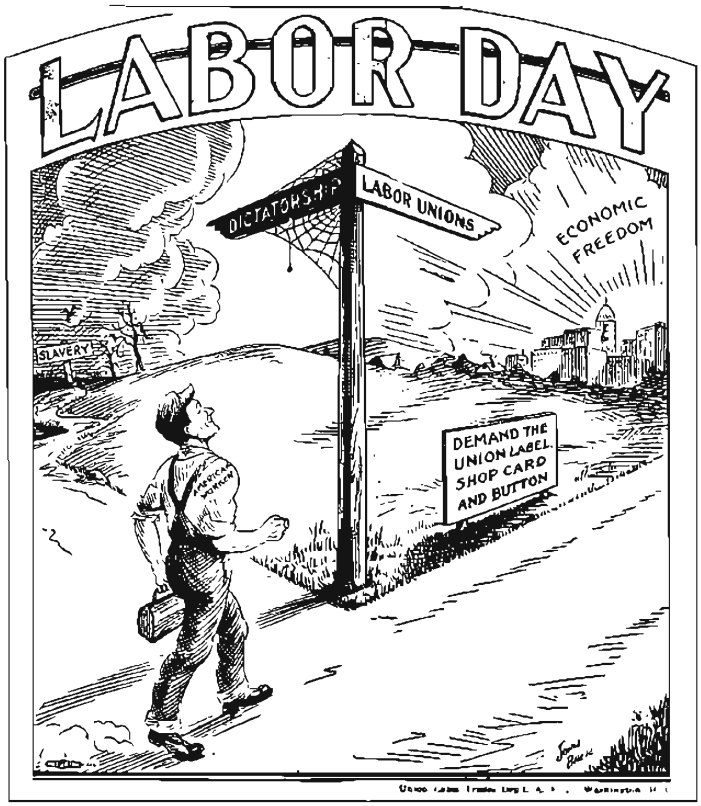

KEEPING MINNEAPOLIS AN OPEN-SHOP TOWN

The Citizens' Alliance in the 1930s

Lois Quam and Peter J. Rachleff

SINCE the Industrial Revolution, workers have organized to build unions. Maintaining and expanding these unions, however, has called for even greater organization. Employers responded to solidarity in kind, but they united in order to resist and repel unionization. Usually, the two parties' strengths have been in inverse relation: a period in which employers have been well organized has typically found workers' groups to be weak, and vice versa. When both sides were well organized the consequences were dramatic.

By the early 20th century, opposition to unions took on increasingly organized form. A nationwide "open shop drive" between 1902 and 1917 threatened unions from the building trades to the metal shops. After a brief truce during World War I, employers introduced the "American Plan," geared both to driving out existing unions and to forestalling any new efforts. This plan was more sophisticated than the open-shop drive; in addition to the typical "sticks"—yellow-dog (individual) contracts, industrial spies, and private security forces—it relied on various "carrots"—pensions, vacations, insurance, and even company unions. At the same time, employer organization itself was strengthened, ranging in size and power from trade associations that worked with Secretary of Commerce (and later President) Herbert C. Hoover to locally based organizations committed to keeping their communities and their industries nonunion.[1]

No local employers' group achieved greater notoriety than the Minneapolis Citizens' Alliance (CA). Class-conscious industrialists, merchants, and lawyers had worked together in the City of Lakes during the 1917-18 trolley strikes. Over the course of the 1920s, they strengthened their organization and assumed the leadership of the entire Minneapolis business community. By the early 1930s they had gained nationwide attention through their success at turning Minneapolis into an open-shop town. Amidst the great labor upheaval of the mid-1930s, this organization caught the interest of the prominent Yale sociologist, Charles R. Walker, who

[1] David Montgomery, *Workers' Control in America, Studies in the history of work, technology, and labor struggles* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 48-90; David Brody, *Workers in Industrial America, Essays on the Twentieth Century Struggle* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 48-81; Gabriel Kolko, *Main Currents in Modern American History* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 100-156.

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noted that the alliance "appeared to all observers to be one of the most powerful and efficiently organized employers' associations in the United States."[2]

By the early 1930s, the CA had "a permanent and well-paid staff, a corps of undercover informers, and a membership of eight hundred business men." Most were small and medium-sized entrepreneurs, hit hard by the Great Depression. At the core, however, was a network of financial power provided by wealthy bankers, grain millers, and department store owners, such as George D. Dayton, O. P. Briggs, president of the Minneapolis Foundry Company, E. J. Phelps, an investment banker, and Frederick R. Salisbury of Salisbury and Satterlee Company, manufacturers of bedding. Later leaders included C. C. Webber of Deere-Webber Company and attorney James Shearer.[3]

"[F]or nearly a generation," Walker noted, the alliance had "successfully fought and broken every major strike in Minneapolis." While the 1934 truckers' strikes dealt a major blow to the Citizens' Alliance, it was hardly fatal. Although unions had established a foothold in Minneapolis, the CA, shored up by its ideology and organizational structure, continued to limit the growth of organized labor. The 1935-36 Strutwear Knitting Company strike provides a case study of the Citizens' Alliance after the 1934 truckers' strikes.[4]

THE CITIZENS' ALLIANCE had one practical goal: to keep Minneapolis an open-shop town. Large employers, above all others, were the chief beneficiaries of this strategy. Yet, to remain successful, the alliance needed to enlist the aid of smaller employers, professionals, shopkeepers, even workers. After all, members called their organization the *Citizens'*, not the *Employers'*, Alliance. Leaders frequently invoked religious morality and the American Constitution to legitimate their authority. The group, for instance, claimed to be motivated by a desire "to secure for every employer and employee freedom of contract in the manner of employment." In its constitution, these principles were voiced in three primary goals: "To promote, on a fair and equitable basis, industrial peace and prosperity in the community, and the steady employment of labor; To discourage strikes, lockouts, and unfair demands by either employer or employee; To uphold the principles of the Open Shop."[5]

In public addresses, A. W. "Bert" Strong, "the grand old man of the Alliance," frequently linked the open shop to the preservation of the American Constitution. Strong and the CA leadership claimed that the closed shop, which required all workers to be union members, violated that sacred document. Every employer-member of the alliance was required to sign the following statement: "This Company will not knowingly employ or retain in employment any person whose principles or expressed beliefs are in opposition to the Constitution of the United States of America or the American principles of government."[6]

The alliance called the closed shop "an invasion of the constitutional rights of the American workman." In a publication entitled "The Real Menace to Industrial Peace in Minneapolis," CA president F. E. McNally claimed that the alliance was formed "to protect every man and woman in their right to pursue their occupation without interference regardless of how they vote, worship, or whether they belong to a labor union." McNally wove together the themes of suffrage, religious expression, and the open shop to argue that the closed shop was a violation of First Amendment rights.[7]

Invocation of religious authority was a cornerstone of the Citizens' Alliance's appeal to its members. This strategy provided leaders with a moral rationale for their actions and an argument that their motives were not selfish and profit-oriented, but altruistic and principled. Religious arguments were presented with religious fervor. Charles Walker had an opportunity to size

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[2] William Millikan, "Defenders of Business: The Minneapolis Civic and Commerce Association Versus Labor During World War I," *Minnesota History* 50(Spring, 1986):2-17; Charles R. Walker, *American City: A Rank-and-File History* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1937), 87.

