

---

# Communists Throw Challenge In Face of Michigan Authorities: Ten of Participants in Bridgman Convention Walk into Courtroom at St. Joseph. [March 10, 1923]

by C.E. Ruthenberg †

Mimeographed press release, copy in Comintern Archive, f. 515, op. 1, d. 210, ll. 95-96.

Comrade Editor:— You are requested to give the following story first place in your issue of today.

C.E. Ruthenberg

• • • • •

## COMMUNISTS THROW CHALLENGE IN FACE OF MICHIGAN AUTHORITIES

-----  
Ten of Participants in Bridgman Convention  
Walk Into Courtroom at St. Joseph  
-----

(St. Joseph, Mich.)— On the eve of the beginning of the trial here, Monday, of William Z. Foster for participation in the convention of the Communist Party at Bridgman [Aug. 17-22, 1922], ten of the Communists named in the indictment whom the authorities had been unable to arrest previously, walked into the courtroom and surrendered.

The ten Communists who came into court to challenge the prosecution in the Bridgman case were Jay Lovestone, Robert Minor, Rose Pastor Stokes, Ella Reeve Bloor, William Weinstone, Max Bedacht, A. Schulenberg, Rebecca Sacharow, Edgar Owens, and John Ballam, all of whom have taken a prominent part in the work of the Communist movement in the United States during recent years.

Commenting on the surrender of the Communists before the opening of the Bridgman case, C.E. Ruthenberg, Executive Secretary, issued the following statement in the name of the Workers Party (Communist) of America:

“The surrender of ten leading Communist workers to the Michigan authorities at St. Joseph has the full approval of the Central Executive Committee of the Workers Party of America. Others named in the indictment charged with participation in the Bridgman convention will undoubtedly follow the same course if they can be assured that bail will not be fixed at such a savage figure as \$10,000 for each defendant.

“The Communists are not surrendering themselves to the Michigan authorities because they have any faith in the justice of the capitalist courts and prosecuting authorities. They have had too many experiences with these institutions showing the willingness of judges and prosecutors to ignore their own laws and rules in order to put Communists in prison.

“The Communists do, however, have faith in the working people of this country. The time has passed when governmental authorities can put Communists in prison on trumped up charges. The working masses of this country have learned by bitter experience in the strikes of the past few years that the government which persecutes Communists is the same government which attacks the workers on strike and these workers

†- The press release is unsigned in the original, attributed to Ruthenberg based upon the initial note and details of internal style. The 10 Bridgman defendants in question surrendered to authorities in St. Joseph, Michigan, (Berrien County seat about 15 miles down the road from Bridgman) on Saturday, March 10, 1923. Ruthenberg was in town as a prospective defense witness in the Foster case.

are ready to fight with the Communists against such persecution.”

The surrender of the ten leading Communist workers in addition to the 22 others already under bond in the Bridgman case is part of the Communist defense in that case. The Communists are not running away from the Michigan prosecution. They do not intend to play the part of defendants but to put their prosecutors on the defensive. Burns and his gang of private detective crooks are already running for cover because of the exposure of their methods in this case.

The Communists will uphold their right [to] openly and publicly advocate the political principles which they support during the St. Joseph trial. The Communists have nothing to hide. They desire nothing more than the opportunity to submit their principles and proposals for a change in the existing social system to the judgement of the working people of the United States.

Bail was fixed by Judge White at \$1,000 each for the ten defendants who surrendered themselves, and they were permitted to remain at liberty till Monday [March 12] on recognizance when it is hooped that this bail will be forthcoming.

*Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport.*

*Published by 1000 Flowers Publishing, Corvallis, OR, 2005. • Free reproduction permitted.*