

# THE FIGHTING WORKER

WORKERS OF THE WORLD  
UNITE!



Organ of the Revolutionary Workers League of the U. S.

Vol. 2 No. 2—WHOLE No. 17

CHICAGO, MARCH 1, 1937

Price: 1 CENT

## AUTO WORKERS POINT WAY FOR AMERICAN LABOR; AGREEMENT NO SOLUTION; NEW STRIKES COMING

### Strikers Trapped by Arbitration; Sold Out by CIO; Must Take Over Union

The settlement signed in Detroit on February 11th by General Motors, the CIO and Murphy brought to a close the greatest auto strike American labor has yet witnessed. Starting spontaneously in Atlanta, the strike spread with whirlwind velocity in six weeks to Michigan, Ohio and Indiana, and reached as far as Kansas City and Los Angeles. It closed twenty of General Motors' sixty nine plants.

The strike center was Flint, Michigan. There the workers spontaneously called sit-down strikes in a number of Fisher Body and Chevrolet plants, barricaded the doors, armed themselves with clubs, high pressure and aciv spray hose, and auto-door hinges and stood off the attacks of the police.

#### COPS ROUTED

Working men and women went to Flint from Toledo, Detroit and other cities to picket and fight the cops and vigilantes. Giant picket lines were thrown around the plants. The Women's Auxiliary and Emergency Brigade led the charge which swept the police off the streets. In this way the good features of the sit down tactic were retained and its weakness (isolating the workers in the plant) was overcome.

To avode strikes and divide the workers by trying to palm off the cause of their unemployment on the strikers General Motors closed its other plants. This was a gigantic lockout.

There was only one correct answer: to turn the lockout into a strike; strike Ford and Chrysler; extend the strike into a general strike of the auto industry; organize the armed defense of the workers; organize plant committees; elect delegates from the plant committees to local strike committees and delegates from these bodies to a central strike committee; with full and sole control of the strikes.

#### CIO BLOCKED STRUGGLE

This was not the program of the CIO. These "leaders" called no strikes until the workers forced them to. They accepted the lockout. They had only twelve organizers in the field when a hundred would have had more than enough to do to keep pace with the swift development of the struggle. There was half a million dollars in the CIO treasury. But the strikers had to raise their own funds.

When General Motors saw that the CIO was holding the workers back, it took the offensive. It got an injunction against the strikers and through the Mayor of Flint organized hundreds of vigilantes.

Roosevelt and Murphy, afraid that the Roosevelt program of feeding the workers fake promises to get them back into the yoke of wage slavery, was going to be blown up, clamped arbitration

on General Motors and the workers with the help of John L. Lewis.

The CIO used the Roosevelt-Murphy arbitration to keep the workers marking time, and told them Murphy was their "friend" Murphy, who had called out the militia which tried to starve the workers out of the plants.

With the militia in town the union leadership signed an agreement with the mayor of Flint to disarm the strikers if he would disarm the vigilantes, which he didn't do, and to co-operate with the police in maintaining law and order.

#### STALINISTS SUPPORT CIO

In all of this treachery the CIO was supported by the "Communist" Party. When the Revolutionary Workers League issued a leaflet in Flint calling on the workers not to disarm, the Stalinists furiously attacked the League. The Socialists who support the

CIO played no independent role in the strike.

William Green played his usual strike-breaking role. First he tried to get the men in the craft unions in the auto industry back to work while the strike was still on. Then he demanded representation in the negotiations to protect their rights which meant he wanted an opportunity to break up the auto workers union.

The Roosevelt negotiations and the CIO settled the strike. The workers got a very limited recognition of the union; an agreement to continue negotiations; a small wage increase, and promises. In return, they have evacuated the plants they held, gone back to work and agreed not to strike during the negotiations. Furthermore no matter what settlement is finally made they have agreed not to strike until they have negotiated the grievances that will arise when the bosses violate the settlement.

#### SELL-OUT

The gains are trifling. Extension of the strike and direct negotiations with the bosses could have won more. On the other hand the workers agreed not to put any pressure on the negotiations through strike action, which is the only way they can get something out of the bosses. And General Motors can get around the union within the framework of the agreement by negotiating with boss-controlled outfits after first taking the matter up with Murphy behind closed doors. In tying the hands of the workers and giving up the demand for straight out recognition of the union when the workers were in a strong position the CIO sold out the workers.

The bosses will now take the offensive. The workers must prepare to resist and take the counter-offensive. Victory can be won on the line of a class struggle policy for a general strike and on the basis of rank and file control of the union.

### Strike Was Focal Point in Rockefeller-Morgan Struggle

The recently settled auto strike became one of the focal points in the struggle between the Rockefeller and Morgan groups of finance capitalists.

