

Take the War-Making Power Away From Congress--- Let the People Decide!

As from this hour you use your power, The World must follow you

THE NORTHWEST ORGANIZER

University of Wisconsin
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Official Organ of the Minneapolis Teamsters Joint Council

MINNEAPOLIS OFFICE: 257 PLYMOUTH AVE. N.

Stand all as one
Till right is done!
Believe and dare and do!

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FIVE CENTS

... One Woman To Another ...

By Marvel Scholl

Next week when Federal Judge Joyce's court reconvenes, a group of our sex is coming to trial on the WPA thing. I would like to talk about these women, today. To tell you something about them as persons and unionists. Knowing them, working with them, taught many of us that women can be as good "union men" as any member of the male sex. A little less than two years ago the women on WPA began to realize that unless they did something about their own status, they would be left far behind the men. Most women on WPA are mothers, left alone to take care of their children. Unlike the men, they had not only to work on WPA but they had also to maintain their homes, keep their children clean and in school, keep them fed and well.

In other words, they had a double job. It might have been easier, from a purely physical point of view, had most of them stayed on direct relief or mothers aid—but women are no more ready and willing to take something for nothing than are the opposite sex. They clamored for and got jobs, sewing, cleaning, assisting in the hospitals, clerical work—anything at which they could work to earn their money.

Working on huge projects, under supervisors who were prone to give favors to favorites, made a group of these WPA women workers realize that unless they organized they were lost. So they organized. They won new and better conditions for all the workers. They took care of their members, called on them when they were ill, helped them get relief when they couldn't work, helped them get back their jobs when they were laid off, assisted them to do better work when they were in danger of losing those jobs because maybe sewing wasn't something they had been born to do—got parents of workers on Old Age Assistance—aided other mothers to get Aid to Dependent Children when it was no longer possible for them to go on with the double job.

In other words, these women took upon their own shoulders the cares and tribulations of many hundreds of families. Took those burdens willingly, their only compensation the knowledge that somebody else's life was a little less burdensome than it had been. They worked tirelessly completely forgetting themselves in their efforts to help the other fellow.

Next week several of these women come to trial. They are charged with "conspiracy." They face almost certain conviction. If these women—if any of the WPA workers who stand convicted or who are in danger of being convicted—if they are guilty then so is every man and woman in the United States who has ever dared to stand up for his or her own ideals; who has ever struck out against oppression; who has ever believed that this is a free country.

They are charged with "conspiracy" because they believed in the Golden Rule which tells us to "do unto others as you would be done by." If "conspiracy" is helping your fellow man to a better life; if conspiracy is putting bread into the mouths of hungry children and old people; if "conspiracy" is giving your all with never a thought for yourself, then they stand convicted. They are proud women. They make me real to be a woman!

WPA Defendants and Families Are a Cross-Section of Minneapolis



Reader, study this picture of a group of the defendants in the present WPA trials, shown with their families as they met last Wednesday night in the Drivers Hall. Look at the faces of the happy innocent children, at the housewives, at the men. Do these people look to you like criminals, like conspirators? Or do they look to you like your own family and your next-door neighbor? They are persons just like yourself, with all the average person's likes and dislikes, reacting to the same forces that move you. Indeed, every laboring man in Minneapolis, every woman and child, can study this picture and say to himself or herself: "There, but for a stroke of Fate, am I!"

Reader, you would have done the same. You undoubtedly HAVE done the same when confronted with a similar situation. You are as innocent of any wrongdoing as any of these indicted workers. Today these indicted workers—your neighbors and mine—find themselves in a tough spot. So does all organized labor for that matter. For if the "conspiracy" charge made by the government can stick against them, it can stick against all of us, against every member of organized labor. It can be used to tear down our unions, the first long step towards forcing living standards in America down to coolie levels. The AFL-WPA Defense Committee, through its chairman, George Murk, is appealing to unions everywhere to donate as generously as circumstances permit, to the defense fund. Help defend these workers, help appeal the decisions in the first two trials, help win complete freedom for all the defendants. Send your donation to L. Clair Johnson, Sec.-Treas., WPA Defense Committee, 18 North 8th street, Minneapolis.

3 More Convicted; Third WPA Trial Will Start Monday

Jury in Second WPA Trial Finds McLean, Connors and Riley Guilty of "Conspiracy" and Overt Acts—Moore, Fourth Defendant, Found Innocent—Of First Twelve Tried, Eight Are Convicted—Mass Trial of 25 for Conspiracy Gets Under Way Monday—State Federation Sends Out Appeal for Defense Fund

Early Friday morning, October 20th, the jury in the second of the Minneapolis WPA trials filed into Judge Joyce's courtroom to announce its verdict: three of the four defendants were found guilty of conspiracy and overt acts in connection with the strike of WPA workers last July. The first trial ended October 17th when the jury found five of the eight defendants guilty of conspiracy and intimidation.

