

WORKERS
OF THE
WORLD
UNITE

THE MILITANT

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE OF AMERICA (OPPOSITION)



VOLUME VII, NO. 6 [WHOLE NO. 210]

NEW YORK, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1934

PRICE 1 CENT

Call 30,000 Cab Drivers in General Strike

Brand Lies On Union Contracts

Show Complete List of Amalgamated Demands

In a renewed attempt to discredit the general strike of the Amalgamated Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union and to sow demoralization in the ranks, the *Daily Worker* is concocting alarmist stories about a "secret sellout" agreement between the union and the hotel men. In these stories it is contended that the general strike of the Amalgamated is not being conducted for specific demands regarding wages, hours and working conditions. This is completely false. Before the general strike started, a detailed list of demands for all the workers in the industry was worked out by the various shop organizations of the union, ratified by a general membership meeting, printed in leaflet form and given the widest distribution. When the forty-eight hour strike ultimatum was sent to the hotel owners, these demands were presented in the same letter with the form of agreement to recognize the union. They were sent to the three hotel associations and to each hotel individually.

A formulation in the agreement for union recognition which specified that there should be no increase in hours and no decrease in wages, did not express the minimum demands of the union, which were dealt with in the list of concrete demands. This was undoubtedly a bad formulation subject to misinterpretation and was deliberately misinterpreted in the *Daily Worker's* agitation against the union.

Strike Committee Unanimous
At the last meeting of the general strike committee this whole question was given thorough consideration and a unanimous decision was taken to draw up a new form of agreement without the objective clauses and specifically providing that not only a general agreement with the employers, but also temporary shop settlements should provide for definite increases in wages and decreases in hours. At this meeting motions were adopted unanimously on the following three points:

1. All individual shop settlements made in the course of the strike are to be considered as temporary and subject to readjustment in accordance with the terms of a general settlement. These individual shop settlements are also to include specific provisions for increase in wages and decrease in hours as well as recognition of the union.

2. Any general settlement with the hotel bosses must be approved by the general strike committee and ratified by a general mass meeting of the strikers before being signed.

3. All temporary shop settlements must be approved by a shop meeting of the workers involved. The fact that all these actions were taken by unanimous vote and without any opposition is in itself a sufficient indication that the attack of the *Daily Worker* was slanderous and without real foundation. The attempt to represent the officials of the union as engaged in a "secret conspiracy to sell out the workers", is refuted by the facts themselves, in the given case, as well as by the well-known practices of the Amalgamated over a long period of years.

As a matter of fact, the constitution of the Amalgamated union specifically provides that at least two shop delegates are to accompany an official of the union whenever he meets an employer to discuss wages, working conditions or other matters affecting the men in a given shop.

In order to give a final refutation to the false assertions that the Amalgamated general strike has not presented specific economic demands, we reprint herewith a complete list of these demands as they were worked out by the union. Copies of them in leaflet form are distributed at the union headquarters.

WAGE-SCALE DEMANDS of the HOTEL AND RESTAURANT WORKERS UNION

Branch of the Amalgamated Food Workers of America

The following categories are to be included: Hotels, Restaurants, Grill Rooms, Oyster Bars, Chop

(Continued on Page 2)

Scabs a Flop at Casino de Paree

Strike-breakers are a pretty miserable lot. They take the job from a good union man—and they are unable to do the work themselves. The striker gets stabbed in the back by the scab. And the employer is unable to obtain proficient service from the strike-breaker.

Take the fashionable Casino de Paree, ritzy Broadway night club. Paul Coughlin, racketeer and president of Local 16 of the A. F. L., has been supplying strike-breakers. In return he got a contract giving him the right to collect dues.

But there has been trouble between Local 16 and the Casino de Paree. The scabby waiters spilled so much soup that more than four hundred of them have been in and out the night club since the strike. Now the boss threatens to break his contract with Local 16 unless he can get strike-breakers from them that will fill the job. His patrons are complaining that since the strike their soup-and-fishes have not been giving them the service they all used to which is tough on the boss—and fine for the strike.

Big Companies Already Tied Up

The strike wave launched by the general strike of the hotel and restaurant workers in New York has spread to the taxicab industry. 30,000 cab drivers went on strike today. The last straw which let loose the accumulation of bitter grievances was the disposition of the 5 cent tax on all rides. The cab companies want the money collected so far, estimated at between half a million and two million, to go to them as part of their gross income. But the men demand it on the ground that their pay, which averaged from seven to ten dollars for a ten-hour day, six-day week, was not enough to keep them alive, and that the tax was really coming out of their tips.

