



New Trends In the Trade Union Movement

There is an unmistakable trend in the trade unions today which foreshadows the most important developments to come. It is shown in its boldest outline in the steel workers' union and came particularly to the fore at the recent convention. The rank and file delegates delivered some severe blows to the president, old "Grandmother" Tighe, and rode rough shod, breaking down all the fences he had so carefully built up. The trend is shown in the newly constituted federal unions organized in several of the mass production industries where a struggle is beginning for a status of industrial unionism. It was shown in the automobile workers situation, where at one time Collins had to wield his gavel heavily to prevent a representative delegate conference from taking strike action for union recognition. Yes, also, the change of front of the railroad union executives in actually presenting demands to the carriers, reflects the pressure upon them from the workers.

Leaders Under Fire

The high-priced labor leaders sense the quickening tempo. Some of them are already hit squarely by the impact and fear themselves riding the whirlwind. Others are trying to adjust at least their language to the pressure from the workers. All of them are endeavoring with might and main to hold back and to keep the movement within safe channels behind Roosevelt and the New Deal.

Bill Green, who is still a deacon in the Baptist church of his native Coschocton, Ohio, were he used to teach Sunday school, released a May Day forecast in which he says: "Labor believes that notwithstanding this refusal a concentrated drive should be made to compel, through the use of forceful methods if necessary, an immediate reduction in the hours of labor. There is no other remedy available."

Of course, he has said that before. We do not harbor any illusions that he, or any of the others in exalted positions of leadership, are becoming militant. Not at all. But the truth is that they all find themselves confronting new conditions.

New Forces in the Unions

New forces in large numbers are coming into the unions. They are mainly proletarians from mass production and basic industries. They look upon the unions as instruments of struggle and as means of protecting their interest. They mean to use them for this purpose. They bring forward the basic interest of the class as a whole, themselves representing its lowest layers.

We are no longer in the conditions of the past where the most powerful unions concerned themselves almost purely with the interests of privileged sections of skilled crafts. Concessions could be wrung from the employers for this privileged section on the basis of keeping the masses of unskilled and semi-skilled without organization and on a low standard of living. These concessions became the breeding ground for bribery, graft and corruption amongst the officials. The exclusive craft unions became the instruments to keep the rest of the working class in subjection. Now new problems begin to face these union officials.

The convention of the Amalgamated Association of Iron Steel and Tin Workers is a good example of these new problems. The union has witnessed a considerable influx of new members, rising from practically nothing to what, in the various estimates, range between a membership of 50,000 and 100,000. Its president, Mike Tighe, counted upon his office as a life-time job and always relied upon his good friends amongst the owners of the means of production.

Rank and File Revolts

To his consternation at the convention the rank and file delegates began to take charge. First they overruled his ideas, that delegates coming from local lodges who had not paid their per capita tax because of unemployment due to blacklisting of union members should not be seated. Secondly, they saved the convention from the disgrace of listening to "puddler" Jim Davis (the senator from Pennsylvania) and forced him off the floor. The

actions of this powerful opposition delegation culminated in the convention adopting the following program:

1. Immediate presentation of demands to the Steel Companies for Union Recognition and a substantial wage increase.
2. To give a ten day ultimatum to the trust, with preparations for a general strike if the demands are not granted.

For good measure the delegates decided to set up a special convention committee to be in charge of the "offensive action". This drew (Continued on page 4)

"United Front" In Chicago

Stalinists Celebrate May Day by Hooligan Attack on International Communists in Parade

Chicago.—The Stalinist-controlled May Day demonstration being the only one held in Chicago, the League decided to participate in it, in spite of the two rebuffs. Accordingly about 70 members and sympathizers gathered at the headquarters of the Italian Spartacus Workers League on May Day, formed a line and marched to the starting point of the demonstration in Union Park, headed by the red flag and under appropriate banners.

A Hooligan Attack

As soon as we took our places in the 9th division, the Stalinists immediately tried to isolate us from the main body by placing a cordon in front of us. Suddenly, while we were waiting to start, a Stalinist hooligan jumped upon a Spartacus Youth Club member and tore down the banner of the Spartacus Youth League. He did not however escape unpunished and that discouraged the Stalinists from trying a second time at that point.

When the demonstration finally got under way, we broke thru the cordon of Stalinists and joined the main body of the parade. Everything went well until we reached Grant Park where the demonstration was to wind up. There, took place a most dastardly attack upon us by an organized gang of Stalinists.