Found guilty in the second trial were Milton McLean, Charles Connors and William Riley. Charles Moore was judged not guilty. Jurors took three ballots to reach the guilty verdict, six ballots before they decided Moore was innocent.

To Be Sentenced November 4th

The eight defendants found guilty in the first two of the ten trials so far scheduled were ordered by Judge Joyce to appear before him November 4th for sentence. Each of the charges carries a penalty of up to two years in jail plus a fine.

Directly after the second trial District Attorney Victor Anderson moved for trial of 90 defendants named by the federal government in one blanket "conspiracy" indictment. All the defendants were alleged to have participated in the picketing of the WPA sewing project in Minneapolis, where police attacked the picket line, killing one unionist and wounding many.

Next Trial Starts Monday

Defense attorneys moved for separate trials and the judge agreed to try 25 defendants starting October 30th, next Monday.

The score in the prosecution of the Minneapolis unemployed now stands as follows:

- Indicted—Over 150 men, women and youth
- Arrested—138
- Tried to date—12
- Found guilty—8
- Found not guilty—4

The indicted make up a veritable cross-section of the city's population. There are young men and women who have never known what it is to hold down a job in private industry. There are World War veterans. There are college graduates and there are workers who have toiled from childhood. There are Negroes and Irishmen, there are Jews and Catholics and Christian Scientists and Seventh Day Adventists. There are veteran union members, and persons who for the first time in their lives participated in a strike and a picket line.

The one thing in common about all these people is that their economic situation was and is desperate. When the government passed the recent relief bill, cutting the wages and slashing the jobs and lengthening the hours of workers on WPA, all these people joined in the nationwide WPA strike which swept the country early in July.

No Defense Witnesses in Second Trial

Tom Davis, defense council, rested his case in the second trial without presenting any witnesses.

While waiting in the courtroom Thursday for the jury to bring in its verdict (the verdict wasn't reached until Friday at 9:45 p. m.), Charles Connors, Negro defendant, mused about his case.

"Here's me," he said, "I'm really a victim of circumstances."

Connors, who served 15 years in the U. S. Army, is now a truck farmer living near Osseo.

"So help me," he said, "I never raised my hand at a soul, and I never went around trying to chase people off the project. I was working on the Robbinsdale project in the blacksmith shop. Riley was there, too. They came along and pulled us off the job first. We were the first to be closed down. Riley and I went along with the rest of the strikers to the Belt Line project and the gravel pit. I walked into the gravel pit to talk with Martoccio. He made an insulting reference to my race. Then I did take a pass at him but he warded off the lick, just like he told the jury. But I never spoke to a soul at the beaches, though I visited them the next day... Boy, I am a victim of circumstances."

Lull in Trials

With no trial on this week, there appeared a brief lull in the WPA cases. The expected renewal of investigation into the WPA strike by the federal grand jury did not materialize when the jury reconvened Monday. District Attorney Anderson announced his calendar was so jammed that no further WPA cases would be presented jurors at its present session. However, he has petitioned the federal court to continue the present grand jury on call for another six months.

Determined to prevent the establishment of a legal precedent which would endanger organized labor everywhere, the AFL-WPA Defense Committee has accepted the responsibility of appealing the verdict in the first two trials.

The appeal will require a large sum of money, coming on top of the heavy financial burden already carried by the committee and the labor movement in Minneapolis. The Defense Committee appeals to unions everywhere to donate generously to the defense fund, to mail checks and protest resolutions to L. Clair Johnson, secretary-treasurer, Minneapolis AFL-WPA Defense Committee, 18 North 8th street, Minneapolis.

State Federation Sends Out Appeal For Defense Fund

On Tuesday officials of the Minnesota State Federation of Labor, in accord with the resolution adopted at the recent state convention, sent out a circular letter to all unions in Minnesota urging that contributions be made to the defense of the indicted WPA strikers.

Signed by President R. A. Olson and Secretary George W. Lawson, the appeal reads in part:

"You are aware of the actions of the Federal Grand Jury and the trials now in progress in Minneapolis and the possibility of similar trials in St. Paul arising out of the protest made against the increasing of hours and reduction in pay which were brought about by amendments to the WPA relief measure by Congress.