The strike is spreading like wild fire. Even the capitalist newspapers have been forced to admit this. The *New York Evening Journal* admitted on February 2 that "they crippled service at the Grand Central Terminal, for example, that scarcely one cab was available there—generally there are five hundred." "The scene at the Pennsylvania Station was worse, if anything." This condition prevails at all railroad and steamship terminals in the city. At the time of the strike vote there

were six thousand men in the union headquarters and the strike halls. Thousands are pouring into union to sign up. —CARL COWL.

- The following are the demands of the striking drivers:
1. The entire "tax" to the drivers.
 2. The 8 hour 6 day week (48 hours)
 3. No firing for low bookings.
 4. Elimination of political and insurance racketeers.
 5. Eliminate police persecution.
 6. Against the vicious blacklist system.
 7. No double shifts.
 8. Recognition of the Union.

Boss Press Persists In Fighting Strike

The bosses' press in reporting Tuesday's Madison Square Garden meeting and the mass picket demonstration that followed it, once again showed its animosity to the hotel workers' strike for decent conditions and union recognition.

The meeting and the demonstration had made history, not only for the hotel workers, but for the working class of New York. A strike meeting of almost 10,000 workers in a single industry is rare enough in New York, but even more significant was the amazing mass picket line after the meeting. Marching for two hours demonstrated before almost every major hotel in the city, stretching out half a mile along Park Avenue, protesting the refusal of President Roosevelt to rebuke scabbing, it was a most unusual event in the city's history.

The bosses' press, however, minimized, distorted and even suppressed the news of this demonstration. In the *Herald-Tribune*, the marchers were reduced to 2,000! The *New York American* made it 2,500. The *Journal* made it 4,000. The *Tabloids* gave it 5,000. The "liberal" *World-Telegram* suppressed any reference to the 10,000 at the strike meeting and extimated the picket line at 4,000. The ultra-liberal *Evening Post* some days ago, said a "kind word" for the strike editorially by attacking a strike-breaking editorial of *World-Telegram*, its liberal competitor from whom it wants to steal workers-readers. Now it pushed the number of workers in the picket line down to 2,000! By unanimously playing down one of the most extraordinary strike demonstrations in recent working class history, the boss press once again dealt a vicious blow to the interests of the workers.

But not only did the press minimize the numbers in the picket line. They reported nothing about the splendid spirit of the marchers, their effective demonstration before each hotel, the purpose of the march, the applause of people on the sidewalks and the rush of workers from inside hotels to greet the marchers. Furthermore, they hid the whole report of the march of workers under a report of minor incident in a Sixth Avenue scab agency, where, they say, some windows were broken when workers protested against scabbing.

This inconspicuous incident was played up by the boss press as a desperate act of violence. Although even the police who always try to break strikes, made no arrests, the boss press blamed the strikers. "Striking Waiters Make Hash of 6th Ave. Agency" was the headline of the *Daily News*. "Job Agency Wrecked", said the *Herald-Tribune*, and it went so far as to say that the incident of the windows is a "measure taken by the Amalgamated Union to call the continued existence of the strike to the public's attention." The *Times* reported this at length as "the first outbreak of violence in the strike", ignoring the earlier use of thugs against strikers on several occasions.

CWA Workers Rebel

With tens of thousands of hotel and restaurant workers, and taxi drivers out on strike against exploitation, and more thousands expected to come out in the morning, a movement of rebellion against mistreatment began to take on militant form among the CWA workers of the city. At Dyker Heights Park in Brooklyn, workers launched a militant protest against being docked half a day's pay without explanation. When they massed outside the Administration Building to voice their protest, they received no consideration from officials. The latter sent for Police Emergency squads to disperse the workers. The C. W. A. workers in the Army Base in Brooklyn, all war veterans, met and adopted a resolution of protest against wage cuts. Steps are being taken to unite all CWA groups who have grievances, and to bring about concrete expressions of solidarity among all striking and unemployed groups throughout N.Y.C.