[3] Walker, *American City*, 87; George D. Tselos, "The Minneapolis Labor Movement in the 1930s," (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1970), 13, 23; "What the Citizens' Alliance and Open Shop Have Done for Minneapolis," *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*, April 17, 1921, sec. 6, p. 8; "Top Business Leaders among Founders of First Organization—1903," undated, typewritten list, Citizens' Alliance (CA) Papers, Minnesota Historical Society (MHS), St. Paul.

[4] Walker, *American City*, 87. This book remains one of the best available studies of the truckers' strikes of 1934; Tselos's dissertation is another good source. For some participants' accounts, see Farrell Dobbs, *Teamster Rebellion* (New York: Monad Press, 1972); Steven Trimble, "Interviews with Strikers" (Pauline and Harry DeBoer and Jake Cooper), *Red Buffalo* (Buffalo, N.Y.) 2-3 ([1971?]):69-90. The tapes from which this edited transcript is derived are available in the MHS audio-visual library. For a previously unexamined dimension of this strike, see Marjorie Penn Lasky, " 'Where I was a Person': The Ladies' Auxiliary in the 1934 Teamsters' Strikes," in *Women, Work, and Protest*, ed. Ruth Milkman (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), 181-205.

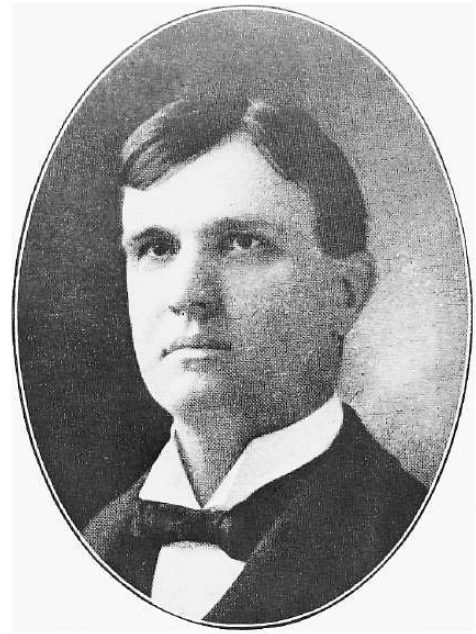
[5] CA, *Annual Report, 1932*, 2, and *Constitution and By-Laws* (reprint, May 1, 1935); O. P. Briggs and J. W. Schroeder, "Policy and Principles of the Citizens' Alliance of Minneapolis," undated pamphlet—all CA Papers.

[6] Walker, *American City*, 190-192; Minneapolis Bureau of Industrial Relations, "Employment Relation Policies and Rules and Regulations Governing Employment," [1934], CA Papers. Strong was the president of Strong, Scott, and Company, manufacturers of grain elevators and boiler equipment. He was a charter member of the CA and president several times.

[7] CA, *Annual Report, 1932*, 3; McNally, "The Real Menace to Industrial Peace in Minneapolis," [1935?], CA Papers.

O. P. BRIGGS, *1902*

A.W. STRONG, *1915*



F. R. SALISBURY, *1902*

up Bert Strong's style: "[T]his is neither politics *nor economics*—it is theology."[8]

Such zealous leadership was translated into the "victory at all costs" methods best evidenced in the Citizens' Alliance's efforts to break the 1934 Minneapolis truckers' strike. In that strike, the alliance—on behalf of the employers—co-ordinated efforts to move goods with nonunion labor, assisted in arming and organizing a police force, and negotiated with Mayor Alexander G. Bainbridge and Governor Floyd B. Olson.[9]

Even when it presented economic arguments, the CA downplayed such motivation as personal gain and profit. In one pamphlet it emphasized the "inefficiency of union labor in building industries" and claimed that this "raises the rent of the masses." The author concluded that living costs would diminish "when the men who build homes will do a full day's work ungrudgingly."[10]

For the Citizens' Alliance, the corollary to this argument was that economic mobility was open to any hard-working male. Members pointed to their own lives as ample evidence of the possibilities of "rags to riches." Bert Strong told an audience: "When I was still a young man—this was in the nineties—I decided I would like to be my own boss. I had no capital but I was young with plenty of blood and vinegar in me. I was ready to take a chance. . . . for I had a plan to buy out this business of which I am now president." In such an ideological framework, the able and motivated would succeed. Other workers were simply of a lower caliber and thus rightfully paid lower wages.[11]

THE CA'S VARIANT of social Darwinism had a revealing limit: the organization did not intend to sit back and wait for nature—or history—to take its course. On the contrary, the alliance promoted considerable activity on the part of Minneapolis' business class. This activity had three primary goals: to promote communication, co-operation, and unity among Minneapolis employers; to co-ordinate the surveillance of union and unemployed workers' groups; and to organize preventive measures and crisis actions to stop workers from organizing or striking.

Joining the Citizens' Alliance entailed submission of an application, payment of dues, approval by two men on the membership committee, and finally, election by the executive committee. Dues were $10.00 for individuals, $25.00 for small business employers, and $50.00 for large concerns. Applicants were required to have a business or residence in Hennepin County. Alliance members elected two leadership committees: the 14-man executive committee was the highest decision-making body, and 50 organizational directors formed the other group.[12]

A letter from business owner Salisbury to George K.

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[8] Walker, *American City*, 189-191. The Yale sociologist contended that Strong and some of his cohorts genuinely believed in the ideology that they promoted. "I am ready to believe that in Strong's case, and in that of his emotional adherents among employers, the fact that non-union Minneapolis means higher profits for the Alliance membership doesn't consciously enter into their thinking."

[9] Dobbs, *Rebellion*, 65-67, 75-78, 87-96, 150-156.

[10] CA, "Result of Union Limitations of Production in Building Industries: Report of Cleveland Grand Jury," undated pamphlet, CA Papers.

[11] Walker, *American City*, 187.

[12] CA, "Law and Order and the Open Shop," Feb., 1927, p. 2, CA Papers.

Belden, alliance membership secretary, emphasized the importance of the CA to the Minneapolis business community. "[T]he fact that there is an organization which is prepared to be of assistance to all employers of labor that are subject to unjust demands of employees either organized or unorganized, has enabled them to take such action as they consistently believed to be right, with the knowledge that they would not be compelled to carry all the burden themselves and stand all the loss that their interests would suffer by so doing." Fellow alliance member T. E. Cootey, owner of the Cootey Lithographing and Printing Company, reiterated this sentiment: "We regard the Citizens Alliance as a safety valve which protects, in a greater or lesser degree, almost every line of business in the city."[13]

Still, maintaining unity among competitive businessmen during economic hard times was no easy matter. The CA enforced internal allegiance through membership pledges and disciplinary action. Each member signed a pledge to support the Citizens' Alliance goals as listed in that group's constitution. Furthermore, boycotts and credit restrictions kept unruly members in line. From 1927 to 1930, the group conducted a boycott of union shops and those showing sympathy toward organized labor. Using local labor's list of shops determined to be fair or unfair, the CA cut off business with the fair shops. Major banks, such as Northwestern and First National, joined in, restricting credit facilities and using their influence on behalf of the alliance.[14]

