

THE MILITANT



Weekly Organ of the Communist League of America [Opposition]

WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE

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Call General Strike of N. Y. Food Workers

600 Start Strike Wave In the Waldorf Astoria

Whole Kitchen and Dining Room Crew March in Body To Amalgamated Union Headquarters

The biggest industry in New York, the mammoth hotel and restaurant industry dominated by the biggest banks has flung a challenge to the workers in the industry, and their challenge has been met—the workers have moved for a GENERAL STRIKE!

The issues involved are clear cut. The bosses who have dictated their own terms for years, riding rough-shod over the most elementary demands and rights of the workers do not intend to have their autocratic control questioned. They will tolerate no union except a puppet of their own choosing, one over which they have absolute control. They want a boss's "union". The workers want no "guilds" they want a union speaking and acting in their own name and for their demands.

The bosses have spoken in an ambiguous manner for a few months, temporizing for time. Now they are ready, and there is nothing ambiguous about their actions. They struck at the workers in the key hotel of the industry, in the heart of the city—the Waldorf Astoria—by discharging Andre Fournigalt, a sous-chef who has worked there since the hotel was put up after the demolition of the old Peacock Alley.

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Six Hundred in Stoppage With the exception of a handful the entire kitchen and dining room staff of some 600 workers responded to this challenge by declaring an immediate stoppage. The waiters went into the kitchens, the cooks put out the lights on the stoves. And at 7 P. M. at the height of the dinner hour, "the guests" sat at their tables while the orchestra played to stimulate their appetites.

Here is how the New York Sun reports the details: "In the dining rooms waiter captains noticed suddenly that they were alone with the patrons. When no waiters emerged from the kitchens with the orders that had been given they went in search of them. They found them standing in groups in the kitchen, their arms folded." And side by side with them were standing the chefs and the entire kitchen help—also with "their arms folded". The boss, Boomer strode in to give his ultimatum—he notified the workers to return to work. But if the workers stood there with folded arms, it was only because they had folded them for action.

They were by no means unprepared for this direct blow of the bosses, and they knew very well that the blow that was aimed at a single worker was aimed at the very heart of the organization they have been building for months with thousands of other workers in the industry. The course of the bosses had become clear from the very beginning of the organization drive of staffs were being infiltrated with the Amalgamated. The working "extra-help", an intensive propaganda was carried on by the agents of the bosses against the Amalgamated, and this campaign was supplemented by an intensive drive for affiliation with the Hotel Guild.

The bosses' plan was to divide the workers and to strangle them in individual hotels and restaurants. But this time their well laid plans did not catch the workers unawares. The union has carried on months of intensive preparation for precisely this emergency; the workers learned from experience what the "collective bargaining" of the bosses amounted to. The boss issues the orders, the workers are compelled to accept. They had their own union ready.

Waldorf Is Signal For Workers

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Militant Three Times a Week During Strike!

Once more the Militant is to appear three times a week!

Once more the price is to be reduced to one cent a copy!

And we intend to keep on issuing it for the duration of the strike of the hotel and restaurant workers of New York.

In the crucial days of the struggle of the German workers against the coming to power of Fascism last year, the Militant also made this gigantic effort to appear on the streets three times a week instead of once, giving news of the struggle, analyzing the events, arousing the workers to an understanding, to solidarity and to action.

Now it is the struggle of thousands of workers in the hotels

and restaurants of New York which brings us out into the streets once more in our new form.

During the strike, the Militant will stand as solid as a rock behind the striking food workers UNTIL THEY HAVE WON!

The Militant will give the workers' side of the strike—we leave it to the capitalist press to give the bosses' side and the bosses' propaganda and the bosses' lies.

The Militant will stand unshakably firm for the union which is conducting the strike—the Amalgamated Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union, helping in every way it can to strengthen the union, to help it grow, to support every militant and class conscious action and tendency in it.

