcements over the loudspeaker. *The Organizer* reported: "Brother Sloan begs to announce that the loudspeaker at Headquarters now has a signature; it is station Five Seven Four."

On Saturday morning the massing of pickets and cruising cars at the headquarters was at least four times as great as it had been on any previous morning of the strike. Among the pickets were walking wounded from Bloody Friday who reported for duty in bandages. One of them, a war veteran, told an *Organizer* reporter: "I took it in France because I had to. Now I take it because I want to. This fight has just begun." The Yellow Cab drivers, who had been working under contract since June 4, had stayed on the job by union decision until July 20. After the shooting they spontaneously returned their cabs to the garage and reported to the union for picket duty, ready to stay at it for the duration of the strike.

Local 574 asked for a one-day strike by all transportation unions on Monday, July 23, as a protest against police violence. We explained that we weren't asking for a citywide general strike because the situation was "not ripe for such a strike." Behind this explanation lay a tactical problem having to do with Governor Olson and the AFL officialdom. Olson already had the National Guard mobilized and he was looking for an opening to intervene in our walkout. If a general protest strike were called it would give the AFL officials a pretext for involving Olson and we felt he could be expected to doublecross us as he had done in connection with the May walkout. We had, therefore, limited our request to the transportation unions, and the one-day protest action took place as scheduled, receiving strong support

from the rank and file. Bus drivers even refused a request that they transport a contingent of the National Guard on that day. At the same time the laundry workers went on strike, declaring that they were acting in support of Local 574 and to fight for their own demands upon the laundry bosses.

There was also a new upsurge of support for Local 574 from among the unemployed, mainly involving people on federal "made work" projects financed by the Emergency Relief Administration (ERA). Prior to July 20, they had been registered by the hundreds through the Minneapolis Central Council of Workers (MCCW) to do picket duty for Local 574. Their spirited involvement is shown by the fact that over a dozen of those shot on Bloody Friday were MCCW members. Generally they had been picketing on days they didn't work on ERA projects, their allotted work time being limited. This changed after the shooting. On July 24 a meeting of delegates from the federal projects voted to call all ERA workers out on strike. The walkout was both to support Local 574 and to press their own demands on the federal government, which centered on trade-union rates of pay and a thirty-hour week. Over 5,000 ERA workers responded to the strike call, setting up their own strike committee which worked closely with Local 574's committee of 100.

Meantime Henry B. Ness had died less than forty-eight hours after he was wounded, leaving a widow and four young children. Marvel Scholl recorded her experience in helping Freda Ness prepare for the burial of her husband:

"This afternoon I went with Mrs. Ness and her brother-in-law to buy clothing for her and the children for the funeral. We got the little boys each a brown and white linen suit, the largest girl a nice dress and the baby a cun-

ning little print. Also shoes and underwear. The children are utterly destitute for clothing. Their pleasure in 'store bought clothes' was pathetic. The home, scrubbed clean, is a typical example of many homes in Minneapolis that are kept on relief. There is a smell of poverty, a feeling of destitution. The very furniture seems to have taken on a discouraged attitude. The children's little pinched, white faces are expectantly eager—as though they still have hopes that there is a Santa Claus or Easter Bunny. Are these victims of capitalist greed to be the fathers and mothers of the coming generation?

"Mrs. Ness got a dress of printed silk. No mourning gowns for her. A practical dress—one that can be worn later for all occasions. 'Not a black dress, Mrs. Dobbs,' she begged. 'That is too much like all our life has been. My heart will be just as heavy under a light dress.' No black dress, Mrs. Ness. Let the wealthy drape themselves in heavy crepe. Their hearts do not remember any longer than will yours!"

Henry was buried on Tuesday, July 24, the services starting late in the day so that employed workers could attend. A family service was first held at the funeral parlor, which, ironically, was located across the street from the big garage used by the union in the May strike. After that a mass march of some 20,000 accompanied the slow-moving hearse to the strike headquarters on Eighth Street. During the march, traffic was tied up for hours—but there was not a cop in sight as the grim thousands gathered. Giving a splendid example of working-class discipline, the entire line of march remained free of disorder, as Local 574's cruising squads handled the traffic control. At the strike headquarters a black flag had been raised and a temporary stand erected in front of the building so that funeral orations could be delivered to the assembled throng. Bill

Brown, who had known Henry Ness as a personal friend, tried to speak, but he broke down.

Passages from the main funeral oration, delivered by Albert Goldman, were published in *The Organizer*. He said in part: "The life of our murdered Brother typifies the lives of all workers. The social system gave him no chance. At an early age he was forced to work to earn a living and to make profits for his employer. Together with other workers, he was sent to kill and to be killed in the world war. What for? For freedom? No. For the sake of profits and imperialist markets for the bosses. Mark these words! There is only one way, one struggle in which a worker has a real interest. That is the struggle of Labor against Capital. . . . This struggle against oppression is no easy task. On the side of the bosses are the police, the army, the courts. The mayor of Minneapolis does not consider the lives of the strikers worth protecting. The only thing of importance to him is the protection of the bosses' property, the bosses' right to keep workers enslaved at low wages and in misery. . . . Brothers, Sisters, as we leave this demonstration we must bear in our hearts a fierce resolve to carry on Brother Ness's struggle. We must not fail him! We must avenge his murder. This we shall do if we struggle to win this strike, if we struggle to throw the exploiters from off our backs and to establish a new social order in which the worker may enjoy the fruits of his toil."

After Goldman had spoken the mass march was continued, accompanying the hearse as far as Twelfth Street and First Avenue North. More thousands of people lined the streets along the way, most removing their hats in respect for Local 574's martyr. Those who didn't sometimes got their hats knocked off. By previous order of the strike committee, a large body of Local 574 members returned to the headquarters after the march was over to resume

picketing. Other thousands, riding in hundreds upon hundreds of automobiles, went on to the cemetery on the north side of town. Henry was an overseas veteran of the first world war, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars had arranged for a squad of federal troops from Fort Snelling to give him full military honors at the graveside. All told over 40,000 had participated in the funeral, either in the mass march, or in the service at strike headquarters, or in the cortege to the cemetery. Among them were workers from every trade and industry, organized and unorganized, as well as many thousands of unemployed.

The massive turnout for the Ness funeral gave impetus to another form of protest against police brutality. Within hours after the shooting on July 20 demands had been raised that Johannes be fired and that the City Council impeach Mayor Bainbridge. Although we were aware that the demands could not be realized, Local 574 helped to launch a mass campaign around them. We did so because the pressure of such a propaganda campaign could help to make the bosses somewhat more cautious about their use of police violence against the strike. Being equally aware that the impeachment campaign gave them a problem, the bosses launched their own propaganda counteroffensive. The capitalist press lauded the “bravery” of the cops. Endorsements of the police action came from the Kiwanis, the Rotary Club, the Lions, and other “civic and commerce” organizations of the ruling class.

Petitions backing the impeachment demand were signed by about 140,000 people. So heavy was the mass pressure that the City Council had to agree to public hearings on a motion by a bloc of Farmer-Labor Party aldermen that Bainbridge be investigated with a view toward impeachment. At the hearings the council chamber was packed—trade unionists as well as agents of the ruling class turned

out in force. Acrimonious debate took place along sharply delineated class lines. In the end, however, nothing was done about the demands, an outcome that conformed with one of the basic aspects of class struggle.

Under capitalism the main police function is to break strikes and to repress other forms of protest against the policies of the ruling class. Any civic usefulness other forms of police activity may have, like controlling traffic and summoning ambulances, is strictly incidental to the primary repressive function. Personal inclinations of individual cops do not alter this basic role of the police. All must comply with ruling-class dictates. As a result, police repression becomes one of the most naked forms through which capitalism subordinates human rights to the demands of private property. If the cops sometimes falter in their antisocial tasks, it is simply because they—like the guns they use—are subject to rust when not engaged in the deadly function for which they are primarily trained.

No police organization is exactly the same day in and day out. Two essential factors determine its character at a given moment: the social climate in which the cops have been operating and the turnover of personnel within the force. An unseasoned cop may tend to be somewhat considerate of others in the performance of duty, especially while class relations are relatively peaceful. Even in such calm times, however, the necessary accommodation must be made to capitalist demands, including readiness to shoot anyone who tampers with private property. Otherwise the aspiring cop, if he is not kicked out of the force, will have little chance of rising beyond a beat in the sticks. By gradually weeding out misfits along these general lines, a police department can keep itself abreast of requirements during a more or less stable period in class relations.

Such had been the case with the Minneapolis cops, whose strikebreaking experiences had long been limited to occasional attacks on weak craft unions that were poorly led. Then in 1934 a sharp turn occurred in the class struggle, and they were found to be less than competent in carrying out the harsh new tasks imposed upon them by the bosses. To play the required role in the changed alignment of class forces, the department had to be drastically shaken up, and it was. When Johannes first issued riot guns to the cops a few had declined to take them, and they were immediately suspended from the force. Another handful drew suspensions when they took the guns but refused to use them. Two or three went so far as to join in the shooting, and then probably appalled by the resultant carnage, turned in their guns and badges. Among those suspended was a captain of police, John Hart. Through this general shakeup the Minneapolis police force had become transformed into a body of uniformed killers who were ready to shoot strikers upon command.

In the meantime Local 574's pickets were reacting to the police assault in full keeping with their magnificent fighting spirit. After the shooting, many who had escaped injury dropped from sight briefly, only to return soon armed with various kinds of weapons. They now had shotguns, deer rifles, revolvers, hunting knives, and various types of souvenirs from World War I, which the veterans among them had brought back from France. Having bested the cops club-against-club in May, the strikers were now prepared to face them gun-against-gun. Although their cause was just and their courage admirable, it would have been a grave tactical mistake to attempt to go through with such an undertaking.

The situation was now qualitatively different from what

it had been during the earlier battle with clubs. Despite the fact that a club can kill, it is not usually classified as a deadly weapon. By virtue of that fact, self-defense of the kind used in May could be sustained tactically for several reasons: it was carried out by a massive body of pickets who had widespread sympathy within the city as a whole; for reasons described previously, Governor Olson found it difficult to use the state militia against the union; and due to the insular nature of the conflict and the local politics involved, President Roosevelt had little inclination and no ready pretext to intervene with federal troops. Consequently the fighting in May remained confined to a showdown between the pickets and the local cops.

As matters stood after Bloody Friday, however, the situation was entirely different. Guns and knives are known as lethal weapons. Being so deadly, their use in self-defense against the gun-toting cops could have been twisted around by capitalist propaganda into the appearance of an “insurrectionary offensive” by the strikers. The bosses would have screamed bloody murder, claiming proof of their contention that our aim was not to build a union but to make a revolution. At the first armed skirmish between strikers and police a clamor would have been raised for Olson and Roosevelt to send troops against the union. Olson would have been quick to do so, feeling that he now had a valid political excuse for putting an end to the whole knotty problem. In case Olson didn’t act effectively, Roosevelt would have felt free to send federal troops because he could claim that he was suppressing an “insurrection.”

Local 574, against which such military repression would have been directed, was engaged in an isolated local action. Nationally, our struggle was paralleled only by two other similarly isolated conflicts involving auto workers in

Toledo and longshoremen in San Francisco. The nation's working class in general was only beginning to move toward unionization and its main detachments were not yet ready for combat. In these circumstances, Local 574 could have mustered very little real support outside Minneapolis itself. Hence, it could not have withstood the heavy military pressure; the strike would have been broken and the union crushed.

This was a situation in which the central strike leadership had to act swiftly and decisively. Otherwise impulsive pickets, looking for a showdown with the cops, could have done irreparable damage to the union's cause while the policy question was being debated. The pickets had to be disarmed forthwith, and the central leaders had to do it on their own responsibility. Ray Dunne and I pitched in to help Kelly Postal confiscate the weapons from each cruising squad as it was sent out on a picketing mission.

It wasn't easy, nor was it pleasant. For my part, I still consider it the hardest thing I ever did in my life. Understandably, we got some stiff arguments and some uncomplimentary descriptions of our attitude. In the end, however, the weapons were handed over, thanks to the union's well-established disciplinary norms and to the leadership authority we had earned. Once again, Local 574's incomparable soldiers went out barehanded to face cops with riot guns.

Our action was promptly reported to a meeting of the strike committee, and the reasons were given for the policy we had followed. After considerable debate the committee approved the course taken, issuing picketing orders accordingly. The orders, which were published in *The Organizer*, contained a deliberately obscure formulation: "All pickets are instructed to continue tactics of peaceful picketing as hitherto. They are, however, to

defend themselves against any attacks.” Since we hadn’t troubled to let the cops know whether or not the pickets were armed, they weren’t sure what permission to “defend themselves” meant, and being aware of the strikers’ anger, the cops weren’t in a hurry to find out.

How well the pickets could handle themselves in this hazardous situation would depend largely on the competence and authority of their captains. In this regard we had a problem because of the injury sustained on Bloody Friday by Harry DeBoer, who had been among those advancing into the gunfire to rescue wounded pickets. Harry would have to be replaced in his role as one of the principal field commanders of picketing operations. With a very complex tactical situation now facing us, other changes in the command structure also had to be made. Kelly Postal, who had been serving as chief picket dispatcher, was reassigned to a central field command. Ray Rainbolt and Jack Maloney were given similar assignments in keeping with needs of the tactical methods we would now use. Henry Schultz, a railway brakeman who had volunteered to help Local 574, was assigned by the strike committee to the dispatcher’s function, and as Kelly had done, he acted in consultation with Ray Dunne and me.

Our task was to checkmate the strategy used by Johannes after the shooting. He was beginning to feel his way gingerly into an attempt to resume trucking operations under police escort. As a starter he used about forty squad cars, loaded with cops carrying riot guns, to convoy a single truck. The operation was flanked by an even larger detachment of Local 574’s cruising picket squads. Our pickets didn’t try to stop the truck; they just made it plain that lots of cops were needed to move it. Johannes next tried to increase the number of convoys undertaken, reducing the size of the police escort used in each case.

His plan was obviously to proceed along this line until enough trucks were moving at one time to crack the strikers' morale and whittle away the union's strength through desertions.

As Johannes reduced the size of the police escorts, we countered by increasing the number of union cruising squads flanking each convoy. This change in the relation of forces with respect to each single convoy implied the danger of union action to halt the scab trucks, and the cops still didn't know whether or not the pickets were armed. Johannes thus felt compelled to beef up the escort for the convoys, which made it necessary to reduce them in number. As a result of this tug of war the bosses found themselves unable to resume trucking operations to any significant degree. The cops were again failing in their mission. Even cold-blooded murder hadn't been able to stop Local 574.

Military strikebreaking

With the conflict between Local 574 and the Citizens Alliance at a point of extreme tension, Governor Olson decided to take a direct hand in the dispute. Military forces for the purpose had already been mobilized. At the outset of the strike, part of the National Guard had been called up; the troops were billeted at the State Fair Grounds; and a military headquarters was set up at the armory on Sixth Street and Fourth Avenue South. So far the guard had been used only for a brief time on Bloody Friday.

In the aftermath of the police assault on the pickets that day, troops had been rushed to the scene of the shooting and about an hour later they had been withdrawn to their quarters. At the same time, Olson had sent a reported 4,000 additional guardsmen into the city and had ordered another 2,000 to ready themselves for strike duty. The *Minneapolis Daily Star* of July 21, 1934, quoted him as saying that if he found it necessary to assume military

control, "I will make the city of Minneapolis as quiet as a Sunday school."

Local 574 responded to the governor's threat through a stinging editorial in *The Organizer*. The union paper noted that martial law meant the existence of a state of war that could not be dealt with by the ordinary police. It said that there was a war going on in Minneapolis, and described the conflict as one of poverty against wealth, of labor against capital. "We never asked for protection from the guard," the editorial continued. "We have no 'property' to protect. The employers have. It is their properties and their profits extorted from our labor that they want protected. It is their scabs and their scab trucks, sent out to rob us of our bread, that they want protected. We never called for the troops. The employers did. We call for their withdrawal. . . . We don't need the guard to stop scab trucks. But the employers need it to convoy them through. . . . Guardsmen's bayonets, tear gas guns or trench helmets cannot move trucks. . . . You need truck-drivers and helpers and platform men and inside men to move trucks. And they are all in the ranks of 574. And that's where they are going to stay. And under its banner they are going to win."

Olson had good reason to know that Local 574's reaction to his threat of military intervention was not mere bluster. Yet he wanted desperately to end the walkout, feeling that it endangered him politically at a time when he would soon be coming up for reelection. He was incapable of staking his political fate on uncompromising loyalty to the working class. His policy was to build a personal political career on the assurance that he could be trusted to follow capitalist ground rules in exercising governmental authority. At the same time he had to avoid estrangement of Farmer-Labor Party members whose

support was vital to his political future. This meant that in attempting to force through a settlement of the dispute he could not afford to cast himself openly in the role of strikebreaker.

In an effort to solve the problem, the governor devised a ploy involving the collaboration of Haas and Dunnigan, the federal mediators. They were to probe the union and employer positions to see if the threat of martial law had given rise to any new prospects for a compromise. Haas and Dunnigan would then publicly propose the terms for what they considered a "fair" settlement of the strike. Olson would back their proposal, stressing that it was a federal recommendation, thereby implying support from the Roosevelt administration. At the same time, the governor would threaten to declare martial law as a means of forcing a settlement on the Haas-Dunnigan terms. If the employers' committee rejected the proposed settlement, he would encourage individual bosses to accept it and operate their trucks under military protection.

Olson hoped for enough individual responses along these lines to break the solid front maintained by the Citizens Alliance. It followed that rejection of the Haas-Dunnigan proposal by Local 574 would lead directly to military strikebreaking. The governor would count on getting away with this politically through propaganda about a "fair" settlement. He would get additional support from conservative AFL officials.

Local 574 got the first inkling of the scheme when Haas and Dunnigan began an exchange of memoranda with the union and the bosses. On the question of union recognition, the mediators proposed a Labor Board election for employees to choose "representatives," omitting any mention of Local 574. The union demanded that its name be on the ballot and that in every company where it won

a majority it should represent all employees. The bosses rejected the union demand, insisting on the abstract reference to "representatives." However, they did show signs of weakening with reference to the scope of union representation.

Haas and Dunnigan proposed the inclusion of inside workers at the twenty-two market firms, defining them as employees other than drivers, office workers, and salesmen. For the remaining firms, they proposed recognition only for drivers, helpers, and platform workers directly engaged in loading and unloading trucks. The bosses hinted that they might accept this overall definition.

Local 574 was amenable to the definition of inside workers in the case of the twenty-two market firms, which included fruit, produce, packers, wholesale grocers, and fish houses. We demanded, however, the right to represent more than drivers, helpers, and platform workers at nonmarket firms, pressing for the inclusion of warehouse and shipping department employees.

On the eve of the strike the union had called for minimum hourly rates of 55¢ for drivers and 45¢ for helpers, platform men, and inside workers. The mediators wanted these figures shaved down to 52½¢ and 42½¢ for the respective categories. Insisting that the matter would have to be negotiated or arbitrated, the bosses refused to commit themselves to any wage scale at all. They also wanted to keep their scabs on the payroll and fire any strikers "found guilty of violence."

After this exchange of views on key issues in the strike, Haas and Dunnigan proceeded to announce publicly their proposed terms for a "fair settlement." Their proposal was issued on July 25, the day after the Ness funeral. It stipulated that all strikers were to be reinstated without discrimination. A Labor Board election was to be held

within three days after the strike ended. In the twenty-two market firms, all employees, except salesmen and office workers, would be eligible to vote and they were to vote as a group. Outside the market, only drivers, helpers, and platform workers would be eligible to vote, doing so on a firm-by-firm basis. The balloting would be on the question of whether or not the employees wished to be represented by Local 574. A majority vote would entitle the union to bargain for all workers. Immediately after the election there was to be negotiation and arbitration of wages and other disputed matters. The wage award was to be no less than 52½¢ per hour for drivers and 42½¢ for inside workers, helpers, and platform men.

Announcement of the Haas-Dunnigan proposal for settlement of the strike was immediately followed by Olson's public endorsement of its terms. The governor gave the union and the bosses twenty-four hours to act on the proposal. If either side rejected it, he declared, troops would be used to put an end to the dispute on the basis stipulated by the federal mediators. On the evening of July 25 the strike committee of 100 met to consider Olson's ultimatum. The central leaders had no difficulty in getting across to these seasoned fighters that a deadly trap was being laid for the union. It was clear that union rejection of the Haas-Dunnigan terms would subject us to direct military attack under adverse propaganda conditions. Therefore, we had to examine the situation in a cool-headed way, carefully thinking out the analysis to be presented to the union membership.

