

Voice Of Socialism In The West

LABOR ACTION

Official Organ of the Western Federation of the Socialist Party

Workers Of The World Unite!

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AUTO WORKERS CRACK GENERAL MOTORS

Act To Crush Militant Labor Group In Spain

Import "Moscow Trial" Technique To Split Workers' Ranks and Slaughter Revolutionists

Another ghastly chapter in the world-wide campaign to "liquidate" the struggle for socialism is now being written in Spain.

As predicted in the last issue of Labor Action, the campaign of incitement against the forces struggling for workers' rule in Spain has now become a campaign of bloody suppression.

At Madrid press reports carry the news of the suppression of the radio station and the daily newspaper of the Workers' Party of Marxist Unity (P.O.U.M.) and the arrest of the P.O.U.M. leaders.

San Diego Farm Strike Is Crushed

"Popular Front" Engineers Fatal Truce Which Smashes Celery Strike

The pathetic end of the San Diego celery strike is another picture of betrayal and deception reminiscent of Orange County. It is a picture of a Mexican Consul, some local politicians and their stooges and a couple of incompetent labor leaders who helped these agents of the employers to maneuver the striking unions into calling a two day "truce" in picketing just as the Shipper-Growers were beginning to feel the pressure of the strike, thus breaking the back-bone of the workers' offensive.

The picture was painted by the Farmers' Protective Assn., framed by its agents within the Unions, and nicely glassed in by a clique of Stalinists.

The Unions of San Diego County up until a week ago were the pride of the state, the shining light of unionism in agriculture; today they are nothing but another menacing blot, marking the spot where another strike was broken, and this one without a struggle. Six months ago the San Diego Unions boasted of good contractual relations with the growers; their leadership was clear and their perspectives sound; their ranks were filled with militant union men; they have given to the labor movement such men as Jose Espinoza.

But such events as the Orange County Citrus strike, Los Angeles, Salinas, etc., had long ago planted a firm determination in the Shipper-Grower Associations (Continued on Page 2)

Los Angeles Bosses Feel Power Of C.I.O. Drive

With the addition of representatives of the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, local 270, the Shipyard Workers Industrial Union, San Pedro, and other organizations, the group of union men who are leading an organization drive of the C.I.O. unions in and around Los Angeles, moved forward to the realization of the slogan "Make Los Angeles a Union Town."

With local 188, Auto Workers Union acting as the organizational center the drive in auto and aircraft has already resulted in the creation of locals at Willys Overland, General Motors, and Douglas Aircraft. Application for charters are going in this week for locals at Chrysler, Studebaker, and Northrop Aviation.

This upsurge of unionization in the automobile and aviation industries has given encouragement to the union men in rubber, and other mass production industries.

STEEL THREAT MET The threat of the steel barons of the East and the northern part

Anti-Picket Ordinance On Skids

Organized labor in San Francisco has swung solidly into support of the repeal of the vicious anti-picketing ordinance that has been in effect in this city since the day of feverish patriotism and violent oppression of labor in 1916, when U. S. imperialism was girding itself for war. The vote will take place Tuesday, March 9th.

John F. Shelley, president of the Central Labor Council, reports that 75,000 trade unionists and their families have pledged their support for the repeal of the ordinance, and 41 organizations, including several district improvement associations, have gone on record as being opposed to the anti-picket statute.

The law is deliberately phrased to make any kind of picketing illegal, depriving workers of a right that has been upheld even by the Supreme Court, and inviting police brutality against any group of workers that dare protest against abominable working conditions and wages. The complete gag nature of the ordinance is revealed in its official description:

TEXT OF LAW "An Ordinance Prohibiting Littering, Picketing, Carrying or Displaying Banners, Badges, Signs or Transparencies, or Speaking in Public Streets, Sidewalks, Alleys or Other Public Places in a Loud or Unusual Tone, for Certain Purposes Therein Named, and Providing a Penalty for any Violation Thereof."

Despite the obvious design of the ordinance to protect greedy employers from being exposed by organized labor, a group of owners, under the guise of a Civic Welfare League, are opening a campaign to keep the ordinance in force, using the slogan, "Play Safe—Prevent Violent Picketing."

In a widely distributed leaflet this "welfare" bunch emphasizes "intimidating, threatening and coercing"—three words seized from the body of the ordinance. The question of labor's elementary right to picket is obscured and distorted by an unscrupulous attempt to claim that repeal means unlimited license for violence on the picket line.

Despite the provocation of the existing gag law, the actual invitation to police interference with peaceful picketing, persons responsible for the leaflet claim that the ordinance has prevented violence on the picket line. According to their short memories, during the twenty years of the ordinance "instances of physical violence in labor disputes have been few and far between."

To counter such propaganda and to actively push for the repeal of the anti-picketing ordinance, a General Campaign Committee has been set up, with offices in Room 410, Grant Bldg., San Francisco.