The Militant has no intention of being "impartial" and "unbiased". We are partial. We are biased. We are prejudiced—because we are, always have been, and always will be

FOR THE WORKERS, FIRST, LAST AND ALWAYS!

The first issue of the actual three-times-a-week Militant will appear on the streets this coming Monday morning, and every Wednesday, Friday and Monday morning thereafter. We are making a supreme effort in this strike—in spite of the fact that as this is written our financial position is extremely difficult. But we are counting on our numerous friends to rush money by air-mail and telegraph to help us carry on.

Thousands Pack Halls; Walkout Vote Solid

The Unanimously Adopted Strike Resolution

The following is the resolution passed unanimously at the huge overflow membership meeting of the Amalgamated Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union on Wednesday night. It constitutes the general strike proclamation that will make labor history in New York, if the enormous enthusiasm which swept the meeting is any indication:

RESOLUTION

"RESOLVED, that we, the members of the AMALGAMATED HOTEL AND RESTAURANT WORKERS UNION, assembled in a general business meeting Wednesday, January 24th, 1934, in view of the situation created by the aggressive steps taken by the hotel and restaurant employers in attempting to force workers to join various organizations such as the Guild societies and other company unions, violating the elementary rights of labor and endangering

the security of the worker on his job, as well as violating the provisions of the law for collective bargaining, especially article 7a of the N. I. R. A., call upon the hotel and restaurant employers, collectively and individually, to agree to full union recognition embodied in signed agreements, and to the other demands as to wages and hours put forward by this organization, and to cease all intimidation and pressure intended to force workers to join any organization against their will. In the event that no answer is given to this demand by the close of the second business day after receipt thereof, we will enforce these demands with a general strike throughout New York City and its environs. Any discrimination or intimidation during the period shall be considered as cause for defensive measures by means of a strike."

New York, January 24.—Over-

flow membership meetings of the Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union affiliated with the Amalgamated Food Workers voted unanimously tonight for a resolution calling a general strike of workers in their industry throughout New York and environs. The meetings were held at the headquarters of the union at 915 Eighth Avenue and in halls around that neighborhood.

More than 3,000 men participated in the vote. By Friday night the strike will be complete. Strike leaders described the resolution voted as an ultimatum to the Hotel bosses to come to terms within the time limit set. They declared that should the employers discriminate against or intimidate union men in the meantime, the strike action would be put into force earlier than the stipulated time.

The main hall at strike headquarters was packed to the doors, high spirits characterized the mood of the union members assembled. Soon after the meeting was opened, B.

J. Field, secretary of the union, read the strike resolution proposed for adoption. In the course of his speech, the secretary explained the resolution which, he stated, has been decided upon by a meeting of the Executive Board of the union that afternoon.

The strike call is an outgrowth of the union's fight against the inhuman conditions hotel and restaurant workers have been subjected to in this city. The Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union has been carrying on a feverish organization campaign in the past several months with thousands of workers joining from all the major and lesser enterprises. The campaign has met with the greatest success union organization has experienced in this industry, which has been a stumbling block for organized labor in the past twenty years, since the decline of the A. F. of L. craft unions.

The call comes in the first place, as an act of solidarity with the Waldorf Astoria workers who went

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Strike Lights ... and Shadows

"The strike was called over the firing of the chef de manger (Park Ave. for fancy cook)." Daily News. Chef de Manger may be fancy Park Ave. language but the waiters, chefs, etc., spoke the real, good, old fashioned working class word "Strike" that even Oscar could understand.

They came in their hundreds—the well-clad, the well-fed, the prosperous. The exclusive Waldorf Astoria, noted the world over for its cuisine and its service, was crowded with the elite. Then it happened. Waiters turned on their heels and walked to the kitchen. Chefs turned off the gas and walked to meet them. In about 15 minutes, with placards and cheers, the enthusiastic chefs and waiters were streaming down the street to union headquarters. The orchestra played. Oscar raved. But the guests went hungry for once.