The Rockefeller group used their control of the Roosevelt administration and the CIO through Roosevelt, to steer the strike into anti-Morgan channels. That is why the CIO raised the slogan: General Motors first; Ford and Chrysler next.

Ford, Chrysler and General Motors have separate assembly plants. The manufacturers of parts, although under the control of one or another set of these auto moguls, produce for all of them. It is therefore impossible to tie up General Motors without tying up the whole industry. What the slogan means then is a tie-up of only General Motors assembly plants; that is, to set in motion only a part of the auto workers against the full strength of General Motors.

General Motors is a Morgan-DuPont outfit. Ford is allied with Rockefeller against Morgan in auto. The Roosevelt-CIO strategy was to restrain the workers from action on a scale necessary for victory while using some of them to harass General Motors (Morgan).

At the same time Roosevelt took no chances. The seamen's strike on the West coast was entering its third month and other strikes were popping and threatening. A gigantic national strike wave which might have got out of the control of the labor fakers was looming. So in Flint Roosevelt's man, Murphy, called out the militia "to protect the strikers," while Roosevelt clamped arbitration on General Motors and the strikers.

By threatening to cancel the subsidies to the Morgan controlled shipping industry Roosevelt forced a settlement of the seamen's strike. This was not difficult inasmuch as the Copeland blacklisting, continuous discharge book law had already been passed by the Senate.

#### REVOLUTIONARY PROGRAM

Had the marine and auto workers understood this relationship of forces and had a program and leadership to utilize it in their interests better settlements could have been won.

Only a revolutionary understanding of the class struggle, of the role of the capitalist state, and of the struggle going on inside the enemy camp, can equip the workers to fight the bosses and their agents in the workers' ranks.

Trade unions with class struggle policies and industrial union structures controlled by the workers are necessary. But only a revolutionary Marxian party can give the workers (and their unions) the political leadership necessary to overthrow the boss system.

## Imperialists Agree on "Peace" Against Spanish Workers

The "neutrality committee" with the exception of Portugal has agreed to close the border between France and Spain and to blockade the Spanish coast to prevent the passage of arms and other aid to either side in the civil war. Now that the Spanish workers are no longer threatening to overthrow capitalism the imperialists have come to an agreement to end the civil war and establish "peace." Since Franco is winning "peace" will favor him. The consent of the Stalinist government is consistent with its entire course in the Spanish situation: support of French imperialism. The obstinacy of little Portugal is part of the cynical game these thieves are playing. It provides a loophole to get around the agreement should the workers threaten capitalism again.

#### ANGLO-ITALIAN DEAL

That England which had most to lose from a German-Italian-Franco victory now consents to let Franco win shows that either England has outbid her rivals and got the inside track with Franco or come to an agreement with them. The latter seems to be the case. The agreement between Italy and England to maintain the status quo in the Mediterranean supports such an assumption. The press also reports that Italy has given France assurances that her line of communications with her North African colonies will not be interrupted.

According to the reports Italy has been granted some mining concessions. This cannot be all she will get. What else is involved will come out later. What Germany will get is highly problematical since the Anglo-Italian deal was possible only on the basis of a switch on Italy's part from her "understanding" with Germany.

The entire solution which the imperialists are working out with

### Marxian Party Can Turn Tide Toward Revolution

the help of the Stalinists is directed against the Spanish workers and peasants. For them it can bring only terrible misery. The Spanish bourgeoisie and its imperialist masters will be able to impose "peace" only by open dictatorship and ruthless white terror. "Peace" will begin the next stage of the class war to suppress the workers.

The bourgeoisie can count on the Stalinist and Social-democratic leaderships to attempt to persuade the workers to accept the "peace." But the anarcho-syndicalists and, in Catalonia, the POUM as well, may attempt resistance. Although opportunist these movements have a more militant tradition.

The bourgeoisie will crush all workers' organizations of whatever kind to prevent the crystallization of any opposition to its program. "Democracy" will be abolished. The illegalization of the POUM in Madrid shows which way the wind is blowing. The abolition of "democracy" will include the Stalinist and Social-democratic organizations which paved the way for this "peace," as in Germany and Austria.

In Catalonia where the workers are stronger and the Stalinists and Social-democrats are weaker than in the rest of Spain imposing "peace" will be more difficult. To march Franco's troops in there at once will prolong the civil war with the possibility of social revolution. First the POUM and the anarcho-syndicalists will be driven underground. "Democracy" will be abolished more gradually. Only if the workers show fight will Franco's troops be used.