While we would have to make certain concessions in accepting the manifestly unfair settlement, nothing basic would be sacrificed. On the plus side, it provided some gain in wages over the scales the bosses had paid before the strike. We would be breaking through on

the inside worker issue in the market where most of these union members were concentrated. Although warehouse and shipping-room employees organized elsewhere were not specifically included in the terms, a victorious union could force de facto recognition of its right to represent them. This expectation was reinforced by the provision enabling us to win direct recognition of the union through a Labor Board election. In fact it was precisely the union-recognition clause which made likely a rejection by the employers of the Haas-Dunnigan proposal. From this followed the probability that our acceptance of the proposal would not end the strike. It was agreed in the strike committee that an analysis along these lines should be presented to the union membership.

The committee held its meeting at the Local 574 hall on South Third Street. While we were in session a report came that the police were raiding the strike headquarters. Everybody rushed there to help fight off the cops, only to find that it was a false alarm. Rumors of an impending raid persisted, however, so workers from Emergency Relief Administration projects guarded the strike headquarters, while all Local 574 members met at Eagles Hall on the morning of July 26. The appraisal agreed upon the night before was presented to the meeting in the name of the strike committee. A long discussion followed in which various aspects of the situation were further clarified, more or less to everyone's satisfaction. A vote was then taken and the union accepted the mediators' terms.

Olson had set noon of that day as the deadline for an answer from the union and the bosses. Although we came to an official decision earlier than that, we kept our silence for the time being. We expected the bosses to hold up announcement of their action, waiting hopefully to see if the

union rejected the proposal. If so, they would most likely have prepared a propaganda blast against us based on such an assumption. We decided to trip them up by withholding news of our decision until the last moment.

Although the packed hall was uncomfortably hot on that summer morning, the windows were kept closed and the doors locked. That prevented newspaper snoops from getting in and informers from sneaking out. Being aware of the reasons for this policy, the membership cheerfully stood the discomfort. Then at exactly twelve o'clock Bill Brown notified Governor Olson that Local 574 had accepted the Haas-Dunnigan proposal.

We had caught the bosses flatfooted. After some delay they announced that the proposal was "accepted with reservations." As *The Organizer* commented, this simply meant that they turned it down with fancy language. The onus was now plainly on them for continuance of the strike and they had been put in a bad propaganda light. Trying to extricate themselves as best they could, the bosses told Haas and Dunnigan: "We cannot deal with this Communist leadership." To Olson they put an arrogant question: "We as citizens of Minneapolis demand to know whether you will support local authorities with military aid?"

Local 574 also had some questions to ask. "What would have happened," it inquired through an *Organizer* editorial, "if the bosses had accepted a Haas plan and we had turned it down? Not a bandit or yegg, not a pious hypocrite or snivelling laborsweater, not a stockholder or stockjobber in town but would have yelled for our blood. And what would the Federal representative have done? What will he do now? It will be interesting to see what, if anything, the Rev. Haas has to say about the bosses who turned down the olive branch he flew with from Wash-

ington. Of course, the Rev. Haas's speech or silence will not determine the issue. The spirits of the strikers are higher than ever. Neither conciliators nor negotiators nor dictators can dampen them. We will not return to work for a pittance. . . . We will go back to work but with decent wages, decent conditions, and a Union, Local 574, to protect us. . . . Despite death and the devil, despite the whole unholy alliance which is pitted against us: the strike goes on. Peaceful picketing continues. The banner still waves on which is inscribed our slogan: No trucks shall be moved! By nobody!"

On the afternoon of July 26 Governor Olson proclaimed that a "state of insurrection" existed in Minneapolis and put the city under martial law. Some 4,000 guardsmen were soon deployed in the business areas. All picketing was forbidden, and Local 574 was denied the right to conduct open-air meetings at strike headquarters. Orders were also issued that no trucks could move without a military permit.

Olson had now come to the final stage of the ploy he had cooked up in collaboration with Haas and Dunnigan; namely, the forcing of a strike settlement through martial law. Local 574 had refused to make this easy for him, which would have been the case if it had rejected the mediators' proposal and thus laid itself open to attack. Instead the governor had to pretend to square off against the bosses who were defying him. Far from being in a position to end the conflict, he had only become more dangerously involved in it and in the process he had dug himself into a new political hole.

Olson's first reflex act in this troublesome situation was to lash out at Local 574 by allowing the military to become involved in a new red-baiting attack on the union. The Trotskyist leaders Jim Cannon and Max Shachtman had

been arrested by the city police on the evening of July 25. Their hotel rooms were searched without a warrant, and scare headlines were run in the capitalist press about “evidence” uncovered that they were leaders of the Communist League. After being kept in jail about forty-eight hours, they were finally brought into court on “vagrancy” charges. Instead of putting them on trial, the judge turned them over to the military, martial law having been declared by that time. They were taken to military headquarters, held there for several hours, and then released with a proviso that they leave town forthwith.

To solve this problem they simply went to the next-door city of St. Paul. Local 574 vigorously protested the frame-up of Jim and Max, the strike committee being aware of their efforts in support of the union and appreciative of the contributions they were making. Olson then backed off, allowing them to return to Minneapolis a couple of days later. Soon afterward it became necessary for Max to go back to New York, and for the duration of the strike Herbert Solow assumed the chief editorial responsibility for *The Organizer*.

Meanwhile, military permits were being issued to truck operators who signed the Haas-Dunnigan proposal. As is usually the case in the trucking industry, there was a rush of small-fry operators to sign up for permits. They did so without hesitation because they had no intention of paying the specified wages. However, none of the big trucking firms broke loose from Citizens Alliance control, as Olson had hoped they would. They merely took advantage of his ruling that special permits would be issued for goods moving in “interstate commerce.”

Before long the military was also allowing unrestricted delivery of wholesale groceries and various other commodities. Pickets who complained to guard patrols about

the policy were often taken into military custody, usually to be held for a few hours for purposes of intimidation. Permits were issued to firms directly involved in the walkout, and this was used by them as a basis for warning striking employees to return to work or forfeit their jobs. The situation had developed into a piecemeal process of military strikebreaking.

Olson next tried to coax the Citizens Alliance into allowing him some kind of a concession as a face-saving cover for his blows against Local 574. He made the pitch through a statement published in the *Minneapolis Tribune* of July 31. Military protection for full-scale operation was offered to the struck firms if they would do two things: pay the wage scale recommended by Haas and Dunnigan, and reinstate striking employees who wished to return to work. Assurance was given that this would “not in any way involve a committal by the employers to the entire proposal” submitted by the mediators. “It will enable Father Haas and Commissioner Dunnigan to continue their conciliatory efforts,” the governor argued, “and it will substantially aid the National Guard in keeping peace in the city.”

The scheme was in reality designed to bypass the issue of union recognition. But another effect of this plan would be to promote desertions from the union’s ranks by offering a wage increase, thus making it easier for the military to suppress a weakened union. Sensing that they had Olson on the run, the bosses flatly rejected his proposition. “Any settlement as so far suggested,” they said in the press, “would be a surrender to a group of communist leaders who do not represent our employees.”

Local 574 angrily denounced the governor’s whole policy. It declared in an *Organizer* editorial: “The government officials, who roar like lions when speaking to

workers, coo like suckling doves when speaking to the bosses.” A delegation from the Central Labor Union, the Building Trades Council, and Local 574 met with Olson to protest the use of militia as a front for scabbing. The governor was pointedly told by Carl Skoglund, speaking for Local 574, that the bosses could have been forced to accept the Haas-Dunnigan proposal, if martial law had not been declared. Carl demanded that all military permits be revoked for forty-eight hours and that future permits be granted only to employers who agreed to comply with all conditions that the mediators had recommended and the union had accepted. It was also insisted that the union have representatives on the committee issuing the permits. Either halt all trucks for forty-eight hours, Olson was told, or Local 574 will stop them. He refused to offer the cooperation requested by the union.

Paraphrasing a famous remark of General Grant’s during the Civil War, *The Organizer* proclaimed: “We will fight it out on the picket line if it takes all summer.” A mass rally, attended by over 25,000 workers, was held at the Parade Grounds on the evening of July 31. Bill Brown gave one of the best fighting talks he ever made. “The Farmer-Labor administration,” he scornfully declared, “is the best strikebreaking force our union has ever gone up against.” All supporters of Local 574 were asked to report to the strike headquarters at four A.M. the following morning, Wednesday, August 1, to resume mass picketing in defiance of the militia. If the troops fired upon us, the union would be in grave danger of defeat, but there was better than an even chance they wouldn’t do so because Olson couldn’t afford it politically. In any case, we had to take the risk or the strike would be broken.

After the rally, Ray and Grant Dunne and I went to strike headquarters to help the night crew prepare things

for the next day's action. Later on we curled up for a little sleep on the cushions of picket cars parked in the lot behind the garage. Toward four A.M. the night crew shook us awake and reported that the National Guard was encircling the entire block around the headquarters. Over 1,000 troops had advanced upon us under the command of Colonel Elmer McDevitt. They were spearheaded by a heavily armed shock battalion of some 300, and supported by a company of machine gunners. By the time the three of us got to the front of the building, we found the street outside packed with guardsmen who had several machine guns trained on the headquarters entrance. After a pause McDevitt came toward us, escorted by a detachment of soldiers whose bayonets glistened in the rays of the rising sun.

Not being fools, we offered no resistance. However, we had something of a reputation as fighters, and the military hadn't been sure how we would react to the attack. This was manifested by the colonel's obvious relief once he found himself inside the building and apparently safe. Although it wasn't all that hot so early in the morning, he took off his helmet and wiped the sweat from his balding head.

"Who's in charge here?", McDevitt asked.

"I am," Ray Dunne replied, always being quick to step forward in a crisis.

"What's your name?"

"Ray Dunne."

"You're under arrest," the colonel declared, ordering a guard detail to take him away.

McDevitt then took a list from his pocket and showed it to Henry Schultz, the night picket dispatcher, asking if any others on it besides Ray were present. The list contained the names of the top strike leaders and a couple of Com-

munist Party hacks, who had been added for propaganda dressing although they had nothing whatever to do with leading the strike. Bill Brown and Miles Dunne were not present, but they were picked up before they could be warned that Olson had ordered their arrest. Carl Skoglund escaped being hauled in because he was out of town trying to raise money in support of the strike. Ray, Miles, and Bill, along with other unionists arrested later in the day for picketing, were taken to an improvised stockade at the State Fair Grounds.

While Schultz was checking the list and telling the colonel that nobody else on it was present, he gave a discreet sign to Grant and me. His meaning was obvious. We were wanted and should get the hell out of there in a hurry. It was unwise to go out the front way because newspaper reporters were out there, and their attitude upon seeing us would surely arouse the curiosity of the military. So we left through the rear door, passing word among the pickets on the way to reassemble at 614 First Avenue North, the AFL headquarters.

When we got to the military lines we were stopped by a lieutenant who said we must go out the front way. We feigned indignation, claiming that “a guy up front with eagles on his shoulders” had told us to leave the way we were going. The lieutenant said he had orders to the contrary. At that we sat down on the curb, allowing that we wouldn’t move until the army figured out who was in charge and what they wanted people to do. The ruse worked. A runner was sent to report the situation to McDevitt, and he sent back orders to let us through the lines.

Henry Schultz was endowed with a stubborn streak, which was just what the doctor ordered in that kind of a situation. He argued that the militia had interrupted

“The 1934 victories led to historic battles which resulted less than two years later in the formation of the CIO, and a wave of sit-down strikes.”



SCHOMBURG COLLECTION

Above: Textile workers picket mill in Greensboro, Georgia, during 1934 general textile strike, when more than 400,000 mill workers across the Atlantic seaboard walked off the job. The Franklin Roosevelt administration sent over 40,000 troops to attack the strikers, killing 16 and wounding hundreds in the course of the battles. **Below:** Workers in Harlem, New York, strike for better conditions, 1936. The rising industrial union movement accelerated, drawing workers who were Black into industry and the unions.

“The Toledo auto workers, San Francisco longshoremens and the Teamsters showed that genuine rank-and-file battles could win.”



TOLEDO LUCAS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY



The Minneapolis strikes were one of three titanic labor battle victories in the summer of 1934 that transformed what workers nationwide believed their combativity could bring. **Above:** *Militant* headline, August 25, 1934.

Left: West Coast longshoremens waged a three-month strike, winning union recognition and gains in wages and hours. **Right:** Striking auto parts workers in Toledo, Ohio, prevailed against the bosses, despite attacks by cops and troops. A six-day street fight came to be known as the Battle of Chestnut Hill, shown in photo.

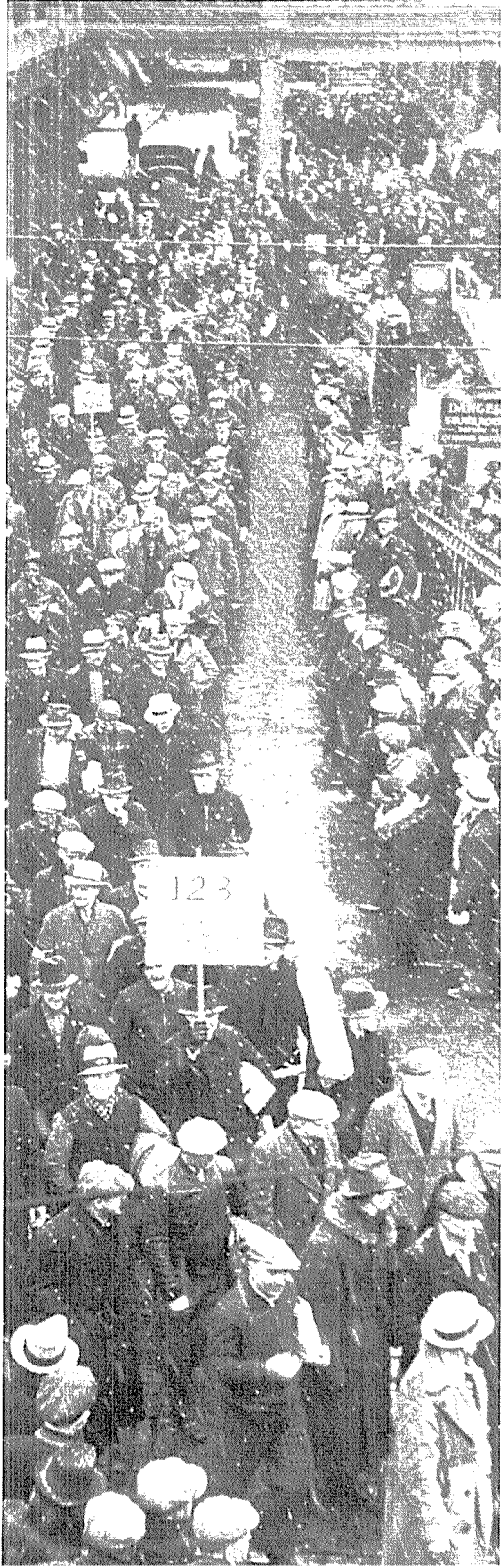


CORBIS/BETTMAN

The 1934 victories paved the way for the Committee for Industrial Organizations, which rose as a powerful social movement through a strike wave that began in 1936. **Top left:** In December a sit-down strike at GM in Flint, Michigan, sparked walkouts by some 140,000 workers in other auto plants, winning United Auto Workers members their first union contract in February 1937.

Right: Striking auto workers on parade, Detroit, New Year's Day, 1937. **Bottom:** Workers in Michigan protest murderous assault in which cops backed Republic Steel bosses against strikers during 1937 Memorial Day Massacre in Chicago.

WILLIAM VANDIVERT / TIME LIFE PICTURES / GETTY IMAGES



“The new Teamster battles that unfolded proved to be a no less turbulent and significant than the struggles in 1934.”

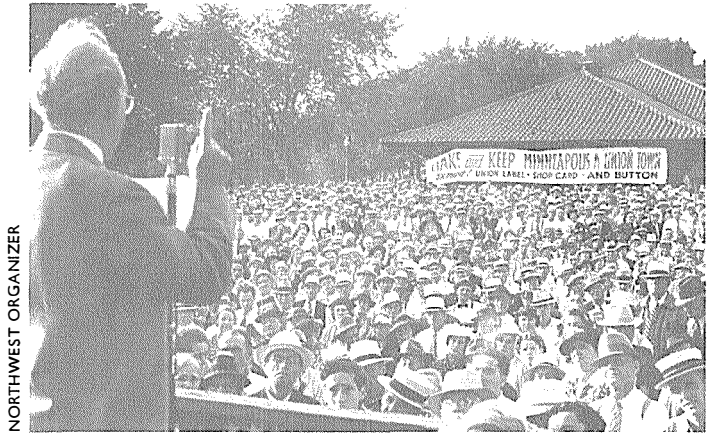
From 1934 to 1941, the class-struggle leadership forged in the battles described in *Teamster Rebellion* mounted union drives and political campaigns recounted in 3 other books by Farrell Dobbs. *Teamster Power* describes the 11-state organizing drive that won a quarter of a million over-the-road truckers to the Teamsters. **Top Left:** Leaders of General Drivers Local 554 in Omaha, Nebraska, and Council Bluffs, Iowa, carry first picket signs ever used by the local. From left: Dick Sodenberg, Louis Miller, and Malcolm Love. **Bottom:** Union Defense Guard formed in 1938. Volunteers from unions across the Minneapolis–St. Paul area swelled its ranks in order to resist employer-funded

fascist and other reactionary forces, as described in *Teamster Politics*. **Below:** Ray Rainbolt of Local 544, the guard's commander in chief.



TOP PHOTOS: NORTHWEST ORGANIZER





NORTHWEST ORGANIZER

Teamster Politics recounts the struggles of Local 574's Federal Workers Section, launched in 1936 to fight for union-scale wages and conditions for jobless workers on federal "relief." **Top:** Works Progress Administration Sewing Project strike, Minneapolis, 1939. In August prosecutors indicted 166 workers, most on charges of "conspiracy" to deprive the federal government of "workers' services"; 16 served up to a year and a day in prison. **Center:** Framed-up California union organizer Tom Mooney, released after serving 23 years in prison, visited Minneapolis in solidarity with the jailed workers. Shown here, Mooney addresses labor rally, August 1939.



**“United States imperialism
is the powerhouse of world reaction.”**

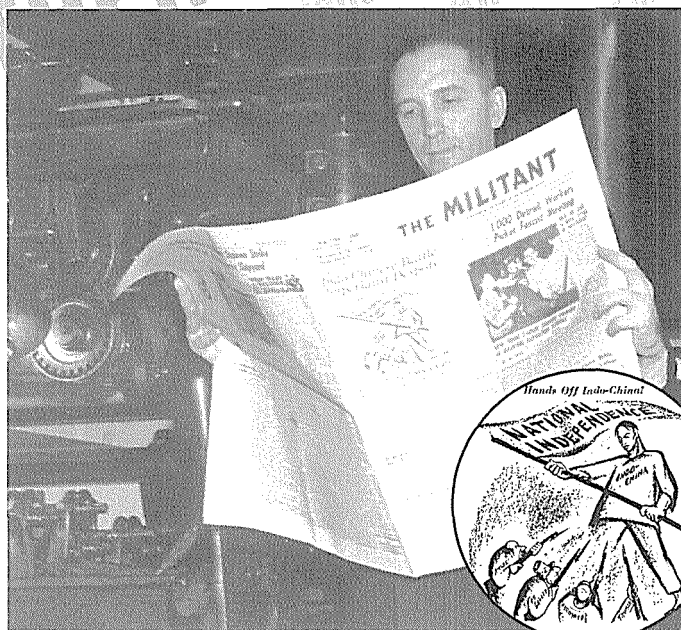
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Teamster Bureaucracy opens with the campaign organized by leaders of Local 544 (formerly 574) against U.S. entry into World War II. **Left:** In December 1937, amid swelling calls for military action by Washington in response to Tokyo's bombing of a U.S. gunboat in China, the lead editorial of the *Northwest Organizer*—weekly of the Minneapolis Teamster Joint Council—pointed to the superexploitation of Chinese toilers by U.S. big business. “What do they mean by ‘we’ and ‘our’?” the labor paper said. “Why should we send one penny or one man to China to ‘protect’ them? Withdraw all American armed forces from China!” **Right:** In January 1940, just after leaving the Teamsters staff as general organizer and on the way to New York to become labor and organization secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, Dobbs visited Mexico to meet with exiled Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky.

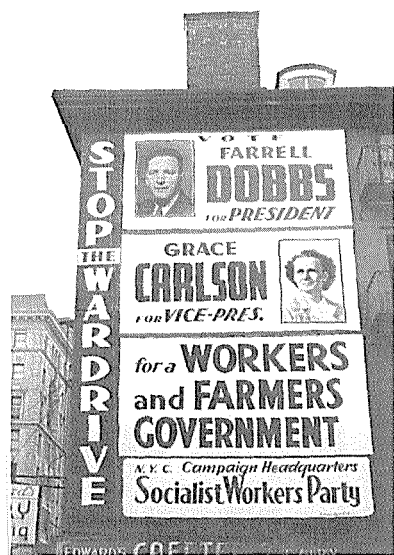


In 1941, aiming to break class-struggle opposition to the U.S. militarization drive, President Franklin Roosevelt's administration, in the first use of the notorious Smith "Gag" Act, indicted leaders of Local 544 and Socialist Workers Party. **Bottom:** Dobbs (center) and 17 others convicted of "sedition" on their way to federal prison, December 1943. To the right of Dobbs are party leaders Carl Skoglund, Albert Goldman, Oscar Coover, James P. Cannon (face partially obscured), and Ray Dunne. At left, Grace Carlson, the only woman convicted. The story of the frame-up trial and international defense campaign is told in *Teamster Bureaucracy*. **Top left:** Defense rally in New York City demands pardon of the Minneapolis 18, 1944. **Top right:** U.S. marshals raid Minneapolis SWP headquarters, June 1941.