Union headquarters at 915-8th Ave. were humming with activity. Organizers and officials were everywhere. Committee meetings, speeches, registering of strikers, and preparations for meetings of the workers of other hotels. "With precision, order and speed the union prepared for battle.

"It can't be done. You can't organize the chefs and waiters in the exclusive hotels." So said the old and tired "labor leaders". But the A. F. W. can do the impossible—and the Waldorf Astoria workers are proving that, once organized, chefs and waiters like miners and clothing workers are fighters from the drop of the hat.

Boomer waited on tables. And

The Union's Strike Demands

The Amalgamated Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union, branch of the Amalgamated Food Workers has issued the following demands for the New York City general strike:

Full union recognition. Union wage scales.

A forty hour week, five days a week and eight hours a day.

Wages not to be taken out of tips.

No split watch.

No charge for meals, uniforms or laundry.

Pay by the week.

Hotel and Restaurant workers! Support these demands! Join the Amalgamated Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union! Strike till you win!

Oscar tried his fat hands at cooking. But the diners couldn't get as much as a hamburger-on-rye. It was very, very sad.

The six hundred waiters and chefs lined up solid. Oscar appealed to them. Boomer threatened and promised. A half dozen scabby looking stools stepped over to the other side. As crummy a lot of scabs as ever licked a boot.

The right to organize... The right to a living wage... These are supposed to be inherent in the constitution of the United States. But whether it be in a mine in Illinois or a Park Ave. hotel, rights and conditions, recognized or not, can only be secured by organization and struggle.

—OSCAR DE BOOMER.

Plan Big Navy Program

Congress has endorsed the \$285,000,000 navy building program presented to it with the endorsement of President Roosevelt and designated to build a "navy second to none" in the feverish international race for maritime armaments now taking place between Japanese, British and American imperialism.

Practically every vehicle of murder and destruction on the high seas is authorized in the Vinson Bill presented to the House of Representatives including aircraft carriers, destroyers, and submarines and providing for fifty-four new vessels in all.

There appears to have been considerable discussion and debate in the House over the most effective means for murder on the high seas, which took the form of a wrangle over the relative merits of the six-inch gun and other powerful head-blowers.

"Under the leadership of president Roosevelt we will sit at the next international conference table with a full treaty navy, built and built", said the chairman of the naval committee, Ayers.

The reason for this martial program, coming simultaneously with the pacific statements of the president and the budget deficit, occasioning the suspension of the C. W. A., is the tense situation in the Far East where Japan threatens American investments and commercial interests, where the struggle for the redivision of the world comes in closer proximity.

What the Strike Means to You

At the present writing the New York Hotels are being padlocked and picketed by the wage slaves that eke out a miserable existence in them.

Twenty thousand waiters, chefs, kitchen help will quit the spacious, de luxe dining rooms and not so de luxe kitchens to take their places on the picket line and the solid front of organized labor.

They are fighting a man-sized battle. Arrayed against them is the mighty Hotel Men's Association whose power has been unchallenged for twenty years.

Behind the labor-hating hotel bosses stands an even more imposing foe—the strongest fortress of capitalism, the banks.

The banks—mind you! the banks of Wall Street, creatures of Rockefeller and Morgan—dictate to the nation's industry. They control the government. Their long hand reaches out and rules the daily lives of the millions of America's toilers.

The hotel workers have served and suffered for years under the iron heel of the banks. We marvel at their remarkable patience. But their is a limit to human endurance—even of hotel workers.

The strike is on. There will be Judge's injunctions. Policemen's clubs, Black Marias, jail sentences—yes, the long arm of capitalist law will reach out for the hotel slaves.

The kept press will rage and scream for civilization, for home and religion. Priests will promise hell and damnation for the strikers.

The rats will be herded in droves and quartered in scabs nests.

But they won't break the strike. Picket lines will march in solid array before every hotel. Grim determination and the unbreakable battle front of the workers will keep the hotels empty. The parasites who insist on eating in the hotels during the strike will have empty plates instead of the sumptuous fare they are accustomed to. Solidarity is the mighty weapon of labor. It will win again as it has hundreds of times in the past.