Grant Park was full of police and detectives. They stood about in large groups everywhere. Suddenly the Stalinist gang made its attack, tearing down banners and slugging right and left. In the brief space that the fight lasted, our comrades gave a good account of themselves but quickly withdrew at the sight of the police rushing to intervene. Had the police planted their agent provocateurs in the Stalinist ranks to furnish them with an excuse to intervene and break up the demonstration, they could not have done better than the Stalinist hoodlums.

Dental Mechanics Strike at Baltimore

Baltimore.—The first strike of the dental mechanics ever to take place in Baltimore was called on April 12, 1934. The response was almost a 100% walkout.

Before many days had passed the local bosses were reinforced by the national organization of the bosses. This turned the strike into far more than an event of only local importance. The National Association of the bosses was determined to stop the spread of the union which had already brought about agreements in New York and Philadelphia.

Labor Board Steps In

Early in the days of the strike, the union was suddenly called on by a representative of the National Labor Board. It is quite clear that this was done because the union had by this time become a recognized force in the industry. The Labor Board had shown no such interest in New York or Philadelphia in the attempts of the union to call to task the violators of the miserable code brought forth by the NRA. This move immediately consolidated the laboratory owners in that it brought them together as a group and interfered with the plans of the union to approach the bosses individually.

Negotiations were opened up and

Young Socialists and Spartacus Youth Sponsor United Front

BULLETIN

The National Committee of the Spartacus Youth Clubs and the National Committee of the Young Peoples Socialist League have agreed to sponsor local united front movements for May 30th in Philadelphia, Chicago, Kansas City and Los Angeles. The demonstrations on that day will be against war and Fascism and for the release of the four German youth who were delivered to the Hitler police by the Dutch Government.

New York City.—The youth conference initiated by the Spartacus Youth Clubs and the Young Peoples Socialist League in this city for a demonstration on May 30th against war and Fascism, for the release of the four deported German youth, and to protest the beatings and arrest of Yipsels on last May 30th by the American Legionaries, unanimously decided to approach the conference of the Youth Section of the League Against War and Fascism (Stalinist controlled) for common action on that day. The objectives of the conference were broadened to include a protest against the naval maneuvers in New York City on May 31st and in solidarity with the persecuted Cuban students.

These decisions were adopted after thorough discussions in which all the representatives partook. The organizations attending, in addition to the sponsoring groups, were the Student League for Industrial Democracy, the Youth Committee Against Fascism (Socialist), the Vanguard Jrs., the youth group of the Communist League of Struggle, the Young Communist League (Opposition), and Pioneer Youth. The National Student League had two observers present.

Discussion at the Conference

The NSLers launched into an attack on the conference as planning a rival demonstration to that of the Young Communist League's National Youth Day. They proposed that the conference dissolve and the constituent organizations attend the Stalinist youth conference of May 13th. The Lovestonites—Y.C.L. (O)—sharply criticized the Yipsels and Spartacus Youth for "the factional way in which the conference was organized".

The delegates of the Spartacus Youth Clubs, Manny Garrett and Joe Carter, replied to both the NSLers and the Lovestonites by stating that their organization had been and was in favor of common action of all radical youth groups. It was pointed out that both the Young Communist League and the National Student League had been invited to the national conference

for the defense of the four deported German youth on April 7th, neither organization sent delegates or replied to the invitation. The S.Y.C.s made a motion that the incoming executive committee of the Conference propose to the Stalinist conference of May 13th a joint committee for the preparation of a common demonstration on May 30th along the lines of the accepted objectives.

Yipsel Amendment

The Yipsels introduced an amendment which stated that the conditions for the united front with the Stalinists are: 1) their support of the struggle for the freedom of the four deported German youth, and 2) the repudiation by the Y.C.L. of the slanderous attack on the organizations which signed the protest petition on the four German youth sponsored by the Non-Partisan Labor Defense Committee. The second section of the amendment was sharply criticized by the delegates of the S.Y.C.s as an ultimatum which would be a serious obstacle in the road toward a genuine united front. After a heated discussion and a recess for consultation, the Yipsels withdrew their amendment with the statement that they will consider the Y.C.L.'s acceptance of our proposal for the united front as an implicit repudiation of the I.L.D. slanders. The Spartacus delegates made a statement welcoming this action and adding that it also would draw the same conclusion if the Stalinist youth accept our proposals.

The original motion for common action with the May 13th Conference was accepted unanimously. An executive committee consisting of one representative from each of the organizations present was constituted. The Conference elected Ben Fischer of the Yipsels and Manny Garrett of the Spartacus Youth Clubs as chairman and secretary respectively of the executive committee.

