

Gang Disrupts Astoria SWP Rally; Cops Look On

Harvey's Police, Like Hague's, Condone Fascist Tactics Against Labor Meetings; Workers Need Own Defense Guard

By FRANK GRAVES
NEW YORK.—A mob of hooligans, inspired with fascist ideology, succeeded in breaking up an open-air meeting of the Socialist Workers Party on July 14 at the corner of Second and Ditmars Avenues, Astoria, in the heart of the bailiwick of George U. Harvey, reactionary president of the Queens Borough, well-known for his red-baiting and hatred of the labor movement.

As soon as the meeting commenced, the rowdies, thirty or forty of them, closed in from all corners of the street intersection and set up a chorus of yelling and singing which made it impossible for the speaker to be heard.

In accordance with the customary procedure, the Astoria party branch had given advance notification to the police that the meeting was to be held and several cops were on hand, presumably to preserve "law and order" and the democratic right of free speech.

Police "Protection" But they permitted the hooligans to carry out their disruptive tactics unhindered, without even a mild warning. Nor did they intervene when the barrage of cat-calls, yells and snatches of patriotic songs was supplemented by a barrage of over-ripe fruit.

After twenty minutes of vain effort to gain a hearing, during which the mob worked itself into a frenzy bordering on real violence, the handful of Astoria comrades were obliged to abandon the meeting.

While preparing to move from the spot, our comrades heard such characteristic remarks as, "Go back to where you came from," "Reds are not welcome here," "Don't come back to Astoria." One youth was heard to say that the breaking-up of meetings was his favorite pastime.

Object Lesson in Democracy On their way to the elevated station a block away, we were followed and "protected" by a solitary policeman who had watched the rowdies assault our meeting without attempting to put a stop to their hooliganism.

Walking between our comrades and the yelling mob which followed them, he kept the hoodlums at a distance of a few yards, but this did not discourage them from hurling fruit missiles at the departing S.W.P.'ers.

This guardian of "law and order" showed by his whole attitude that he was in sympathy with the aggressive mob and was doing only the minimum necessary to prevent an outright mob attack on our hopelessly outnumbered comrades.

A show of real resistance to the hooligans would have put the latter instantly to flight. It was not forthcoming from the police because they, and their inspirer, George U. Harvey, are fascist-inclined and hostile to the workers' movement.

Defense Guard Needed Which points the need for a well-organized, disciplined and sufficiently numerous defense guard to protect our meetings. The hooligans are bold and aggressive because they know or sense our weakness. They could easily be put to flight by organized, physical defense and given a lesson which would discourage them from repeating their July 14 performance.

This was not the first S.W.P. meeting disrupted in Astoria. A week previous, at the corner of Steinyard Street and Jamaica Avenue, some distance away, young hoodlums inspired and egged on by Legionnaires and known members of a local fascist organization had carried out precisely the same tactics.

The conduct of the police in this precinct, too, was the same as at the July 14 meeting. One of the cops on duty there told us plainly that he had no sympathy with our ideas but that nevertheless we had the right to expound them at meetings.

He permitted the hoodlums to disrupt the meeting and pelt our comrades with fruit and vegetables, and finally escorted the local comrades to their homes to protect them from threatened violence. Thus he performed his duty of "protecting" the democratic right of free speech.

Material for Fascism Who are the rowdies? They are, for the most part, youthful people of both sexes, but a majority of them are young men in their teens or early twenties—the type of youth which has not known the taste of a job since leaving school. They are the New Deal unemployed, fast degenerating into declassed slum proletarians of the most vicious type.

Skoglund Elected President of 544

MINNEAPOLIS.—Carl Skoglund, veteran of Minneapolis labor struggles, was formally installed in office as president of General Drivers Union Local 544, after returns of the election were reported to the membership.

The official tabulation, reported by the union's election board, gave Skoglund 788 votes, with Tom McCue polling 596. Two other candidates, Peter Harris and Frank McArdle, received 26 and 19 votes, respectively.

The election was held to fill the post left vacant by the death of Bill Brown, long-time leader of the Minneapolis teamsters.

Jersey City, and his method of "handling labor"—the method of outright proscription and suppression of labor's hard-won rights.

Stalinists Also Attacked Not only the S.W.P. but the Stalinists, too, are finding it impossible to obtain a hearing on the streets of Astoria. A Communist Party meeting, despite the patriotic south-saying of its public representatives, was broken up by the same hoodlums at the same spot (Second and Ditmars Avenues) the night previous to the S.W.P. meeting.

The experiences in Astoria point to the growing danger of an advancing fascist movement in the United States. The continuing and deepening social crisis, throwing hundreds of thousands of the youth on to the scrap-heap of unemployment each year, is providing fascism with its human material, its army of the future.

This army awaits only an organizer with the gifts of a demagogue—a Hitler. If the labor movement proves unable to organize these elements and draw them into the class war for the overthrow of capitalism, which has reduced them to their present social plight, they will become recruits in the army of fascism.

