

PROGRESSIVE LEADERS BUILD N. W. LABOR MOVEMENT

MINNEAPOLIS, Sept. 3.—Written almost on the third anniversary of the triumphant 1934 strike of the General Drivers Union in Minneapolis, this article will picture briefly for trade union militants of America the progress and growth of the labor movement in this section for the past six months.

In contrast to the early days of the rise of progressive trade unionists to power locally, studded with spectacular strikes, the past half year has been more or less one of steady but relatively quiet growth. Many thousands of new workers, in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and North and South Dakota have been enrolled in the movement for the first time. The spearhead of the organization campaign has been the North Central District Drivers Council, organized one year ago on the initiative of the leaders of General Drivers Local 544 in Minneapolis.

At the present time there are over 20,000 members, working in five states, enrolled in this Drivers Council. Locals have been revived and strengthened, other locals have been set up, in about 20 cities. Today, there are General Drivers Locals, affiliates of the Council, functioning in Austin, Albert Lea, Duluth, Eau Claire (Wis.), Fargo (N. Dakota), Grand Forks (N. D.), Mankato, Minneapolis, Minot (N. D.), St. Cloud, St. Paul, Superior (Wis.), Brainerd, Watertown (S. D.), Mason City (Iowa), Winona, Faribault, Waseca, etc. In every community, working conditions have been bettered, union contracts have been won.

Strike Weapon Used

At times, the strike weapon has cracked the necks of the bosses. In June, the road construction workers in Minot, members of General Drivers Local 74, won their strike. An exceedingly important struggle took place in July, when on the first day of the month over 800 members of General Drivers Local 120 in St. Paul won an 8-day strike, gaining every demand, and equalizing wage scales in the driving industry of the Twin Cities.

During the struggle, Bill Brown, president of Local 544 in

Minneapolis, was arrested on charges of "highway robbery," placed against him after a scab truck had been damaged. While the charges were pending, 83 delegates of the North Central District Drivers Council met at their quarterly meeting in Duluth and resolved to call a 48-hour general protest strike in four states if Brown were convicted.

Had the strike occurred, it would have been the first political strike of this character in America. The bosses backed down before the threat, however, and on July 26 Judge Clayton Parker dismissed the case against Brown. Prior to the strike threat, information leaked out that the St. Paul employers were determined to railroad Brown to prison, as an example and a warning to progressive labor leaders to stay out of that city.

Ness-Belor Honored

On Sunday, July 18, hundreds of Minneapolis workers gathered in a parade and demonstration in honor of the memory of Ness and Belor, the two workers murdered by Minneapolis police in the 1934 strikes.

Minor strikes were called during the hot July-August days. On July 19, the milk drivers of Minot walked out and one week later won their demands. Local 544 won a short strike of the heavy hardware workers in Minneapolis. Drivers in Mankato, Minn., struck July 22, and won in 48-hours. The drivers in Eau Claire, Wis., struck on Aug. 3; one day later, they had a splendid contract, calling for wage increases of 15-25 percent, a week's vacation with pay, etc. Cab drivers in Minot went out Aug. 11, and are still carrying on a militant struggle. Ice, coal, transfer and lumber drivers of Winona struck on Aug. 23, and two days later won a victory for 250 men.

In Minneapolis, the General Drivers managed to win working agreements granting wage increases and better working conditions for thousands of workers in many sections—spring water, heavy hardware, market, lumber, package delivery, sand and gravel, excavating, etc. The wage level for drivers is around 75c here at present, compared with the 20c-40c hourly wage in 1934

prior to the rise of the General Drivers Union.

Whole Movement Advances

The steady progress of the workers in the driving crafts has naturally stimulated unionization in other industries. Other locals, following the progressive policies of the drivers, have won important victories during this period. On March 3, the utility section of Electrical Workers Local 292 in Minneapolis, won a short strike against the Northern States Power Company, gaining union recognition, wage increases, etc. A comparative newcomer, the Warehouse and Inside Workers Local 20316, has gained union contracts at the B. F. Nelson plant, the Buzza plant (through a strike), Butler Brothers, Sears, Roebuck (by strike), Jenny, Semple, Hill, etc.