"While those involved in these proceedings are not all members of organizations affiliated with this Federation or the American Federation of Labor, the questions involved are of vital interest to the labor movement, and it is for this reason that the convention, in our opinion, took the position they did on this question...

"It devolves upon those who are interested from the standpoint of seeing justice done, and those who are or will be vitally affected by the outcome to assist in securing the best possible legal assistance and advice.

Recommend Contributions
"We are therefore recommending to the local unions of Minnesota that they cooperate in this effort, that they contribute to this defense fund to the extent of their ability, that such contributions be sent to the office of the Federation which will acknowledge the receipt of the same and make a report of all such receipts to the next convention, and will see that such receipts are properly apportioned between any of the communities in our state who may be faced with defending themselves in these matters.

"Prompt action by your local union is essential. We trust we may have your cooperation in the matter."

'Hard Times' Is Theme of FWS Dance

Those attending the Federal Workers Section Halloween Hard Times Dance this Saturday evening will not only be assured a good time but will help contribute financially to raise needed funds for the FWS to extend its organization.

Costume prizes for the most elaborate and comic "hard times" costumes will be given by the Dance Committee headed by Charles Sather. A corking good union orchestra led by Elinor Gumbles will play both old time and modern music for the dance.

Chairman Sather reports that ticket sales have been brisk and a large crowd of Halloween merry makers are expected to attend. Tickets are 25c and all FWS stewards are selling them.

The dance will start at 8 p. m. in the third floor of the Drivers Hall, 257 Plymouth Avenue North. It is reported that many FWS members are preparing clothes for the party and a number of highly original costumes are anticipated.

State Drivers Council Meets In St. Cloud

The regular meeting of the Minnesota Drivers Council was held last Sunday in St. Cloud. Representatives present from drivers' unions throughout the state endorsed the work of the Area Committee and the new over-road pact recently signed in Chicago. The drivers' union negotiators were highly praised for their work.

The state council held a lengthy discussion on the dispute with the Gamble-Robinson company and reached agreement on detailed plans for the pending area strike against this concern.

Statement by Executive Board Of Local 544

The attention of the Executive Board has been called to the fact that several Union members have arranged meetings of members of Local 544 away from the Union Headquarters and without consulting and receiving authority of the Union. Such meetings are sponsored by individuals claiming the authority of the Union. The Executive Board declares that no permission has been or can be given for such gatherings and wishes to make clear to the membership that meetings of members dealing with Union affairs are customarily held in halls provided by the organization. The Board also has information which indicates that funds are being solicited from business firms in the name of the Union. The Union has not authorized anyone to solicit funds in its name. Anyone being so solicited will confer a favor by calling the Union at once.

Executive Board, Local 544

Excelsior Corp. Signs With 1859

Following weeks of negotiations, the American Excelsior Corporation, 3200 East Hennepin, has signed a new one-year agreement with the Furniture Workers Union Local 1859, to go into effect December 5th when the present contract expires.

The pact is practically a renewal of last year's, inasmuch as it provides for an hourly minimum of 52½c, the 40-hour week and a week's vacation with pay. Slight upward wage adjustments were made in a few classifications, and a new clause provides that the wage clause can be re-opened for negotiations within 30-days' notice if there is a 10% raise in the cost of living.

Puffer Firm Aims New Blows at 1859

The seven-weeks' Puffer-Hubbard strike shifted to a new front recently when representatives of the Furniture Workers Union Local 1859 appeared, together with Ed Palmquist of Local 544's Federal Workers Section, before the State Unemployment Commission. The union committee sought unemployment insurance for 23 Puffer-Hubbard workers who were laid off before the strike began. The hearing lasted all day Friday, October 13th.

The Puffer-Hubbard management has intensified its vindictive attitude towards its workers by seeking to bar them from receiving the unemployment insurance and the relief to which they are entitled. In the Unemployment Commission hearing the management argued that the 23 workers were laid off for inventory only, and would be back working now if it weren't for the strike—therefore, the company demanded the workers be denied their unemployment insurance.

The union leaders were able to prove by testimony that the practice of the Puffer-Hubbard company over a period of years has been to lay off a score or more workers early in September and not to re-hire them until the first of the year. The union movement is awaiting with interest the decision of the Unemployment Commission on this case.

In the company's effort to break down the solidarity and morale of the strikers, it has also written letters to the relief department on each individual striker, asking relief authorities to deny them relief.

Despite these company moves, the union is maintaining a solid picket line and is confident the final victory will go to the union.

Make Minneapolis a Union Town