This is a big step toward real united front of the youth. The reaction of the Stalinists is yet to be seen.

New York's May Day In Review

May-Day—the greatest May Day in the history of New York City—is not too long past for discussion and controversy. The issues raised by the two huge demonstrations—one at Madison Square Park, the other at Union Square—are still lively issues. Time has lent certain perspectives that justify a fresh review.

More than 150,000 workers marched in the two demonstrations—the one under the auspices of the May Day Labor Conference, and the other called by the "United Front" conference of the Stalinists. The lines of march ran parallel, circling the center of Manhattan, and never met. Both parades were orderly and disciplined; each raised separately and challengingly—as if they were rival slogans—the call for a united front against Fascism.

The Communist League of America marched with the Socialists, trade unions, and other organizations in a united front that excluded only the Stalinist organization and its sympathizers — to Madison Square. It marched under its own banners, it had its own speakers, it introduced revolutionary slogans. It gained thereby in prestige among the workers; it proved thereby that it was prepared to support in action its own doctrine of a united front.

The Union Square parade and demonstration was a typical Stalinist "United Front"—without even the usual "united front" of liberals and theologians. It was a united front of Browder, Minor and Hathaway with such "non-party" elements as William Patterson, of the "non-partisan" I.L.D., and Jack Stachel, of the "non-partisan" T.U.U.L. Under its banners and slogans rallied the Stalinist controlled unions, Stalinist-controlled "mass" organizations, Stalinist intellectuals, students, professionals and social workers. It represented the full strength of the official Party. But that is all.

To this Stalinist "united front", despite the tricky and emotional

appeals of the Stalinist press, was attracted no working-class groups not already under the Stalinist thumb. The others marched to Madison Square.

The alternative, therefore, was rejected by the League as no alternative. The League marched with the Socialists and trade unions—social reformist groups, it is true, but containing thousands of workers headed leftwards, and quickly responsive to appeals for militant and united action.

This, the League holds, was a true united front tactic. This was a correct revolutionary policy. Its strength was demonstrated at Madison Square, and has been since proved.

The most significant happening on May Day, the big "lift" in both demonstrations, was the greeting the League marchers received from the militant Socialist youth. As the League group, carrying revolutionary banners and shouting revolutionary slogans, marched past the speakers' stand in Madison Square, there was general applause. But the young Socialists, massed in uniform around the stand, raised clenched fists in greeting, and the Square rang with their call:

Long live the United Front!

It was a vote of confidence in honest revolutionaries. It was a challenge hurled in the face of the bureaucrats, Socialist and Stalinist alike, who are splitting the working class ranks.

Hence, the new fury of the Stalinist attacks upon the League; the Daily Worker post-May Day editorial: "These are not oppositions to be refuted, but enemies of the working class to be destroyed." The Stalinists fear and hate the growing prestige of the League and its program.

—E.
ORDER A BUNDLE OF MILITANTS—ONE CENT PER COPY.
JOIN THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE.

Minneapolis Union Prepares For Action

Three Thousand Transport Workers Organize Forces to Fight For Demands

Minneapolis.—In the hands of the men who drive the trucks and vans, the delivery equipment of a modern city, lays a mighty power. Not a whit less important or powerful are the men who transport and serve the gasoline and oil which makes this vast industry a living thing. Taken together with that numerous

Wolinsky Gang Seize Control of Pocketbook Union

The notorious Wolinsky who was forced out of the Pocket-book Makers' Union in 1925 while he was manager of the union, and a partner in the firm of M. White and Co. at the same time, has been ushered back into the union at a general membership meeting, Tuesday, May 8th at the Stuyvesant High School. This was done through a coup d'etat that was staged by the present administration.

At this meeting the Joint Council of the union was supposed to bring a report on the pending negotiations with the manufacturers for a new agreement in place of the old one expiring in June. Instead, the whole meeting was confined to the Wolinsky issue. The Joint Council report was confined to one point presented to the membership: the election of the Conference Committee to meet with the bosses.

Reactionary Elements

The Conference Committee, as recommended by the Joint Council, consisted in its entirety of the most reactionary elements in the union, supporters of the Wolinsky gang, David Meyer, a Socialist and one of the leaders of the Progressive Group, led off the fight against the Joint Council recommendation by a motion to reject it. After Meyer, Block and Rothman of the rank and file group also spoke along similar lines, denouncing Wolinsky and all that he represents. But the machine was so well oiled that very few of the opponents were given the floor, while the Wolinsky supporters spoke one after another.