San Diego Labor Sees Unity Hope

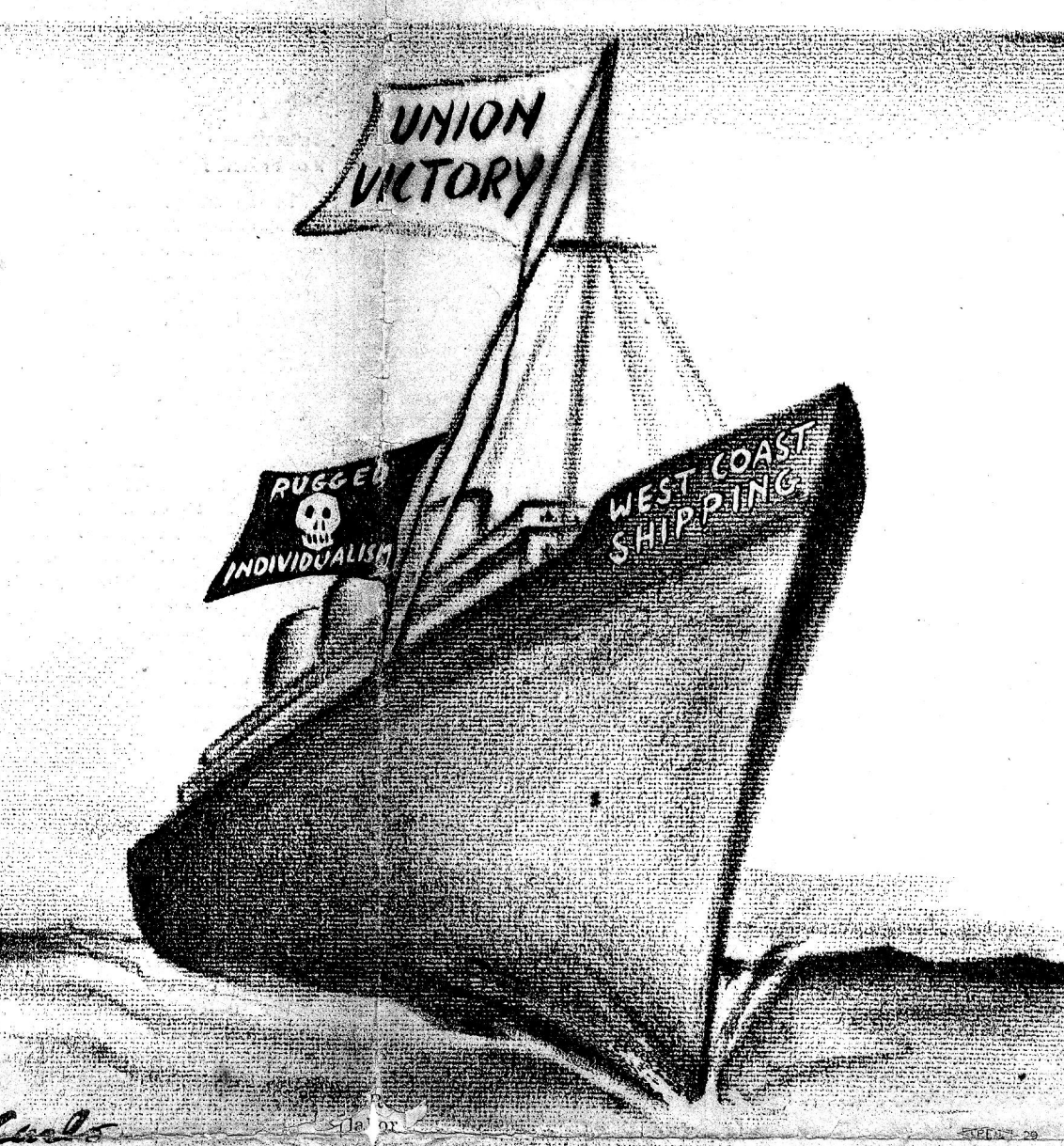
SAN DIEGO—After months of division and internal dissension which resulted in the expulsion of the majority of progressive unions from the local Federated Trades Council, a move is under way for re-unification of the labor movement here.

All unions unaffiliated have been invited to return to the Council. Back per capita tax is to be waived and the unions are promised re-admission on payment of their per capita for the present month.

A statement signed by Walter R. Stutz, president of the San Diego Federated Trades and Labor Council, urges unity and states that "the unaffiliated organizations may seek a new election under the Constitution and By-laws of the local body."

If this statement is made in good faith, it indicates an end to the virtual dictatorship over local labor affairs forced some months ago by William Green through his "personal representative" Mr. Casey.

Flying The Right Flag - - By Carlo



Unions In Six-Hour Day Move

The Building Trades Take Referendum Vote on Proposal

A movement to establish the six-hour day in the San Francisco building trades has gained considerable headway with the submission of the question by the Building Trades Council to a referendum vote of all affiliated organizations.

Eleven unions have already endorsed the resolution. They are: Carpenters Local No. 22, Carpenters and Pile Drivers No. 34, Lumber Clerks and Handlers No. 2559, Felt and Composition Roofers No. 40, Varnish and Paint-makers, Hod Carriers No. 36, Millmen No. 42, Construction and General Laborers No. 261, Ornamental Plasterers No. 460, Plasterers No. 66, and Painters No. 1158.

CONFERENCE FORMED The driving force behind the campaign is "The Six Hour Building Trades Conference Committee," a delegated body from the unions initiating the proposal. J. A. Murphy, Business Agent of Hod Carriers Local No. 36, is chairman of the conference and J. A. MacDonald, a member of Carpenters Local No. 34, is secretary.

In a leaflet issued by the conference the six-hour day is advocated as a "practical and realizable proposition for the building trades."

A.F.L. ENDORSEMENT CITED The endorsement of the six-hour day by the conventions of the A. F. of L. is cited and it is pointed out that five unions in the San Francisco building trades, already enjoy the six-hour day; namely, the Hod Carriers, Plasterers, Ornamental Plasterers, Lathers, and Bricklayers.