“The showdown battle for world socialism is going to be fought right here in the United States of America.”



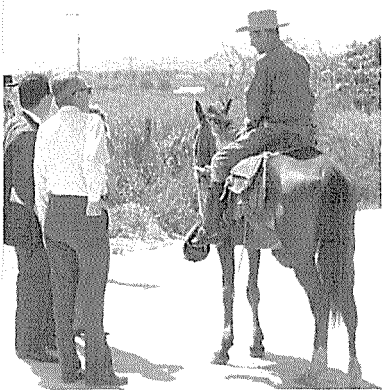
“There is no peace!” reads headline in August 18, 1945, issue of the *Militant*, the week after U.S. imperialism’s atomic incineration of the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki led the Japanese government to agree to unconditional surrender. “Workers of America! You must take power into your own hands.” Dobbs was an editor of the socialist newsweekly at that time. **Center:** Dobbs at the printer, doing a press check on the October 6, 1945, issue, whose headline reads: “Indochinese Battle Imperialist Despots.” The drawing by *Militant* cartoonist Laura Grey (**inset**) shows a Vietnamese revolutionary waving banner inscribed, “National independence” in face of bayonet-wielding heads of government from the imperialist United States, Japan, France, and United Kingdom.



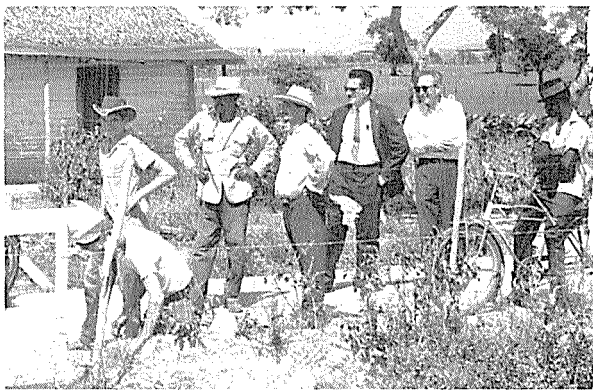
ALL PHOTOS: MILITANT

Dobbs was the Socialist Workers Party's presidential candidate in 1948, 1952, 1956, and 1960. **Bottom left:** Three-story-high banner for 1948 SWP ticket of Dobbs and vice-presidential candidate Grace Carlson on side of the party's national headquarters at 116 University Place in New York's Greenwich Village, off Union Square. **Top:** Dobbs campaigns in working-class neighborhood in Detroit and soapboxes at street meeting of 400 in Brooklyn (**bottom right**).

“Don’t be summer soldiers. Maintain your place in the front ranks of the revolutionary fighters, and stand in that place for the duration.”



JOSEPH HANSEN / MILITANT



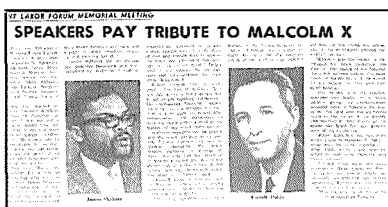
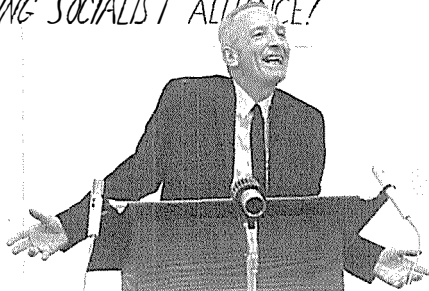
JOSEPH HANSEN / MILITANT

During Dobbs’s years as SWP national secretary (1953–72), advances for working people at home and abroad finally broke the momentum of the anticommunist witch-hunt. By the 1960s new generations were being won to the communist movement. **Top:** First mass meeting during 1955–56 bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama, which launched the struggle against racist segregation in the U.S. South. Dobbs and other party members drove station wagons there to donate to volunteer shuttle service. The SWP put support of the boycott at center of its 1956 campaign. **Bottom:** Dobbs on fact-finding trip to Cuba, April 1960, together with *Militant* editor Joseph Hansen, who took both photos. Their findings were reported in a widely circulated pamphlet, *The Truth about Cuba*. Dobbs campaigned nationwide in defense of the revolution during 1960 election.

Left: Dobbs speaking at conference sponsored by Young Socialist Alliance (YSA) in mid-1960s. **Right:** Dobbs spoke representing the SWP at a March 1965 memorial meeting for revolutionary leader Malcolm X, along with Malcolm's close collaborator James Shabazz (at left in clipping), Jack Barnes on behalf of the YSA, and others. **Bottom:** Dobbs helped the SWP and YSA map a proletarian course during the anti-Vietnam War movement. Shown here: Banners at New York march, April 15, 1967, demand "Bring the GIs home now!"

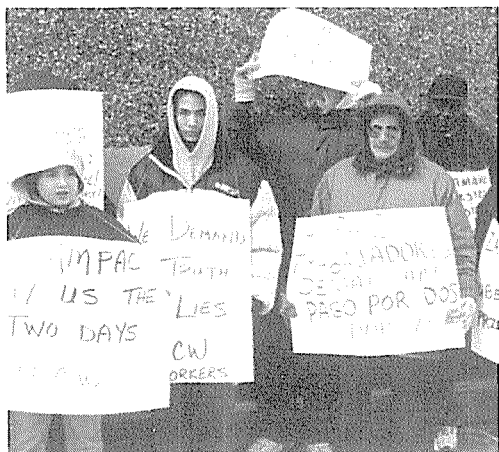
IS IT CONFERENCE 'ING SOCIALIST ALLIANCE!

MILITANT



“The story told in Teamster Rebellion also belongs to the growing ranks of Spanish-speaking workers in the U.S. today as they enter into struggle.”

—FROM THE INTRODUCTION BY JACK BARNES



PHOTOS: MILITANT

Top left: Rally in New York City at conclusion of Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride, October 4, 2003. Sign reads: “We are humans, not animals.” **Top right:** Members of the United Food and Commercial Workers, former employees at the AMPAC packinghouse in Chicago, protest being laid-off with no notice and without wages owed them, December 24, 2001. **Bottom left:** Rally of 3,500 in Doraville, Georgia, demands “Drivers’ licenses for all,” in response to state government attempt to deny them for immigrants, September 30, 2003. **Bottom right:** UNITE-organized laundry workers on picket line outside Flex-O-Tex plant in the Bronx, New York, demand union recognition, December 27, 2001.

our morning meal and finally got permission for the pickets to eat breakfast before they left the premises. In this way word was gotten to everyone to go to "614." Henry also talked the colonel into letting him move part of the commissary equipment to the AFL headquarters. In addition he insisted on a written inventory of union property seized by the National Guard. This included cars belonging to individual strikers found in the parking lot behind the garage. The main haul, however, was the weapons that had been taken from the pickets in the aftermath of Bloody Friday. These had been put away under lock and key, but now the guard command took them out of storage and put them on display so that the newspaper reporters and photographers could build up a phony propaganda smear against the union. About a half-dozen wounded from Bloody Friday were still on cots in the union hospital. They were hauled away to a military institution, and Dr. Enright, who was caring for them, was put under arrest.

By the time Grant and I reached the AFL headquarters, a considerable picket force had already assembled there. A meeting of the available picket captains was quickly called to shape plans for stopping scab trucks in defiance of Olson's martial law. Everything would depend upon their individual resourcefulness in the hit-and-run actions we had to conduct. They were all seasoned hands by this time, able young secondary leaders ready to step into the gap created by the governor's attack on the top union leaders. Before the day was over they proved that they had the necessary ability to do what was needed.

Since the kind of fight we intended to wage would probably bring further military raids on any suspected center of picket concentration, we decided to decentralize operations. A series of control points was set up around the

town, mainly in friendly filling stations, which cruising squads could enter and leave without attracting attention. Pay phones in the stations and couriers scouting the neighborhoods were used to report scab trucks to picket dispatchers. Cruising squads were then sent to the reported locations to do the necessary and get away in a hurry. Trucks operating with military permits were soon being put out of commission throughout the city. Within a few hours over 500 calls for help were reported to have come into the military headquarters. Troops in squad cars responded to the calls usually to find scabs who had been worked over, but no pickets. Long lists of attacks on scab trucks were reported in the evening papers.

While all this was going on, the National Guard raided the AFL headquarters, ordering everybody out of the building to the dismay of the business agents who couldn't believe that Olson would do such a thing. The troops also invaded the Cooks and Waiters Union hall located at another address, where our pickets had been using the telephones. In addition they occupied the regular Local 574 hall on South Third Street. Despite everything the military tried to do, however, the supposedly headless strike was full of life. The pickets were battling furiously and they were doing it skillfully. By the end of the day only thirty-eight of them had been arrested, a small number considering the scope of the union action and the results that were being obtained.

Grant Dunne and I stayed at the AFL headquarters until we heard Pat Corcoran, the business agent for the Milk Drivers, yell, "They can't do that!" He was protesting the intrusion of guardsmen with bayoneted rifles. We decided it was no place for us to remain, and once again we managed to slip through the military dragnet. After that it was touch and go for us as we tried to keep in circulation

with the radio stations broadcasting our descriptions. The hunt was so intense that the militia searched the homes of all twelve families in the apartment building where Grant lived.

Finally we got word that Robley D. Cramer, editor of the *AFL Labor Review*, had been making urgent requests for us to call him. Grant made the call, and Cramer quickly put Olson on the phone. The governor promised us immunity from arrest if we would meet with him at the *Labor Review* offices in the Sexton Building, and we agreed to do so. When we got there we found a room full of AFL business agents. They told us that the governor was in another office meeting privately with a committee from Local 574.

We learned later that after the raid on the AFL headquarters Olson had sent out a request to meet a “truly representative” rank-and-file committee from Local 574. What he got was a committee of Kelly Postal, Ray Rainbolt and Jack Maloney, three of the union’s outstanding picket commanders. When they got to the Sexton Building they showed their contempt for the business agents assembled there by refusing to talk in their presence. Olson had then gone into session with them privately, saying that he wanted to negotiate a “fair” settlement of the strike. They told him they had no power to negotiate and had come simply to present certain demands. These were: release our leaders from arrest; return our strike headquarters to us; and get your troops off the streets so we can stop the scab trucking operations without further interference from them. It was with the “negotiations” thus standing on dead center that the governor had decided to send for Grant and me. He had done so after Haas made a fruitless attempt to talk with Ray and Miles Dunne and Bill Brown in the stockade. They said they wouldn’t negotiate “within

the confines of a military concentration camp.”

When Grant and I walked into the room where Olson and our committee were in session, he seemed glad to see us. We, in turn, were happy to find such strong union representatives there. The governor was told there could be no negotiations until he agreed to release Ray, Miles, and Bill from the stockade. He said he would, and a few hours later the three were set free. The order for Carl Skoglund’s arrest was also rescinded. We then demanded an explanation for the raid on the strike headquarters. Olson claimed it was because we had held a mass meeting the night before without a military permit. We told him that we did have a permit and could produce it. At this point he asked Grant and me to accompany him to the military headquarters so that the matter could be taken up with General Walsh. We did so, first reaching Al Goldman by telephone and arranging for him as our attorney to meet us there with the permit. Colonel McDevitt was also present in the session with Walsh. He tried to argue against turning our headquarters back to us on the ground that it would hurt the morale of his troops.

We had Olson in a bind, however, because the permit for our July 31 protest rally plainly read “Sound equipment and hold a mass meeting.” Stripped of the pretext he had used for the raid, he ordered that the union premises be vacated by the military. Around eleven P.M. on the same day that the strike headquarters had been taken over, a guard officer formally returned it to us. Henry Schultz was assigned to see that nothing had been damaged or stolen. Before signing a receipt for the return of our building and equipment, Henry demanded an exact check to see that none of the weapons that the guard had seized were missing. He did so on the premise—sacred to capitalism—that they were the private property of individual strikers.

The day's events had obviously stemmed from another "master plan" devised by the governor, the general nature of which can readily be deduced. Using the excuse of an alleged violation of martial law, he had hoped to put the union in an untenable position. He thought he could seize the strike headquarters and put the blame on the Local 574 leaders on the grounds that they were defying military authority. Such charges would at the same time be used to justify locking us up in the stockade, thereby removing the "communist" issue on which the bosses based their refusal to deal with Local 574. With the union thus beheaded, he would call for a rank-and-file committee to negotiate a settlement of the strike.

The governor apparently thought he had several things going for him that would enable the plan to succeed. These included his own cleverness and powers of persuasion; signs among trucking bosses of resistance to Citizens Alliance control; his personal prestige within the labor movement; and the help of conservative AFL officials. The scheme may have looked good on paper, but when the smoke cleared at the end of the day, Olson found that he had only gotten into worse political difficulty.

Hitting back at the governor on his political flank, *The Organizer* went after him hammer and tongs. The strike daily had managed to come out almost on schedule despite military harassment of the union. Its editorial line in reply to Olson's attack was decided through a rather hectic process of consultation among available leaders. Al Goldman arrived at "614" while Grant and I were there, and we agreed that the paper should call for a general protest strike. Jim Cannon was then reached by telephone, and his views squared with ours. While Al prepared rough notes for an editorial, Grant and I jotted down an outline sketch of the tactical situation. Marvel Scholl was then

WEATHER
12 A. Breeze from the north.
Temperature 60 to 65.
Relative humidity 60 to 70.
Wind velocity 10 to 15.
Clouds 10 to 20.

The Minneapolis Tribune

**NRA
EVENING
EDITION**
Five Cents a Copy
Published by the Tribune Company, Inc.

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STRIKE HEADQUARTERS SEIZED Guardsmen Also Raid Labor Temple BROWN AND TWO DUNNES HELD

NATIONAL GUARDSMEN TAKE STRIKE LEADERS IN CUSTODY



Guardsmen take strike leaders into custody. The photo early in the morning. The men taken into custody were taken to the police station. The photo shows the strike headquarters at 100 Central St. at which headquarters an engine crew from the forces had occupied.

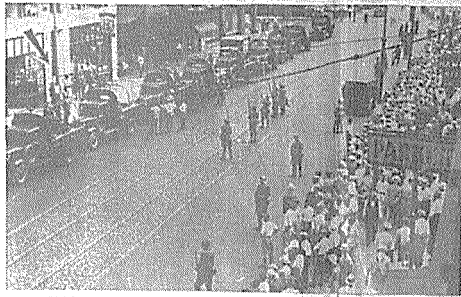


Photo of the strike headquarters at 100 Central St. Many men and women were taken into custody.

TROOPS ARREST PICKETS

Shove With No Resistance
in Taking Over Two
Union Headquarters.

Seven Jail After Drive.
Are Seized and Treated
Without.

The strike headquarters at 100 Central St. were taken over by the National Guardsmen without any resistance. The men taken into custody were taken to the police station. The photo shows the strike headquarters at 100 Central St. at which headquarters an engine crew from the forces had occupied.

Olson's Statement

General Olson, who left with General Walsh of military department at 10:00 A. M. today, stated the National Guardsmen were sent to the city of Minneapolis to maintain order and to take into custody the strike leaders.

Walsh's Statement

General Walsh, who left with General Olson of military department at 10:00 A. M. today, stated the National Guardsmen were sent to the city of Minneapolis to maintain order and to take into custody the strike leaders.

General's Order

The following order was issued at 10:00 A. M. today by General Olson, who left with General Walsh of military department at 10:00 A. M. today, to the National Guardsmen sent to the city of Minneapolis to maintain order and to take into custody the strike leaders.

ALONG STRIKERS RITES OF HONORS

The strike headquarters at 100 Central St. were taken over by the National Guardsmen without any resistance. The men taken into custody were taken to the police station. The photo shows the strike headquarters at 100 Central St. at which headquarters an engine crew from the forces had occupied.

Troop Cruiser Car Runs

The strike headquarters at 100 Central St. were taken over by the National Guardsmen without any resistance. The men taken into custody were taken to the police station. The photo shows the strike headquarters at 100 Central St. at which headquarters an engine crew from the forces had occupied.

YOU HINDERBORG EXPECTED TO DIE IN LESS THAN HOUR

The strike headquarters at 100 Central St. were taken over by the National Guardsmen without any resistance. The men taken into custody were taken to the police station. The photo shows the strike headquarters at 100 Central St. at which headquarters an engine crew from the forces had occupied.

Front page of the August 1, 1934, *Minneapolis Tribune* reporting the occupation of Local 574's headquarters. Photo shows V.R. Dunne being taken into custody by National Guardsmen.

assigned to deliver this raw material to Herbert Solow who was editing the paper. He was at Argus, where we always got maximum cooperation, but there was a possibility of military interference there. On the assumption that it might happen, arrangements were made to print the paper in St. Paul, if necessary. Toward that end, extra page proofs were pulled as the paper was set and Marvel tucked them away in her purse.

After the first 500 copies of the paper came off the press, Marvel and her picket escort took the bundles to "614," the strike headquarters not yet having been returned to us. By that time military occupation of the AFL building had ended, and Local 574 was again operating a commissary in it. The pickets on hand there set up a rousing cheer when the bundles were opened to reveal their little two-page champion. Its headlines read: "Answer Military Tyranny by a General Protest Strike!"—"Olson and State Troops Have Shown Their Colors!—Union Men Show Yours!"—"Our Headquarters Have Been Raided!—Our Leaders Jailed!—574 Fights On!"

In the changed situation a reversal had occurred on the tactical aspects of the general-strike question. A broad protest action could not now be misused by conservative AFL officials as a way of promoting Olson's leadership influence to the detriment of the strike. The protest would this time be aimed squarely at the governor who was acting as an open strikebreaker. Under these conditions our call for a general strike would be entirely to Local 574's advantage. It would stimulate rank-and-file pressure on the AFL business agents to support us against Olson's attack.

We knew that union militants throughout the city were seething with anger about the military raids. The Farmer-Labor Party club at the University of Minnesota

sent the governor a wire stating, "This is to notify you that you have been expelled as honorary chairman of our organization." In fact the swift manifestation of such sentiments helped to pressure Olson into releasing the Local 574 leaders and returning our strike headquarters to us. These developments indicated to us that our call for protest action would in itself help Local 574's cause, even though there was little chance of a general walkout actually taking place.

Instead of supporting the strike call, Bob Cramer used the columns of *Labor Review* to alibi for Olson. His twisted logic depicted the raids on the strike headquarters and "614" as clever actions "to foil the plans of the enemies of organized labor." At the AFL headquarters, he said, the troops "made an inspection of the premises" after getting false reports that arms were hidden there. Thus the National Guard had proven, he added, that the Citizens Alliance was lying in an effort "to arouse a situation between the guard and the strikers."

The day this nonsense appeared in *Labor Review*—August 3—the strike committee of 100 invited the AFL hacks to come before it and explain their conduct at the time of the military attack on the union. As the minutes note, Postal, Rainbolt, Maloney, Grant Dunne, and I gave the committee a report of the session with Olson at the *Labor Review* offices. Jack Maloney expressed doubt that all the Central Labor Union brass we found there could have assembled on a moment's notice without any foreplanning.

In a limping way Roy Wier, the CLU organizer, tried to explain that they had met at Cramer's office to analyze the raids. After locating Olson, he said, they asked for an explanation of the raid on the AFL headquarters and were told by him that it was a mistake. They only wanted to help Local 574 obtain a settlement, Wier contended, and

they thought the bosses might agree to meet with them. A skeptical strike committee member then asked a loaded question. He wanted to know who was on the CLU committee that had asked for the troops to be called out after the bosses rejected the Haas-Dunnigan proposal. Cramer, who tried to answer the question, had been caught off guard, and he became quite flustered. He wound up denying he knew who composed the committee in question. Indirectly and by inadvertence he was actually admitting that there had been CLU collusion with Olson behind the back of Local 574.

A motion was then adopted by the strike committee asking that a delegation from the Central Labor Union meet with the governor to demand removal of the troops from the city and the release of strikers held in the military stockade. It was stipulated that the delegation would have no power to negotiate for Local 574. After that, Cramer, Wier, and the others from the CLU were excused from the meeting with the assurance that they were welcome to come again. The strike committee's attitude toward the AFL business agents was akin to the verdict once rendered by a frontier jury: "We find the defendants not guilty and we warn them not to do it again."