On May 27, the Gas Workers Union Local 20490 climaxed a year's organization campaign by winning a closed shop contract from the Minneapolis Gas Light Company, gaining seniority, paid vacations and wage increases averaging 19 percent. Miles Dunne was loaned to the gas workers during this successful campaign.

The Woodenware Workers Local 1859, under progressive leadership, has grown into a powerful body. Delegates of the union recently attended a meeting in Oshkosh, Wis., of the Midwest Advisory Conference of Furniture and Woodenware Workers, at which 125 delegates from half a dozen northwest states set up a regional conference along the lines of the Drivers' Council.

This, in the briefest possible manner, completes the picture of union developments here since March. It is not hard to see why Minneapolis is today recognized (by both government labor bureaus and union officials) as "the best organized city in America." The seed of militant trade unionism planted in 1934 has been nourished along, and has grown to a mighty oak, casting its welcome shade over five states, and so firmly rooted in the working class that not all the onslaughts of the bosses, the blows of reactionary labor officials nor the machination of the Stalinists have prevailed against it.

Great Future

The possibilities of mass work that open up before the League are almost unlimited. Everywhere, throughout the country, the youth comrades have already turned their minds away from the recent unpleasantness to turn their eyes toward building a mass young Socialist movement in America.

History places tremendous responsibilities upon us, not only as the only revolutionary force in this country, but internationally as the largest youth organization lined up with the movement for the Fourth International. Now, when the regroupment of the revolutionary socialists may coincide with the outbreak of the second World War, when the fate of the Spanish revolution and the preservation and extension of the Soviet October depends more clearly than ever on the revolutionary organization of the workers of the world, when even the most radical representatives of centrism have sold out to the capitalist politicians through Roosevelt or La Guardia, the Young Socialists of America raise high the banner of Marxism. FORWARD!

LA GUARDIA ATTACKS MILITANT UNIONISM

NEW YORK. Fiorello La Guardia is now proceeding to make plain just what kind of "labor candidate" he is. Until he had sewed up all of the important labor bureaucracy he kept fairly quiet; but with that done he feels freer to speak his mind. Two recent addresses, one at the convention of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, and the other delivered to a rally of Local 3 of the Electrical Workers, are the most revealing. They read very much like editorials from the New York Times, outstanding spokesman of the pro-La Guardia movement. Especially is the Mayor at pains to insist that he "does not take sides" in labor disputes. "Although strike situations tend to become complex and confused," he told the electrical workers, "the city authorities throughout are sworn to safeguard the rights of all concerned, whether it be the strikers, the employers against whom the strike is conducted, his customers, the employees who refuse to strike..."

In both speeches, he stressed the point which is being hammered home by the reactionary press throughout the country: "The new rights and powers accorded labor require increasing responsibility..." "Misguided policy, excessive zeal or lack of discipline, leading to unruly demonstrations, minor riots, breaches of the peace or disorders extensive enough to become a nuisance to the public, can only lead to a strengthening of movements, always active, to curtail the rights of labor..." (speech to Local 3). The half-veiled threat in the last statement means, in plain language, an order to the bureaucrats to keep the workers yoked firmly in the harness of class collaboration or face the whip of

repression from the hand of the Mayor himself.

The bureaucrats evidently understand very well what is required. For example, the Transport Workers Union is dropping its efforts to gain recognition on the City-owned Independent Subway System, where the Union has a substantial majority, until after the elections, in order not to "embarrass" the Mayor. It would, of course, be a great error to expect "labor's candidate" to take a stand on the side of labor. At the same time, the Union has stopped pressing for a formal agreement with the B. M. T. Subway system—where the Union has already overwhelmingly won a Labor Board election. To go ahead might mean a strike; and, comments the Times, "such a strike... would place the City Administration, definitely recognized as friendly to organized labor, in a position where it might have to make the delicate choice between alienating labor support by rigid insistence that transit service go on as usual or antagonizing large sections of the public by real or seeming partiality to the cause of striking transportation workers."