The conference, declaring its sole task to be "to aid the Building Trades Council in popularizing the six-hour program and mobilizing the rank and file behind the B.T.C. in order to get complete unity of action," urges all unions to endorse the resolution and send delegates to the conference.

Call Conference To Form State-Wide Agricultural Union

California State Federation Calls Sixty Local Unions Together for Concerted Action

The California Federation of Labor has sent out a call to all federal and independent agricultural unions and all central labor unions in the state of California for a conference to be held in San Francisco on February 27th and 28th at the Labor Temple. The purpose of the conference is the formation of a state-wide industrial union of agricultural workers to displace the dozens of small and weak federal and independent unions now struggling for existence.

WIDE REPRESENTATION Organized into the reactionary Associated Farmers, controlled by the Bank of America and similar corporations, and into Grower-Shipper Associations. Their powerful organizations plus the weakness of the agricultural workers has resulted in a consistent and successful drive against organization in agriculture. They can only be beaten by a state-wide organization of workers organized industrially.

FIRST MOVE AT STOCKTON The first move toward co-ordinating the activities of all agricultural unions and strengthening organization among agricultural workers was made at the Stockton Conference held June 6th and 7th of last year. At this conference 8 independent and ten A. F. of L. agricultural unions were represented, as were other organizations such as the Workers Alliance and sympathetic trade unions.

ISOLATIONIST POLICY LOSES However, because there was no solid state-wide organization of agricultural workers many strikes in agriculture in the last year were lost. In Orange County, in Salinas, and in Stockton strikes were called which ended in questionable success or outright failure. This was due to the fact that the strikes were localized, that the Associated Farmers were able (Continued on Page 3)

C.I.O. Union's Victory Begins Wide Advance

National Industrial Agreement and Six Month Recognition Strengthens Entire C.I.O. Campaign In Basic Industries

General Motors has signed its first national agreement with an industrial union. This fact represents a real victory for the auto workers and for the forces of the Committee for Industrial Organization. The first major breach in the iron front of the open shop mass production industries has been made.

California's Volunteers Begin Trip

Group In New York To Sail With Second Debs Contingent

The first detachment of volunteers for the Debs Column from San Francisco reached New York early this week. They will embark for the battle front in Spain with the second contingent soon to join the International Brigade defending Madrid.

Every man in the group sent from San Francisco is trained and experienced in some military field, and in addition is a member of a working class organization, political party or trade union. The loyalty of each is unquestionably with the Spanish working class.

Still waiting in San Francisco for funds necessary for traveling expenses are over a hundred qualified volunteers; aviators, artillerymen, machine-gunners, etc. These men, trained by the capitalist war machine, now are eager to give fighting aid to the workers fighting the fascists in Spain.

WON IN PLANTS Major credit for these gains goes to the militant and finely disciplined auto workers whose determination to hold the plants from "now to Christmas" spoke louder than any honeyed words in the conference chambers. As (Continued on Page 2)

Fink Book Blocked By Fight Of Unions

Repeated attempts to force the Copeland fink book on the Seamen in the West Coast ports during the past week were frustrated by the firm resistance of the unions of the unlicensed personnel, the Sailors, Firemen and Cooks and Stewards.

Orders and counter-orders from Washington kept the port of San Francisco in turmoil. Some ships were delayed in sailing when the categorical orders of Daniel Roper, Secretary of Commerce, to force the fink books on the crews ran squarely up against the refusal of the workers to accept them.

The stalemate was finally broken, for the time being, by the granting of a court injunction restraining the U. S. shipping commissioner from enforcing the provisions of the Copeland Act at this time.

There is no doubt that hopes were entertained in certain circles at Washington to take advantage of the general eagerness to resume west coast shipping in order to slip the dog-collar around the necks of the seamen. Definite promises had been made to the unions that enforcement of the (Continued on Page 3)

BULLETIN Ernest Erber, National Chairman of the Young People's Socialist League, who has recently returned from Spain, will give a first-hand report on the Spanish situation, Sunday night, Feb. 21, at 8 o'clock, at International Hall, 236 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco.

COLONEL WOOD ON MOSCOW TRIAL

Noted Lawyer and Liberal Explains Why He Defends Trotsky's Right Of Asylum

MINNEAPOLIS LABOR NOTES

State Party Hits Farmer-Labor Votes ... The Socialist Party of Minnesota has issued a statement...

Printing Trades Win

In a four-day strike which ended last Thursday, the workers of the Typographical, Pressmen and Assistants, Bookbinders, Stereotypers, Electrotypers, Lithographers, and Photo Engravers, won their demands...

Auto Workers' Victory Launches C. I. O. Drive

(Continued from Page 1) ... predicted in these columns, the battle was really won in the factories. The guarding of that victory while moving on to strengthened organization and greater gains will continue to depend on the intelligent militancy of the auto workers themselves.

city, and proceeded to shut off entries and exits. Even Jensen was denied access to his office, and even more important, all deliveries to the plant were halted by the co-operative Drivers' Union. Four days of this resulted in ink, coal, and other necessary supplies running out or dangerously low...

Electrical Locals Merge ... A further cohesiveness of the Minneapolis labor movement will no doubt follow the merger of the electrical workers locals of this city...