War of attrition

At the very time Governor Olson's troops were invading the strike headquarters on the morning of August 1, 1934, John Belor died of wounds received on Bloody Friday. He was an unemployed worker who supported the strike as a member of the Minneapolis Central Council of Workers. Since John was unmarried, his nearest relatives took over burial arrangements. They asked that there be no demonstration, adding that all union members were invited to the funeral, which they wished to have conducted as quietly as possible. Honoring the relatives' request, Local 574 simply paid the burial expenses and helped to arrange transportation. Thousands of strikers joined the funeral procession to show their respect for John Belor as a fighter and to demonstrate their appreciation of the help they were getting from unemployed workers like him.

These workers had been struck a direct blow by Olson's declaration of martial law. Federal officials used it as a weapon against the strike on "made-work" projects run

by the Emergency Relief Administration. An ERA directive was issued asserting that the projects would resume operations under military protection and that the provost marshal of the state guard would "apprehend agitators." Under these conditions it became necessary to call off the ERA strike on July 30. In doing so, the strike committee urged all the workers involved to join the Minneapolis Central Council of Workers and its membership soon climbed to above 4,000. The MCCW forces, of whom John Belor was an example, stood shoulder to shoulder with Local 574 on the day of the military raids, as they had done on Bloody Friday.

There were practical reasons for the affinity between Local 574 and the unemployed movement. Within the trucking industry some employees had to rely in part on public assistance. Many jobs were seasonal, and there were cases in which the earnings of regularly employed workers were too low to support a family. As a result, workers caught in such situations felt a close kinship with the totally unemployed. The feeling was reciprocated by the jobless who saw in the fighting policies of Local 574 a chance to do something about their own plight. This was before the developing labor struggles of the 1930s had compelled the boss class to make grudging concessions in the form of unemployment insurance and other social-security measures of a limited nature. In 1934 the needy were wholly dependent on public relief.

The relief system operated like something out of colonial days. Applicants were required to strip themselves down to an absolute poverty level. Any money they might have saved had to be used up and their insurance policies cashed in for the surrender value. Home appliances and other "luxury" items had to be gotten rid of via pawn shops and secondhand furniture stores. Money

thus raised had to be reported and the relief budget was reduced by that amount. The budget itself was a pittance, allowing only for the bare rudiments of living. Some improvements in the relief system had been won after Local 574 began its fight against the status quo, but there was still a long way to go on that battlefield. No one understood that better than the unemployed workers and they were prepared to stand in firm solidarity with the union, come hell or high water.

The development of a new stage in the unemployed struggle came as a blow to the local Stalinists. Earlier they had acquired some influence among the jobless by setting up an organization known as Unemployed Councils. What little hold they had thus gained was now slipping fast. Contributing to their own discreditment, they falsely represented their councils as the place of registration for unemployed who wanted picket credentials in Local 574's strike. The union repudiated their assertion, stating publicly that such pickets should register with the MCCW.

When the ERA strike began after Bloody Friday, Sam Davis of the Communist Party tried to muscle his way onto the strike committee. He had no credentials from any work project, and the ERA strikers refused to seat him on their committee. Having isolated themselves from the class struggle raging in Minneapolis because of their ultraleft policies, the Stalinists reacted by continuing to denounce the "anti-working-class policy of the Trotskyite leaders." Diatribes by William F. Dunne in the *Daily Worker* were matched by the fulminations of Morris Childs in the *Communist*, a Stalinist magazine. Later their articles were put together in a pamphlet under the title, "Permanent Counter-Revolution—The role of the Trotskyites in the Minneapolis Strike."

Giving the carping Stalinists the back of the union's

hand in its issue of August 7, *The Organizer* said in an editorial: "The epic battle of Local 574 is a drama to stir the souls of men. It conforms to the classic pattern, even to the extent of having a clown and a touch of comedy. The name of this clown is, according to the leaflet surreptitiously distributed at our great mass meeting last night, 'The Communist Party of the USA, District No. 9'. . . . The leaders of our union, they say, are double-dyed traitors and the way to win the strike is to get rid of them. Some of the boys, who have been reading the same thing in the statements of the Citizens Alliance, got sore and tore up the leaflets and gave the distributors a crack on the jaw. That's wrong. Such serious treatment should be reserved for serious opponents. They are not stool pigeons—at least, not conscious ones; they are just a little bit nutty and what they need is a friendly boot in the posterior. Maybe the shock will bring them to their senses."

Meanwhile, in the real world of the time, Governor Olson was trying to recover from political damage he had suffered because of the military assault on Local 574. On August 3 he sent a small detail of guardsmen to raid the offices of the Citizens Alliance. It was a patently demagogic act, calculated to picture him as the "impartial" governor of "all the people." Local 574 shrugged the episode off for what it was, but the bosses yelled like their throats were cut. "Their" guard had been used for an "unauthorized" purpose.

By its very nature the National Guard is a strikebreaking instrument, intended for use by the bosses against the workers. To assure reliability its key officers are generally men of wealth and social position, blood brothers to the whole capitalist class. Such was the case in Minnesota, then as now, except that a few junior officers were Farmer-Laborites. One of them, Lieutenant Kenneth Haycraft, was

put in charge of the raid. But that was apparently offset by other officers giving the Citizens Alliance an advance tip-off so incriminating evidence could be spirited away. In any case, nothing of any significance came to light as a result of Olson's caper, even though the *Labor Review* painted it up as a great prolabor deed.

Parallel with this episode a real problem was developing for the Citizens Alliance. Some of the fruit and produce houses in the market district were threatening to break discipline and sign the Haas-Dunnigan proposal, which the union had accepted. This prompted the Employers' Advisory Committee to try to offset this capitulatory mood through a new proposal for settlement of the strike. The only thing really new in it was a concrete wage offer of fifty cents an hour for truck drivers and forty cents an hour for helpers and inside workers. The representation clause in the new proposal continued to omit any mention of Local 574. A "preferential" hiring list was still insisted upon, putting scabs ahead of union members, and strikers accused of "unlawful" acts were not to be rehired.

Local 574 immediately rejected the employers' proposal, stating that it would accept nothing less than the original Haas-Dunnigan terms. The union had won victories on the picket line, *The Organizer* declared, and it was not going to be cheated out of them in negotiations. Attention was called to the fact that a critical period had been reached in the strike. The workers were up against enemies who were full of tricks. There was only one course for Local 574 to follow, the union paper said. That was continuation and extension of its picketing activities.

At about this juncture one picketing incident got out of hand. Bill Brown and Grant Dunne, who were walking along a street near the strike headquarters, spotted a scab truck with a military permit. Commandeering a couple

of cruising picket squads, they set out to stop it, and the driver produced a shotgun. In the ensuing melee they let their impulsiveness get the better of sound tactical judgment. As a result two pickets were wounded, Earl Collins and George Schirtz. When Kelly Postal heard what had happened he was fit to be tied. He had good reason because, as picket dispatcher, he was in command of tactical operations. Bill and Grant had superseded his authority, vetoed general orders to avoid incidents of that kind, and got two strikers shot for no useful purpose.

Although the episode could not be allowed to disrupt the strike, action had to be taken in order to demonstrate that union discipline applied to the leadership as well as the ranks. The strike committee did so by instructing Bill and Grant—who were among the top union leaders—to subordinate themselves to Kelly in matters concerning his function as chief picket dispatcher. Knowing they were in the wrong, Bill and Grant took the rebuke as gracefully as they could, and there was no repetition of such conduct.

Uncontrolled fighting of that kind, aimed at random scab operations, would not serve as a helpful tactic. It would only put the union in a bad propaganda light. Our proper course was to keep the political heat on Olson, demanding that he stop giving military permits to scab trucks, and cease interfering with Local 574's right to picket peacefully. This had been done in issue after issue of *The Organizer*, and it was generating mass pressure on the governor. He felt compelled to announce that, as of August 6, he would revoke all military permits; new ones would be issued only to signers of the Haas-Dunnigan terms and to "emergency" cases.

The Citizens Alliance reacted by seeking a federal court injunction against the continuance of martial law. On numerous occasions before this the bosses had gotten court

orders against Local 574, and the union had ignored them on the premise that the cops couldn't make the orders stick. It was different in Olson's case, the Citizens Alliance obviously felt, expecting him to obey an injunction if one could be obtained. Hoping to regain direct control of the strikebreaking efforts, the bosses imported thugs from the P.L. Bergoff agency, a notorious scab-herding outfit based in New York.

Local 574 took the position that the legal squabble between the governor and the employers was a private affair of their own. We never asked for martial law, the union said, and we don't want it now. Demands were repeated that union members be freed from the stockade and that the military stop interfering with peaceful picketing. *Local 574's fundamental line was declared to remain one of independent and militant struggle by the workers.*

The strike committee was prepared for whatever decision the court made in the injunction case. As *The Organizer* noted: "If the martial regime is sustained, they [the strikers] will continue to fight along the lines of the past week. . . . If martial law is suspended, pickets will immediately take the field in force and tie up all trucking as Local 574 has repeatedly shown it can do without difficulty and without violence." As it turned out, the court sustained the martial regime.

On the evening of August 6, Local 574 held an open rally at the Parade Grounds with 40,000 workers present, a record-breaking attendance. In addressing the meeting the union leaders had several objectives in mind. It was necessary to dispel illusions that Citizens Alliance opposition to martial law showed there was something good about it for the workers. Mass pressure had to be kept on Olson to slow down his piecemeal strikebreaking through military permits. An alert was needed against the impor-

tation by the bosses of hired thugs and professional scabs. An answer had to be given to the intensified red-baiting attack on the Local 574 leadership.

The workers had rejected the smear campaign against the leaders not through any basic political understanding of the need for a nonexclusion policy in mass organizations. Their attitude flowed from the realities of the given situation. The union members were consulted about everything that was done, and they believed in the policies that were being followed. They didn't care what the leaders were politically. What counted for them was that the guidance they were getting had stood the test of battle time and again. The workers had confidence in the leaders, and they wanted no change.

After the rally *The Organizer* of August 8 took up the red-baiting issue in a rather unique way. Under the title, "A Bughouse Fable," it published a simulated confession by the editor, who had supposedly been dragged into Olson's military court. Written by Jim Cannon, the "confession" said in part:

"OFFICER: Who's dis guy called Father Haas? . . .

"EDITOR: His real name is Haasky. He's a Russian bolshevik. . . . His proposal of 42½ cents an hour is practically the same thing as Communism. . . .

"OFFICER: Spill the rest of it. What about Dunnigan, Olson, Brown and the Dunne brothers—how many of these here Dunne brothers is there all told?

"EDITOR: Their real name is Dunnskovitsky. They are Irish Jews from County Cork, smuggled into the country about six months ago disguised as sacks of Irish potatoes. There are seventeen of them in Minneapolis, all the same age, and they all holler for 42½ cents an hour. They say that's the beginning of Communism. . . . Mr. Dunnigan's right name is Dunnigansky—a cousin of the Dunne boys

THE ORGANIZER



Bulletin of the Strike Committee of 100 and official organ of General Drivers, Helpers, Petroleum and Inside Workers Union, Local 574, affiliated with the American Federation of Labor.

STAFF

Farrell Dobbs	.....	Fall Guy
Jim McGee	.....	Office Boy
Charles ("head 1/2 s") Hudson	.....	End Man
Jerry Hudson	.....	Artiste
Max Marsh	.....	St. Paul Correspondent
Albert Goldinan	.....	Mouthpiece
Marvel Dobbs	.....	Military Reporter
William S. Brown, the Three Dunne Sisters and Carl Skoglund	.....	Stooges
Herbert Solew	.....	Guest Conductor

"The first strike daily in American history" --- tribute from **The Organizer**.

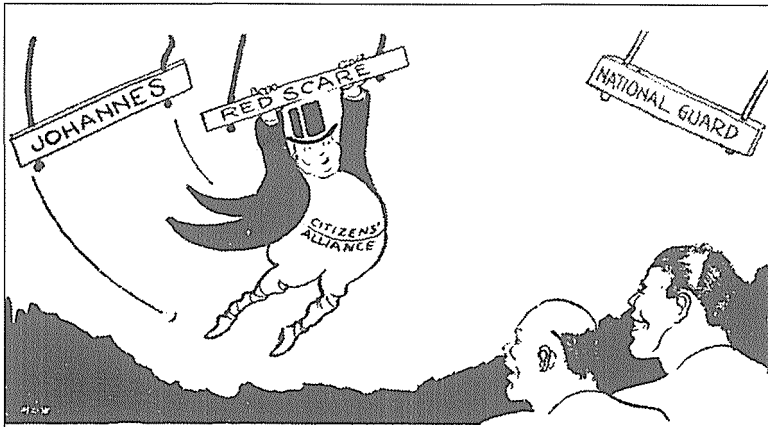
**FORTY-ONE ISSUES THAT KNOCKED
THEM FOR A LOOP!**

**Published every day but Sunday at 225 South Third St.,
Minneapolis, Minnesota**

SATURDAY, AUGUST 25, 1934

Volume 1, Number 40

The Organizer was the first strike daily ever published by a union in the United States. This joke masthead appeared in the August 25, 1934, issue. James P. Cannon is listed as Jim McGee and Max Shachtman as Max Marsh (a St. Paul correspondent because he and Cannon were driven out of Minneapolis by the National Guard and forced to live in the neighboring city, St. Paul, for a short period of time).



"The Daring Old Gent On the Flying Trapeze"



Minneapolis Communism—42½ Cents an Hour

The Organizer takes on Citizens Alliance red-baiting.

and hand in glove with them on the 42½ cents an hour racket.

“OFFICER: What about Brown?

“EDITOR: He’s a Jew named Bronstein, a fish peddler from the east side of New York. He came here a few weeks ago and tried to sell Bismark herring down at the market. Then he lined up with the Dunnskovitskys and muscled into the union racket, and got himself elected president of Local 574. . . . By the way, he is a son of Leon Bronstein—that’s the original name of this guy Trotsky that started all the trouble over in Russia.

“OFFICER: How about Governor Olson? He’s in wit youse guys in the Communist racket, ain’t he?

“EDITOR: Sure! That’s the slickest part of the whole game. That guy’s a card. His right name is not Olson, and he’s not a Swede either—that’s just a gag to get the Scandinavian vote. He’s a Russian importation—direct from Moscow—and his real name is Olsonovich. He’s been a big help to the strike. That raid he pulled off at the union headquarters and the throwing of the pickets in the stockade, was all a trick to get sympathy for the strikers.

“OFFICER: This is gettin’ too deep for me. Who cooked up this whole scheme, anyway?

“EDITOR: Well, to tell the truth, it was all planned out in Constantinople a few months ago. Some of the boys worked a week driving trucks and saved up enough money to take a trip to Europe. They went to Constantinople to see Trotsky and get instructions for their next move. Trotsky said: ‘Boys, I want a revolution in Minneapolis before the snow flies.’ They said ‘O.K.’ and started to leave.

“Just as they were about to take the boat, Vincent Dunne stepped up to old man Trotsky and said: ‘What’s your last word of advice before we go?’

“OFFICER: What did Trotsky say?

“EDITOR: He said: ‘Boys, keep your eye on Olsonovich. He is liable to double cross you any minute.’”

This lampoon of the red-baiters, with its pointed barbs at the governor, was received with belly laughs throughout the labor movement. The reception helped to set the stage for yet another blow at the bosses through *The Organizer*. Under a headline, “Here Are the 166 Tyrants,” the paper published a complete list of the trucking firms who were fighting the union. The information was provided, it said, “for those who like to know where they spend their money.” Requests quickly came from throughout the region that the list be republished for the benefit of those who hadn’t seen it the first time. A boycott movement of the most effective kind rapidly developed, one tied directly to a hard-fought strike struggle. While the fight couldn’t be won that way, the boycott could at least complicate things for the Citizens Alliance. It did, in fact, help to push three market firms among the 166 into breaking Citizens Alliance discipline and signing the original Haas-Dunnigan terms.

With this crack appearing in their ranks, the bosses issued a public blast against Haas and Dunnigan. They demanded that Washington recall the mediators, on the ground that they were “playing into the hands of the radical leadership of the truck drivers’ union.” Haas and Dunnigan buckled under the attack, abandoned their original settlement terms, and tried to help the bosses impose harsher conditions on the strikers. Their changed position focused on two points: (a) abandonment of any specific minimum wage; and (b) a provision that the bosses could challenge the rehiring of strikers accused of “violence.”

The mediators began their new push by trying to put pressure on Ray Dunne and me, the union negotiating

committee. Washington insisted on a settlement, they said, and the union would have to give some ground. They demanded that we recommend their new terms to the membership, saying they would go to the ranks themselves if we refused. Ray and I merely said that we would report to the union what had transpired in our talk with them.

A decision was made to grant the mediators' request that they be allowed to appear before the strike committee. When they arrived, they were kept waiting outside the meeting room until the committee was ready to receive them. Ray and I first gave the body a report of the mediators' new pitch, recounting what had been said in our talk with them. It was also reported that strike committee members in the stockade had already been informed of the new development, after which they had voted to reject the changed settlement terms. The proposition was then put to the committee as a whole, and it was turned down unanimously.

At this point, Haas and Dunnigan were granted permission to enter the meeting. None of the top leaders took the floor until other members of the committee had worked them over. Typical of the many questions put to the mediators were these: "Why do you go over the heads of our negotiating committee and not over the heads of the bosses' negotiating committee? Why don't you force the 166 to take a secret ballot on your original settlement plan? Will the man from Washington who judges 'violence' cases wear a white collar or overalls?"

After this round had been completed the top leaders spoke. Ray Dunne did the main job of tearing apart the mediators' new proposal and reaffirming the union's position about settlement terms. During the discussion Bill Brown delivered a stinging rebuke to Haas and Dunnigan.

"We have been fighting for four weeks," he said. "All of us have sacrificed and struggled; two of our brothers lie dead at the hands of the bosses' agents. We accepted your first plan. And now you ask us to bow our heads and go back to the old slavery, and you would speak of fairness and honor?" In reporting Bill's remarks *The Organizer* noted that he had moved the committee to wild applause. Finally the mediators asked to be excused from the meeting. As Father Haas was leaving the room, a young Catholic worker ripped away a crucifix suspended around his neck and hurled it at the departing priest.

Having failed to get their way through pressure on the federal mediators, the bosses devised a new scheme. They started a petition campaign for a Labor Board election, allegedly to determine whether or not the workers wanted Local 574 to negotiate a settlement of the strike. Voting was to be confined to employees certified as "eligible" by the bosses. Beneath the tricky legal wording of the petition lay the slick aim of rigging the outcome by padding the election lists with scab voters. The Labor Board was to be used as a front to get the federal government's endorsement of the strikebreaking move. Local 574 immediately organized a counter-campaign to expose the fraud, but the bosses kept chipping away, trying to make a breakthrough with their petitions.

While this was going on Governor Olson again loosened up the permit system. Before long thousands of trucks were being allowed on the streets with military approval, no more than a third of them owned by signers of the Haas-Dunnigan terms. Union interference with the scab operations brought military arrest of pickets. They were sentenced to hard labor at the stockade, some for as much as ninety days. When Marvel Scholl was sent to cover the military trials as a reporter for *The Organizer*, the presiding

officer had her ejected from the court room.

Conditions in the makeshift stockade were deplorable. They were described in an *Organizer* editorial entitled, "The Stockade is a Hog-lot!" The prisoners were herded into overcrowded tents with insufficient blankets. Tasteless food, brought in an open truck, arrived cold. Toilet facilities were primitive and fly-infested. Bathing facilities consisted of rusty dishpans and a hose. And copies of the union paper were confiscated by the stockade guards. Being the fighters they were, the imprisoned pickets organized themselves and gradually won better conditions.

At this juncture in the developing war of attrition, Local 574 called for a general demonstration strike. "Bring up the labor reserves," *The Organizer* urged in an appeal to the rest of the trade-union movement. The Minneapolis Central Labor Union was asked to add its voice in a request for support from the Minnesota State Federation of Labor which was to hold a convention on August 20. As had happened after the military raid on the strike headquarters, the appeal fell on deaf ears among conservative AFL officials. They knew that the demonstration would be against Olson as well as the bosses, since his troops were doing the main strikebreaking job. Being incapable of putting the interests of the strikers above everything else, the AFL business agents were determined at all hazards to defend the governor against his critics within the labor movement. They were also beginning to lend off-the-record encouragement to cautious internal challenges of the Local 574 leadership.

On August 9 Cliff Hall went on the prod at a strike-committee meeting. He was still nominally the business agent for Local 574 and he announced some decisions made by the official executive board. Asserting that the board had full power over the strike committee, he said it

had decided to vacate the strike headquarters on August 16 because there wasn't enough money to continue paying the rent. He also said that, as an "official" union answer to the red-baiting, a majority of the board members had issued a press statement. It turned out to be a weasel-worded apology calculated to appease the witch-hunters by pleading that no member of the union was a member of the Communist Party.