"Daily Worker" Hits Hotel Strike With Slander and False Charges

The irresponsible and malicious story of the *Daily Worker*, charging the A. F. W. with selling out the general strike of the hotel workers, is only the latest and most flagrant attempt of the Stalinist organ to break the solidarity of the strikers.

Having failed to win a following in the industry on the basis of their program and "organization", the 18th St. "Union", the *Daily Worker*, and the *Food Worker* have fallen back on slander and misrepresentation of those who have the workers' confidence. As a result, the strike, assailed viciously by the lying capitalist press, has also had to face a barrage of attacks by the *Daily Worker* under pretense of building

The *Daily* led up to its latest attack with a series of articles inimical to the strikers' interest. From the outset, the *Daily* has failed to print statements of A. F. W. officials. It has supported the split policy of the Stalinist Food Workers' Industrial Union. The F. W. I. U., instead of helping militant elements in the A. F. W. has persistently sought to discredit them. At critical moments the *Daily* has ignored important developments in the strike. Whenever the strike suffered a blow, the *Daily* has featured the bad news. Whenever a victory was won it played it down, ignored it or lied about it.

Like the boss press, the *Daily* minimized the strike's strength. At the membership meeting which adopted the general strike resolution, 3,000 were present; the *Daily* said 1,000. At the Madison Square Garden rally of Jan. 30, there were almost 10,000, the *Daily* of Jan. 31 said 4,000.

On the other hand, the *Daily* has persistently exaggerated the strength of the Stalinist union. The Jan. 30 meeting of the F. W. I. U. in Bryant Hall was attended by about 500 people, most of whom were not hotel workers. The *Daily's* report on Jan. 31, that 600 strikers were present was not so bad. In fact, it was so little like the *Daily* that on Feb. 1 the figure was boosted to 1,000.

During the first days of the strike, minorities of strikers in three hotels were tricked into the F. W. I. U. by Stalinist bunk. One after another these groups bolted and joined the A. F. W. After wandering for three days in the Stalinist wilderness, the New Yorker shop, the Stalinist "fortress", unanimously decided on Jan. 30 to join the A. F. W. Not even the four professional

What the Amalgamated Stands For

The Amalgamated, first and foremost, is a workers' union. No bosses allowed.

It is a democratic union. The membership elects or recalls officials as it sees fit. There are no thugs and no tyrants in its ranks.

There is freedom of expression. The worker can speak up without fear of losing his membership book or dues card.

There is no political discrimination. Every hotel and restaurant worker is welcomed whether he be Democrat, Republican, Socialist or Communist.

There is no religious discrimination, no racial discrimination. Do you work in a hotel or a restaurant?

Grand Central Joins in Strike

Among the latest hotels and restaurants to join the big strike parade have been the Columbia University Club, the Blake and the Grand Central controlled by the Union News Company, the Bosses Restaurant, Brooklyn, the Wellington.

The strike-breakers at Hotel Lincoln joined the walk-out on Thursday.

A worker at the Seymour Restaurant reports that the head waiter persistently refuses to fire one of the bus boys and several waiters who have been openly agitating for the general strike. The sympathy for the walk-out in this restaurant is gaining every day.

The Carteret Restaurant is the latest to settle with the Amalgamated.

In flagrant violation of the official regulations of the Department of Labor, cooks from the Italian Fascist ship, the S. S. *Vulcan*, were sent from the ship to scab at the Hotel Ambassador. The Amalgamated Food Workers has sent a letter of protest to Francis Perkins, Secretary of Labor.

Stalinists in the New Yorker dared vote to stay out. These developments the *Daily* ignored. Indeed, on Jan. 31 when the whole shop was already in the A. F. W. it published a manifesto "by the New Yorker strikers" supporting the F. W. I. U. The *Daily* reported on Jan. 30 that 150 houses were ready to come out at the call of the F. W. I. U. Of course, they have not come out, the simple reason that there were never any such houses. The *Daily* has tried, like the boss press, to discredit the strike in the eyes of the strikers. It has told many types of lies.

The *Daily* attacked the A. F. W. for lack of militancy. For example, on Jan. 31, it said:

"Strike pickets paced up and down in the bitter cold in front of the struck hotels, while leaders of the Amalgamated Union maneuvered behind the backs of the workers to sidetrack any militant action which might develop at the Waldorf-Astoria hotel where government officials and A. F. of L. leaders were preparing a birthday party for President Roosevelt. . . . They issued explicit orders to the strikers not to stage a demonstration."