Schaetman To Speak On Moscow Trials ... Max Schaetman, outstanding Socialist and the American editor of the literary works of Leon Trotsky, world renowned leader of the Russian Revolution, will address a series of meetings in Minneapolis Tuesday and Wednesday, Feb. 23 and 24.

WAR AHEAD ... The strike is but one battle in a far flung war. Indication that employers are well aware of this fact came with the announcement on the same day of the settlement that Carnegie Steel was attempting to hold its "employee representatives" in line by granting a \$5 a day minimum wage...

HONOR ROLL ... Kermit and Genora Johnson, Vic and Ray Ruether, B. J. Widdick, editor of the Rubber Worker and William Carney, militant rubber workers' organizer, were among the worker-generals who along with an aroused rank and file defeated the police, despite gun and gas fire which wounded 20 class conscious workers...

(Continued from Last Issue) ... If all those confessions, signed and under seal, were brought forward as evidence against Trotsky in any civilized country of the world, whether it takes its jurisprudence from the praetors of Rome or from the English Common Law and its derivatives, they would not be admitted—not a word of them could be read...

Don't Discard Life-Preserver ... Then, my young friends, Self-preservation is the first law of Nature. Don't be in a hurry to throw away your life-preservers. Fascism and dictatorship may come here also.

ATTACK LEADERS ... The first and most important line of strategy followed by the growers agents in the Unions was to undermine the authentic leadership of the Mexican Union with a vicious campaign of lies and slanders...

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writing against prejudice and emotion; two things quite incapable of appreciating reason. But let us go on: ... Trotsky has not been charged of conspiring to assassinate. Whoever says so makes himself a laughing-stock in the civilized world. To convict by the confession of the accused in the settled law of civilized tries, simply ridiculous...

Traitor—To What? ... In the campaign against Chief Joseph, the Nez Perce, we went into bivouac one evening in a hot, rocky canyon, alive with rattlesnakes. After a general slaughter of snakes, we had our meagre supper and went to bed. Soon afterward I thought I heard a rattler in the blankets of my Captain, Colonel Robert Pollock, a Civil War veteran, of more than two hundred pounds weight, by whose side I was sleeping...

Testimony of John Reed ... There was a boy; a playmate and classmate of my younger sons, who came much to our home in Portland, Oregon, until he went away to college. But when the Russian Revolution shook the world, he hurried there and went through it. When the Revolution was established and things had quieted down a bit, he returned to this country and to his home in Portland. One day he came to my sick bed and said he was going back to Russia, but did not care to have it generally known. He said he might never return and he could not go without saying goodbye to me.

One young emotionalist whom I dearly love, says in effect ... "I am suddenly now a "Traitor."—Traitor to what is not clear to me. I never swore allegiance to the Russian government. I never was a Communist and am not likely to be from the specimens I see about me. I do not confess.

The Action Army

By Frank Stern ... Last week Labor Action missed an issue because of a shortage of finances. That means that the Action Army has been laying down on the job. Just one month ago the special trial subscription drive was announced in order to add a thousand new subscribers for Labor Action, and in order to raise funds without forcing the membership to contribute beyond their means.

Fisher Hits Distortion Of Speech

Illinois Chairman Calls Daily Worker to Order For False Report ... John Fisher, Illinois Socialist state chairman and president of Local No. 1 of the Progressive Miners of America at Gillespie, which alone has raised \$2,000 in cash from its members for the Spanish workers, writes in to protest against deliberate distortion in the Daily Worker of his remarks as chairman of a meeting for the Spanish Young People's Delegation in Gillespie, where more than \$600 was raised for aid.

Action is required now—immediately. We must assure the regular appearance of Labor Action. This is no time for retreat. Sacrifices must be made if necessary. Extraordinary efforts must be put forth to build Labor Action and widen its support.

We are listing those who have come through thus far on the two-bit sub drive. If your name is not listed you are not doing your part. You still have a chance to come through. Join the vanguard of the Action Army!

Socialist Builder

CHICAGO—The first issue of "The Socialist Builder" for Socialist members of the Workers' Alliance of America has been issued by the national unemployment committee of the Socialist party.

Stoolpigeon Profits

WASHINGTON, D. C.—The Corporations Auxiliary Co., stoolpigeon outfit, made \$1,750,019 between January 1, 1933 and November 1, 1936, evidence presented to the La Follette civil liberties committee shows.

CELERY STRIKE LOST IN SAN DIEGO

(Continued from Page 1) ... to wipe out the existing unions in agriculture and the Unions in San Diego in particular. ATTACK LEADERS ... The first and most important line of strategy followed by the growers agents in the Unions was to undermine the authentic leadership of the Mexican Union with a vicious campaign of lies and slanders...

concentration of the workers forces in such a way as to enable the Unions to break off one after another several Shipper-Growers from the Association. ... discipline themselves, and urged them on to break their own strike! ... The Mexican Consul (Castro) blandly said that he was glad that the workers were "doing the right thing." ... Three days later the men began to feel the fruits of militant struggle gradually melting away and the strike slipping through their fingers...

# The Notebook of an Agitator

### After the Maritime Strike—Main Aspects of the Victory—Two Conceptions of Trade Union Policy

The more thoroughly the result of the 99-day maritime strike is considered the more convincingly does the victory of the unions stand out. The gains of the workers have two aspects. The immediate material benefits in the form of increased wages and cash payment for overtime are worth the struggle and suffering which the workers had to pay for them. The shortening of the working day of the Cooks and Stewards—even if it fell short of the 8-hour objective—is a benefit which the workers involved will enjoy every day they are at sea. The general movement of labor for better wages and shorter hours is greatly stimulated by the tangible concessions won by the maritime workers in these respects.