The Citizens' Alliance was described by two St. Paul reporters as "an element just as hard-boiled in its own way, just as truculent as the militant laborites." With references to the 1934 truckers' strike, the *St. Paul Daily News* story continued: "The Citizens Alliance has used terroristic methods as freely as Local 574, has cracked down on moderate business men just as vigorously as have the Dunnes on conservative union men." Minneapolis' most renowned unionbuster, Lloyd M. MacAloon, the "directing genius" of the alliance and its vice-president and director of employment relations, was characterized as "[f]iercely hated by labor . . . the terror of business men who favor a conciliatory attitude toward the union."[15]

In addition to many brochures for the general public, the alliance printed two regular publications, the *Weekly Bulletin* and the *Monthly Bulletin*, as well as numerous confidential crisis alerts. The *Weekly Bulletin* was the CA's major vehicle for communication with its members, keeping them "informed on vitally important developments, locally and nationally, in the field of labor relations." The crisis alerts, derived from intelligence reports on union or unemployed council activities, were also sent only to members—in some cases, only to certain segments of the alliance.[16]

The *Monthly Bulletin*, founded in 1916, had a circulation of 6,000 by 1921 and 7,000 in the 1930s. Copies were distributed to working people in Minneapolis in order to "combat a large number of Socialist and Anarchist publications placed before the workers every week." Its first issue stated its purpose: "The public had little or nothing to read upon the question of radical unionism. Neither does the average workman have information on this subject from the employers' viewpoint, while his home is flooded with radical union and communist propaganda. The purpose of the *Monthly Bulletin* is to supply this lack of knowledge."[17]

THE DUNNES and compatriots during the truckers' strike: Grant Dunne, William Brown of local 574, Miles Dunne, Vincent R. Dunne, and attorney Albert Goldman

The Citizens' Alliance papers do not detail directly the organization's intelligence system, but they do include a wealth of union and unemployed council handbills and meeting information, reports on individual

[13] Salisbury to Belden, Cootey to Belden, both May 15, 1905, CA Papers.

[14] Industrial Commission of Minnesota, "Report of Temporary Board of Mediation and Arbitration," *Fifth Biennial Report, 1929-1930* (St. Paul: Department of Labor and Industry, 1930), 284; *Fortune* 13 (April, 1936): 197; Walker, *American City*, 189-191; Tselos, "Minneapolis Labor Movement," 23.

[15] *St. Paul Daily News*, Oct. 8, 1936, p. 7.

[16] CA, "Citizens' Alliance of Minneapolis," Mar., 1936, p. 11, CA Papers. The MHS holds a nearly complete set of the *Weekly Bulletin*. Unemployed councils were grassroots neighborhood groups, frequently under radical leadership, that were established in many cities during the 1930s to help people deal with the effects of the depression.

[17] "What the Citizens' Alliance and Open Shop Have Done for Minneapolis," *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*, April 17, 1921, sec. 6, p. 8; *Monthly Bulletin*, Dec., 1916, p. 1, CA Papers.

activists, union cards of alliance informants, and similar material. Historian George Tselos wrote that the Citizens' Alliance spent thousands of dollars each year on surveillance; the frequency and extent of references to information thus obtained substantiates intelligence-gathering as a major source of the alliance's information. Such surveillance helped the CA, for example, organize preventive action against strikes or the formation of unions. Employers were encouraged to call on the alliance for support and advice when threatened with strike action. The extent of this support is evidenced by the alliance secretary's note in 1933 that employers' pleas were "taxing our resources to the limit."[18]

WHEN section 7A of the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933 threatened to open the floodgates of worker organization, the Citizens' Alliance formulated a model plan for "employee representation" for use by its members. To encourage adoption of the plan, it also formed the Minneapolis Bureau of Industrial Relations, complete with a brochure that read: "[It is] important that every employer, large or small, have in his establishment a definite and practical employment relations program which will safeguard his right to select and retain desirable and competent employees and that he require as a condition of employment acceptance on that part of his employes of definite rules and regulations governing employment."[19]

Once again, the Citizens' Alliance stood at the forefront of a major national trend as it aimed to pre-empt labor organizing by fostering company unions—unions based in only one plant and closely linked to its management. In the introductory document for their model plan, alliance leaders wrote: "[I]t is highly essential that the management see to it that tried and true employes assume the leadership . . . then . . . an organization will have been set up which will automatically exclude the racketeer or the unscrupulous, prejudiced union working delegate."[20]

The plan itself was a form with blank space for insertion of any company's name. Calling for twice-a-year meetings between management and the "employee representatives" on company time, it reiterated the Minneapolis Bureau of Industrial Relations' aim: "Recognizing that in the enactment of the National Industrial Recovery Act, it will be the most expedient and helpful, in order to promote the end sought in this legislation, to bring about close cooperation between management and employees, and believing that the welfare of the employees, as well as the management, can best be served through a plan of mutual representation managed by our own industrial family."

The alliance also established a "Proposed Individual Employee Agreement" to thwart labor organizing under the recovery act. This agreement between employers and workers established a rate of pay, hourly schedule, length of the contract, and the conditions for the temporary or permanent termination of the contract. Both parties signing agreed to abide by managerial prerogative: "the Employer shall have the right to select and hire the Employee, and to retain, advance or dismiss the Employee for cause, solely upon the basis of the Employee's individual merit and without regard to the Employee's affiliation or non-affiliation with any Labor Union or other Organization."[21]

After the 1934 truckers' strike, the CA's Minneapolis Bureau of Industrial Relations issued revised employment policies in a further effort to undermine union organizing. Several drafts of a document entitled "Employment Relation Policies and Rules and Regulations Governing Employment" were circulated in 1934, bearing the banner "Fair Dealing is the Fundamental Principle Upon Which the Relationship Between Employee and Management Should Be Founded." This form required employers to take a firm open-shop stand, to state explicitly their obligation to their employees, and to state the procedure for firing.[22]

The alliance recommended that workers be informed they could be fired for the following union-related behaviors:

> The possession or exercise by an employe of any habits, demeanor, characteristics, action, or course of action that make him objectionable to other employes, *the public*, or to the Management, or that make his retention in service disruptive of the spirit of harmony therein, or would cause other employes to leave the service.
>
> Engaging in organization activities or any other activities outside of regularly assigned duties, during working hours.

[18] For references to information gained through surveillance, see the run of *Special Weekly Bulletins*, CA Papers; *Minneapolis Labor Review*, July 14, 1933, p. 1; J. W. Schroeder to members of Citizens' Alliance, July 25, 1933, Robley D. Cramer and Family Papers, MHS. A key potential source remains beyond the grasp of researchers. The MHS has the Lloyd M. MacAloon Papers, but they are restricted for 75 years. Mr. MacAloon's son has turned down all research requests.

[19] "Minneapolis Bureau of Industrial Relations, Its Purposes and Functions," [Feb. 8, 1935?], and *Employment Relations Program*, pamphlet, Sept., 1934, CA Papers.

[20] Here and below, see "Suggested Plan for Employe and Employer Organization for the Purpose of Collective Bargaining under the National Industrial Recovery Act," June 6, 1933; "Model Plan of Employee Representation," June 13, 1933, CA Papers.

[21] "Proposed Individual Employee Agreement," undated, typewritten form, CA Papers.

[22] Here and below, see Minneapolis Bureau of Industrial Relations, *Employment Relations Program*, CA Papers.