That is the drift of the present situation. But it is not guaranteed. If the workers take to the road of the social revolution to overthrow capitalism they can yet win. Through the proletarian dictatorship they can smash their class enemies on all fronts. That means no faith in the Catalan and Madrid-Valencia governments. It means independent class action by the workers against Franco on the military side and independent class action against the governments on "their" side of the war.

#### ON TWO FRONTS

The road to victory against Fascism is the road of the overthrow of the Valencia and Catalan governments. The two tasks are inseparable. Today the civil war against Franco can be won only by first overthrowing the capitalist governments and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Independent class action by the workers is possible only through Soviets and a revolutionary Marxian party. Everything depends on whether the workers can create these instruments of victory in time.

In Catalonia, the key to the situation, where the workers created embryonic Soviets and pressed forward farthest on the road to revolution, the anarcho-syndicalists and the POUM steered them back into support of the capitalist government which liquidated the independent organs of the workers. It is necessary to create them again.

That is the task to which our representatives in Spain are devoting themselves. The League, unlike other groups, has no illusions about the treacherous character of the POUM, and strives to build a revolutionary party and Soviets by independent action in the class struggle.

# STALINIST GOVT IN NEW DRIVE TO TERRORIZE WORKERS

## New Communist Party Can Stop Return to Capitalism

NEW YORK, Feb. 13.—We just got back from Rutgers Square after our open air demonstration on the Moscow trials. Big crowd. Stalinists turned out in large number and organized an attempt to break up the demonstration. They were unsuccessful and quieted down after howling about an hour.

Police wanted us to adjourn. We refused, protesting against their presence. Main speaker, Cowl, spoke practically without interruption. We had plenty of banners: for the Communist Fourth International, for a new Communist Party in the Soviet Union, etc. Meeting lasted three hours.

Comrades are in high spirits. The Trotskyists boycotted the meeting.

At headquarters we just concluded a little meeting and collected twelve dollars for the FIGHTING WORKER.

Comradely,

L. B.

Thirteen more members of the ruling Stalinist stratum in the Soviet Union have been shot after sensational frame-up trials in which the only evidence against the accused was their own "confessions." Radek, who admitted he was guilty of all the crimes with which he was charged and "even those I know nothing about" was given ten years, as was Sokolnikov. Both are being held as witnesses for the coming trials of Bukharin, Rykov and others, as were Zinoviev and Kamenov after their first trial three years ago.

### NO EVIDENCE

The accused were charged with conspiring with Trotsky, who is supposed to be their leader, and with German and Japanese imperialism, to restore capitalism in the Soviet Union. Germany was supposed to get the Ukraine; Japan, the northern half of Sakhalin Island and the maritime provinces of Siberia. What the accused and Trotsky were supposed to get was not "confessed."

No one with a shred of political intelligence will believe that these trials proved what the Stalinists claim they did. There was not a single shred of evidence, no witnesses, no documents.

The "conspiracy" is supposed to have covered a number of years, involved thousands of human beings, had ramifications with foreign governments and their secret services, and stretched over thousands of miles of Soviet and foreign territory. How is it possible that no evidence was available? The failure to produce any evidence can be taken as proof of the fact that it doesn't exist.

But the confessions! About this we note first that hundreds have been arrested. Only those who confess come to trial. Radek proved this. For eight months he refused to confess. He was not brought to trial. Then he confessed and was brought to trial. Piatikov was brought to trial only after he confessed. Why? Because there was no other evidence. Because these men had to be forced to furnish "evidence" against themselves.

Could they not have refused?

The strong ones refused and have been shot or exiled or are waiting in jail. The weaker ones confessed. Torture was undoubtedly used.

### ACCUSED WERE STALINISTS

Besides on what POLITICAL basis could they have fought the frame-up? The only basis for fighting the frame-up is a Marxian political struggle against the whole Stalinist regime and its anti-working class policies of which such frame-ups are a necessary part to make scape-goats for the cruel results. But this is exactly what the accused could not do. With the exception of Trotsky, which is different story, they have been Stalinists for years. Together with Stalin and other Stalinists they have collaborated with the French bourgeoisie against the French workers and against the Spanish revolution, with the American bourgeoisie against the extension of the Bolshevik revolution to Cuba. In Russia with Stalin they have carried through policies against the interests of the working class in the interests of the petty bourgeoisie and world imperialism. In short they had no political basis to fight the frame-up.

There is nothing to exclude the

Yet it is a vital point. Individuals can and have degenerated to such depths. But to have us believe that people who suffered DECADES of exile, persecution, prison; who went through three revolutions and the Civil War of 1919-21 should ALL sink so low, we need more than these frame-up trials.