But, in my opinion, the outstanding and most important result of the strike was the unquestionable strengthening of the individual unions, and of the Maritime Federation as a whole. That is the safeguard and the promise of better things to come.

The 1934 strike, with all its heavy cost of struggle and sacrifice, laid the foundation for all the advances of maritime labor in the past two and a half years. But it left the question of the stability of the unions still undetermined. The sea-faring crafts had to fight every inch of the way by means of job action—the only recourse left to them—to wrest the recognition and the consideration denied them in formal agreements. The attempt to wreck the Sailors Union in connection with the revocation of its charter showed that the stability and strength of this militant organization was doubted by labor fakery as well as by shipowners. Finally, the arrogance of the shipowners last Fall only demonstrated their underestimation of the stability of the Federation as a whole. They had to be convinced by the strike that maritime unionism is no passing phenomenon.

The unions survived this test of a drawn-out struggle and came out of it stronger than before—and consequently with more confidence in themselves.

The results of the strike are the vindication of the strike. Who could argue now—in the face of the results—that the strike should have been postponed and stashed off indefinitely until Washington came to the rescue of the workers? All the Roosevelt administration ever offered to the maritime workers is the Copeland Book. It is clear now, or ought to be, that the strike was a necessity.

The prevailing policy in the strike was, in the main, a policy of militancy. That accounts for the victory. But this policy made its way and prevailed at times in a peculiar, indirect way—from the bottom upward rather than from the top down. The maritime rank and file are fighters. They are strongly influenced by militant traditions. That is the real secret, if there is a secret, of the strength of the Federation and its affiliated unions, not some new inventions in the line of strategy. The maritime workers FEEL the class struggle, and instinctively act accordingly. That is why they were right every time they blocked policies inspired by a different conception of capital-labor relations.

# Ohio Alliance Back Militants

TOLEDO.—The Socialist Party won a smashing victory for the policies of its members within the Workers Alliance when the state executive board of the Ohio Workers Alliance, after a 14-hour hearing in this city, Sunday, January 31, cleared Ted Selander, National Executive Board member of the WAA, and Art Preis, chairman of the powerful Lucas County Workers Alliance, of all charges brought against them by Communist Party elements in the local organization.

Pries and Selander have played a leading role in building one of the most powerful locals of the Workers Alliance in the country and recently led a WPA sit-in strike which won 4,200 new WPA jobs.

# SITDOWN IN STEEL

CHICAGO.—The first sitdown in steel in this area was successful when the Amalgamated Assn. of Iron, Steel & Tin Workers forced the Hamilton Steel Co. to rehire three men.

The company, which employs 200 men and girls, all members of the union, was forced to recognize the grievance committee as representing the workers and to answer by February 4 a request of the union regarding a pay increase.

# Glass Workers Win Increase

TOLEDO.—The striking workers at Libbey-Owens-Ford have received an 8 cent hourly raise. After holding out for 6 cents an hour for several days, the glass company agreed to the same hourly wage increase recently won by the Federation of Flat Glass Workers from Pittsburgh Plate Glass, the other big producer in the industry.

# PRAVDA'S "REPLY" TO ANDRE GIDE

The long overdue Stalinist reply to Andre Gide is contained in a long article in Pravda, entitled, December 3, 1936, entitled, "The Laughter and Tears of Andre Gide." To put it mildly, it is a piece of journalistic blackmail, a thinly veiled threat to unleash a campaign of defamation against Gide, if he does not recant. The only charge that Pravda "still forebears to make" is that Gide is a paid agent of the Gestapo. That is still held in abeyance.

Gide, you see, has always been "unstable emotionally." Hence his sudden change. Says Pravda: "We are ready to ascribe this sudden and mysterious change to the emotional instability of Andre Gide. Assuredly, stability was never a virtue with this writer." On top of that, Gide is an old man. Add senility and instability and you get a man who easily "falls prey to the skillful anti-Soviet sharpshooters." Senility, instability, plus gullibility gives you a Stalinist portrait of Gide: "He is neither a blond nor a brunette but a sort of a piebald mongrel cross between an old French writer and a frisky Russian White Guard." From Gide's mouth issues crackles of idiot laughter, his eyes drip rheumy tears, and all the while his lips drool spittle—"poisonous anti-Soviet saliva," which is seized upon and smeared over the pages of the "German and Polish Fascist press." Such is the psychological leitmotif of the article.

# Moving To Crush Militant Workers' Groups In Spain

(Continued from Page 1) Two organizations have this in common with Trotsky and all other revolutionary forces: They fight, according to their own ideas and by their own methods, for a Workers' Spain.

THE REAL ISSUE They are the symbols of the idea of socialism in the Spanish struggle. The C. P. daily proclaims that it is "hoarse from repeating that we are not engaged in a proletarian revolution; this war leads to the bourgeois-democratic revolution, and it is those solutions, not those of proletarian revolution, which must be envisaged."

# State-Wide Union For Farm Labor Sought

(Continued from Page 1) to function on a state-wide basis and "pick their spots," catching the labor movement unprepared. Lack of funds also seriously hampered unions in isolated spots from carrying on extended struggles.