> Practicing or encouraging by conspiracy or force the lowering of personal efficiency, the limitation of output, or advocating, encouraging, or participating in activities or action tending to create discord between employes or between Management and employes.
>
> Advocating sabotage or criminal syndicalism as defined in the state law prohibiting same, or preaching or advocating doctrines of communism, or conspiring in any manner against the government of the United States.

The Citizens' Alliance urged all members to post this new form in their workplaces. It clearly represented an intensification of the conflict between management and workers in that year; the 1933 policies had not extended managerial prerogative to firing an employee because of union affiliation.

In the aftermath of the truckers' strikes, the Citizens' Alliance sought to strengthen its hold on Minneapolis employers. Its leaders used payroll audits and investigations to keep member firms united and nonunion. They even encouraged workers to sue their employers for back wages and other reimbursements if those employers, whom the CA then labeled "chiselers," broke ranks with the alliance.[23]

IN AN EFFORT to undermine organization among the unemployed, the Citizens' Alliance also developed programs to restore a paternalistic relationship between rich and poor. Promoting their Job-a-Week program, established in 1931, alliance leaders contacted country club associations, churches, and luncheon clubs, asking them to help find temporary jobs for unemployed persons. Interested job-seekers would register with the CA and then be classified according to need and qualifications. Anyone interested in hiring a worker signed a Job-a-Week Club card stating: "I desire to become a member of the Minneapolis Job-a-Week Club and agree that our family will furnish an odd job once a week, or as often as we possibly can, to some unemployed man or woman, resident of Minneapolis with dependents to support." The project received fairly wide backing from Minneapolis clubs and churches. In the winter of 1934, for example, the alliance placed 3,000 people in these temporary jobs.[24]

The Free Employment Bureau was another alliance effort. Established in May, 1919, it offered daily job placement at no cost to workers or employers. It was most active during the Great Depression, but even earlier secured many jobs: 33,982 in 1927; 36,372 in 1929; 32,131 in 1930; 27,270 in 1931. In 1936 the alliance noted that the bureau had spent $10,000 a year to place an average of 24,166 persons. The Free Employment Bureau was in close contact with Dunwoody Institute in Minneapolis and other trade agencies, using these connections to place workers in nonunion companies for their first job. The bureau also offered its services as a consultant to personnel departments of members' firms and assisted them to prepare a case if called before the local labor board.[25]

Thus, as the labor situation changed in Minneapolis, so did the CA's strategy. The ultimate goal of restricting unionization in the city remained the guiding force behind the group. The alliance's innovative internal organization and activities such as the model plan for employee representation, the Minneapolis Bureau of Industrial Relations, the Free Employment Bureau, and the Job-a-Week program all made the CA a national leader in employer organizing.

THE EIGHT-MONTH Strutwear strike in 1935 and 1936 was the central labor-management conflict of its time. Coming when both employers and workers were well organized, this struggle served as a rallying point for both the forces of the new unionism and the forces of anti-unionism. Local unions and labor activists provided visible, dramatic support for the young men and women on strike. On the other side, the Citizens' Alliance entered the fray on behalf of Strutwear management, urging it to hold a firm line against the advancing wave of labor.

Local opinion about the Strutwear Company reflected these antagonistic forces. The business establishment, led by the CA, hailed Strutwear for its annual payroll, its local property taxes, its company union, its voluntary compliance with National Recovery Act codes. Local labor activists saw Strutwear differently; it was "long recognized as one of the most infamous sweat shops in the city of Minneapolis," noted the *Northwest Organizer*. "For many years this company has maintained an efficient stool pigeon system, company unionism, the speed-up and stretch-out system, child-labor and all the other vicious practices which go to make big profit for the bosses and miserable conditions for the workers."[26]

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[23] F. E. McNally, "Market Firms Payroll Audit and Investigation," May 1, 1935, CA Papers.

[24] J. W. Schroeder to Rufus R. Rand, Aug. 31, 1931, Sept. 10, 1931; Job-A-Week Club card, undated, both CA Papers.

[25] Schroeder to Rand, Sept. 10, 1931; *Monthly Bulletin*, June, 1924, [1-3]; "Law and Order and the Open Shop," Feb., 1927; "The Free Employment Bureau of Minneapolis, Minnesota," April 1, 1932; "Specific Activities of the Minneapolis Bureau of Industrial Relations," [1935?]—all CA Papers.

[26] *Northwest Organizer* (Minneapolis), Aug. 21, 1935, p. 1; *Minneapolis Journal*, Aug. 25, 1935, p. 7. The *Minneapolis Labor Review*, Aug. 30, 1935, p. 1, noted: "Strutwear is not so full of struts as during the time for years that it reigned over its helpless employes like a tyrant of the middle ages."

From its establishment in 1916, Strutwear had been a virulently anti-union company and a participant in the Citizens' Alliance. Management insisted all employees sign an individual ("yellow dog") contract which affirmed management's rights to hire, make job assignments, and lay off workers, according to its own criteria ("seniority and family responsibility . . . when same does not conflict with merit"). "Congeniality" and "harmony" were stressed, "among employes and between employes and the Management." Twenty dischargeable offenses were listed, including: "Practicing or encouraging by conspiracy or force the lowering of personal efficiency, the limitation of output, or advocating, encouraging or participating in activities or action tending to create discord between Management and employes." When the National Recovery Act's section 7A threatened such individual contracts, Strutwear created a company union. Management got state-of-the-art advice from friends in the Citizens' Alliance and used state-of-the-art union avoidance tactics.[27]

Right from the start of this conflict, the two sides squared off. Strikers demanded the reinstatement of eight discharged union activists, formal recognition for Branch No. 38 of the American Federation of Hosiery Workers, recognition of a shop committee, and wage increases to the level paid in other midwestern hosiery plants. They argued that the recently passed Wagner Labor Relations Act gave them the "right" to organize and raise such demands. Strutwear management, on the other hand, contended that workers were "satisfied," that the strike was the work of "outsiders," and that the pickets were a "violent mob" bent on denying Strutwear employees their right to work. With the CA in its corner, management took a hard line toward the union, refused to negotiate, and called upon local, state, and federal authorities to protect the "right" to do business. This was to be a major test of the strength of the new, growing labor movement against that of the well-established Citizens' Alliance.[28]

The Strutwear workforce of 1,133 was divided, as typical of this sort of industry, into skilled male and unskilled female workers. More of the men were attracted initially to the union, while many women were intimi-

THE MINNEAPOLIS STAR — MONDAY, AUGUST 5, 193[illegible]

THAT THE PUBLIC MAY KNOW

For the first time since 1916, when Strutwear Knitting Company was started as an infant industry in Minneapolis, it has ceased operations.

Our employes did not strike. Outsiders forced the closing of our plant on August 19th. No complaints or grievances of any kind had been made by our employes. No demands whatsoever were made upon us by anyone prior to the time that a large crowd of belligerent men strangers to us and to our employes, gathered in front of our factory doors and, by violence and intimidation, prevented our employes from entering the plant.

Our attempt to reopen our plant on Monday, August 19th, resulted in violence and serious injury to some of the 150 employes who were able, with the assistance of police officers, to make their way into the building. One office employe was struck in the head with a piece of concrete. Our office manager was assaulted and cut about the face.