The Jan. 31 issue also characterized the union's telegram to Roosevelt, protesting birthday dinners at scab hotels, as "cringing and belly-crawling", and said that, in order to prevent a demonstration during the birthday party, the leaders had organized a fake demonstration the previous night. The issue also contains a cartoon which shows A. F. W. leaders feasting with Sec. Perkins in the Waldorf while telling the freezing picket outside not to make any noise.

The capitalist papers minimized and sneered at the mighty protest demonstration in front of the Waldorf and other leading hotels, organized and led by the A. F. W. during the President's birthday party. But the *Daily Worker* pretended that it had never occurred, that the A. F. W. leaders had prevented it from occurring! The *Daily* of Feb. 1 which might have corrected the "mistake" still did not say a word about the demonstration, the most sensational mass picketing New York has seen in years.

The *Daily* has also accused A. F. W. leaders of rejecting demands of their own rank-and-file for unity with the Stalinist "union". The *Daily* of Jan. 27 reported that 150

(Continued on Page 2)

Strike Has Cut Menus To Bone

Stories by Diners Show Hotel Men Bluffing

Reports coming to *The Militant* from sympathizers of the striking hotel workers made it plain that the great hotels of the city continue in a crippled condition, as far as restaurant service is concerned. The steady campaign of the capitalist press to convince the workers that their strike is hopeless culminated yesterday in a statement by Caldwell, spokesman for the Hotel Men's Association, in which he declared that the strike is over and no hotels feel it any longer. The truth is quite the contrary.

On Tuesday night there were banquets at several hotels in honor of Roosevelt's birthday. To protest the act of the President in showing solidarity with those who employ and support scabs, the striking hotel workers held a great militant demonstration before the banquet tables. What was going on inside is revealed by the following statement of a diner.

"I saw Oscar at one point getting so red in the face that I thought he would burst. He was furious because of the sloppy way in which the banquet was being served. Of course, the skilled hands which usually serve the rich banquets were outside on the picket line. As a result more than one soup-and-fish was stained. And it wasn't stained with the usual delicacies of the Waldorf, either. I never saw such an important banquet with such a plain menu. Of course, there was plenty to eat, too much as is usual in the Waldorf, but it was certainly not the famous Waldorf cuisine."

Another person, Mrs. Elinor Novack, went to half a dozen of the leading hotels on Tuesday afternoon to find out what was available for a dinner for eight people. She was told that service was going on as usual. As late as five o'clock however, several of these hotels had no menus ready, although usually they are printed hours before this. The strike!

At Pierre's Mrs. Novack was told that "there is no a la carte menu at all." "There was one item in each course, nothing fancy. The dessert was ice-cream. Theodore, the head waiter, admitted that this was "not usual," that there are ordinarily four dishes on each course. "Madame must forgive us—you know what conditions are—"

Essex House had only a typewritten menu. They had given up printing menus altogether as they could not be sure what they could actually cook. George, the head-waiter apologized, blaming the situation on the strike.

The captain at the Park Lane said there would be no a la carte menu. They could not serve more than one or two dishes. The main dinner course was white fish!

At the Ambassador the main dining room was closed altogether. Dishes available in the small dining room were few and simple. Here the captain pretended this had nothing to do with the strike, but could give no other explanation. At Park Central the headwaiter said he had not noticed the strike, but Mrs. Novack spoke with a guest who said that the waiter at her table did not know what a demitasse is.

The Savoy Plaza head waiter offered \$4.50 dinner without choice of courses. The captain explained that the strike did not bother them. A guest said indignantly: "Then why is the food so terrible?"

The menu at Marguery's offered seven choices on the main course. One was a vegetable plate, four were fish. Pierre, the head waiter, said a dinner for eight would have to be ordered definitely before six o'clock or they would never get it ready, not even the vegetable plate. Service as usual?

These conditions were duplicated at the Pennsylvania-Information about the Pennsylvania from another source reveals that in the grill for the last three days the only dessert has been pie.

A diner at the Brevoort reports that the women hired for the dining room are not a great success at scabbing. After failing to get any of the famous French dishes which the Brevoort usually provides, this diner turned to cheese. It took him 25 minutes to get a portion of Port du Salut; the waitress admitted that she had never heard of it. Service as usual? Bunk!