# Guild Members Pass No Picket Lines

NEW YORK.—The refusal of 11 members of the Newspaper Guild to pass through a picket line posted by typographical workers was unanimously approved as the New York Newspaper Guild's representative assembly voted to authorize a strike against the North Shore Daily Journal, Flushing, L. I.

# Textile Workers Approve Sit-Downs

WASHINGTON, D. C.—Wholehearted approval of the "sit-down" technique as well as the "lie-down" method employed by strikers at the Berkshire Knitting Mills in Reading, Pa., was voiced by the 26th convention of the American Federation of Hosiery Workers here.

# Western Federation Of the Socialist Party

(Craty Trimble, 236 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco), giving their opinion as to the advisability of issuing such a call.

# Colorado Notes

Socialists of Denver Local, and of locals immediately surrounding the state capital, heard Comrade Ernest Erber, national chairman Y P S L, at Grace Community Church on Tuesday, February 9, speak on a program under auspices of Local Denver Spanish Solidarity Committee. Comrade Erber talked on, "What I Saw in Spain." Comrade Simon Bloom acted as chairman of the meeting. Comrade Marjorie McCormick is chairman of the Solidarity Committee. Other speakers on the platform, besides Comrades Erber and Bloom, were Comrades John Maley, J. Austin Beasley and Harley Murray.

# Party Group Meets To Aid Negro Work

NEW YORK.—The national Negro work sub-committee of the Socialist Party met here and received reports of the growth of Socialist sentiment among Negro workers. The meeting was attended by Elizabeth Gilman of Baltimore, Eloise O. Fickland of Philadelphia, Alfred Baker Lewis and Ralph M. Harlow of Massachusetts, and Margaret Lamont, Norman Taylor, Frank R. Cross-waith and Noah C. A. Walters of New York.

Chairman A. Philip Randolph of the committee could not be present because he is in the midst of conducting collective bargaining negotiations for the pullman porters of which union he is international president.

# California Behind On Debs Fund Drive

Although California went over the top of its quota for the United Fund Drive during the campaign and stood among the first twelve states (along with ten other western states) in performance, the record is not so good on the Debs Organization Fund Drive.

# Standard Oil's Spy Still Lying

LOS ANGELES.—James Scudder, chief prosecution witness in the Modesto Standard Oil frameup, told a State Assembly investigating committee he "lied" when he confessed his trial testimony was perjured.

# Costa Rican Aryans Wait Hitler's O.K.

The international character of fascism, regardless of its nationalistic forms, was again demonstrated when President Leon Cortes and his cabinet became honor guests at a luncheon aboard the German Nazi warship Schleswig-Holstein while it was engaged in "maneuvers" at sea, off San Jose, Costa Rica, Thursday, January 28.

# Western Caravan To Convention

Inasmuch as there will be no national allotment to states for delegate expenses this year, some of the California delegates will travel in the Red Special. The Federation Secretary suggests to other states on the route eastward that they co-operate in the formation of a caravan for delegates, headed by the Red Special, and that plans be made in advance for meetings along the way to raise money for traveling expenses. State secretaries are requested to write immediately to the Federation Secretary to plan these arrangements.

# Federat'n Conference At Convention

Several members of the Western Federation Executive Committee have suggested the advisability of western delegates gathering a day or so ahead of the convention in Chicago for the purpose of holding a Western Federation conference. Important matters, other than the planning of the rest of the Red Special tour, should be discussed for the purpose of making the Federation a more effective means for promoting Socialist organization and education throughout the west. State Secretaries and Federation Executive Committee members are requested to write immediately to the Federation Secretary

# The Party At Work

## State Convention In San Francisco

Forty delegates will meet at 236 Van Ness Avenue at 1 p. m. for a three-day convention of the Socialist Party of California, annually held in February. Reports of the year's work will be given by the State Secretary of the Socialist Party and the District Secretary of the Young People's Socialist League. Delegates will consider resolutions on policy and lay down the basis for organization work and party activity for the coming year. A new State Executive Committee will be elected to serve until the next convention.

## Fresno Local Reorganized

With a newly established central headquarters at 2044 Mariposa Street and the return of some members who have been away from Fresno for several months, the local has re-organized for active Party and YPSL work. Regular meetings have been scheduled for Tuesday evenings.

## California Behind On Debs Fund Drive

Although California went over the top of its quota for the United Fund Drive during the campaign and stood among the first twelve states (along with ten other western states) in performance, the record is not so good on the Debs Organization Fund Drive.

Only \$3.00 has been sent to the National Office so far from California! This is a very poor showing, particularly in view of the very fair assessment schedule prepared by the National Office. If every individual member (members-at-large as well as those in organized locals) would buy stamps on the income assessment basis, the fund for the pre-convention period would be raised without throwing the whole burden on the local few who are often those who can least afford it.

# Western Federation Of the Socialist Party

## New Mexico

The Socialist Party of New Mexico suffered a heavy loss January 28 in the death, after several weeks' illness, of their State Chairman, Comrade Claude B. Blackburn. He was a man loved and respected by people who knew him, and had been for many years a faithful worker for the cause of Socialism.

## Red Special Federation Plans

Because of snow and flood conditions further north, and the short time between now and the convention, the Red Special will remain in California until time for delegates to go to Chicago for the National Convention in March.

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The assessment schedule calls for purchase of only one 25c Debs stamp by those earning \$10 per week. From \$10 to \$20 weekly wages are assessed fifty cents (for two stamps). Four stamps should be bought by those earning \$20 to \$30 a week; eight stamps between \$30 and \$40; sixteen between \$40 and \$50. Those earning \$50 and more are asked to buy thirty-two of the 25c stamps—a reasonable demand for the cause of Socialism!