The administration as a whole climaxed its maneuvers to usher in Wolinsky with a letter from Wolinsky which they read to the members. In this letter Wolinsky pretended that he wants no paid job in the union, that he merely wished to offer his services as an adviser in the present difficult situation and in the negotiations. The manager of the union himself, in a demagogic speech, said nothing in opposition to Wolinsky, keeping in mind his own hide when Wolinsky is back in the union.

When the composition of the Conference Committee came before the membership for a vote, the administration tellers counted 616 votes in their favor and 359 against. The next move was a motion to give the Conference Committee full power to make Wolinsky its legal adviser. After a heated discussion, this motion too was voted, the Administration counting a victory for itself. The vote according to the announcement was 572 for this proposal, and 442 against.

Progressive Forces Divided

While both the Progressive group and the Rank and File group fought against Wolinsky's return to the leadership of the union—and this is what his "advisory" capacity will mean—no effort was made to bring about a unity of the two groups in the struggle. The Progressive group must find a way to unite all the groups and all the progressive elements to save the union. The rule of Wolinsky means a reign of terror against the best elements in the union. It means the suppression of all the democratic rights of the members. It means, in a word, the same gangster rule that prevailed during his administration prior to 1925. Such a unity is particularly imperative for the mobilization of the workers for the coming struggle to improve their conditions.

—A POCKET-BOOK MAKER.

and important strata of workers who store, preserve and warehouse the food that constitutes the daily ration of the people, we have a group of workers whose social importance is enormous.

That these workers, in the gasoline stations and in the warehouses, on the Market, in the paper trade, in the food stores as well as the helpers and drivers of the trucks in the various lines, have now realized the strategic position they hold is apparent to every worker who looks to union organization for help.

Workers Flock to Union

During the past several weeks these workers have streamed, by the hundreds, into General Drivers Union No. 574. More than 3,000 have been enrolled. They have not merely joined the union. With the leadership of a capable and experienced Organization Committee they have grouped themselves along seven main lines, according to type of job, and have set up committees to carry on the detail work. These rank and file committees have functioned with whirlwind speed. They have acted with the dispatch evident everywhere when serious workers set themselves to serious tasks. The monumental detail work turned out, the research work accomplished, under severely adverse conditions, the precise schedules drawn up, the manifold demands formulated in conjunction with the continuous organization campaign carried on at ALL times, will stand as a monument to the union loyalty and sincerity of the workers who have taken the lead.

And, by the same token, they will also stand as an accomplishment that gives the sharp and proper answer to the contented labor officialdom who sat back in their chairs and said: "it can't be done!" Today the General Drivers Union is the largest and by far the most important union in the city. It numbers in its ranks thousands of militant and determined workers. It takes in as members, besides the drivers and helpers, gas and oil workers, market and food store workers, truckers, wrappers, counter and platform men etc.—in short, those workers who are daily connected with the machinery of street transportation and delivery.

Coal Yard Workers in Vanguard

That the coal yard workers are members of this union needs mention only for the benefit of those workers who do not live in Minneapolis. For the benefit of workers in other sections we make a note. The present sweeping campaign of organization was planned and launched by the coal yard workers, these same loyal workers are again giving the best they have to the union. It goes without saying that they have been reinforced by a veritable army of eager and militant workers from all of the other sections. These new workers not only supplement the older and more experienced workers, but take responsible posts and leading roles in the general work.

The agitation and organizational work spreads out, in the hands of these willing workers, with more and more efficiency and, for the bosses, with terrifying speed.

Role of Labor Board

The Labor Board, when they act at all, shuffle back and forth between the bosses' and the workers' spokesmen. They stand between, they talk of "peaceful" settlements. They talk with tongue in cheek. No reliance can be placed in "labor boards", nor the decisions that come from them. We rely upon the union, upon the workers' organizations. It can be made strong by an alert and militant membership and, by a FIGHTING policy.

The workers organized in the General Drivers Union occupy a strategic position in industry. They have power to win their demands. The position this gives them in Minneapolis, is one of central importance. Far too little aid, to say nothing of consideration, has been given to

(Continued on Page 4)

AMERICA TODAY

A Lecture By
Max Shachtman

Who is just returning from a two and a half months tour from coast to coast, studying conditions first hand. He will deal particularly with the ferment among the American workers and the sentiment for a New Party and a Fourth International.

Friday, May 18th, 1934 - 8 p. m.
IRVING PLAZA HALL
15th St. and Irving Place