A motion was adopted by the strike committee instructing the organizing committee (Ray, Miles, and Grant Dunne, Carl Skoglund, and myself) to meet with the executive board and settle this matter. The joint meeting of the organizing committee and the executive board was immediately held. As the minutes show, a motion was adopted that, "the orders of the strike committee are not to be countermanded by the executive board, inasmuch as the executive board sits in the strike committee and may voice objections there." A second motion was also passed that "the [organizing] committee of five also be included in the executive board meetings."

When these decisions were reported to the next strike committee session, another hassle developed. Sam Haskell, the secretary-treasurer, contended that he was the only one with power to make expenditures. Hall then repeated his assertion that the executive board had supreme authority over the union. Carl Skoglund blasted them, pointing out that the union membership was the supreme authority. The members, he emphasized, had authorized the strike committee to act for them and it was therefore empowered to give orders to the executive board. After the debate had ended, the strike committee adopted a motion that "the strike committee, sitting together with the executive board, rule on all policies of the union, including all expenditures of monies, and that all strike committee decisions be final

for the duration of the strike.” Although defeated in the strike committee, Hall and his cronies didn’t give up. They simply went underground, peddling their red-baiting gossip to whoever would listen in the union ranks and among members of the women’s auxiliary.

A similarly underhanded attack also came from another quarter. John Geary, a general organizer of Tobin’s, began to connive with a handful of independent taxi owners. Their aim was to reestablish the small local union of cab drivers, which had been liquidated into Local 574 when the Yellow Cab drivers were organized during the May strike. Their immediate object was to get their cabs back on the streets. When Local 574 got wind of the move a meeting was called of the independent taxi owners and their relief drivers. After the situation was thrashed out and the splitting move understood for what it was, a majority of those at the meeting voted to stay in Local 574 and remain on strike.

Not long thereafter a blow came from the national AFL headquarters, one that had the earmarks of being arranged by Tobin. Filling-station attendants were being organized into Local 574, along with the truck drivers for the oil companies. Since the companies were negotiating with the union these workers had not been called out on strike. It would seem reasonable that any jurisdictional questions in such a situation be held in abeyance while Local 574 was fighting for its life, but that wasn’t the case.

Paul Smith, an agent of William Green, the AFL president, was sent from Washington to put the filling-station attendants into a separate union right then and there. He proceeded with the attempt behind the back of Local 574, in the middle of its strike against the trucking bosses. Smith called a meeting for that purpose, bringing a dozen

detectives to the hall with him for protection.

Although Local 574 received no invitation it sent a delegation to the meeting led by Grant Dunne. When Smith saw them he became hesitant to start the meeting so Grant took over the chair. The detectives were ordered removed from the meeting and Smith scurried out with them. Grant and the other representatives from our strike committee then left, turning the meeting over to the filling-station operators themselves. They decided to stay with Local 574, at least for the duration of the strike, but later on we had to agree to their reorganization into a separate AFL union.

As the strike wore on, money problems became increasingly severe. Although the Farmers' Holiday Association came through handsomely on its promise to keep the commissary supplied with meat and vegetables, we still had to spend about \$500 a day for other food items. Gasoline for the cruising squads came to another \$400 daily and with medicines and incidentals included, it cost around \$1,000 a day to keep the strike going. The problem was eased some by large donations from other unions. Milk Drivers Local 471 gave us \$6,000. Typographical Union Local 42 came through with \$1,000 for the commissary, and it pledged \$250 a week for the duration of the walkout to help publish *The Organizer*. Another \$1,000 was received from the Cooks and Waiters Union, which was holding its national convention in Minneapolis. A steady trickle of small contributions came from individual workers, and funds were also raised by touring the state with the picket truck that had been shot up on Bloody Friday.

Like the union, individual strikers were finding the going rougher and rougher. Children were being poorly fed. Lights, gas, and water were in numerous instances shut off for nonpayment of bills. Rent problems became increasingly acute. Fighting the city administration to get

relief for strikers had developed into one of our biggest tasks. On top of all that the real-estate interests launched a drive to evict strikers from their homes for delinquencies in rent. In many cases we managed to turn the latter around by scraping up a month's rent on a new house and using picket trucks to move the ousted families. This action bought at least another month of time, if not a bit more, and eliminated any need to pay back rent.

All in all, the union was in a pretty worn state. We had been in almost constant battle since May. More and more trucks were moving under military permits. A few of the strikers were beginning to give up hope and trickle back to work. A new federal mediator, P.A. Donoghue, was being sent from Washington to replace Haas and Dunigan. He was getting a press buildup as a hotshot, and he might well be coming to help the bosses put through the phony election they wanted. It was becoming a very difficult situation.

Al Goldman pointed this out at a special meeting he had asked for with Jim Cannon, Carl Skoglund, Ray Dunne, and me—the five of us constituting the party steering committee in the strike. Al argued that we were beaten and had to throw in the towel. In one sense he had raised a legitimate point. When a strike is being defeated there is no percentage in keeping every militant on the picket line to the very last. In such a case it is better to have some of the fighters go back to work, as though they were quitting the strike, with the hope they can be in a position to prepare for another battle later on.

If Al had simply posed the question on that basis for consideration, it would have been in order for him to do so. Instead he began to argue strongly that the strike must be called off at once. I felt that he went too far in pressing for such a decision. Although he had been on the scene

for a little over a month, he did not have as good a feel of the mood in the ranks as did Ray, Carl, and I—those of us who had been in intimate touch with the union membership for much longer and through many fights. I felt that a person coming into the situation from the outside, as was the case with Al, should not have been so categorical about such a life-and-death question for the union. I wasn't the only one who felt that way. Carl Skoglund took the lead in arguing for continuance of the strike. Ray Dunne joined in with him, as did I, and we had a hot debate. Jim Cannon, who had more practical strike experience than Al Goldman, first listened very carefully to our arguments. Then he said he considered it a key fact that the leaders in closest touch with the ranks still thought the strike could be won.

It was not alone a question of the union being worn down we felt. The bosses were not as fresh as daisies either. We knew they were putting pressure on the Citizens Alliance to let them make a settlement with the workers. If we could hang on for a longer time, there was still a good chance that the union could win.

By the time the argument was over, Goldman had changed his mind, seeming to gain renewed confidence from our insistence that the strike should continue. A slogan was formulated for publication in *The Organizer*: "Local 574 will not stand for fake elections." The union demands that no elections be held, we stated in an editorial, unless all strikers are first returned to work without discrimination. A union victory in the elections, we insisted, would have to mean that the bosses were required to recognize Local 574 and meet all the conditions of the Haas-Dunnigan plan.

Local 574 wins

Our more optimistic estimate of the situation was confirmed by the way in which the long battle suddenly came to an end. The new federal mediator, P.A. Donoghue, had not come from Washington to rig a fake election as we had suspected might be his aim. Instead it seemed that President Roosevelt had decided to help Governor Olson get the strike off his hands before the November elections. This was in order since the Farmer-Labor Party administration was supporting the Roosevelt Democrats in national politics.

As a new mediator, Donoghue was in a position to communicate Roosevelt's wishes to the bosses and at the same time give them a face-saving device by superseding Haas and Dunnigan in the negotiations. Whatever his instructions were, Donoghue got right down to business. On August 21, 1934, he submitted a new proposal to the union for settlement of the strike. In doing so, he told us "off the record" that he had convinced A.W. Strong, head of

the Citizens Alliance, to call off the fight. We demanded something more explicit about the bosses' attitude before submitting the new proposal to the union membership. Donoghue responded then and there by dictating and signing a letter that stated: "This is to advise you that the Employers have consented to having the Minneapolis-St. Paul Regional Labor Board enter a consent order containing the proposal submitted to you this afternoon." Since a settlement now appeared in the offing, the union also demanded that Governor Olson put in writing a promise to release all pickets from the stockade, which he did.

Under the terms of the consent order to which Donoghue referred, the Labor Board was to conduct a collective-bargaining election within ten days. Only employees on the payroll as of July 16, the day before the strike began, were to vote; no voting by scabs was to be allowed. In firms where Local 574 won a majority in the balloting, it was to be recognized as the bargaining agent for all employees, and the employers were to be required to deal with it.

On the inside-worker issue, which had led to the July-August strike, the breakthrough made in the original Haas-Dunnigan plan was reaffirmed. The twenty-two market firms were to recognize the union's right to represent drivers, helpers, platform workers, and inside workers. Inside workers were defined as all employees within the establishment, except office workers and salesmen. As had been stated in the earlier proposal, union representation was to be more restricted in the remainder of the 166 firms for whom the Employers' Advisory Committee spoke. Employees included in these cases were limited to drivers, helpers, and platform workers directly engaged in loading and unloading trucks. On this point we still had the opinion that a victorious union could establish

de facto representation of all its members, even though a few were not explicitly included in the terms of the settlement.

For the first time since the union demands were originally presented, the bosses were definitely committing themselves to specific figures on minimum-wage rates. No less than fifty cents an hour was to be paid to truck drivers and forty cents an hour to helpers, platform workers, and inside workers. It was stipulated that any current wage rates above these minimums were not to be reduced. Provision was made for arbitration of the union's demand for higher minimum-pay scales.

The board of arbitration was to consist of two union representatives, two employer representatives, and a fifth party to be chosen by these four. After the Labor Board election had determined the union representation issue, the board of arbitration judgments were to be applied retroactively to the time of arbitration. All employees were to be reinstated in their jobs, without discrimination, on the basis of seniority. There was to be neither "preferential" employment of scabs, nor "violence" gimmicks to victimize strikers.

Although the settlement provided much less than the workers deserved, it was as much as we could get at the time. On the whole the gains that were being registered provided a solid basis from which to go forward with the union-building job. From these considerations it followed that the leadership should recommend approval of the settlement by the union members. A session of the strike committee of 100 was immediately called to consider the new turn of events. It voted to ask acceptance of the proposed terms which were to be submitted to a membership meeting that same evening, August 21. I was assigned to report the proposal to the body when it assembled and to

recommend its adoption.

Rumors of the impending end of the strike had been flying, and the gathering virtually breathed a sense of relief that the battle was about over. As is usual in the mass movement, there were also a few present who wanted to fight on to the bitter end for more substantial concessions from the bosses. Among them was a worker who showed signs of having stopped by a beer joint on his way to the meeting. I had no more finished my report when he asked for the floor. "That doesn't meet the demands we went on strike for," he said. "What's the matter with Brother Dobbs, has he lost his guts?"

His attitude was an exception to the general feeling among the strikers, as was evidenced in the discussion that followed. All that the leaders really had to do was to put the outcome of the strike into perspective concerning the future it promised for the union. The settlement terms were accepted almost unanimously and the jubilant meeting adjourned with the singing of "Solidarity Forever."

After almost five weeks of bitter conflict, coming on the heels of the hard-fought May strike, the workers had won a sweeping victory. Growing realization of what had been accomplished was reflected in the mood back at strike headquarters after the membership meeting was over. A good example was the pride with which Brother Sloan did his announcing over the loudspeaker. Sloan, whom we called "Brother" as a nickname, said in signing off: "This is Station 574 broadcasting, with 7,500 pickets, 450 cruiser cars, 16 motorcycles and 2 airplanes, by authority of the Strike Committee of 100."

In an editorial hailing the union victory, *The Organizer* took note that "the strike ends but the struggle does not end." It warned that the bosses would be up to their usual sneaky tricks in the Labor Board elections to be held on

August 28. There were to be two opposing tickets: Local 574's and a company-union slate. Several employer devices were used in an effort to steal the elections. Payroll lists were padded with office workers and salesmen. Attempts were made to leave some union members off the list. There were also cases in which a boss tried to put the name of a good union member on the company-union slate.

To combat these maneuvers Local 574 organized for the elections as it had prepared for the strike, using *The Organizer* as the main weapon. Daily publication of the union paper continued throughout the preelection period. (After the elections, *The Organizer* continued briefly as a weekly and publication was then suspended for lack of funds.) As reports came in from union members of each boss trick, the paper would publish a general alert and explain how to combat the underhanded move. The union campaign was climaxed by a big open rally the night before the vote. Nonmembers from within the industry were invited and the speakers explained in a friendly way why these workers should vote for the victorious union and join it.

The election returns made Local 574 the bargaining representative for 61 percent of the employees in the general trucking industry. Majority votes gave the union the right to speak for all employees in sixty-two firms. At fifteen companies there were tie votes. In these cases Local 574 had the right to represent its half of the employees, thereby gaining union recognition on these jobs. At nearly all the large companies the workers voted about three to one for Local 574, and the bloc of twenty-two market firms went solidly for the union. The boss slates won a majority at sixty-eight places. These were generally small outfits, which usually operated on a paternalistic, sort of semi-family basis. At twenty-one companies no votes were cast at all. These firms had not been organized by

Local 574, but they had nevertheless joined in with the rest of the 166 in the war against the union. All in all, the union had established itself in virtually every branch of the trucking industry.

Right after the elections, the union filed a request for arbitration, seeking to raise the minimum-wage rates above those provided in the strike settlement. Grant Dunne and I were assigned to represent the union on the board of arbitration. Various employer representatives were selected, company by company. John R. Coan, a local lawyer, was agreed upon as the “impartial” fifth member of the board. A wage decision was to be made concerning each of the seventy-seven establishments where the union had either won a majority or got a tie vote. The sections of the industry involved were: transfer, market, lumber, coffee, furniture, wholesale grocery, hardware and plumbing, spring water, lime and cement, packing, paint and glass, paper, and retailers.

As a pilot case, the Employers’ Advisory Committee selected a transfer company. After the union and the bosses had argued the case in the board, Coan made an award in favor of Local 574. Truck drivers were granted a minimum of 52½¢ an hour from September 15, 1934, to May 31, 1935, and 55¢ an hour from June 1, 1935, to May 31, 1936. Minimum scales of 42½¢ and 45¢ for the same two periods were specified for helpers, platform workers, and inside workers.

What Coan had done was to apply the Haas-Dunnigan proposal to the first stage and bring wage rates up to the union’s prestrike demand in the second. His decision reflected the pressures generated by Local 574’s terrific battle. Inclusion of inside workers in the ruling—when the strike settlement called only for our representation of drivers, helpers, and platform workers at a transfer

company—confirmed our estimate of the impact of the union victory. It meant formal recognition of our right to represent warehousemen, furniture packers, etc., and set a precedent for comparable expansion of our right to represent all union members at other companies. After the arbitration decision in the transfer case, the union established the same wage rates in direct talks with the market firms. Following that the Employers' Advisory Committee announced that all the seventy-seven companies were accepting the Coan ruling on wages.

Our agreement to carry out this arbitration procedure was strictly a tactical decision arising from the complexities of the conflict. The key issues were union recognition and the right to represent all union members. We would not have agreed to arbitrate either of these basic points. As a matter of fact we had denounced Governor Olson's proposal, after the May strike, that the inside-worker issue be arbitrated. These were matters that had to be fought to a finish. The limited concession we had made on the inside-worker question in accepting the original Haas-Dunnigan proposal resulted from the bad bind in which the union was caught at the time. We still intended to fight in some other way to regain the ground that circumstances had forced us to yield, and we were confident a victory in the strike would make that possible.

Seemingly aware of our determination in this matter, and not being eager for another fight soon with the union, the bosses yielded on this point in accepting the Coan ruling. Although the union welcomed as a windfall Coan's expansion of the inside-worker definition, we would have rejected any attempt on his part to freeze the scope of union representation through his ruling. For us that was not an arbitratable matter.

Since union recognition was the paramount issue in the

fierce battle with the bosses, we could afford to be somewhat flexible on the wage issue insofar as that might help to win on the main point. Any setback on the wage question arising from this tactical course would be only limited and temporary. Once the union was firmly established on the job, the workers would have a solid foundation for a steady advance in wages and working conditions. These considerations led us to accept wage arbitration, so that the main thrust of the strike could be focused on the issue of union recognition. Our decision in no way implied agreement with the outlook and practices of the average union business agent. Unlike such misleaders, we were not trying to substitute arbitration for strike action in an effort to get the bosses to accept us as "labor statesmen."

We fully understood that there is no such animal as an "impartial" arbitrator in worker-capitalist disputes. There is actually no middle ground in such situations and no one stands unaffected by the conflicts that occur. Arbitrators—who are usually lawyers, jurists, preachers, etc.—have left a long trail across the years of being "neutral" on the capitalist side. Their sorry record stems from their acceptance of ruling-class norms coupled with a desire to get ahead themselves in the capitalist world. These considerations make them susceptible to many forms of pressure from the boss class. At best, arbitrators will make only timid concessions to the unions and then only under heavy counterpressure from the working class.

For these reasons workers should avoid arbitration of their demands wherever possible. In dealing with basic issues, it should be resorted to only under highly unusual circumstances: for example, in an effort to salvage some employer concessions out of an otherwise lost strike. Where secondary points are submitted to arbitration for tactical considerations, it should be looked upon as a necessary evil

rather than a desirable procedure. Agreement to arbitrate grievances arising from employer violations of a union contract is a highly dangerous course for the workers. What usually happens is that the grievances pile up behind the arbitration dam, and the boss gets away with murder. On this point, Local 574 retained the unconditional right to strike in accepting the August 21 settlement. The union remained free to take such action to settle grievances or for any other cause.

After the July–August strike was over, the union thanked its friends for their help. To cite some outstanding instances, Herbert Solow was made an honorary member of the union in appreciation of his work as editor of *The Organizer*. Argus press was also remembered for its courageous printing of the strike daily. Special tributes were paid to Joe Goslin, the foreman; Ace Johnston, the linotype operator; and Roy Kalstrom, the make-up man at Argus. Dr. McCrimmon became the family doctor for many union households, and after a time the union itself worked out a cooperative medical plan with him.

Joe Davis, who ran Lyons Bar near the union headquarters, also got special commendation in the form of a practical joke. He had kept collection cans on the bar to raise money for the union; we had used his phone for long-distance calls at his expense; and he had often put up bail money to spring pickets from the jug. An official telegram of thanks was sent to Joe with the following postscript: “We know you won’t mind our sending this collect as funds are low.” Joe later told an *Organizer* reporter, “Seeing that it brought good news, I had to tip the delivery boy two bits, so it cost me a dollar to get thanked.”

E.G. Hall, president of the Minnesota State Federation of Labor, was not on our list of those to be thanked because he stabbed the union in the back the day after the strike

ended. In the *Minneapolis Tribune* of August 22, 1934, he was reported to have said, "The leadership in the Minneapolis truck strike had caused turmoil by seeking to include other crafts in the drivers' union, and by promising the impossible." He was also said to have hinted broadly that a fight against "communistic tendencies" would be made inside the state AFL.

This attack by the head of the State Federation of Labor encouraged Cliff Hall to step up his red-baiting campaign inside Local 574. He was now in a somewhat better position to carry on this skulduggery. Dissolution of the strike committee after August 21 had restored formal authority to the executive board, and he still controlled a narrow majority in that body. Hall's cronies within the women's auxiliary became especially vicious in their attacks on the strike leaders. Things got so bad that something had to be done quickly. So Moe Hork introduced a motion in the executive board to disband the auxiliary, and Brown and Frosig helped to force its adoption. Moe had done good work during the strike. As this action on his part indicated, he was breaking from his earlier collaboration with Hall.

By this time it was clear that the entire Hall gang had to be cleaned out of union office before their disruption began to weaken the organization. As the first step toward that end, Bill Brown called for the resignation of all incumbent officers, including himself. The others agreed to resign, apparently thinking they could win in new elections. We put up opposition candidates for the posts held by Hall's stooges and campaigned strongly against them. When the votes were counted the following new executive board had been chosen: Bill Brown, reelected president; George Frosig, reelected vice-president; Grant Dunne, newly elected recording secretary; F. Dobbs, newly

elected secretary-treasurer; Ray Dunne and Harry DeBoer, newly elected trustees; and Moe Hork, reelected trustee. Neither Miles Dunne nor Carl Skoglund had been chosen as part of our ticket. Miles had been assigned to help the Teamsters union in Fargo, North Dakota. It had not been considered wise for Carl to be a candidate because of his citizenship problem.

Incompetents holding posts on the old executive board had now been removed by the membership. They were replaced by leaders who had won rank-and-file support during the union's long struggle against the bosses. To complete the renovation, the new board promptly fired Cliff Hall as business agent. Steps were taken to develop a staff of union organizers who would conduct themselves as working-class fighters, not as "statesmenlike" AFL business agents. Having been properly timed, all this had been accomplished with the same ease that a withered husk can be stripped from a ripened ear of corn.

These changes in official leadership set the stage for further consolidation of Local 574. The former strike committee of 100 was now transformed into an instrument for union control on the job. Its members, along with former picket captains, were elected by the workers as job stewards. Their task was to enforce the strike settlement, and to crowd as far as they could beyond its specific terms in order to pave the way for advances in the next union contract. Their strike experience made them very capable stewards. With the union power standing solidly behind them, they proceeded militantly to make the bosses toe the line. At the same time they took the lead in recruiting new union members, and as part of their task, they saw to it that union dues were paid regularly.