The continued presence of a hostile and disorderly mob of several hundred, who surrounded our plant and virtually kept it in a state of siege throughout the entire day, terrified employes in the plant, causing two young women to collapse from hysteria and fright and making it necessary to send them to the hospital in ambulances.

When our employes left the factory they suffered vile abuse and physical assaults, even though under police escort.

No business can operate under such conditions. We cannot expect our employes to subject themselves to the serious physical hazards involved.

We closed our plant Monday afternoon, August 19th. It will remain closed until such time as we and our employes can resume operations without the presence at and on our property of a hostile and violent mob recruited from the ranks of unemployed and communist organizations.

The Strutwear Knitting Company grew up in Minneapolis. From a small struggling factory, employing 50 people in 1916, it has grown to the point where, during the last year, it has given employment to 1,133 Minneapolis people, of whom about 700 are women.

It has given steady employment 52 weeks in the year throughout the depression to an ever increasing number of young men and women from the homes of Minneapolis, who have been trained for their jobs in our plant.

It has been our policy to employ only one member of a family. This means that at 1,133 families are represented by the employes of Strutwear Knitting Company, to every one of which the forced closing of our plant is a serious matter.

Approximately 90% of our business volume is obtained outside of Minneapolis.

Our annual pay roll to employes is slightly less than a million and a quarter dollars.

We pay local taxes annually in the amount of $48,000.00.

Our building and grounds represent an investment of $692,348.00. Our machinery and equipment represent an investment of $1,342,892.60.

We operate on a 40 hour week basis. We have not increased our hours nor reduced any wages since NRA was declared unconstitutional.

The violent demonstrations at our plant have been conducted solely in an effort to force our employes to join a union against their will.

The Strutwear Knitting Company will resume operations when law and order is restored so that our employes may pursue their lawful right to work.

Strutwear Knitting Company

1013 SOUTH SIXTH STREET — MINNEAPOLIS

dated by their employer's power. Yet all were united by their youth, "boys and girls in their teens and early twenties," according to one labor newspaper, and by their energy. Experienced unionists—Alexander McKeown of the American Federation of Hosiery Workers, Roy Wier, organizer for the Minneapolis Central Labor Union, Robley D. Cramer, editor of the *Minneapolis Labor Review*, and the Dunne brothers of Teamsters

[27] Strutwear Knitting Company, leaflet subsection entitled "Basis of Employment Relationship," May 2, 1934, p. 2, 4; American Federation of Hosiery Workers, Branch No. 38 to Strutwear workers, Sept. 5, 1935, CA Papers.

[28] *Northwest Organizer*, Aug. 21, 1935, p. 1; *Journal*, Aug. 25, 1935, p. 7; "Strutwear Knitting Company Case," n.d., p. 3, CA Papers: "To accede to the demands of outsiders who represent but a handfull [*sic*] of the 1,133 employes of the company, Strutwear Knitting Company management feels will encourage the use of the mob against all industry and will bring about further forced closings of its own plant, as well as other plants."

ANGRY pickets and their supporters milling around the gates of the Strutwear plant in 1935, early in the course of the strike

General Drivers Local 574—helped weld these strikers into a tight organization throughout the ranks of the Strutwear workforce.[29]

The strike began on Friday, August 16, 1935, as a protest against the discharge of eight union activists. Organizing had been going on for several months, after some rank and filers visited Milwaukee, where they had learned firsthand of the wages, hours, and conditions in a union plant. At first, they were able to spread organization mostly just among the skilled male knitters. But, infused with anger over the discharges and a new sense of power, most departments participated in the August walk out. Men and women milled around the plant, obstructing the gates. The center of attention was a confrontation between a rank and filer and an office manager who had waded into the crowd to urge a return to work. His efforts netted him a punch to the jaw, much to the delight of the strikers. The company announced before the day was out that the plant would reopen on Monday and appealed for police protection. Popular attention over the weekend focused on Monday: what would happen?

Monday, August 19, saw the sort of confrontation anticipated by both sides. Six hundred pickets, Strutwear strikers and supporters, massed in front of the gates. A full complement of 68 armed police met them head on. Clubs were used, and one policeman fired a shot over the heads of the crowd. The police drove the pickets across the street to admit a small group of strikebreakers. Ray Dunne of Local 574 was trapped by the police away from the pickets. He was severely beaten and then arrested. A call immediately went out for additional pickets.[30]

At 3:00 P.M., the strikebreakers, with a police escort, tried to leave the plant by the back door. A huge procession followed them down 7th Street, where they were ushered into Dayton's by the police. The strategy was to mix them in with shoppers "and thus sneak into some dark corner and hide themselves from the world which they were ashamed to face." Many pickets were able to follow the strikebreakers into the store and speak with them. The next day, there were no strikebreakers. On Wednesday, August 21, the strikers held a funeral for the company union. They marched a coffin around the plant and then buried it in a vacant lot across the street. They felt their strength growing.[31]

The *Minneapolis Journal*, a newspaper sympathetic to the Citizens' Alliance, noted that "Minneapolis is at the crossroads. Strutwear is the test. Which road is Minneapolis to take—the one that goes up, or the one that goes down?" The *Labor Review* editorialized: "Minneapolis is no longer the paradise of the scab and even the Citizens Alliance is not describing it lately as an open shop heaven."[32]

THE CITIZENS' ALLIANCE played the primary role in representing management to workers and the public and in preparing company strategy. Through the efforts of Lloyd MacAloon, serving as advisor to Florence Struthers, the company president, strategy was developed. MacAloon started working for the alliance in 1926; during the Strutwear strike, he received a salary as its vice-president and director of employment relations. Struthers took a back seat to MacAloon in the management of the strike. George Belden, long-time CA member and president in 1935-36, was the regular representative of company interests to public officials.[33]

The company's strategy represented the Citizens' Alliance approach at its best. Strutwear refused to negotiate with the union, claimed that the controversy was

[29] Here and below, see *Northwest Organizer*, Aug. 21, p. 2, Dec. 4, p. 4, 1935; *Labor Review*, Aug. 23, p. 1, Oct. 4, p. 1, Oct. 25, p. 1, Dec. 13, p. 1—all 1935. The Dunne brothers were Vincent (often called by his middle name, Ray), Miles, and Grant.

[30] *Northwest Organizer*, Aug. 21, 1935, p. 2.

[31] American Federation of Hosiery Workers to Strutwear workers, Sept. 5, 1935: "[T]he company led their employees into believing that they could adjust any grievance that existed through the medium of the company union. However, when the officers of the company union endeavored to take up any grievances for adjustment with management they were intimidated and threatened with discharge."

[32] *Labor Review*, Sept. 13, 1935, p. 4; *Journal*, Oct. 1, 1935, p. 1.