Insofar as Stalinism as a system of ideas and policies is concerned the thing stands differently. Capitalism can be restored in the Soviet Union only by the violent overthrow of the existing property relations and the existing state, even in its present Stalinist form. To say that Stalinism is plotting to restore capitalism is to say that it is plotting to overthrow itself, which is nonsense.

### CAPITALIST AGENCY

Stalinism represents the class needs and interests of the petty bourgeoisie in the Soviet Union, which like the petty bourgeoisie in capitalist countries, cannot play an independent role in modern society. I tseek support either from the working class or the capitalist class.

The defeats of the proletariat since 1923 have weakened the world and Russian workers and their hold on the soviet state and

show their dissatisfaction by slowing down production; illegal demonstrations and wholesale arrests are reported. The atmosphere is charged with the tension of coming social conflicts.

The German workers have learned through bitter experience what Stalinism means in the struggle against Fascism—capitulation. Today the Spanish workers are learning through an even bitter experience that Stalinism stands in the camp of the concealed "democratic" counter-revolution with the Anglo-French imperialists and their Spanish capitalist puppets.

To cover its responsibility for the cruel consequences of its course Stalinism attempts to fix the responsibility on scape-goats and terrorize the workers into submission to its policies. That is the purpose of the trials. At the same time it seeks to remove all people who might constitute leaders of an opposition movement to itself. Zinoviev, Kamenov, Radek, Piatikov, Sokolnikov, Smirnov and many others were once with Trotsky against Stalin. The vacillations and capitulations of these men in the past has enmeshed them in the Stalinist net and made them easy prey.

## Trotsky Defense Seeks Personal Vindication

Leon Trotsky, organizer of the insurrection by which the Bolshevik Party seized power in 1917, organizer and leader of the Red Army, is supposed to be the chief of the "conspiracy," uncovered by the recent Moscow trials, to overthrow the proletarian dictatorship and restore capitalism in Russia. Less than any of the others would he have cause or purpose in such a conspiracy. Since he was not there to "confess," and denies the charges, there is no evidence whatsoever against him except the "confessions" of the accused, which were dictated by the prosecution.

But no more than Radek, Zinoviev and the others can he make a Marxist political struggle against the frame-ups. He is not a Stalinist but his line is opportunist. For almost three years now he has been operating on the line of making revolutionary parties out of the traitor parties of the Second International. In effect this is an abandonment of the struggle for the creation of a Communist Fourth International and for a new Communist party in the Soviet Union.

### "I AM NOT GUILTY"

That is why in all that he has written on the trials there is not one word about the vital question of a new revolutionary party in the Soviet Union which alone can overthrow Stalinism. The failure to utilize this occasion to make propaganda for a new Communist Party in the Soviet Union and the Fourth International is at bottom a capitulation to Stalinism.

Trotsky's defense revolves around the axis: I am not guilty. Personal vindication is his main concern. What a far cry this is from the days of 1917 when Lenin and Trotsky were accused of being in the pay of the Hohenzollerns against the Russian revolution. Then the Central Committee of the Bolshevik party indignantly denied the slanders and demanded that the slanderers be tried and executed. They rejected the demand that Lenin stand trial. They used the occasion to sharpen the struggle against the Provisional Government.

### PROLETARIAN JUSTICE

Trotsky demands that he be tried. He demands that an "impartial investigation commission" decide whether he is guilty. This is false and dangerous.

The fundamental issue involved is the defense of the proletarian dictatorship. Justice is possible only in a proletarian court whose guiding line is the defense of Marxism.

An "impartial commission" will contain friends and enemies of the proletarian dictatorship. As an auxiliary arm of the struggle to overthrow Stalinism and preserve the proletarian dictatorship it can serve a useful purpose by investigating the legal aspects of the evidence. To make it the axis and pivot of a defense which seeks personal vindication is, whether one intends it or not, to throw the political issues into its lap, give it a free hand to attack the proletarian dictatorship and the opportunity to frame Trotsky.

The American Defense Committee is cleverly using the false policy of Trotsky and his followers to attack the proletarian dictatorship as the speeches of Norman Thomas so clearly show.

Trotsky is innocent of the charges made against him by the Stalinists. We must defend his right to asylum. If possible we must create a commission to investigate the legal aspects of the evidence. But its basis must be clearly defined so that it does not give support to enemies of the proletarian dictatorship, nor to its opportunist "friends." At the same time we must organize the struggle against the opportunist policies of Trotsky who confuses the workers and gives support to the agents of capitalism.