Special attention was given to the coal workers situation. As business picked up in the fall the union fought

for the return of all employees to their jobs on a seniority basis. Bosses who had so cockily fired union militants the previous spring now found themselves compelled to take them back—or else. Quickie strikes in a couple of yards reformed the unbelievers. After that it was primarily a matter of enforcing the existing working agreement which ran to the spring of 1935.

Parallel to the concentration of attention on the coal industry, measures were taken to develop a special section within Local 574 for unemployed workers. Leaders of the Minneapolis Central Council of Workers hailed the step and agreed to dissolve their organization into the new union setup. While the unemployed would still have their own formation as a special section of the union, direct affiliation with Local 574 gave them new leverage as an organic part of the official labor movement.

The MCCW's leap in membership between May and August had been an exceptional development, related directly to the mass actions of the time. It was now experiencing a sharp decline in strength due to the relative quiet following the end of the truck drivers' walkout, but the basic cadres remained intact. Among the latter were several figures who could do a lot to get the new union section underway. What they needed primarily was help from a competent political leader, but such a person could not be spared from the union staff. If the gap was to be filled, the Communist League would have to do it. This key assignment was given to Max Geldman, a party member who had transferred to the city from New York after the July–August strike was over. He stuck to his post, did his job well, and thereafter played a prominent role in the Minneapolis unemployed movement.

Although the Communist League had been quick to reinforce the local comrades in a big way while the battle

was on, its limited forces precluded longer-range assignments of personnel for the long haul in consolidating the union. For this reason Max's arrival was more or less a windfall of which we promptly took advantage. Since further aid of the kind couldn't realistically be expected, we had to go forward on our own local resources. Significant forces for the purpose were available. By the fall of 1934 the party's Minneapolis branch had grown to about 100 members and close sympathizers, more than double the membership a year earlier. Recruits had been won within various trade-union locals; also among students and intellectuals. In the case of Local 574, a big and growing party fraction now existed. The reasons for this expansion can perhaps best be illustrated through a few individual examples.

Marvel Scholl, who had fought in the strikes as a member of the women's auxiliary, spoke of her political evolution in her diary: "It was on July 20, Bloody Friday, that I made up my mind, or rather my heart, to join the Communist League of America. . . . The headquarters had become a frontline battle hospital for a few hours. . . . When the last of the casualties had been taken out to the many hospitals for further treatment I slipped out, went down to the hotel where Jim Cannon and Max Shachtman had a room. Jim was alone in the room. I told him, 'I don't know what the League is all about but whatever it is, if it is against what happened today, I want to join.' Jim was gentle with me. He explained that nobody was allowed to join the party purely from emotional reasons, that they had to know what they were joining, what it stood for, what it was against, and with this knowledge, make up their minds if they wanted to devote their lives to the cause. He must have recognized my state of shock, and while he welcomed my intentions, advised that I learn

what the program was, what becoming a revolutionary socialist meant. But from that day on my intentions were clear. I was put under the tutelage of Carl Skoglund. . . . It was not until after the strike was over that I was admitted to the party.”

Though in a different way, Bloody Friday also had its political impact on Harry DeBoer. As he later described his situation, “I wound up with forty-five pounds of weights hanging on my leg and guards to see that I didn’t run away!” Once the surgery was over and his long convalescence began, Harry had a lot of unoccupied time on his hands. Fellow strikers came to see him when they could, among them party members with whom he was able to have political discussions.

Oscar Coover, Sr., brought him volume one of Marx’s basic work *Capital* to read. It’s a hefty volume to handle when lying on one’s back, and besides Harry wasn’t much of a reading man at the time. He preferred to talk politics with those whose views he respected and he did a lot of thinking. Out of it all came a decision on his part to join the Communist League. In explaining his action he made a broad political generalization about Local 574’s victory that is hard to improve upon: “We couldn’t have done it without a disciplined revolutionary party.”

Bill Brown also came to consider himself a Trotskyist. Even though this did not lead him to active membership in the Communist League, no political hesitation on his part was necessarily implied. I, personally, thought that his attitude showed the depth of his respect for the party. Bill was an undisciplined person, and he seemed to know himself well enough to realize that this wouldn’t change simply because he joined the League. If we tried to convince him otherwise, he might well have wound up making a problem of himself as a formal member. As it was,

he played an invaluable role as a close sympathizer. He collaborated loyally and consistently with the party fraction on all important matters within Local 574. Whenever a national party figure came through the city on a speaking tour, Bill would be on hand to hear the talk, and part of what he heard would often find its way into the next major speech of his own within the union movement. He was also generous about making financial contributions to the party, insisting that we take for granted his adherence to this particular obligation of party membership.

With Local 574 in bad financial shape after the strike, union staff got at most twenty dollars a week each, sometimes less. Out of this sum, party members on the staff had decided that we would each contribute a dollar a week to the party branch. An incident in this connection reflected our custom of playing practical jokes on one another, a practice that helped us keep a sense of proportion in those turbulent times. Bill had asked to be included in the checkoff for the party. As secretary-treasurer I was doling out the union payroll one day, and Harry DeBoer, who had by then recovered from his injury, was collecting the party contributions. When Bill got his pay, he closed his fists around the money, shoved both hands into his pockets and told Harry: "You can have the buck if you can collect it." After wrestling Brown to the floor, rubbing some skin off his nose, and generally using him a bit roughly, DeBoer got the dollar. Bill grinned and said to Harry, "I made you earn it, you Dutch sonofabitch."

The Communist League fraction within Local 574 functioned as a single unit. Equal voice and vote was accorded to all comrades, whether they were leaders or rank-and-file members of the union. Party members in other spheres of activity were similarly organized into separate fractions in each case. These fractions were in turn part of a gen-

eral branch of the party which in the given instance embraced all comrades in the city. The structure enabled those in a particular field of activity to concentrate in an organized way on their specific work. At the same time it provided a corrective for any tendency to become too narrowly engrossed in specialized activity at the expense of one's broader political education and outlook. In the case of Local 574, for example, the union problems were so pressing and so complex that comrades could easily get so one-sidedly preoccupied with them that they slighted other political and organizational matters. Being part of a general membership branch helped them to offset this danger. They were drawn into broader patterns of political thinking and into the party's multifaceted educational processes. As a result, trade-union comrades became more proficient in their own special assignments and the party was better able to help them do their job.

In addition, the party was the best medium through which trade-union comrades could keep abreast of national labor trends. Our strikes had unfolded during the fifth year of the great depression and the second year of the revival of labor. They constituted one of the three outstanding class battles of 1934, the others having been waged by the Toledo auto workers and the San Francisco longshoremen. All these strikes were led by radicals, over the opposition of conservative union officials. They tended to spill over narrow jurisdictional lines and were militantly conducted in the face of harsh police repressions. These combats not only demonstrated that the workers would and could fight for their rights—they showed that genuine rank-and-file actions could win. In all three cases the bosses were beaten and forced to recognize the union.

This series of victories gave a tremendous lift to the morale of insurgent workers throughout the country. The

increasing labor momentum led to historic struggles in basic industry that resulted in the formation of the CIO and culminated in the wave of sit-down strikes that began two years later. A basic understanding on our part of this developing phenomenon was vital to the charting of Local 574's future. The mounting groundswell of labor combativity could lend us objective support in our coming battles, provided we clearly grasped the meaning of events and maintained a good sense of timing.

In more immediate terms, objective trends were already leading toward national reinforcement of our party's trade-union cadres. Parallel to the May strike in Minneapolis the American Workers Party had led the comparably militant struggle of auto workers at the Electric Auto-Lite Company in Toledo, Ohio. It had also built a substantial unemployed movement, centered in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and contiguous areas. The AWP was centrist in character, containing both potential revolutionaries and political opportunists. Important to us was the presence in its ranks of militant workers who were moving in our direction politically. A collateral consideration was to prevent the Stalinists from knifing into the AWP while we drew the militants over to our revolutionary program.

With this object in mind, the Communist League opened a friendly discussion with the AWP. By December 1934 our efforts had led to fusion of the two organizations into a new formation called the Workers Party of the United States. Soon after the fusion a joint national tour was made by Jim Cannon, who had headed the Communist League of America, and A.J. Muste, who had been the central leader of the American Workers Party. Their arrival in Minneapolis was greeted with great jubilation. All the comrades became doubly inspired to go forward both in the trade-union and party-building work.

Locally our victorious strike struggle had already set the tone, given an example, and shown the way toward further working-class advances. In its August 24 issue the *Minneapolis Labor Review* had declared: "Winning of this strike marks the greatest victory in the annals of the local trade union movement. . . . It has changed Minneapolis from being known as a scabs' paradise to being a city of hope for those who toil."

Confirmation of the declaration came swiftly. By August 27 the laundry workers, who had gone on strike after Bloody Friday, wrested an agreement from the laundry bosses to raise wages and improve working conditions. Their victory, which came on the heels of Local 574's triumph, helped inspire other workers to square off against the bosses. Strike after strike began to take place as more and more workers joined in the campaign to make Minneapolis a union town. In every case help and guidance was sought from Local 574, which had emerged as a major power in the Minnesota labor movement.

What was to happen as these new battles unfolded after 1934 proved to be no less turbulent and significant than the struggles I have described, and no less laden with national ramifications. Those events deserve to be related in a separate narrative.

WORK!

Settlement Goes Through!

The strike settlement adopted by the Union last night at a membership meeting is a victory for Local 574 and for the cause of trade unionism which was at stake in this strike.

The bosses, led by the Citizens' Alliance, forced this strike on us. The Alliance bandits admit that they want to make this an open shop town. The beginning, they thought, would be to smash Local 574. Then they would go on to the rest of the Unions.

They have been defeated in their foul plot!

Battle scarred and bleeding from many wounds, Local 574 rises from the struggle stronger in the confidence of the workers and more certain of its future than before.

Local 574 has not yet gotten everything for its members that it means to get. The bosses know this and we shall not let them forget it.

But what Local 574 has won is the gain of the whole union movement. All Minneapolis workers rejoice to know that the attempt to break 574 has completely fizzled and that our great union remains in the field to fight the battles of its own members and to point the road of struggle to all workers seeking the benefit of organization and a better life for themselves and their families.

The walls of Eagles hall shook last night as the members wound up their meeting with the fighting song of 574, "Solidarity Forever!" When 574 says "Solidarity," it means union, it means stick together, fight it out, don't give in. And this in turn means 574.

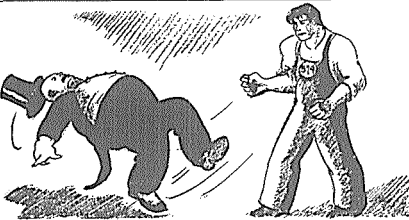
This number is the veritable symbol of unionism and the unconquerable spirit of labor in Minneapolis today.

And not only in Minneapolis.

Local 574's heroic struggle has become a national affair. Minneapolis has shown the country something new, and newspaper front pages everywhere carry our name.

What was new? The fact that a few thousand workers, miserably oppressed and exploited, rose to rebel. That happens daily. Everywhere American workers, sick of working like slaves and living like bums, are striking.

The pity is that, as a rule, they are cheated, betrayed or sold out by those they trust and



He Packs a Wallop!

only us. The bosses crush them, or the leaders betray them, or they get caught in the "National Rim Around" of Federal meditation, and before the imperceptible workers know what has happened their strike are broken and they go back defeated, without conditions, without a union, without anything, as a rule, but an NIA promise worth just about as much as Confederate money.

They tried all that in Minneapolis, but it was no go. That's what was new about our strike. That made the whole country sit up and take notice.

Every menace of oppression was brought to heel. They shot our pickets down in cold blood. Two of them lie dead today, victims of the murdering, union-baiting conspirators, maskers to the sacred cause of labor. They flung our pickets and our leaders into a military stockade. They raided our headquarters.

But they couldn't break us.

Every dirty trick and maneuver was tried. A Farmer-Labor governor, whom so many workers trusted, turned up as a copper, throwing pickets into the stockade. They put over a "Red Scare" to get it they could catch some suckers and get the union to select a leadership to suit the bosses. Even the Federal Mediator, Father Hunt and Mr. Dunnigan, to their shame, tried to go over the heads of our leaders and disrupt our ranks. Such "labor leaders" as Tobin and Smith played the role of Judas.

But they couldn't fool us.

Local 574 stood up and fought back. Rank and file and leaders stood united and nobody

could split us. We stuck it out and got a settlement which the whole labor movement will approve.

Thus the strike ends. But the struggle does not end.

Elections are coming. Local 574 wants to win in every house. Every worker should join the Union. Every union man should speak to his brothers on the job and see to it that 574 gets a unanimous vote. After that we shall remain vigilant and see that all conditions of the settlement are enforced in practice. Local 574 is not going to sleep at the switch.

Let's get out the vote and let's see to it that every ballot cast is marked for 574, a real union.

And a final word: Mayor Rainbridge has started to yab about driving "Communists" out of the city. We know what he means. He means framing up every worker who fights for his rights. The Citizens Alliance, sore because they had to swallow the settlement, are planning to see their bloodhound Johannes onto some innocent individual workers and take it out of their hides.

We warn all enemies of labor: Local 574 is going to take a hand in the fight against any kind of a frame-up. Those who start this sort of business will be responsible for all the consequences.

This outlines the immediate program of Local 574:

We are going to see to it that the settlement is carried out.

We are going to see to it that any attempt at discrimination get a crack on the head.

We are going to win the election and build a bigger union than we ever had before.

And we are going to protect every last man of our heroic strikers against any sort of persecution.

The Organizer ceases today to be a Daily Strike Bulletin. It remains official daily of Local 574. Until the elections have been concluded, we intend to keep in our hands the precious weapon, a daily paper.

Numbers remarks, scores of letters give us confidence that this will be welcome news to the workers of Minneapolis.

Vote for 574 in the Elections

Make Minneapolis a Union Town

August 22, 1934, Organizer.

Appendix

(List of the Original Strike Committee of 100 as it appeared in Local 574's files.)

Allen, Ethen	Dunne, Ray	Oakes, S.E.
Anderson, Hans	Fredericks, Sam	Olson, Edith
Amo, P.W.	Finklestein, Max	Osborne
Aboe, L.	Frosig, Geo.	O'Brien, Geo.
Anderson, T.		
Ardeser, F.	Gray, Bill	Pfaff, Harry
Abar, Wm.	Haskell, Sam	Peterson, Church
Ahlquist, T.	Home, Chet	Peters, Bill, ERA (Resigned)
	Hallegen, Wm.	Patterson, Elmer
Benzick, Bill	Harvey, Guy	Pearson, W.
Bove, P.	Haynes, Harold	Postal, Kelly
Brown, Curly	Hanson, John	Parant, Louis
Blais, Archie	Hall, Cliff	Peterson, A.
Bolouc, Al.	Holstein, Happy	
Boldt, Wm. S.	Hodgekins, ERA	Quick, C.H.
Bartlett, Curly	(Resigned)	Quinn, P.F.
Berman, Art.	Hoglund, Jean	
Beal, H.	Hork, Moe	Rainbolt, Ray
Bellanger, J.		Rogers, John M.
Bensen		
Bove, Rob't	Johnson, Elmer	Serre, Leo
Brown, Wm.	Jossart, L.C.	Smith, Tom
Baumgartner, Sam	Johnson, A.J.	Swanson, Sam
Bruneau, F.D.		Swenson, Melvin
	Kneeland, Tom	Secord, Ward
Croul, Elmer	Kuann	Shepard, E.
Carter, Earl	Karlen	Swoers, Ed.
Cabana, Chuck		Skoglund, Carl
Carle, N.E.	Lundholm, E.	Seibert, A.C.
Costello, J.	Levine, Ben	Shedlov, Al.
Cipperly, Fay	Lindquist, Bert	Severson, Jack
Clarence, Ed.	Liscombe, H.E. (hospital)	Swans, Arens
Crichton, Minnie	Langeseth, Wm.	Serempa, Bill
Caseu, Harry	LaBeau, G.W.	Sandell, Carl
Cooper, representative	Long, Bob	
oil co.	Lund, Bob	
	Lund, oil committee rep.	Tutty, Don.
Devine, Joe. E.		Taftus, R.A.
Davis, E.B.	Moe, Christ	Tigue, Ray
DeBoer, Harry (in	Madeen, Fred	
hospital)	Minister, H.J.	Underwood, U.W.
Dreon, Geo.	Mathews, Clarence	
Dobbs, Farrell		Wachter, Harold
Dunne, Myles	Nolar, J.	Williams, Geo.
Dunne, Grant	Nelson, C.	Williams, Tom

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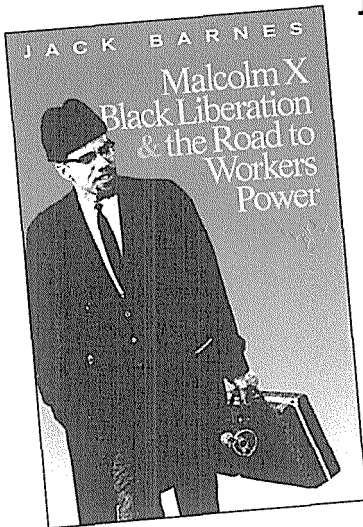
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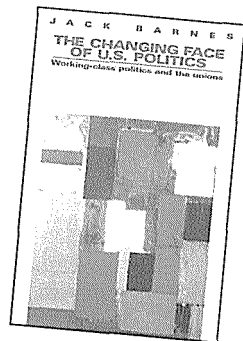
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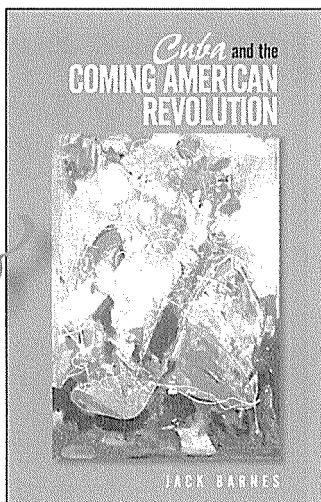
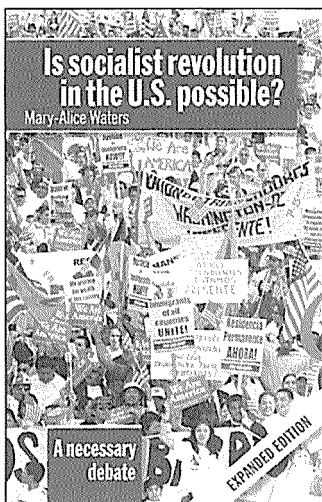
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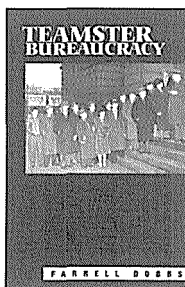
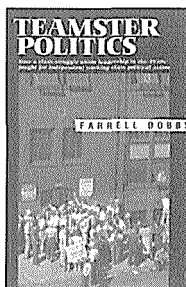
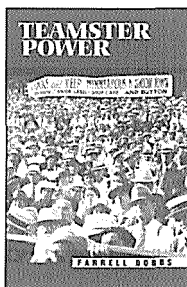
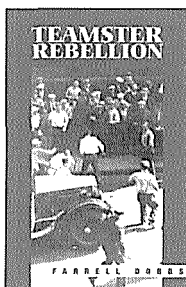
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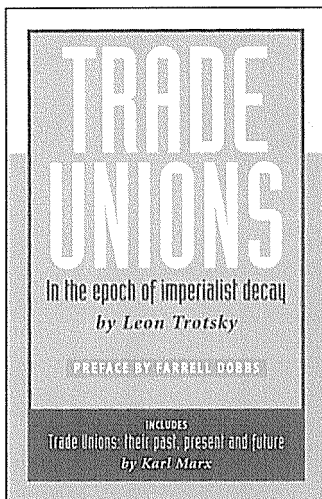
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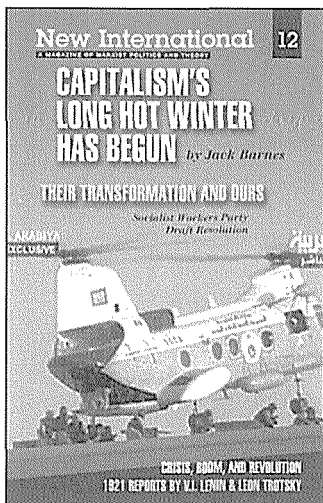
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A MAGAZINE OF MARXIST POLITICS AND THEORY



NEW INTERNATIONAL NO. 12

CAPITALISM'S LONG HOT WINTER HAS BEGUN

Jack Barnes

*and "Their Transformation and Ours,"
Resolution of the Socialist Workers Party*

Today's sharpening interimperialist conflicts are fueled both by the opening stages of what will be decades of economic, financial, and social convulsions and class battles, and by the most far-reaching shift in Washington's military policy and organization since the US buildup toward World War II. Class-struggle-minded working people must face this historic turning point for imperialism, and draw satisfaction from being "in their

face" as we chart a revolutionary course to confront it. \$16

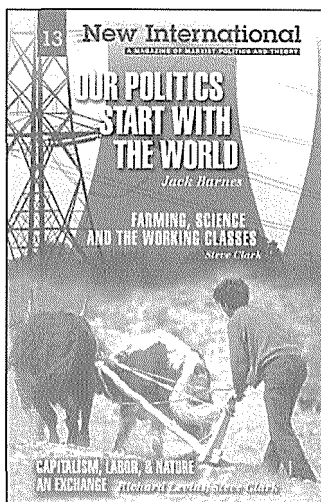
NEW INTERNATIONAL NO. 13

OUR POLITICS START WITH THE WORLD

Jack Barnes

The huge economic and cultural inequalities between imperialist and semicolonial countries, and among classes within almost every country, are produced, reproduced, and accentuated by the workings of capitalism. For vanguard workers to build parties able to lead a successful revolutionary struggle for power in our own countries, says Jack Barnes in the lead article, our activity must be guided by a strategy to close this gap.