The fascist peril is here right now. Jersey City—Newark—and now Astoria! Hague and Harvey! Only last week the Flatbush (Brooklyn) Chamber of Commerce addressed a letter to Mayor LaGuardia and Police Commissioner Valentine "respectfully demanding" that future outdoor mass meetings scheduled for Flatbush Avenue and Albemarle Road be held elsewhere.

Communists, Nazis, Friends of Spain, Catholics and non-Catholics draw as many as 2,000 spectators who create a nuisance and hinder business," the letter declared. Thus Brooklyn is in line to follow Hague and Harvey.

Right now is needed a workers' defense organization to defy and contest every attempt to curtail the rights of free speech anywhere — and workers' defense squads to protect working-class meetings from fascist assaults. There is no other way to halt the black plague of fascism.

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OHIO UNIONS TO DEMAND BETTER RELIEF SCALES

Example of Minneapolis Unions' Fight for Adequate Unemployed Relief Inspires Akron Workers

By B. J. WIDICK
Labor Secretary, S.W.P.

AKRON, Ohio.—A campaign to provide for supplementary relief for W.P.A. and industrial employes along the lines of the "Minneapolis plan" was begun here this week by the Akron C.I.O. council and Goodyear Local, United Rubber Workers of America.

By mobilizing the labor movement behind this fight, union leaders seek to revitalize the unions and to alleviate the suffering of thousands of families living on sub-existence levels.

The campaign was announced in the Summit County Labor News, which gave much credit to the Minneapolis Teamsters Unions for initiating the system of supplementary relief on a sound basis.

Over 110,000 of the 225,000 inhabitants of Akron are on one kind of relief or another, and thousands of rubber workers are working less than two days a week, thereby making a system of supplementary relief indispensable for the sheer existence of the people.

The plan of the Akron unionists was indicated in a resolution passed by Goodyear Local and the C.I.O. council. It reads:

Text of Resolution
Whereas, The present amount of wages received by W.P.A. workers and by part-time industrial employes is not sufficient to meet the minimum standard of living needs, especially of large families, and
Whereas, This grave situation

New Orleans Police Fight C.I.O. Unions

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C.I.O. union. All were forced to flee the town.

Use Sound Truck
The extent of the preparations for the "purge" was revealed when a sound truck appeared on the streets, manned by a group of the vigilantes. Names of suspected union members or sympathizers were called out over the loud-speaker. When the men could be found they were forced to state their position. If at all in favor of the union, or resentful of the humiliation heaped upon them, they and their families were ordered to get out of town.

Fight Legal Battles
With many of the strike leaders in hiding or in jail, and rank and file strikers afraid to appear on the streets because of the certainty of arrest, defense of the workers has been conducted almost wholly on the judicial plane. Two attorneys are busy night and day, attempting to protect the strikers according to their "legal rights."

In the face of the lawless activity of the police, acting on the direct orders of the boss-owned city and state government, the legal-minded defense attorneys are preparing a comprehensive document listing the specific violations of the law by the official thugs of New Orleans.

Philadelphia EXAMPLE AND SYMPTOM

An Editorial

In the face of economic decline and rising reaction, the militant unity of the labor movement is imperative. The example of Philadelphia, therefore, should inspire workers everywhere.

When the city councilmen of Philadelphia persisted in playing ghoulish politics with the suffering of the unemployed, the C.I.O. and the A. F. of L. leadership buried their differences. Together, they led hundreds of workers on the City Council last week. Together they brushed aside the police. And together with the workers they "stormed the City Council Chamber—with demands" for jobs for Philadelphia's unemployed.

Once there, the workers denounced the councilmen. Before they left, James L. McDevitt, president of the Pennsylvania Federation of Labor and head of the joint committee of the C.I.O. and A.F. of L. set up to get prompt action, warned the councilmen, "Continued refusal to take action to safeguard the 50,000 WPA jobs available to this city might have unfortunate results."

Symptom and Example
Philadelphia is both a symptom and an example.

It is a symptom that the workers cannot tolerate a split labor movement. Pennsylvania, the most industrialized state in the country, has the greatest proportion of unemployed, due to the economic decline. It is no accident, then, that the unity of the C.I.O. and the A.F. of L. should take practical form in the struggle against unemployment. In the face of the suffering jobless, all other quarrels are trivial. Only the unity of the labor movement can wrest jobs for the jobless from the government. Any bureaucrat who stands against this unity will find himself isolated and soon forsaken. This unity can be forged today—now. Philadelphia stands as an example.

Yipsels Announce Membership Meet

A general membership meeting of the New York District of the Young Peoples Socialist League, to be held Friday evening, July 22, at 916 Ninth Ave., is announced by the District Committee.

As the meeting is to be held for internal discussion, admission is by red card only. The meeting will be called to order sharply at 8:30 P.M.