Meanwhile, La Guardia has flung off his earlier coyness about accepting nomination on the Republican ticket. His hat is well into the ring for the September 16th primaries. He has accepted an invitation to speak at a luncheon of the Women's Republican Club on the 13th, where he will put an end to all doubts, and where he is expected to announce his support of the arch-Republicans, McGoldrick and Morris, as his running mates.

The Mayor gives Thomas and Browder a lot to swallow; but they apparently have iron digestions.

Colorado Party Leader Charges Tyler Factional

By Paul S. McCormick

The role of factionalism on the part of Clarityites occupying official positions in the party is no better exemplified than in the case of Gus Tyler, N. E. C. alternate and editor of the Socialist Call.

Immediately after the Colorado convention of the Socialist Party on June 13, the complete minutes and a tentative news story was sent to the Call. Three weeks passed and not the briefest notice was given. Then comrades from Colorado, San Francisco, Chicago, Kansas, New York and other parts of the country began writing to the Call asking for an explanation.

The State Action Committee of the Socialist Party of Colorado officially denounced the Call editorship for factionalism and discrimination against the left wing of the party. Still no notice of the convention in the Call and still no reply whatever from Tyler. Frank Trager was appealed to, and as National Labor Secretary of the Party and an N.E.C. member, he wrote Tyler asking for an explanation and requesting a copy of the same be sent to the Colorado comrades. Trager's letter was sent weeks ago, and still silence from Tyler.

Why Tyler Suppressed It

Why this flat refusal to print news from left wing sections of the party and why the uncomradely and discourteous attitude on the part of Tyler? Because the Colorado convention declared itself unanimously for the Fourth International, condemned a labor party, and attacked the N.E.C. resolution adopted at Philadelphia on Spain.

James Oneal, as editor of the New Leader, usually published party news from various sections of the country even though he was not in agreement with it, reserving his editorial column for personal criticism. For instance, he printed notice in 1933 of a resolution adopted by Local Denver calling for the formation of the Fourth International. If Oneal could be brought back into the party and made editor of the Socialist Call, as far as democracy of news selection is concerned, it would be a step forward.

Glen Trimble of California has been seriously reprimanded by the National Action Committee and threatened with disciplinary action for accusing Tyler of factionalism in his editorship. I am herewith submitting my two bits' worth of evidence in support of Trimble.

YPSL Convention Organizes For Work

(Continued from page 5)

tional Bureau of seven was set up in New York City, the new national headquarters, consisting of: Erber, Draper, Gould, Garrett, Kracik, Demby, plus a representative of the party.

The temporary Headquarters of the League are at 22 East 17th Street, N. Y. C. All circles and correspondents are to get in touch with the secretary at that address.

Program Mass Work

Finishing with the feeble disruptive efforts of the centrists, the convention turned its face toward the future. After a preliminary tightening up of the organization through re-registration, and reorganization wherever necessary, an extensive program of action will be undertaken.

Will place groups of comrades in the fields of the basic industries, to enlarge the indispensable working class base of the League.

Field organizers will be assigned to important centers throughout the country.

The Spanish situation will be centered in our propaganda. A special program of activity on this point is to be worked out by the NEC.

For the present at least one popular pamphlet will be published in the immediate period: four district schools in four states will be set up; regular educational outlines will be issued, including specific attention to the radicalized youth around the Stalinists.

At the same time, our student comrades will begin the campaign for a militant program for the American Student Union through the organization of left-wing sentiment in the organization.

All this, and the rest of the program of action, is to be coordinated through national tours to be made by Erber and Gould, covering the entire country; and pointed toward results in a national membership drive.