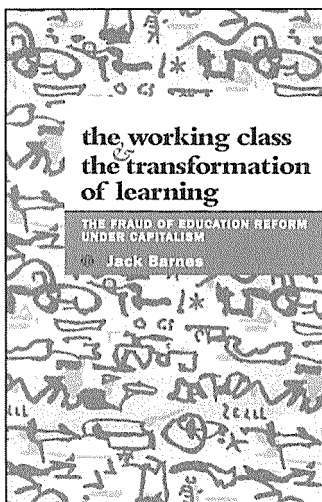
Also in No. 13: "Farming, Science, and the Working Classes" by Steve Clark. \$14



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Building a PROLETARIAN PARTY



The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning

The Fraud of Education Reform under Capitalism

JACK BARNES

"Until society is reorganized so that education is a human activity from the time we are very young until the time we die, there will be no education worthy of working, creating humanity." \$3. Also in Spanish, French, Swedish, Icelandic, Farsi, and Greek.

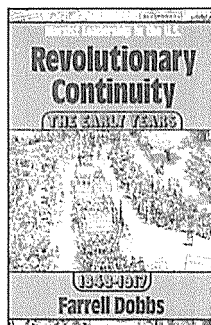
Revolutionary Continuity

Marxist Leadership in the U.S.

FARRELL DOBBS

How successive generations took part in struggles of the US labor movement, seeking to build a leadership that could advance the class interests of workers and small farmers and link up with fellow toilers around the world. Two volumes:

The Early Years, 1848–1917, \$20; *Birth of the Communist Movement, 1918–1922*, \$19.

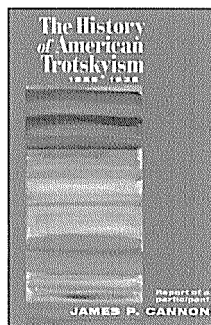


The History of American Trotskyism, 1928–1938

Report of a Participant

JAMES P. CANNON

"Trotskyism is not a new movement, a new doctrine," Cannon says, "but the restoration, the revival of genuine Marxism as it was expounded and practiced in the Russian revolution and in the early days of the Communist International." In twelve talks given in 1942, Cannon recounts a decisive period in efforts to build a proletarian party in the United States. \$22. Also in Spanish and French.



What Is To Be Done?

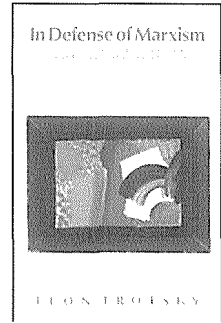
V.I. LENIN

The stakes in creating a disciplined organization of working-class revolutionaries capable of acting as a “tribune of the people, able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, to clarify for all and everyone the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat.” Written in 1902. In *Essential Works of Lenin*. \$12.95

In Defense of Marxism

*Against the Petty-Bourgeois
Opposition in the
Socialist Workers Party*
LEON TROTSKY

Writing in 1939–40, Leon Trotsky replies to those in the revolutionary workers movement beating a retreat from defense of the Soviet Union in face of the looming imperialist assault. Why only a party that fights to bring growing numbers of workers into its ranks and leadership can steer a steady revolutionary course. \$25. Also in Spanish.



The Struggle for a Proletarian Party

JAMES P. CANNON

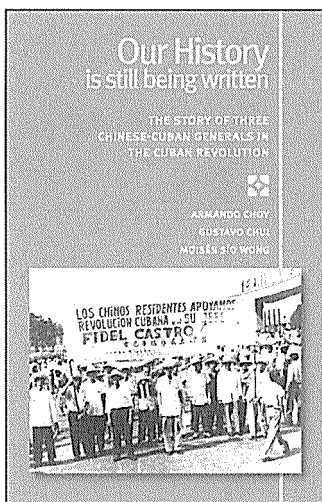
“The workers of America have power enough to topple the structure of capitalism at home and to lift the whole world with them when they rise,” Cannon asserts. On the eve of World War II, a founder of the communist movement in the US and leader of the Communist International in Lenin’s time defends the program and party-building norms of Bolshevism. \$22

Socialism on Trial

JAMES P. CANNON

The basic ideas of socialism, explained in testimony during the 1941 trial of leaders of the Minneapolis Teamsters union and the Socialist Workers Party framed up and imprisoned under the notorious Smith “Gag” Act during World War II. \$16. Also in Spanish.

The Cuban Revolution and



Our History Is Still Being Written

THE STORY OF THREE CHINESE-CUBAN GENERALS
IN THE CUBAN REVOLUTION

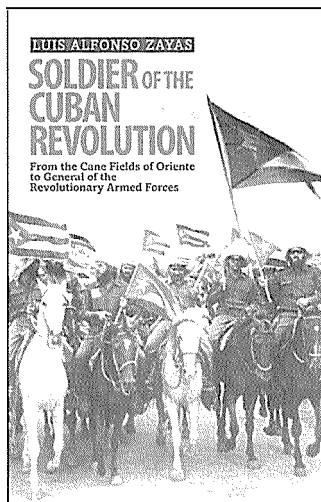
In Cuba, the greatest measure against racial discrimination "was the revolution itself," says Gen. Moisés Sío Wong, "the triumph of a socialist revolution." Armando Choy, Gustavo Chui, and Sío Wong talk about the historic place of Chinese immigration to Cuba, as well as more than five decades of revolutionary action and internationalism, from Cuba to Angola and Venezuela today. Through their stories we see how millions of ordinary men and women changed the course of history, becoming different human beings in the process. \$20. Also in Spanish and Chinese.

Soldier of the Cuban Revolution

FROM THE CANE FIELDS OF ORIENTE TO GENERAL OF THE
REVOLUTIONARY ARMED FORCES

Luis Alfonso Zayas

The author recounts his experiences over five decades in the revolution. From a teenage combatant in the clandestine struggle and 1956–58 war that brought down the US-backed dictatorship, to serving three times as a leader of the Cuban volunteer forces that helped Angola defeat an invasion by the army of white-supremacist South Africa, Zayas tells how he and other ordinary men and women in Cuba changed the course of history and, in the process, transformed themselves as well. \$18. Also in Spanish.



Renewal or Death

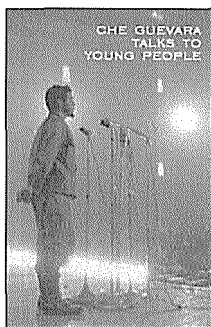
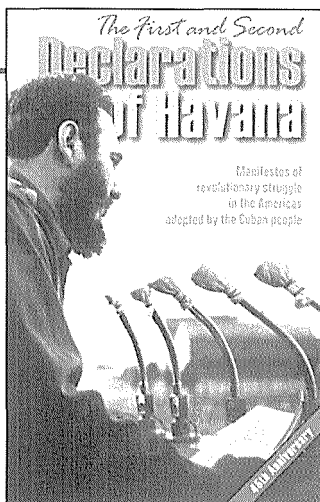
Fidel Castro

"To really establish total equality takes more than declaring it in law," Fidel Castro told delegates to the 1986 congress of the Cuban Communist Party, pointing to the revolution's enormous conquests in the fight against anti-black racism. "We can't leave it to chance to correct historical injustices," he said. "We have to straighten out what history has twisted." In *New International* no. 6. \$16

World Politics

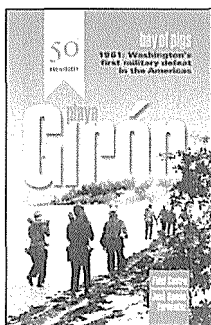
The First and Second Declarations of Havana

Nowhere are the questions of revolutionary strategy that today confront men and women on the front lines of struggles in the Americas addressed with greater truthfulness and clarity than in these two documents, adopted by million-strong assemblies of the Cuban people in 1960 and 1962. These uncompromising indictments of imperialist plunder and "the exploitation of man by man" continue to stand as manifestos of revolutionary struggle by working people the world over. \$10. Also in Spanish, French, and Arabic.



Che Guevara Talks to Young People

The Argentine-born revolutionary leader challenges youth of Cuba and the world to study, to work, to become disciplined. To join the front lines of struggles, small and large. To politicize themselves and the work of their organizations. To become a different kind of human being as they strive with working people of all lands to transform the world. Eight talks from 1959 to 1964. \$15. Also in Spanish.



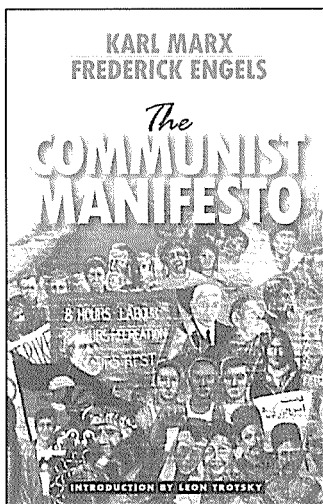
Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs

WASHINGTON'S FIRST MILITARY DEFEAT IN THE AMERICAS

Fidel Castro, José Ramón Fernández

In fewer than 72 hours of combat in April 1961, Cuba's revolutionary armed forces defeated a US-organized invasion by 1,500 mercenaries. In the process, the Cuban people set an example for workers, farmers, and youth the world over that with political consciousness, class solidarity, courage, and revolutionary leadership, one can stand up to enormous might and seemingly insurmountable odds—and win. \$22. Also in Spanish.

From the dictatorship of capital...



The Communist Manifesto

Karl Marx, Frederick Engels

Founding document of the modern revolutionary workers movement, published in 1848. Why communism is not a set of preconceived principles but the line of march of the working class toward power—a line of march "springing from an existing class struggle, a historical movement going on under our very eyes." \$5. Also in Spanish, French, and Arabic.

State and Revolution

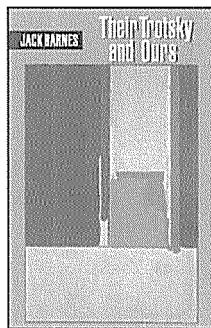
V.I. Lenin

"The relation of the socialist proletarian revolution to the state is acquiring not only practical political importance," wrote V.I. Lenin in this booklet just months before the October 1917 Russian Revolution. It also addresses the "most urgent problem of the day: explaining to the masses what they will have to do to free themselves from capitalist tyranny." In *Essential Works of Lenin*. \$12.95

Their Trotsky and Ours

Jack Barnes

To lead the working class in a successful revolution, a mass proletarian party is needed whose cadres, well beforehand, have absorbed a world communist program, are proletarian in life and work, derive deep satisfaction from doing politics, and have forged a leadership with an acute sense of what to do next. This book is about building such a party. \$16. Also in Spanish and French.



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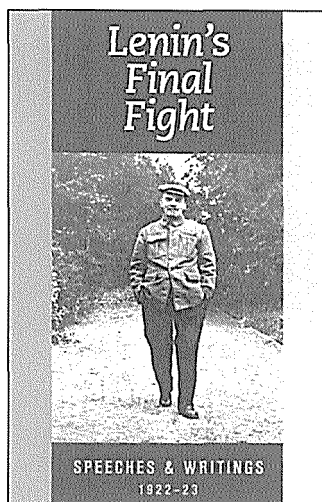
...to the dictatorship of the proletariat

Lenin's Final Fight

Speeches and Writings, 1922-23

V.I. Lenin

In 1922 and 1923, V.I. Lenin, central leader of the world's first socialist revolution, waged what was to be his last political battle. At stake was whether that revolution would remain on the proletarian course that had brought workers and peasants to power in October 1917—and laid the foundations for a truly worldwide revolutionary movement of toilers organizing to emulate the Bolsheviks' example. \$20. Also in Spanish.



The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution

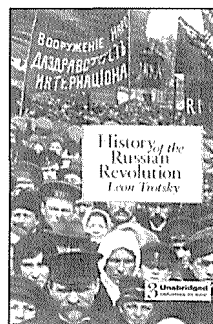
Leon Trotsky

In this 1938 founding document drafted for the Socialist Workers Party in the US and the world movement it is part of, Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky explains an interconnected program of slogans and demands that "lead to one and the same political conclusion: the workers need to break with all traditional parties of the bourgeoisie in order, jointly with the farmers, to establish their own power." \$20

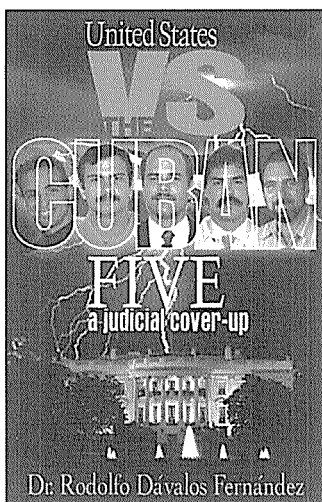
The History of the Russian Revolution

Leon Trotsky

The social, economic, and political dynamics of the first socialist revolution as told by one of its central leaders. How, under Lenin's leadership, the Bolshevik Party led the overturn of the monarchist regime of the landlords and capitalists and brought to power a government of the workers and peasants. Unabridged, 3 vols. in one. \$38. Also in Russian.



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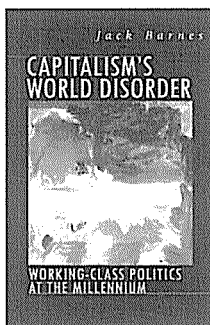


United States vs. The Cuban Five

A Judicial Cover-Up

RODOLFO DÁVALOS FERNÁNDEZ

Held in US prisons since 1998, five Cuban revolutionists were framed up for being part of a "Cuban spy network" in Florida. They were keeping tabs for Cuban government on rightist groups with a long record of armed attacks on Cuba from US soil. "From start to finish," says the author, court proceedings were "tainted, corrupt, and vindictive. Every right to 'due process of law' was flouted." \$22. Also in Spanish.

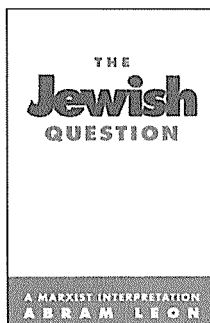


Capitalism's World Disorder

Working-Class Politics at the Millennium

JACK BARNES

Social devastation and financial panic, coarsening of politics, cop brutality, imperialist aggression—all are products not of something gone wrong with capitalism but of its lawful workings. Yet the future can be changed by the united struggle of workers and farmers conscious of their capacity to wage revolutionary battles for state power and transform the world. \$25. Also in Spanish and French.



The Jewish Question

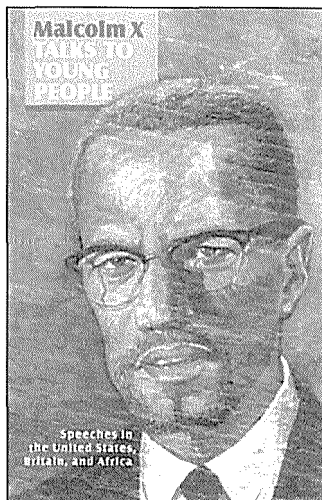
A Marxist Interpretation

ABRAM LEON

Traces the historical rationalizations of anti-Semitism to the fact that, in the centuries preceding the domination of industrial capitalism, Jews emerged as a "people-class" of merchants, moneylenders, and traders. Leon explains why the propertied rulers incite renewed Jew-hatred in the epoch of capitalism's decline. \$22

Malcolm X Talks to Young People

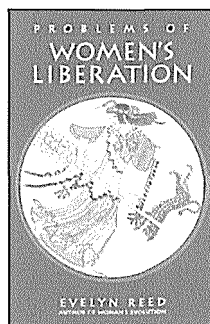
"You're living at a time of revolution," Malcolm told young people in the United Kingdom in December 1964. "And I for one will join in with anyone, I don't care what color you are, as long as you want to change the miserable condition that exists on this earth." Four talks and an interview given to young people in Ghana, the UK, and the United States in the last months of Malcolm's life. \$15. Also in Spanish and French.



Problems of Women's Liberation

EVELYN REED

Six articles explore the social and economic roots of women's oppression from prehistoric society to modern capitalism and point the road forward to emancipation. \$15

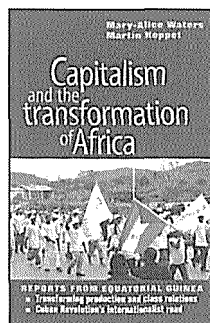


Capitalism and the Transformation of Africa

Reports from Equatorial Guinea

MARY-ALICE WATERS, MARTÍN KOPPEL

The transformation of production and class relations in a Central African country, as it is drawn deeper into the world market and both a capitalist class and modern proletariat are born. As Cuban volunteer medical brigades collaborate to transform social conditions there, the example of Cuba's socialist revolution comes alive. Woven together, the outlines of a future to be fought for today can be seen—a future in which Africa's toilers have more weight in world politics than ever before. \$10. Also in Spanish.





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MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**“There was a war in Minneapolis:
a conflict of poverty against
wealth, of labor against capital.”**



ST. PAUL DISPATCH / MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



PHOTOS: MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

This page, top: Farmers, who became the workers' allies during the 1934 strikes, demand government assistance at Minnesota's capitol in St. Paul, March 1933. **Bottom:** 10,000 unemployed workers demonstrated in Minneapolis, April 6, 1934, protesting below-poverty-level federal "relief" benefits. Cops later teargassed the demonstrators.

Facing page, top: Washington, DC, July 1932: 15,000 jobless World War I veterans encamped near the U.S. Capitol, demanding bonuses scheduled to be paid only in 1945. General Douglas MacArthur deployed mounted troops and tanks to drive the veterans from the camps, killing two and wounding several others. **Center:** Dearborn, Mich., March 1932: Cops attack march of 3,000 unemployed at Ford Motor Co.'s River Rouge plant, killing 5 and injuring 60. **Bottom:** Shanghai, China, Feb. 1932: Workers district in flames during brutal invasion by Imperial Japan, as U.S. troops guard city's wealthy international settlement nearby. Pictures such as these in the Omaha newspapers drove home to Farrell Dobbs the class inequalities and intolerable brutality of the world capitalist system.

“A key aspect of the situation in Minneapolis was common to the country as a whole: radicalization of the working class under the impact of severe economic depression.”



CORBIS BETTMAN



BOTTOM PHOTOS: DOUGLAS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



**“It did workers good to see unionists
standing their ground against the cops,
giving more punishment than they received.”**



“Battle of Deputies Run”: Illusions about cops began to be dispelled when workers found the whole force fighting on the bosses’ side. From the outset, striking workers had to defend themselves from bloody assaults by police and special deputies organized by the bosses’ organization, the Citizens Alliance. On May 21–22 hundreds of workers in the Minneapolis market district routed the cops as well as the deputized company personnel who had come out on a lark to teach the workers a lesson.



PHOTOS: MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

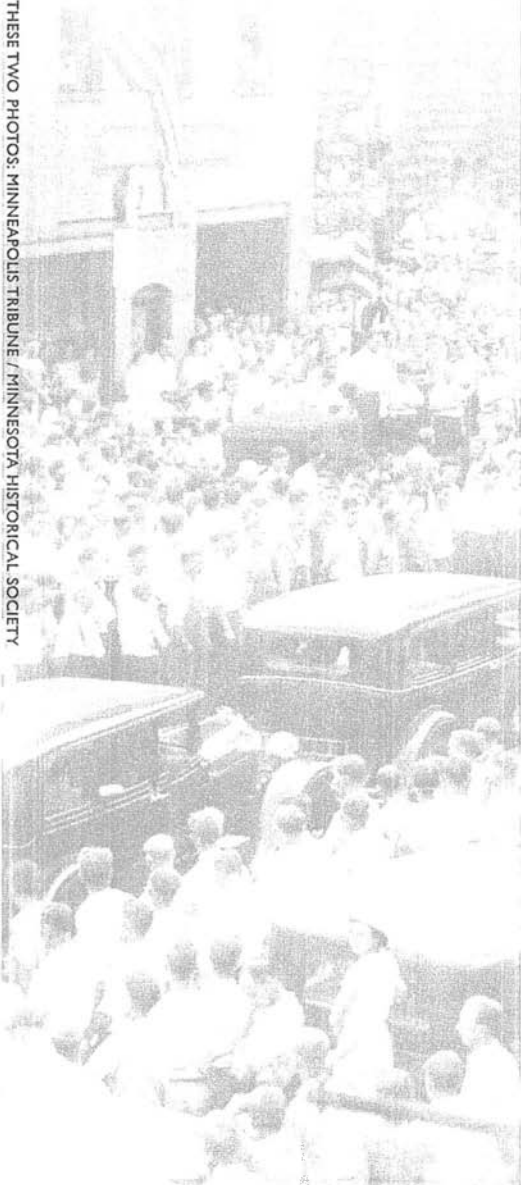


Bloody Friday, July 20, 1934: "Suddenly, without any warning, the cops opened fire on the picket truck, and they shot to kill. In a matter of seconds two of the pickets lay motionless on the floor of the bullet-ridden truck" (**sequence below**). Among the 67 pickets and bystanders shot by the cops, striker Henry Ness died two days later and John Belor on August 1.

