

EMIL RIEVE

MEMORIAL SERVICE

AFL-CIO BUILDING

WASHINGTON, D.C.

APRIL 24, 1975

EMIL RIEVE WAS AMONG THE MOST FORTUNATE OF MEN. HE
LIVED A FULL, FRUITFUL, EXCITING AND PURPOSEFUL LIFE.

WE, THEREFORE, DO NOT GATHER HERE THIS AFTERNOON TO MOURN
HIS DEATH, PAINFUL AS IT IS TO LOSE A DEAR FRIEND.

RATHER, WE GATHER TO PAY TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF A GOOD
FRIEND -- A NOBLE SPIRIT.

THE NEWSPAPERS REPORTED THAT EMIL SUFFERED FROM A HEART
FAILURE. STRANGERS MAY BELIEVE THAT, BUT THOSE OF US WHO
KNEW HIM WELL DO NOT -- WE KNOW BETTER.

EMIL RIEVE NEVER HAD A FAILURE OF HEART, OF SPIRIT, OF
COURAGE, OR OF MIND; HE WAS ALWAYS STRONG OF HEART AND INTENSE OF
CONVICTION.

L EMIL AND I FIRST MET IN 1946 -- 29 YEARS AGO. IT
WAS IN MINNEAPOLIS AND I, A YOUNG MAYOR WITH JUST A HINT
OF AMBITION IN MY MAKE-UP, WAS INVITED TO ADDRESS AN
EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE OF THE TWIN CITIES JOINT BOARD OF THE
TEXTILE WORKERS UNION, LOCALLY HEADED BY OSCAR WINGER AND
AL ESNOUGH.

L BILL TULLER, MY DEAR FRIEND AND THE BROTHER OF DORIS WHO HAD
WORKED FOR ME IN MINNEAPOLIS, WAS THEN REGIONAL DIRECTOR OF
TEXTILE OUT OF CHICAGO. L WITH THE ADVICE OF LARRY ROGIN AND JOE
GLAZER, BILL HAD ENLISTED THE AID OF MY FRIEND AND LATER
MY LAWYER, MAX KAMPELMAN, TO SERVE AS A POLITICAL CONSULTANT TO THE
UNION.

L THIS INSTITUTE WAS TO BE A MAJOR STEP FORWARD IN THE MOVE
TO RID THE MINNESOTA LABOR MOVEMENT OF ITS PERVASIVE *leftist and*
COMMUNIST INFLUENCE.

L INTO THAT PICTURE CAME EMIL RIEVE -- THE FORMIDABLE
AND TO US IN THE MID-WEST, THE AWESOME EMIL RIEVE -- PRESIDENT
OF A POWERFUL LABOR UNION, FRIEND OF PRESIDENTS, GOVERNORS
AND CONGRESSMEN, AN INTIMATE FRIEND OF PHIL MURRAY.

L BUT AS I SOON LEARNED, THERE WAS NO NEED FOR A YOUNG MAN
TO BE FEARFUL. L FOR THAT CRINKLY, FULL, HARD-WORN HOSIERY WORKER
FACE WAS ALSO WARM AND SMILING L AND BEHIND THAT EXTERIOR
WAS GREAT WARMTH, A SENSE OF COMPASSION, AND DEEP WISDOM.

L I HAVE HEARD IT SAID THAT UNDER EMIL RIEVE THE TEXTILE
WORKERS UNION HAD THE BEST LEGAL STAFF, THE BEST EDUCATIONAL
DEPARTMENT AND THE BEST POLITICAL DEPARTMENT IN THE TRADE
UNION MOVEMENT. L OBVIOUSLY, THE CAREERS OF LARRY ROGIN, AL
BARKAN AND JOE GLAZER CAN BE LOOKED TO AS EVIDENCE FOR THAT
CONTENTION. L THE FACT THAT THE CLAIM WAS MADE WAS IN ITSELF
A TRIBUTE TO THE LEADERSHIP CAPABILITIES OF THIS GREAT ^{+good} MAN --
SMALL IN STATURE BUT A GIANT IN PERCEPTION.

Emil's
L FURTHERMORE, ~~THIS~~ LEADERSHIP WAS BROAD-GUAGED. L EMIL RIEVE
KNEW THAT A DEMOCRATIC LABOR MOVEMENT MUST NEVER LOSE
SIGHT OF ITS MEMBERS AND THEIR ASPIRATION TO SHARE THE
FRUITS OF THEIR HARD LABOR. L BUT, HE ALSO KNEW THAT A DEMOCRATIC
LABOR MOVEMENT MUST NEVER LOSE SIGHT OF ITS STAKE IN A STRONG
DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY AND IN AN EFFECTIVE DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL STRUCTURE
L EMIL RIEVE AND I, THEREFORE, FOUND OURSELVES SIDE-BY-SIDE
IN MANY POLITICAL STRUGGLES TO ESTABLISH AND SOLIDIFY A LIBERAL
POLITICAL ^{*coalition*} ~~MOVEMENT~~ IN AMERICA, FREE OF RIGID ORTHODOXY AND
TOTALITARIAN INFLUENCE.

FROM THE DAY WE MET, EMIL RIEVE SUPPORTED ME IN EVERY
POLITICAL FIGHT OF MY LIFE -- FOR MAYOR, SENATOR, VICE PRESIDENT
AND PRESIDENT. I WILL NEVER FORGET AND WILL ALWAYS BE GRATEFUL
TO THIS DEAR MAN, THIS DEDICATED CHAMPION OF AMERICAN'S WORKERS,
THIS LOYAL FRIEND.

Yes, EMIL RIEVE WAS A FORTUNATE MAN, BUT THOSE OF US WHO
HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF KNOWING HIM AND BEING HIS FRIENDS WERE
EVEN MORE FORTUNATE FOR HIS FRIENDSHIP.

THIS SUPERB PRAGMATIST AND GENUINE IDEALIST LIVED TO SEE SO
MANY OF HIS GOALS REALIZED. FIGHTS -- YES; BUT VICTORIES, TOO --
AND VICTORIES EVEN IF THEY WERE NOT ALWAYS IMMEDIATELY APPARENT.

AND NOT THE LEAST, BUT PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT INGREDIENT
OF EMIL'S GOOD FORTUNE WAS WANDA, WHO GAVE HIM TENDERNESS, SCOLDING
AS NEEDED, GUIDANCE AND CARE, ALWAYS LOVE.

-7-

↳ TO WANDA, TO HAROLD (HIS SON), TO EMIL'S FAMILY, WE

HIS FRIENDS SAY: "THANK YOU FOR SHARING HIM WITH US,"

####



Minnesota Historical Society

Copyright in this digital version belongs to the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, link to, or email content, however, for individual use.

To request permission for commercial or educational use, please contact the Minnesota Historical Society.



www.mnhs.org