[33] Walter Nold and Company, "Audited Account of the Citizens Alliance of Minneapolis," Jan. 30, 1937, CA Papers; *Minneapolis Star*, Dec. 27, 1935, p. 10.

provoked by "outsiders," and that "their" workers had been "satisfied" and were now in "economic distress" and eager to return to work. Union leaders and prominent supporters were red-baited. The company claimed to be in receipt of a workers' petition urging the reopening of the plant and announced that workers had formed a "Back to Work Club" with 900 members. Again and again, Strutwear management claimed to have workers' "rights" and best interests at heart.[34]

Yet, at the same time, the company simultaneously applied economic muscle, both to its employees and to the city authorities. When Strutwear closed on August 22, officials announced that it might not reopen in Minneapolis, but might relocate. This was the signal for Belden and the Citizens' Alliance. He organized a "businessmen's committee" to pressure the city government to make it possible for Strutwear to reopen. At first, Mayor Thomas E. Latimer, only recently elected with labor support, refused to act. Then, in early November, business interests tied to the CA incorporated the Peacock Knitting Company in St. Joseph, Missouri. In two weeks, this dummy company was in federal court, claiming that Strutwear owed them $5,000 in undelivered material. They were issued a writ of replevin and given the right to move goods out of the Strutwear plant under protection of federal marshals.[35]

During Thanksgiving week the company made ready to move the materials. Rumors were widespread that this was the beginning of a move to Missouri altogether. The Minneapolis Central Labor Union held a mass meeting and issued a call for pickets to aid the strikers. Support for their stand against anti-unionism had grown over the previous months, as had the membership of the local union. Numerous other unions contributed to the strike fund, the Farm Holiday Association delivered tons of food, and local labor activists had joined the picket lines and addressed mass rank-and-file meetings of Branch No. 38. Now, the company's strategy was to test these forces. General Drivers Local 574 successfully discouraged all local trucking concerns from doing the work, and Strutwear contracted with the Winona Dray Company. The stage was set for a showdown.[36]

Conflict erupted the day after Thanksgiving. Mass pickets blocked the moving trucks and tangled with local police and federal marshals. Several were roughed up. Plant windows were broken by thrown stones. Four pickets were arrested and charged with contempt of court for violating the federal order. Little was actually moved—and the strikers felt they were still holding the line. So, apparently, did the company and its ally, the Citizens' Alliance.[37]

The businessmen's committee stepped up its pressure. It held a public meeting and passed a series of resolutions, decrying "mob rule" and "brute force." "The lawful right to work is just as inviolable as the right to strike," the businessmen argued. The committee also held closed-door meetings with Mayor Latimer, in which they urged him to provide police protection to reopen the plant. The CA helped circulate a model resolution for businesses and trade associations to pass and send along to the mayor. This resolution claimed to look out for "the rights of this great majority of the employes of the Strutwear Knitting Company," and it closed by urging the mayor and the police force "to prevent the assemblage of disorderly mobs or masses of so-called pickets." The pressure campaign yielded results, as Latimer issued his own statement, pledging police protection and urging Strutwear to reopen. As Christmas neared, the management announced its intention to do just that.[38]

MEANWHILE, support for the strikers grew. Two locals, the milk drivers and hotel and restaurant workers, provided Thanksgiving dinner. General Drivers Local

[34] *Northwest Organizer*, Oct. 2, p. 2, Nov. 27, p. 2, 1935; Strutwear Knitting Company files, CA Papers.

[35] *Journal*, Nov. 14, 1935, p. 1; *Star*, Dec. 27, 1935, p. 1; *Northwest Organizer*, Dec. 4, 1935, p. 1; *Labor Review*, Nov. 29, Dec. 6, 1935, both p. 1.

[36] *Northwest Organizer*, Dec. 4, 1935, p. 1.

[37] *Northwest Organizer*, Dec. 4, 1935, p. 2; *Star*, Nov. 29, 1935, p. 1.

[38] *Northwest Organizer*, Dec. 4, 1935, p. 2; *Journal*, Dec. 9, 27, 1935, both p. 1; "Model Resolution," n.d., CA Papers.

THOMAS E. LATIMER, May, 1935

574 promised that no more machines or unfinished goods would leave the plant. A mass rally on December 9 at the Eagles Club hall expressed solidarity with the hosiery workers. Among the speakers were the presidents of both the State Federation of Labor and the Minneapolis Central Labor Union (CLU), as well as the presidents of several locals. A rank-and-file striker regaled the crowd with the horrors of Strutwear working conditions. Alexander McKeown explained the hosiery workers' demands and their willingness to submit the issues to arbitration; their position was heartily endorsed by the assemblage. On December 20, the CLU itself hosted a Christmas party for the strikers and their families. Fifteen different local unions contributed food and presents. Three months after their strike had begun, the Strutwear workers were still the center of attention.[39]

The stage was set for another showdown. On Christmas Eve, the company announced it was breaking off all efforts to settle and intended to reopen by the first of the year. The strikers distributed thousands of leaflets around the city asking for picket-line help. The CLU issued a call for mass pickets. The day after Christmas, 35 maintenance workers, who were to ready the plant for reopening, were escorted by the police through a crowd of more than 300 pickets. Over the course of the day, hundreds more pickets arrived. At closing time, the workers were escorted out the gates through the protesters. By early afternoon on Friday, December 27, Mayor Latimer had asked Governor Olson to send in the National Guard. That evening the guardsmen protected existing workers and then shut the plant down. Under Olson's orders, it would remain closed until labor difficulties were settled.[40]

Strutwear, the businessmen's committee, and the Citizens' Alliance sought to challenge the mayor's and governor's actions. They announced plans for a law suit. Belden warned that other businesses were preparing to leave Minneapolis. On January 7, 1936, 300 "business, civic and professional leaders" met at the Radisson Hotel, with Belden in the chair. He presented the issues in terms carefully developed over three decades by the Citizens' Alliance: "Law and order does not exist in Minneapolis. The forces of government, which are supported by the taxpayers, are being used, not to maintain law and order, but to oppress law-abiding citizens who want only the right to work."[41]

Together, Belden's committee and Strutwear management filed suit against the governor, the mayor, and E. A. Walsh, adjutant general of the Minnesota National Guard. The businessmen decried "the practice of public officials utilizing either police or militia to deprive citizens of their constitutional right to work," and they sought an injunction to remove the guard. They also launched a public pressure campaign, fighting the

STRIKEBREAKERS, concealing their faces to avoid being recognized by pickets, departing the Strutwear plant under police protection, 1935

NATIONAL guardsmen, called in to relieve city policemen at Strutwear, December, 1935

[39] *Labor Review*, Dec. 6, 13, 1935, both p. 1.

[40] *Labor Review*, Dec. 27, 1935, p. 1, Jan. 3, 1936, p. 1; *Northwest Organizer*, Jan. 1, 1936, p. 1; *Journal*, Dec. 27, 28, 1935, both p. 1.