Full page: Over 40,000, including hundreds of cruising pickets, join funeral for Henry Ness, July 24, 1934. **Facing page:** Ness's comrades honor him with wreath and plaque above entrance to Local 574 strike headquarters. Plaque quotes his last words: "Tell the boys not to fail me now."



THESE TWO PHOTOS: MINNEAPOLIS TRIBUNE / MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



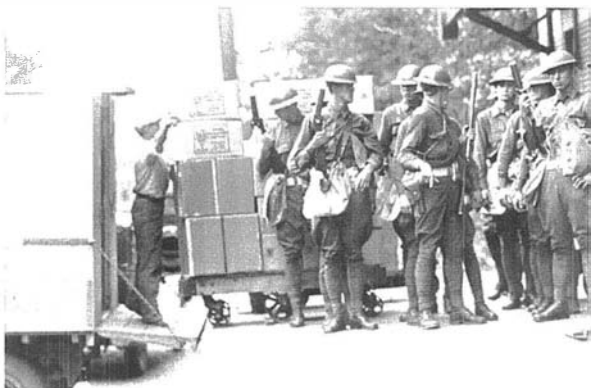
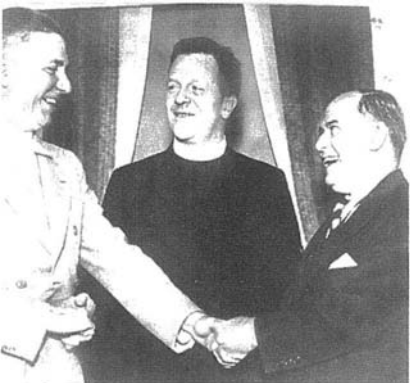
**“Under capitalism,
the main police function
is to break strikes and repress
other forms of visible protest
against the policies of the ruling class.”**



**“I will make the city of Minneapolis
as quiet as a Sunday school.”**

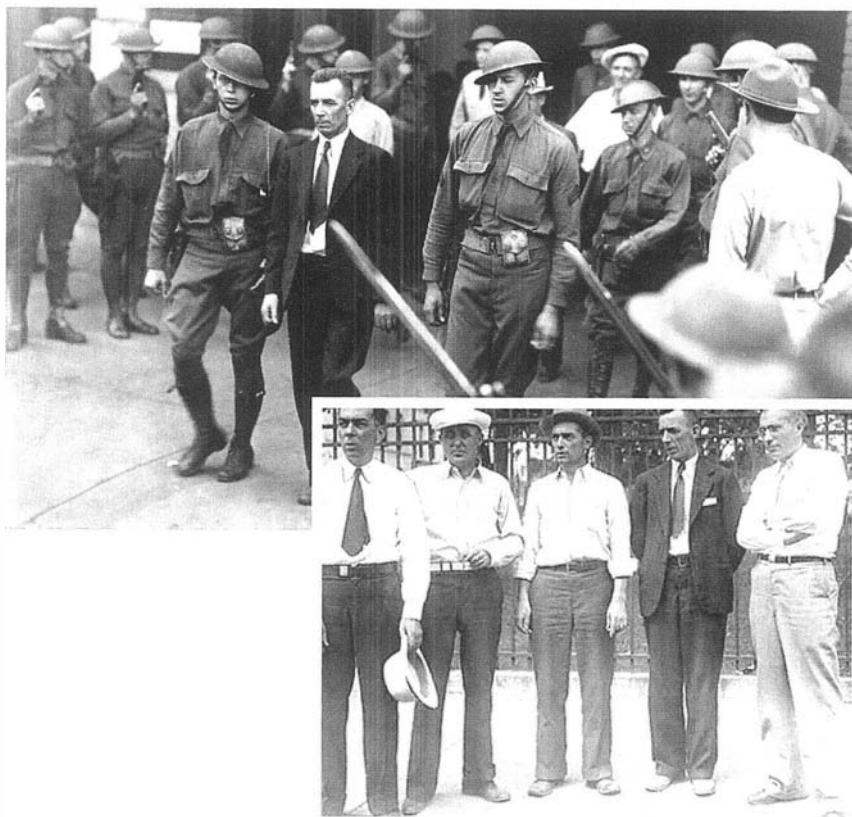
—FARMER-LABOR PARTY GOVERNOR FLOYD OLSON
ON EVE OF IMPOSING MARTIAL LAW

MINNEAPOLIS STAR & TRIBUNE / MHS



**“Release our leaders from arrest,
return our strike headquarters to us,
and get your troops off the streets.”**

—LOCAL 574 TO GOVERNOR OLSON



Facing page, top left: Gov. Floyd Olson (left) joined with federal mediators Rev. Francis Haas and Eugene Dunnigan in trying to sell workers a “fair settlement.” On July 26 Olson imposed martial law—declaring that a “state of insurrection” existed—and called out 4,000 National Guardsmen. **Right:** Olson’s troops protect scabs unloading trucks.

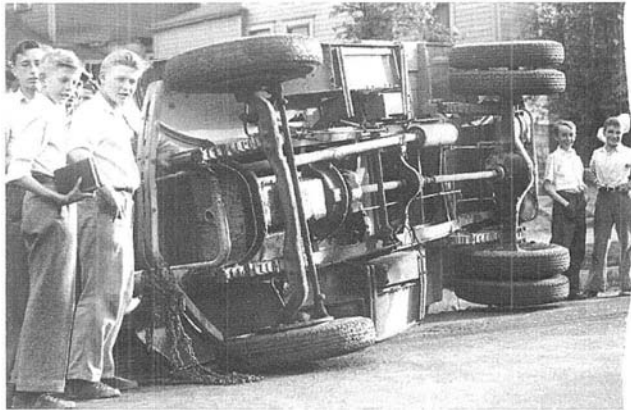
This page, top: On August 1, guardsmen raided Local 574’s strike headquarters, arresting union leader Ray Dunne, shown outside State Fair Grounds where he and other strikers were jailed. Later that day troops with fixed bayonets raided the AFL offices (**facing page**) and Teamsters hall. When Local 574 mobilized their cruising pickets and ended any talks until its leaders were freed, the governor backed off, ordering their release within hours. **This page, bottom:** Grant Dunne (left) and 574’s attorney Albert Goldman (right) welcome Bill Brown (white cap), Miles Dunne, and Ray Dunne upon their release.

“We will fight it out on the picket line if it takes all summer”

—‘THE ORGANIZER’, LOCAL 574 STRIKE DAILY



ST. PAUL DISPATCH / MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



MINNEAPOLIS JOURNAL / MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Local 574's cruising pickets controlled the streets throughout the renewed strike. **Top:** Strikers check union-issued circulation permit. **Bottom, right:** Scab trucks were put out of commission. On August 1, after troops raided union headquarters and jailed strike leaders, in just a few hours National Guard officers reported more than 500 calls for help from scabs. **Left:** Chief picket dispatcher Kelly Postal.

Top: An alliance with working farmers—themselves slaves to banks and monopolies—was one key to victory. In an act of solidarity, Local 574 leased a parking lot for use by market gardeners, farmers who sold their produce to small grocers. When the local launched a women's auxiliary, some strikers didn't like it at first, "but all this stopped suddenly when the women went into action." Running the commissary (**bottom**) was one of the auxiliary's tasks. Its members staffed the strike hospital that treated wounded pickets, and organized trips all over the region speaking to win support for the strike.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS PHOTOS



“A special factor in Minneapolis lay in the presence of revolutionary socialist cadres who proved capable of fusing with the mass of rebellious workers.”



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Top: Local 574 strike leaders (from left) Bill Brown, Farrell Dobbs, and Carl Skoglund. **Center:** The Dunne brothers (from left), Ray, Grant, and Miles. **Bottom:** The Communist League sent James P. Cannon (right), the party's national secretary, and editor Max Shachtman to help the Teamster militants. Shown here in Minneapolis, they were arrested and held by police for 48 hours in late July 1934.

“The 1934 victories led to historic battles which resulted less than two years later in the formation of the CIO, and a wave of sit-down strikes.”



SCHOMBURG COLLECTION

Above: Textile workers picket mill in Greensboro, Georgia, during 1934 general textile strike, when more than 400,000 mill workers across the Atlantic seaboard walked off the job. The Franklin Roosevelt administration sent over 40,000 troops to attack the strikers, killing 16 and wounding hundreds in the course of the battles. **Below:** Workers in Harlem, New York, strike for better conditions, 1936. The rising industrial union movement accelerated, drawing workers who were Black into industry and the unions.

“The Toledo auto workers, San Francisco longshoremen and the Teamsters showed that genuine rank-and-file battles could win.”



TOLEDO LUCAS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY



The Minneapolis strikes were one of three titanic labor battle victories in the summer of 1934 that transformed what workers nationwide believed their combativity could bring. **Above:** *Militant* headline, August 25, 1934.

Left: West Coast longshoremen waged a three-month strike, winning union recognition and gains in wages and hours. **Right:** Striking auto parts workers in Toledo, Ohio, prevailed against the bosses, despite attacks by cops and troops. A six-day street fight came to be known as the Battle of Chestnut Hill, shown in photo.



CORBIS/BETTMAN

The 1934 victories paved the way for the Committee for Industrial Organizations, which rose as a powerful social movement through a strike wave that began in 1936. **Top left:** In December a sit-down strike at GM in Flint, Michigan, sparked walkouts by some 140,000 workers in other auto plants, winning United Auto Workers members their first union contract in February 1937. **Right:** Striking auto workers on parade, Detroit, New Year's Day, 1937. **Bottom:** Workers in Michigan protest murderous assault in which cops backed Republic Steel bosses against strikers during 1937 Memorial Day Massacre in Chicago.

WILLIAM VANDIVERT / TIME LIFE PICTURES / GETTY IMAGES



“The new Teamster battles that unfolded proved to be a no less turbulent and significant than the struggles in 1934.”

From 1934 to 1941, the class-struggle leadership forged in the battles described in *Teamster Rebellion* mounted union drives and political campaigns recounted in 3 other books by Farrell Dobbs. *Teamster Power* describes the 11-state organizing drive that won a quarter of a million over-the-road truckers to the Teamsters. **Top Left:** Leaders of General Drivers Local 554 in Omaha, Nebraska, and Council Bluffs, Iowa, carry first picket signs ever used by the local. From left: Dick Sodenberg, Louis Miller, and Malcolm Love. **Bottom:** Union Defense Guard formed in 1938. Volunteers from unions across the Minneapolis–St. Paul area swelled its ranks in order to resist employer-funded

fascist and other reactionary forces, as described in *Teamster Politics*. **Below:** Ray Rainbolt of Local 544, the guard’s commander in chief.

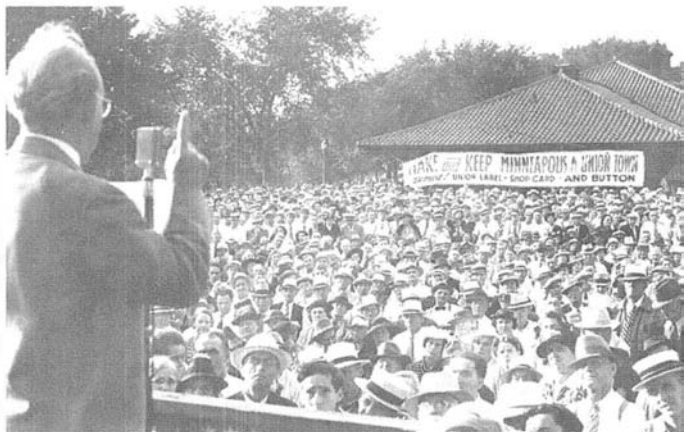


TOP PHOTOS, NORTHWEST ORGANIZER





NORTHWEST ORGANIZER



Teamster Politics recounts the struggles of Local 574's Federal Workers Section, launched in 1936 to fight for union-scale wages and conditions for jobless workers on federal "relief." **Top:** Works Progress Administration Sewing Project strike, Minneapolis, 1939. In August prosecutors indicted 166 workers, most on charges of "conspiracy" to deprive the federal government of "workers' services"; 16 served up to a year and a day in prison. **Center:** Framed-up California union organizer Tom Mooney, released after serving 23 years in prison, visited Minneapolis in solidarity with the jailed workers. Shown here, Mooney addresses labor rally, August 1939.



Christmas on Direct Relief

Northwest Organizer

Published every Thursday under the auspices of the
 of the
 Birmingham Evening Post

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 ST. LOUIS, MO.

On the 1st of January, 1914, the
 the American people
 should know it is their duty to

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 under Postoffice No. 100, Post Office
 at St. Louis, Mo.

PUBLISHED WEEKLY
 JAMES M. HENRY
 Business Manager, 187 PLUMBOURVA ST. LOUIS, MO.

When I see the American people
 who are so much interested in
 the world, I feel that I am
 doing my duty.

Get Out of China!

The sinking of the United States gunboat, Panay,
 in Chinese waters by Japanese soldiers, has the signal for
 all the world to get out of China!

Our "gunboat has been sunk."
 Our "fleet has been sunk."
 Our "fleet has been sunk."

What is the meaning of this? It means that the
 United States is a nation of slaves. It means that the
 United States is a nation of slaves.

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Keeping

The man who keeps his
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The Union is Our Bulwark

As we have seen and heard of the
 called the "extremists," we recall that during the
 of the last year, the American people have
 the American industry refused to admit the existence of
 the crime, let us remember that the American people
 are the bulwark of the Union.

The man who works for a living is the bulwark of
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Teamster Bureaucracy opens with the campaign organized by leaders of Local 544 (formerly 574) against U.S. entry into World War II. **Left:** In December 1937, amid swelling calls for military action by Washington in response to Tokyo's bombing of a U.S. gunboat in China, the lead editorial of the *Northwest Organizer*—weekly of the Minneapolis Teamster Joint Council—pointed to the superexploitation of Chinese toilers by U.S. big business. "What do they mean by 'we' and 'our'?" the labor paper said. "Why should we send one penny or one man to China to 'protect' them? Withdraw all American armed forces from China!" **Right:** In January 1940, just after leaving the Teamsters staff as general organizer and on the way to New York to become labor and organization secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, Dobbs visited Mexico to meet with exiled Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky.

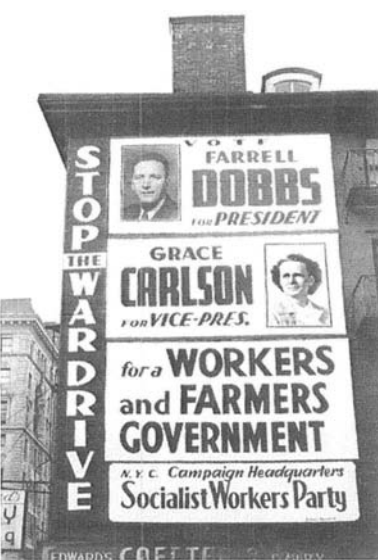


In 1941, aiming to break class-struggle opposition to the U.S. militarization drive, President Franklin Roosevelt's administration, in the first use of the notorious Smith "Gag" Act, indicted leaders of Local 544 and Socialist Workers Party. **Bottom:** Dobbs (center) and 17 others convicted of "sedition" on their way to federal prison, December 1943. To the right of Dobbs are party leaders Carl Skoglund, Albert Goldman, Oscar Coover, James P. Cannon (face partially obscured), and Ray Dunne. At left, Grace Carlson, the only woman convicted. The story of the frame-up trial and international defense campaign is told in *Teamster Bureaucracy*. **Top left:** Defense rally in New York City demands pardon of the Minneapolis 18, 1944. **Top right:** U.S. marshals raid Minneapolis SWP headquarters, June 1941.

**“The showdown battle for world socialism
is going to be fought right here in
the United States of America.”**



“There is no peace!” reads headline in August 18, 1945, issue of the *Militant*, the week after U.S. imperialism’s atomic incineration of the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki led the Japanese government to agree to unconditional surrender. “Workers of America! You must take power into your own hands.” Dobbs was an editor of the socialist newsweekly at that time. **Center:** Dobbs at the printer, doing a press check on the October 6, 1945, issue, whose headline reads: “Indochinese Battle Imperialist Despots.” The drawing by *Militant* cartoonist Laura Grey (**inset**) shows a Vietnamese revolutionary waving banner inscribed, “National independence” in face of bayonet-wielding heads of government from the imperialist United States, Japan, France, and United Kingdom.



ALL PHOTOS: MILITANT

Dobbs was the Socialist Workers Party's presidential candidate in 1948, 1952, 1956, and 1960. **Bottom left:** Three-story-high banner for 1948 SWP ticket of Dobbs and vice-presidential candidate Grace Carlson on side of the party's national headquarters at 116 University Place in New York's Greenwich Village, off Union Square. **Top:** Dobbs campaigns in working-class neighborhood in Detroit and soapboxes at street meeting of 400 in Brooklyn (**bottom right**).

“Don’t be summer soldiers. Maintain your place in the front ranks of the revolutionary fighters, and stand in that place for the duration.”



JOSEPH HANSEN / MILITANT



JOSEPH HANSEN / MILITANT

During Dobbs’s years as SWP national secretary (1953–72), advances for working people at home and abroad finally broke the momentum of the anticommunist witch-hunt. By the 1960s new generations were being won to the communist movement. **Top:** First mass meeting during 1955–56 bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama, which launched the struggle against racist segregation in the U.S. South. Dobbs and other party members drove station wagons there to donate to volunteer shuttle service. The SWP put support of the boycott at center of its 1956 campaign. **Bottom:** Dobbs on fact-finding trip to Cuba, April 1960, together with *Militant* editor Joseph Hansen, who took both photos. Their findings were reported in a widely circulated pamphlet, *The Truth about Cuba*. Dobbs campaigned nationwide in defense of the revolution during 1960 election.

Left: Dobbs speaking at conference sponsored by Young Socialist Alliance (YSA) in mid-1960s. **Right:** Dobbs spoke representing the SWP at a March 1965 memorial meeting for revolutionary leader Malcolm X, along with Malcolm's close collaborator James Shabazz (at left in clipping), Jack Barnes on behalf of the YSA, and others. **Bottom:** Dobbs helped the SWP and YSA map a proletarian course during the anti-Vietnam War movement. Shown here: Banners at New York march, April 15, 1967, demand "Bring the GIs home now!"

IS IT CONFERENCE 'NG SOCIALIST ALLIANCE!

MILITANT



“The story told in Teamster Rebellion also belongs to the growing ranks of Spanish-speaking workers in the U.S. today as they enter into struggle .”

—FROM THE INTRODUCTION BY JACK BARNES



PHOTOS: MILITANT

Top left: Rally in New York City at conclusion of Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride, October 4, 2003. Sign reads: “We are humans, not animals.” **Top right:** Members of the United Food and Commercial Workers, former employees at the AMPAC packinghouse in Chicago, protest being laid-off with no notice and without wages owed them, December 24, 2001. **Bottom left:** Rally of 3,500 in Doraville, Georgia, demands “Drivers’ licenses for all,” in response to state government attempt to deny them for immigrants, September 30, 2003. **Bottom right:** UNITE-organized laundry workers on picket line outside Flex-O-Tex plant in the Bronx, New York, demand union recognition, December 27, 2001.

"To the men and women who gave me unshakable confidence in the working class, the rank and file of General Drivers Local 574."

—FARRELL DOBBS



THIS IS THE STORY of the strikes and union organizing drive the men and women of Teamsters Local 574 carried out in Minnesota in 1934, paving the way for the continent-wide rise of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) as a fighting social movement. Through hard-fought strike actions, which were in fact organized battles, they made Minneapolis a union town, defeating not only the trucking bosses but strikebreaking efforts of the big-business Citizens Alliance and city, state, and federal governments. They showed in life what workers and their allies on the farms and in the cities can achieve when they're able to count on the leadership they deserve.

Farrell Dobbs, a coal-yard worker then still in his twenties, was one of the central leaders of the 1934 strikes. At the time he wrote this account almost forty years later, Dobbs was national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. With an introduction by Jack Barnes.

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