# WHAT DO YOU SAY?

## Help Build A Marxist Party in Spain

The campaign of the League to assist in the construction of a Marxist party in Spain to turn the tide of the social revolution in favor of the workers reached a new high peak when comrade Oehler, National Secretary of the League, sailed for Spain early in February to join comrade Negrete who has been working in Barcelona since the early part of November.

Both comrades will attend the Barcelona conference called by the POUM, Workers Party of Marxist Unity, and the International Bureau of Revolutionary Socialist Unity now set for April 11.

### MARXIST INDEPENDENCE

Our comrades will work to build a party on the line of the League for the creation of a Communist Fourth International: the political and organizational independence of the Marxist force in direct competition with all other forces in the class struggle, including the POUM.

To make our work possible the League made a campaign for funds which has brought in \$300.00 from the following units of the League:

New York \$184.

Washington 100.  
Philadelphia 16.  
Total .....\$300.

To continue the work we need at least as much more. We appeal to all workers to help us in the struggle to build a revolutionary party in Spain. All donations should be sent to the Fighting Worker at 2159 West Division Street, Chicago, Ill.

## J. M. Carl Expelled

J. M. Carl has been expelled from the Revolutionary Workers League by the Political Committee.

Carl left Spain before the outbreak of the civil war and joined the League on his arrival here.

After the outbreak of the civil war Carl returned to Spain, joined the Workers Party of Marxist Unification, the POUM, and assisted in editing *La Batalla*, central organ of the POUM.

Carl did not consult with the League about these steps at any time neither before he left for Spain nor after his arrival there.

The political line of Carl is capitulation to the opportunism of the POUM. His actions constitute a gross violation of Bolshevik discipline.

## Press Fund Nears Goal

Some time ago we announced that the League was making a drive for funds with which to buy a press for printing the *Fighting Worker*, *Fourth International*, theoretical organ of the League; and *Young Worker*, organ of the Young Workers League. A sympathizer had offered to match dollar for dollar up to seventy-five dollars.

To date the League has raised \$91 which with the \$75 pledged makes a total of \$166. But we are making efforts to raise more as the present sum is not sufficient to buy a press, install it and buy the necessary equipment.

### \$100 MORE

We need \$100 more to make the grade. We know that we will get it.

The present plan calls for the first weekly issue printed on our press by our second convention which is due soon.

Everyone is invited to lay it on the line, as they say. Name your own figure and send it in to the *Fighting Worker Press Fund*, 2159 West Division, Chicago, Ill.

idea of conspiracy of these people with the German bourgeoisie. Had the policy of Stalinism demanded it they would have done it. But the policy of Stalinism did not demand it. On the contrary at the moment it demands a conspiracy with the French bourgeoisie against the German, and with the American bourgeoisie against the Japanese. That is why we do not believe that these people were guilty of conspiring with the "wrong" bourgeoisie.

### NO POLITICAL LOGIC

There is another reason. The alliance of Stalinism, including the accused, with various sections of world capitalism against the extension of the Russian revolution and against the interests of the Russian workers is one thing. Of this they are all guilty, accusers and accused, alike. A conspiracy to overthrow the property relations established by the October revolution is another. To this charge there is no sense at all. Why should these men who have spent the best part of their lives in the struggle to overthrow capitalist property relations and the capitalist state, conspire to restore them in Russia?

What would they gain from such a conspiracy? The "confessions," threw no light on this question.

strengthened the world capitalists and the petty bourgeoisie inside the Soviet Union and increased their pressure on the Soviet government. Stalinism therefore also reflects the pressure of world imperialism on the proletarian dictatorship.

As a result of this increasingly strong pressure on one side and increasingly weak pressure on the other the Soviet Union under Stalinism has moved—not forward toward Socialism—but backward toward capitalism. Objectively the role of Stalinism is to prepare the return of capitalism. But it can not plot its own annihilation. Neither can Radek, Piatikov and all the others. In the case of Trotsky who is not a Stalinist the thing is even more absurd.

### WORKERS SUFFER

Under Stalinist rule the workers in the Soviet Union are made to pay the costs of the defense program while the peasants are granted fresh tax exemptions, Stakhanovists goad the workers to frenzied speed-ups to make up for the growing failures to meet the production quotas, as aristocracy of labor is arising while the real income of the great majority of workers is falling; the sabotage of real imperialist agents and their conspiracies grow; the workers

MARCH ISSUE  
of the  
**FOURTH INTERNATIONAL**  
Theoretical Organ of the Revolutionary Workers League, U. S.  
**MOSCOW TRIALS**  
**AUTO AND THE CIO**  
**TROTSKYIST FOURTH INTERNATIONAL**

10 cents a copy \$1.00 a year  
Order from Fourth International,  
2159 W. Division St., Chicago