[41] *Journal*, Dec. 29, 1935, p. 1, Jan. 7, 1936, p. 1; *Labor Review*, Jan. 10, 1936, p. 1. The *Journal*, Jan. 8, 1936, p. 1, resonated to the idea and added its own ideological expressions: "Minneapolis needs this business institution. Employees need the jobs. But there is much more involved in this Strutwear situation. Not only property rights, but human rights in a free Country are at stake."

issues in the press, from the pulpit, even on the college campus. George Belden gave a speech at the University of Minnesota in late January, where his argument that "There are workmen who are radicals and worse than radicals," was not so well received. He was booed and, the following day, the *Minnesota Daily* commented that his speech was full of "generalities that didn't even glitter particularly well." Nevertheless, the Citizens' Alliance had seized upon the issue of the guard, presented it as an issue of government interference with citizens' right to work, and had gone again on the offensive.[42]

Labor ranks closed around the Strutwear strikers. The Non-Partisan Labor Defense, organized by activists in several unions, launched a campaign to overturn the contempt citations issued for the November 27 picket-line skirmish over the moving trucks. The governor, recovering from stomach surgery in Rochester, called the Citizens' Alliance "the real plaintiff" and noted, "I always welcome a fight with the Citizens' Alliance." Nevertheless, when Mayor Latimer contended that it was Olson, and not he, who was responsible for the deployment and use of the guard, the governor yielded to the pressure. On January 28, the guard was removed.[43]

Strutwear did not move to open the plant immediately. Rather, company spokesmen announced they would wait for the pending court decision. On February 5, the panel of federal judges granted an interlocutory injunction and chastised Governor Olson. Mrs. Struthers wrote to the businessmen's committee to "express our appreciation" for its help "[d]uring all the difficulties that have been forced upon us and our employees by outsiders." Strutwear and the Citizens' Alliance moved in for the kill. Belden increased the pressure on the mayor. He warned him that the CA would no longer be "withholding publicity [on Latimer's role]. . . . Unless you forthwith enforce the law, suppress disorders and permit the orderly operation of this business, as you have repeatedly promised, you are deliberately misleading our Committee and the public, and are working hand in hand with the forces of disorder."[44]

The labor movement continued to support the hosiery workers. Some activists campaigned for the city council to adopt a "Milwaukee ordinance," which would have empowered the mayor to shut plants in the case of industrial disputes where management refused to submit labor difficulties to arbitration. Others saw the need for more immediate, direct measures. The *Northwest Organizer* warned that the time for mass pickets had returned. Unions from all over the state pledged they would send people. The February 12 Central Labor Union meeting heard delegate after delegate pledge support for the strikers. Two weeks later, the CLU meeting was addressed by Emil Rieve, national president of the American Federation of Hosiery Workers, and from Milwaukee, the well-known Amalgamated Clothing Workers activist, Leo Kryzscki.[45]

Still Strutwear made no attempt to reopen its plant. But on February 24, again with the able assistance of its Citizens' Alliance friends, the company filed suit in U.S. District Court for an injunction against mass picketing. The list of defendants was impressive: the hosiery workers, the Central Labor Union, teamsters' local 574, the *Labor Review*, the United Relief Workers Association, and more than 50 rank and filers. A temporary injunction was granted on March 5. Over the next weeks, the hearings brought out a great deal of interesting information. The *Northwest Organizer* com-

[42] *Journal*, Jan. 17, 18, 25, 26, 1936, all p. 1; *Labor Review*, Jan. 24, 1936, p. 1; *Minnesota Daily* (Minneapolis), Jan. 22, 1936, p. 1, 2; *Minneapolis Tribune*, undated clipping, CA Papers.

[43] *Journal*, Jan. 28, 1936, p. 1; *Northwest Organizer*, Jan. 29, 1936, p. 2; Strutwear vs. Olson, Latimer and the National Guard, U.S. District Court, Jan. 17, 1936, CA Papers.

[44] *Journal*, Feb. 6, 1936, p. 1; Mrs. Struthers to Citizens Committee, Feb. 7, 1936; Belden to Latimer, Feb. 18, 1936, CA Papers.

[45] *Northwest Organizer*, Feb. 5, 1936, p. 4; *Labor Review*, Feb. 14, 28, 1936, both p. 1; *Journal*, Feb. 18, 1936, p. 1.

FLOYD B. OLSON, 1936

Labor Unions Protect, Educate, Fight for You

The Minneapolis Labor Review

Union Label Goods Are Products Of Fairly Paid Workers

TWENTY-EIGHTH YEAR, NO. 496 MINNEAPOLIS, MINN., FRIDAY, JANUARY 10, 1936 PRICE FIVE CENTS

Plea To Lynch Olson Applauded At Bosses' Strutwear Meeting

Cloquet Lock Out May Bring Big Strike

No Threats Made To Burn Match Factory At Cloquet, Minnesota

DUMB PROPAGANDA BOOMERANGS ON BOSSES

Situation Results From Attempt To Lengthen Hours And Reduce Wages

Efforts of the management of the Berst-Forester-Dalfield Company to put in operation a department that had not been in operation when the employes of the company's plant at Cloquet were locked out precipitated a situation of national significance and brought the Militia to Cloquet late last week.

When the employes of the plant were locked out for refusing to accept a lengthening of hours from 40 to 48 a week accompanied with a wage cut of about 10 per cent, the plant was peacefully and effectively picketed and the locked out workers agreed to permit firemen and engineers to keep steam up in the plant to prevent any damage from the cold weather.

With the management threatening to operate the new department the locked out workers warned they would withdraw the engineers and firemen if this was attempted.

How to where the employer propaganda was born that some gullible daily newspaper fell for to the effect that the locked out workers were threatening to burn down the plant. Ridiculousness of such a thing would be apparent to most anyone, but a daily newspaper management intent on discrediting organized labor.

Fearing what might ensue in damage to the plant if the engineers and firemen were withdrawn, the panic stricken employing interests are believed to have manufactured the story of the threatened attempt to set fire to the plant in an effort to bring the Militia into the picture.

However, the Militia did not come to Cloquet to the way the bosses wanted. They came not to protect strikebreakers, but to protect life and property. And so the plant was shut

Upholsterers Elect Friday, January 17

All members of Upholsterers' Local union No. 61 are hereby notified that election of officers will be held at the next regular meeting of the Union that will occur Friday evening, January 17, at eight o'clock at F. N. A. hall, 1300 Fourth street N. E.

There will be other important matters of interest to the entire membership to be considered at this meeting and every member is urged to be in attendance.

JAMES M. BISHOP, Secretary.

Workers' Classes In Session Again

For Information Regarding Organizers-Teachers And Classes Call Minnie Japs

Free Classes in Labor History, Public Speaking and other subjects are again in session this year under the Workers' Education Program, which last year conducted classes for about six hundred workers in various unions and other organizations in the city. Workers' Education is a part of the Emergency Education Project under the WPA, and they are carrying on classes in the larger centers in the state. The project has the full support of the State Federation of Labor.

Besides Labor History and Public Speaking there are also classes in Parliamentary Law, Economics, Current Events, Cooperatives, and other subjects of special interest to various Labor groups. Competent teachers, most of whom have union experience, organize and teach the classes, the purpose of which is to make the students better able to take a part in their union activities and assume responsibilities as union men and women. Parliamentary Law has been in great demand for this reason, especially among new organizations, for the new members want to find out how they can take an active part in the work of their organizations.

Workers' Education also provides a Dramatics Teacher which presents Labor plays at meetings. This group played before an average of 1,500

The Striker

A. F. of L. District Office Opened Here

The American Federation of Labor has opened a district office at 431 National Building, South Street and Second Avenue So.

The office will be available for the assistance of any organization affiliated with the American Federation of Labor desiring its assistance.

Until further notice Mayer Levin will be in charge of the office.