The Socialist Party has no Federal Agents or tax collectors. Individual members are expected to realize their Socialist obligations and voluntarily step forward with the money for the stamps. Local secretaries should approach every member of the local if they fail to purchase their stamps. Members-at-large should order at once from the State Office as many stamps as are due on their income. Anyone who wishes to act in the spirit, as well as the letter, of the assessment plan can buy more than the assessed number and thereby help California go over the top again in support of the National Office!

## Red Truck Schedule

Unmistakable in purpose—with "Socialist Party of the U. S. A. Organization Car Number One" inscribed on its panels—the Red Special sound truck has been visiting Socialist locals, members-at-large in outlying districts, and contacts since its arrival in this state January 26. From San Diego the truck went to Los Angeles for three days, visiting contacts as far out as San Bernardino, and then continued up the valley, stopping at Bakersfield, Fresno, and Stockton.

On Friday, February 12, Comrade Anderson, National Organizer who brought the Red Special across the southwestern states into California, left for Marin County, accompanied on the Red Special by Howard Rosen, District Secretary of the YPSL. There will be a meeting of Socialist sympathizers in Yuba City on Tuesday, February 16. The Red Special will return to the Bay area to assist in publicizing the Erber meetings, after stopping a day in Sacramento on the way down from Yuba City.

# Western Federation Of the Socialist Party

## Colorado Notes

Socialists of Denver Local, and of locals immediately surrounding the state capital, heard Comrade Ernest Erber, national chairman Y P S L, at Grace Community Church on Tuesday, February 9, speak on a program under auspices of Local Denver Spanish Solidarity Committee. Comrade Erber talked on, "What I Saw in Spain." Comrade Simon Bloom acted as chairman of the meeting. Comrade Marjorie McCormick is chairman of the Solidarity Committee. Other speakers on the platform, besides Comrades Erber and Bloom, were Comrades John Maley, J. Austin Beasley and Harley Murray.

At the meeting of the SEC, Sunday, January 23, Comrade Jean Rudd was appointed State Secretary to fill a vacancy caused by the resignation of Comrade Paul McCormick, who has moved to Thermopolis, Wyoming. Comrade McCormick retains his membership in Local Denver, but suggested that a new secretary be appointed due to his inability to attend SEC meetings and take care of state business. Comrade Rudd has been assistant state secretary for some time past. Her appointment is for the interim between now and the meeting of the State convention.

Colorado State Headquarters, Room 205, 1026 Seventeenth St., Denver, will be kept open at least until after the state convention, according to action of the SEC. Local Denver will assist in keeping headquarters open by renting the room for regular weekly meetings and through voluntary pledges.

Colorado will have a State Organizer—some day. At the meeting of the SEC recently appointment of an organizer was deferred until after the national convention but members of the committee displayed an "up-and-coming" spirit toward thorough and complete organization of the state that will undoubtedly result in a state organizer being put in the field during the summer months. This will be welcome news to Colorado locals whose membership is apathetic, and to members at large who feel a local should be established in their communities.

Subscription cards sell for one dollar.

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OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE WESTERN FEDERATION OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY

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VOL. 1, No. 12 SATURDAY, FEB. 20, 1937

Labor Action

In our last issue the following editorial statement appeared:

Labor Action will be faced with the necessity of retrenchment until the rallying of the fighting Socialist forces in the West can be accomplished.

You did not receive last week's Labor Action. All subscribers will, of course, have their subscriptions extended to cover this omission.

The Forgotten Man

Mr. William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, rushed into print on the day of the auto settlement to declare that the whole labor movement had been "injured"

"As regards the closed shop principle, the defeat is complete," says Mr. Green.

It would be hard to find any person in the entire range of American life who is less entitled to criticize the auto agreement.

It was again Mr. Green's organization which maintained a virtual dictatorship over the auto workers, refusing for many months to allow them to have any voice in the selection of their own officers or their own policies.

Throughout the present strike, Green has pulled every string and violated every fundamental of labor ethics to weaken, and if possible destroy organized labor's support of the militant auto workers.

Protection of an aristocracy of labor at the expense of the working class as a whole leads inevitably to anti-labor strike-breaking tactics.

Erber Brings Message Of Spanish Revolution

Ernest Erber, National Chairman of the Young People's Socialist League, is at present touring California.

For two months he witnessed at close range the Civil War which is now raging in Spain.

Erber has a revolutionary message to bring to the workers in California. The Socialist Party and Young People's Socialist League have done everything to make this possible.

Green and his little group of craft reactionaries is reduced to mud-slinging press statements.

The capitalist press still gives these statements space, but in the real struggles of the working class there is no room for William Green.

Teapot Tempest

Roosevelt's ultra-mild suggestions for retiring supreme court judges on old age pensions has created a sizeable tempest in the capitalist teapot.

The judiciary branch of national government is the one farthest removed from any possibility of democratic control.

Roosevelt's proposal makes no material change in this happy arrangement. Younger judges might give less evidence of senility but they would offset this by a more vigorous and timely defense of "American system" of private enterprise.

The popular notion that the supreme court is the defender of a written constitution is a favorite myth of the capitalist courts.

Men, not words, are the constitution; and the men appointed by Roosevelt, or any other capitalist executive, will defend the system which guarantees their privilege.

