

# Grocery Drivers Win Strike in Minneapolis

## C. I. O. Director Repudiates C. P.; Carpenters Oust Stalinist Stooge

MINNEAPOLIS.—Complete victory on December 13 over the wholesale grocery bosses after a four-days strike has demonstrated the undiminished power of the Minneapolis Teamsters' Unions. The bosses involved in this strike were the last die-hards to yield to unionization last year, after a bitterly-fought seven-week strike.

Despite the lesson taught them last year, the bosses hoped to be able to take advantage of any confusion created by the Stalinist slander campaign.

### Issues of Strike

Union demands for sole bargaining power and a ten-cent increase of hourly wages were the chief issues of the strike. Although it involved only a few hundred men, the strike was conceded by both sides to be a test of strength which would determine who would hold the advantage when contracts expiring next May, covering most of the teamsters of this area, would come up for revision. The absolute solidarity of the ranks of the strikers, their ability to shut tight every house involved, and the extraordinary speed with which they forced the bosses to capitulate, indicate that the unions will have an easy time of it in the coming negotiations for the whole industry.

Sole jurisdiction and the ten-cent hourly wage increase, raising the drivers to a minimum of seventy cents per hour and the inside workers to a bottom of 60 cents per hour, were embodied in the contract signed by the bosses, recommended for adoption by the executive board of 544, and adopted unanimously, by a mass meeting of the strikers.

Twenty-four hours before the bosses capitulated, Mayor Leach attempted to go over the heads of the union leaders by sending every striker a "secret ballot" on the boss proposals. Leach's strike-breaking attempt fell completely flat, the strikers bringing all ballots to union headquarters. The bosses, more realistic than the mayor, did not even wait the necessary day to see if any strikers would respond.

Equally flat fell the attempt of Mayor Leach to foment hostility against the drivers' leadership in a radio speech the second night of the strike. Utilizing the old formula of "a plague on both your houses" Leach called on the labor movement to purge itself of both Stalinists and Trotskyists.

Ruefully mindful of the aroused indignation of the masses here against the attempts of the capitalist press to arouse a lynch spirit against the unions during the first days after the Corcoran murder, the press made no attempt to bolster Leach's speech. Seldom indeed has a mayor's move to declare himself in a labor situation received less attention from the daily press which elected him and continues to support him.

### Call Bosses Bluff

Northwest labor had been mobilized against the capitalist press in one of the most strongly-worded editorials that has ever appeared in a trade union paper. The Northwest Organizer, official organ of the Minneapolis Teamsters' Joint Council and spokesman for the 25,000 drivers of the North Central District Drivers' Council, as well as for the Northern States' Power Company

workers, the machinists, the warehouse men, etc., bluntly had called the bluff of the boss press:

"Threats of vigilantism are made by these hirelings of the bosses, for the first time since the strikes of 1934. The most conscious agent of the reactionary forces, the St. Paul Daily News, made such an open threat in a scare-head editorial on the front page, on November 29, after a 12-day campaign of identifying unionism with terrorism. With this 'build up' as preparation, the News finally screwed up enough courage to bluster: 'If the terrorism continues, a vigilante movement will develop.'

### Labor's Answer

"The answer of organized labor to such bluster is the answer we gave to it in 1934. Bring on your vigilantes, if they dare come out of their comfortable clubs and mansions! Just try it! Yes, just even try thinking about it! There is only one answer to such talk: put up or shut up! Organized labor knows that it has achieved its victories because of its own strength, and can continue to protect its victories only by its own strength."

Neither the St. Paul Daily News nor any of the boss papers called to account by the Northwest Organizer had the courage to accept the challenge. Their slander campaign immediately tapered off.

### C. P. Pulls in Horns

Beaten from pillar to post, the local Stalinists have pulled in their horns. The five-day sessions of the coroner's inquest into the murder of Pat Corcoran gave the progressive labor leaders an opportunity to put the Stalinists and their stooges on the witness stand, where their insinuations against the "Dunne brothers" were effectively punctured.