Olson Lynch Threat Condemned By CLU

Label Committee To Hold Meeting On Wednesday Evening, January 15

When the Central Labor Union Wednesday evening, January 8, and the report that a mob of labor baiting employers had applauded the idea to lynch Governor Olson at a meeting Tuesday night, the executive board of the delegates found expression in the following resolution that was unanimously adopted:

"Whereas, there has been a strike in progress at the Strutwear Knitting Company, employing several hundred people, and

"Whereas, every legitimate effort has been made by the strikers to effect a settlement fair to all to both parties to the dispute and the company has resisted all such efforts; and

"Whereas, a group of employers going under the name of law abiding citizens have charged the Mayor of Minneapolis and the Governor of Minnesota with failure to provide proper police protection for the operation of the plant while the case of the same involving the workers the right to collective bargaining; and

"Whereas, this group of employers have attempted to foist their wishes upon the Mayor of Minneapolis and the Governor of Minnesota by means of intimidation at a meeting at the Radisson Hotel on January 7, 1936; and

"Whereas, we believe it contrary to

Want Leaders Driven Out By Vigilantes

Advocates Violence To Seek Aid Of Courts To Create Violence

LAWYERS ASSURE ACTION WANTED BY COURTS

Tax Strike Is Urged To Starve Those On Relief Lines

Break the strike of Hosiery Workers at the Strutwear plant even if Governor Olson has to be lynched to accomplish it. That is reported to have been the spirit of a meeting held Tuesday afternoon at 10:15 at the Radisson Hotel.

"I am one of those who would enjoy taking part in the lynching of our Governor and the gangsters in control of our Mayor," declared one desperado as the while four hundred of the two hundred employers present are reported to have applauded lustily.

"I think we can get rid of the Governor that way like the suit to oust Governor Olson which will be before the Supreme Court on appeal soon from Judge Dickinson's dismissal of the case). If we don't get rid of him by sickness, then let's get rid of him some other way," declared another speaker with a smirk on his face.

[illegible] the hoarsely of baby [illegible]

Among those present who [illegible] being sandwiched [illegible] Minneapolis' foremost champions of law and order as presented by the [illegible] under Teamster [illegible] guard, gun fourteen who seek law and order by [illegible]

It was not disclosed by [illegible] meeting and who called [illegible]

mented: "The constant reference by the Strutwear attorney to the 1934 drivers' strike. . . . has not been forgotten, by the employers, at least." Mrs. Struthers admitted on the witness stand that she saw "no reason to deal with the AF of L, an organization which is not legal in this state or country." She also revealed that the entire Peacock Knitting Company suit had been intended to pressure workers and local authorities. The union's attorney managed to get one of Strutwear's yellow-dog contracts admitted into evidence. Although there was a parade of pro-company workers to testify to their satisfaction with their wages, there were other rank and filers who told hair-raising tales about working conditions.[46]

The hosiery workers and their supporters tried to make use of this revealing testimony to build public support. A spirited rally on March 20, organized by General Drivers Union Local 574, drew 3,000 attendees. More than seven months had gone by since the walk out. And Strutwear management still held firm.[47]

Suddenly, on April 4, 1936, local headlines announced: "Strutwear Peace Pact Accepted." As a result of behind-the-scenes negotiations through various third parties, including a federal conciliator, an agreement was reached. Strutwear strikers voted 140-80 to accept it. Hosiery Workers Branch No. 38 gave its blessing. And Strutwear announced it would reopen on April 6.[48]

"The terms of the settlement," the *Northwest Organ-*

[46] *Labor Review*, Feb. 28, Mar. 20, 27, 1936, all p. 1; *Northwest Organizer*, Mar. 18, p. 3, Mar. 25, p. 3, April 1, p. 4—all 1936. Strutwear vs. Hosiery Workers, Teamsters 574, Minneapolis Central Labor Union, Minneapolis Labor Review, United Relief Workers Association, Feb. 24, 1936, CA Papers.

[47] *Northwest Organizer*, Mar. 25, 1936, p. 1.

[48] *Journal*, April 4, 1936, p. 1; *Labor Review*, April 10, 1936, p. 1. Cryptic remarks in the *Special Weekly Bulletin*, Mar. 3, p. 1, suggest that growing conflict between Hosiery Workers No. 38 and its national union about how to settle the strike might have contributed to the sudden cave-in.

izer remarked, "leave much to be desired." Strutwear agreed to call back the strikers as their departments were put back to work, with no discrimination against union members. The company agreed to submit the case of the eight fired activists to an arbitrator. Management declared that it would resume a schedule of wage increases announced before the strike and that it was willing to meet with "any employees or representative of employees for the purpose of discussing any complaint." This offer fell far short of formal union recognition. Indeed, it had been pretty much the company's bargaining position (if it can be called that) all along.[49]

The Citizens' Alliance hailed the end of the strike in a *Special Weekly Bulletin*, taking credit for a major victory in which its leaders "worked diligently and patiently" behind the scenes. The bulletin also urged its subscribers to "read carefully" Strutwear's formal letter to its employees, "which was the basis for the termination of the strike, and compare it with the previous statements issued by the Strutwear Knitting Company as a basis for reopening its plant." Indeed, as the republished letter showed, the company had promised in writing no more than to call back "all employes on the payroll as of August 15, 1935 . . . without discrimination." Nothing more.[50]

THE CITIZENS' ALLIANCE used many tactics in its efforts to break the Strutwear strike: police guards, the threat of closing the plant, formation of a dummy corporation, court action, organization of the business community, and public relations through letters to local newspapers. Even after 1934 the alliance was a powerful force in Minneapolis. Three truckers' strikes that year constituted a turning point for labor—nationally as well as locally. Yet employers remained steadfast in their opposition to unionization. The Citizens' Alliance rallied its forces, modified its strategies, and sallied forth to do battle with the invigorated labor movement. As the Strutwear Knitting strike shows, the Citizens' Alliance—and the array of forces it represented—was far from defeated.

Neither were the forces of the new unionism. When the settlement was announced, the *Northwest Organizer* pointed out that the struggle was hardly over, even at Strutwear. In some ways, it was just beginning. The hosiery workers had to build a shop organization and force management to deal with their representatives on a day-to-day as well as contractual basis. Branch No. 38 dug in and established itself. In May, 1937, a year after the strike ended, Strutwear management signed a closed-shop agreement with the union, covering 750 workers.[51]

The Citizens' Alliance's kingdom was gradually crumbling. It had not fallen down about its participants' ears, but the labor earthquake of the mid-1930s had shaken its foundation and weakened its walls. By World War II, the CA's hardline opposition to union recognition and its well-built ideological package had grown too far out of touch with the times. While alliance leaders would ride the crest of the anti-Communist wave of the late 1940s and early 1950s to revived local influence, they would never again function as a constituency organization among a broad base of local businesses. Nevertheless, its most ardent activists would make several transitions over the next decades, only to emerge among the slick management consultants of the 1980s. Organized resistance to unionism remains a key element in the industrial scene.

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[49] *Journal*, April 4, 5, 6, 1936, all p. 1; *Northwest Organizer*, April 8, 1936, p. 1.

[50] *Special Weekly Bulletin*, April 7, 1936, [1-3], CA Papers.

[51] *Journal*, April 17, 1936, p. 2; *Northwest Organizer*, May 6, 1937, p. 1.

THE CARTOONS on p. 105 and 116, from the *Minneapolis Labor Review*, Aug. 30, 1935, p. 1 and Jan. 10, 1936, p. 1, and the ad on p. 111, from the *Minneapolis Star*, Aug. 26, p. 10, were made available with the assistance of the MHS newspaper microfilming project; all other photos are in the MHS audio-visual library.