The hotel workers will need your help from the very start. The enemy of the hotel workers is the enemy of every worker in the entire nation. A few months ago it was the miners. Today it is the waiters and the lowly kitchen dishwashers and floor sweepers that are holding the front line trenches for the organized and unorganized workers. If they win we all win. A victory for them means renewed strength, for the unionized workers and a new confidence and enthusiasm for the sorely beset unorganized. The hotel strike is your strike.

You win or lose with them. Which shall it be—a victory or a defeat? It's up to you. Get your local union to support the strike. And if you don't belong to a union, any physical, moral and especially financial aid will be more than appreciated by the Amalgamated Hotel and Restaurant Workers, leading the strike.

If you do this the hotel workers will triumph! Shoulders to the wheel!

An Open Letter to the American Workers Party

The Provisional Organizing Committee of the American Workers Party Comrades:

After a thorough-going discussion of the results of the Pittsburgh convention of the Conference for Progressive Labor Action, the National Committee of the Communist League of America (Opposition) has decided to address the following communication to you for your consideration and action.

Your convention voted to take the measures it considered necessary for the founding of a new revolutionary party in the United States. "The revolutionary struggle of the masses against the capitalist system which more and more depresses their standard of living, takes various forms," declares the report of your National Executive Committee adopted by the convention. "The primary form is the economic struggles of the worker and farmer. The struggle is, however, inspired, coordinated, carried to its goal of taking power, by the revolutionary political party."

Our organization, having itself formally adopted the decision in September of last year to work for the creation of a new revolutionary party in this country and a new International throughout the world, is consequently directly concerned with and interested in the decision adopted by your Pittsburgh convention. We stated our position in our declaration four months ago and we take the liberty of calling your attention to the following essential paragraphs:

"The Communist League, as it is at present constituted, does not consider itself a party and has no intention of anticipating the real establishment of the new party by proclaiming itself as such. The task now is to recognize firmly that our role as a faction striving to reform the party of official Stalinism is exhausted, to strike out on a completely

independent path, and to prepare, in cooperation with all other groups and organizations moving in the same direction, for the formation of a new party.

"In the course of its struggle to reform the official party, as a faction of it, the Left Opposition worked out a program, consolidated a cadre of principled militants and formed the skeleton of a national organization. These accomplishments can be regarded now as part of the capital of the new movement; not all that is necessary for the formation of the party, but contributions to it.

"What is needed now is the coming together of the various groups of revolutionary workers who have broken, or who are in the process of breaking, with reformism and centrism as well as those dispersed individual revolutionists who have been repelled by the Stalinist bureaucracy and remained without affiliation. It is self-evident that the working out of a common program and the eventual concentration of these forces into a single party must be preceded by an exchange of opinion and discussion and, very probably, will involve a transition period of cooperation before the final fusion.

"Whatever form the next development may take, the Left Opposition is ready now, to enter into open and comradely negotiations and discussions with other groups which seriously set for themselves the same goal. After its long and unrelenting struggle against the arrogant bureaucracy and ultimatic methods of Stalinism, the Left Opposition least of all can seek to impose anything on others or to demand the acceptance in advance of its proposals, its program or its 'leadership'."

It is with these ideas as our point of departure that we approach the question of our relations to the American Workers Party which your convention decided to launch. We are striving to build up in this coun-

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Speakers: JAMES P. CANNON Editor of "The Militant" JOSEPH CARTER Editor of "Young Spartacus"

LENIN, LIEBKNECHT, LUXEMBERG MEMORIAL MEETING

UNUSUAL FEATURE! The remarkable film of the death of Lenin and the funeral in Moscow will be shown at the meeting.

Friday, January 26, 1934, 8 P. M. IRVING PLAZA HALL Irving Place and 15th Street ADMISSION 20c