### C. I. O. Director Repudiates Stalinists

George Cole, Regional Director of the C.I.O., had to testify that the attacks on Corcoran and the labor movement, made under the name of the "C.I.O. industrialist Unionist," had been issued without his knowledge and that he did not accept any responsibility for that. "Will you assume responsibility for the statements in the paper?" Cole was asked by one of the jurors. "No, sir!" was Cole's immediate answer.

By the end of the inquest a total of eleven A.F. of L. officials had testified that their names had been signed to a Stalinist "innocent" leaflet without their knowledge or consent.

### Stalinist Kicked Out By Union Membership

Detlaf Wieck, a Stalinist and paid official of the carpenters' local No. 7, was thrown out of his union post by the indignant membership, at a meeting on December 9, after Wieck had testified at the inquest that alleged gangsters who threatened him had said, "We're Corcoran's men."

In an editorial of its issue of December 9, the Northwest Organizer said:

"Every conceivable device is being used by our enemies to derail the hunt for Pat's murderers into a slimy attack on the memory of Pat and the integrity of his unions. Let us cite an example which can be verified by scores of labor officials. Last February, when the alleged threat at revolver-point was made by unknown persons against Detlaf Wieck, he and his friends—the Bean-Mauseth-Smith crowd—reported it the night it allegedly happened, to the Central Labor Union meeting. At that time they made no reference whatsoever to Pat Corcoran. Nor did they ever, in Pat's lifetime, attempt to link him with the incident.

"But now Pat's dead. He can't speak up and defend himself. So Detlaf Wieck, in his testimony at the coroner's inquest, introduced an entirely new detail, invented for the occasion: He said that his alleged assailants told him: 'We're Corcoran's boys.'

"We shall be blunt. Detlaf Wieck, in saying this, acted as the mouthpiece for an attempt to brand Pat Corcoran as an employer of gangsters, and by so branding him to discredit the unions for which Pat lived and died."

### Another Serious Blow

Within twelve hours after the appearance of the issue of the Organizer, the membership had ousted Wieck.

Another serious blow to the boss-Stalinist slander campaign was the exposure and refutation, by William Wright, National A. F. of L. representative here, of an affidavit which the Stalinists produced as proof that Meyer Lewis, William Green's representative here, had plotted the murder of Harry Bridges. Wright was able to prove that every reference to facts which could be checked branded the affidavit as the instrument of a deliberate frame-up.

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn.—Art Hudson, president of the St. Paul General Drivers union, was elected chairman of the North Central District Drivers council to fill the post held until recently by the martyred Pat Corcoran.

Thirty-five delegates from the 29 union locals of the district council gathered here for a special meeting of the council's executive board to fill the vacant position.

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## INTERNATIONAL NOTES

Illegal Conference of Austrian Revolutionary Socialists—Esthonia Social Democrats and People's Front—Swiss Leader Exposes Stalin

By John G. Wright

The third Conference of the Austrian Revolutionary Socialists was held in October. While complete account of the proceedings at this Conference has not yet reached us, the material at hand is sufficient to characterize the political platform under which the shattered ranks of Austrian social democracy are seeking to rally the working class movement there. The Austrian "Revolutionary Socialists" are pursuing a centrist course. The chief document issuing from the Conference is a Manifesto to the Austrian workers. The Manifesto, after criticizing the sham of bourgeois democracy, goes on to say: "Only a socialist struggle for emancipation on the part of the toiling masses can liberate Austria from the yoke of National-Socialism (Fascism)". The manner in which the Austrian Revolutionary Socialists propose to wage this emancipatory struggle may be gathered from the Resolution on party tactics which was adopted.