COURTS CRACK DOWN AGAIN ON N. Y. STRIKERS

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course that the workers' rights must be abrogated.

By restricting themselves to merely legal contests against these decisions, the workers affected would be contesting decisions in a game in which the bosses have made all the rules for their own benefit. Obviously, the only way the Busch workers as well as all the others involved in these recent court decisions have of assuring themselves against the ravages of boss class "justice" is by implementing the lawyers' brief with strong doses of militant, mass action. That is also a means of obtaining a quick decision and of preventing their cases from dragging on and on until the union treasuries have been exhausted and the spirit of the militants sapped.

The surest way to protect the workers from the damage the capitalist courts intend to inflict upon them, is to bring the bosses to terms as rapidly as possible. While the lawyers engage the court in argument, the workers must resort to mass picketing that will break the injunctions in effect and hurl back the employers in actual practice.

It is gratifying to see that the Cotillo injunction has not stopped the Busch strikers. Their solidarity remains unimpaired. Picket lines continue to roam through the streets of New York's business district.

That responsible labor representatives are aware of the implications of the Busch workers' fight insofar as the whole union movement is concerned, is indicated by the expressions of solidarity coming into the Optical Workers Union every day as well as by the conferences called by the union and attended by more than 200 union delegates last week. In line with this spirit of solidarity, a Labor's Anti-Injunction Committee has been formed.

At a meeting of this Committee, addressed by Alan Haywood, regional director of the C.I.O., and other leading unionists, a resolution was adopted calling for agitation against the Cotillo writ by meetings, radio and mass picketing. To assure the movement against the injunctions of the greatest success, special stress will have to be laid on mass picketing. Every labor union should be involved in mass picketing demonstrations. Only by a powerful show of labor solidarity in action can the bosses and their judges be brought to their knees.

ASK FOR THE APPEAL AT YOUR NEWSSTAND

Auto Union Threatened With Split By Wreckers

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to step into the Auto situation and bring about peace between the two warring factions. On this point, the S. P. program, insofar as this group has a program, is identical with the program of the Stalinists. What significance has this request for the Auto Union?

Independence Threatened

The intervention of John L. Lewis into the auto union battle would mark the end of the autonomous and independent existence of the most militant union organization in this country. Lewis would only act as a receiver, in order to turn the union over to the Stalinists at the first favorable opportunity. That Lewis is not averse to turning unions over to the Stalinists, when he thinks that they are in a position of power, is attested by the fact that he did not hesitate to hand over the West Coast C.I.O. movement to Harry Bridges, who has since been wrecking and discrediting the C.I.O. organizations on the Pacific Coast.

Martin was completely right when he stated that the Auto Union was an autonomous body, that had voluntarily affiliated with the C.I.O. and that the latter had no authority to intervene into any International's internal affairs. All progressives must repudiate the calling in of Lewis or any other high mediator from the outside, who will only throttle its autonomy and either reduce it to the pitiful status of some of the C.I.O. organizing committees, or else hand it over, lock, stock and barrel to the Stalinist wrecking crew. The problems of the Automobile Union must be solved by the Automobile workers themselves, or they will not be solved at all.

Stalinists Prepare Split

After the Adde's expulsion, the Stalinists began active preparations for a rump convention of the Auto Workers Union. Such reckless proportions did their splitting campaign assume that a great dissatisfaction arose inside the Socialist Party against continuing the bloc with the Stalinists.

Recently S. P. members have registered a sharp change on their previous policy. At the

Monday night meeting of the Detroit District Auto Council, S.P. members fought against the calling of a special convention and condemned the attempts of the Stalinists to stop payments of per capita tax to the International. The S. P. has not yet achieved a complete break with the Stalinists and their program, but the first moves have already been made. The path is now cleared for the creation of a broad progressive bloc standing on the program of democratic and militant unionism and fighting the reactionary policy of the Stalinist gang.

It must be freely admitted that the "Martin administration has not facilitated the path of the S. P. or other union groups. Ever since the present battle in the union, the Martin leadership has remained, by and large, unmindful and ignorant of the actual desires and wishes of the rank and file membership. It has never clearly stated and certainly never clearly demonstrated, what kind of unionism it stood for and was prepared to establish. It has never put through a bold campaign to win the membership to its program and to condemn the reactionary program of the Communist Party, but has tried to solve this complicated task by premature and unexplained disciplinary measures against the opposition.

Martin Begins Campaign

The fact is the Martin group is not only composed of the most variegated and heterogeneous kinds of people, but includes red baiters as well. Only during the past few days has Martin begun an educational campaign to expose the Stalinists to the membership and to explain what kind of a union he proposes to build. He has already spoken at some major local union meetings and made several radio addresses explaining the position of his administration. But one swallow doesn't make a summer. Surrounded as Martin is, by many opportunists, job-seekers and reactionaries, his speech will bear no relation to the acts of his administration, unless he makes a genuine attempt to unite all progressive elements around his twenty-point program concretized to the present situation.

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