The Conference placed itself on record against the Stalinist "illusions". The chief point of criticism being that under the slogan of the "People's Front" or the "Democratic Republic" the Stalinists turn with proposals of alliance to all kinds of groupings, "down to unimportant groups in reactionary camp." Instead of a forthright condemnation of the "People's Front" policies and of Stalinism, the resolution on party tactics confines itself to a declaration that the Party struggles for political freedom and considers the immediate task of this struggle to be the re-establishment of the organizational freedom of the labor movement. The party combines this struggle with the struggle for the economic and social demands of the masses.

It is hardly necessary for us to delineate the course pursued by the Stalinists in Austria. Suffice it to say that the Stalinists in Austria as elsewhere demanded, as an integral part of the People's Front betrayal, complete solidarity on the part of the Austrian Socialists with the Moscow frame-up... which proved a bit too much too swallow. The Conference complained of the "disruptive tactics" of the Stalinists, placed the blame for the break-up of the united front on the C. P., and then proceeded to 'empower the Central Committee to initiate steps aiming to convince the C. P. of the ruinousness and worthlessness of its present tactics and urge the C. P. to cease its struggle against the Revolutionary Socialists so that the existing unity of action its not destroyed but rather made firmer and more effective in the interests of the socialist struggle for emancipation and against the Fascist dictatorship."

The Austrian Revolutionary Socialists claim to be the partisans of the dictatorship of the proletariat. If they persist much longer in the conciliatory, not to say grovelling, attitude towards Stalinism, they will at best only repeat the tragic experience of the Anarchists and the POUM in Spain. The first condition for revolutionary action is to cherish no illusions about Stalinism but to brand it for what it is: the most dangerous and corrupt enemy of the working class movement.

### Esthonian Social Democrats Reform Ranks For a People's Front.

In 1934 the Esthonian S. P. split into three sections. In September 1936 negotiations for unity were initiated. One year later, in September, 1937, two of the sections reached a final agreement to fuse, in order to lay a basis for a "People's Front." The newly fused organization declared itself against any united front action with the Stalinists. But "recognizing that the Soviet Union is one of the main bulwarks of peace", the Esthonian social patriots pledged themselves not to "attack" either the Stalin regime in Russia or the C.P. in particular. Needless to say the Stalinists will not take kindly to this offer of "non-aggression", which is in essence similar to the attitude of the Austrian Socialists.

### Former-Head of Swiss Stalinists "Exposes" Stalin

Berner Tagwacht, organ of Swiss social democrats has printed the revelations of Walter Bringolf former leader of the Swiss S. P., and follower of Brandler, who had broken some time ago with the Comintern. Citations from these articles have been widely reprinted, among others by the Russian Mensheviks (Sots. Vestnik, Nov. 30, 1937). Bringolf deals primarily with the behind-the-scenes struggle between Stalin and the opposition in Russia. He does not specify the source of his information, but in the status of an "old Bolshevik" asserts that the idea of the New Constitution originated among the Red Army tops, as part of a campaign to bring the regime closer in line with the demands of the expanding production in Russia. It was the plan of this opposition headed by Red Army generals to retire Stalin either by assigning him to some sinecure or by altogether removing him from the political arena. Stalin pretended to go along, and then assumed the offensive. The "inside" story of Yagoda's downfall, to believe Bringolf, is as follows:

"Yagoda had always been personally tied to Stalin and absolutely devoted to him. Back at the time of the first trial against the opposition (Zinoviev, Kamenev), Yagoda went along with Stalin without any reservations. But following this trial some sort of inner conflict seized Yagoda. The thing is that in connection with this trial, a memorandum was handed to the Central Committee of the party, signed by 2,000 old Bolsheviks and decisively condemning Stalin's methods. Among the signatories were a good many of Yagoda's old friends and comrades-in-arms. Confronted with the necessity of applying harsh measures against those whose names adorned the memorandum, Yagoda wavered. This was his undoing. The avenging hand of Stalin descended on Yagoda himself."

Bringolf considers Bluecher's conduct of especial interest. "General Bluecher was taken by everybody for an oppositionist. And there is no doubt that in the main Bluecher was in agreement with those of his comrades in the Red Army who were shot."