The absurdity of the tempest can be seen in the one fairly certain appointee when, and if, the court modification gets congressional O. K.

"New blood" on the supreme court bench will not solve the workers' life and death problems—exploitation, insecurity, war and fascism.

Why?

Georgyi Piatakov and 12 other defendants in the recent Moscow trial were shot twenty-four hours after an official announcement was made in Oslo proving Piatakov's "confession" was false.

Five days before the executions, while the trial was still in progress, Trotsky publicly asked for factual verification of Piatakov's decisive testimony concerning his airplane trip to Oslo.

Acting on their own initiative the Oslo authorities conducted an investigation of their own and announced to the world that no such airplane as that described by Piatakov in his "confession" ever came to Oslo.

This information was officially wired to Andrey Vishinsky, the Soviet prosecutor, on January 31.

Nevertheless on February 1 Piatakov and the others were shot!

What did the Moscow prosecutors fear? The day before the executions the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky wired to Stalin himself asking for a stay of sentence for the accused "pending investigation by an impartial commission of inquiry composed of genuine friends of the Soviet Union."

Why do they hasten to shoot men although the most serious doubt has been raised as to the validity of their testimony?

These questions can only be answered when all the evidence has been studied and sifted by a group of men in whom world public opinion can put its unquestioning trust.

Nevada Ratifies

The Nevada State Legislature is the twenty-sixth to ratify the Child Labor Amendment.

Next state in line seems to be New York where Senate approval has already been gained, and favorable House action seems likely.

STABILIZE LABOR ACTION. GET NEW SUBSCRIBERS

Trial subs to LABOR ACTION are 25c for 13 weeks.

Erber gathering. International Hall, 236 Van Ness Ave.

Berkeley—Feb. 23, 12 noon, Mass Open Air Meeting at University Sather Gate.

Oakland—Feb. 23, 8 p. m., Mass Meeting.

Further information is available at 236 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco; UNDERHILL 9296.

Socialist Policy In The Trade Unions

C.I.O. Support and Methods of Union Work

By GLEN TRIMBLE

NOTE: This is the fifth of a series of articles on issues confronting the March convention of the Socialist Party.

The answer to the major political and economic question of our day—Socialism or Fascism—lies in the basic mass production industries.

That is the reason why the drive of the Committee for Industrial Organization commands the support of every Socialist worker.

Capitalists see Threat To Power

The capitalist class is fully aware of this and of the potential menace to their power inherent in the C.I.O. drive.

Decision On The Spot

Disciplined trade union work raises some problems and many boogies.

Garment Workers Gain

DALLAS, Tex.—Moving ahead in their campaign to unionize the dress-making industry here, the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union signed closed shop agreements with three plants.

Steel Front Cracking

CHICAGO.—A lockout by the Hamilton Steel plant was transformed into a victorious strike when the men thrown out of work turned to the Amalgamated Iron, Steel and Tin Workers union for organization.

Alabama Fears Sit-Down

MONTGOMERY, Ala.—A bill outlawing sit-down strikes and providing liability for unions encouraging them, has been favorably reported by a state senate committee.

They Took a Day Off

TOLEDO.—Members of the United Auto Workers of America in this city piled into their cars and hurried to Flint when the crisis in the General Motors strike seemed to be near.

West Likes Lynching!

NEW YORK.—In a poll conducted by the American Institute of Public Opinion 70 per cent of the vote favored a federal anti-lynching law.

Colorado Discusses Party Convention

Resolution of up and down both sides of the national agenda are flying thick and fast in Colorado locals, especially in Local Denver, where resolutions have been introduced covering practically every phase of the agenda called for by the NEC.

of the Party by a number of experienced Socialists, many of them active leaders in the trade union field.

Lewis No Cure-All

"It must be remembered that the officials of the C.I.O. cannot at all be relied upon to provide correct leadership for the progressive forces in the trade unions.

The answer to the major political and economic question of our day—Socialism or Fascism—lies in the basic mass production industries.

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The Slacker A True Story of Germany

By ERICH RIX

No one really took him seriously. In the first place he had an unpronounceable name and since no one could manage it they called him Kratschmarek.

When he came to us once and told that the Nazis had attacked him and that he had now procured a revolver because the Nazis were after his life, we all listened attentively and afterwards were greatly amused.

At any rate he was never around when there was a question of showing the Nazis a fist, and was therefore rated as a coward by some.

Once someone brought the news "Kratschmarek is cell leader in Eimsbuettel." But we gave him the good advice to tell them out there to find someone else for the job or we would be sorry for the anti-fascist front.

September 1933. Prison for investigation. In the yard goes a detachment of prisoners walking in single file five steps apart.

At that instant he looks up, sees me, and God! the man has nerve. If the sentry had seen that it would mean 14 days solitary. I step off the sill to make room for the next man and tell them the incident about the fist.

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"Never heard of it. Let's have it!" Kratschmarek, there's a tough specimen! We should have a dozen more like him.

You should have seen the send-off he gave the Nazis when they tried to pull off a raid in February! The air was thick with cheers for him.

"Never mind," he said, "but you could do me a favor and bring me my 6:35." He told me where to go and I got it for him. But I knew they would catch him some day.

They shoved Kratschmarek into an open car and drove to the suburbs, a chauffeur and three officials. At a certain place they stopped. The fools got out and began digging at a spot pointed out by Kratschmarek.

Kratschmarek made the chauffeur get out, ordered all four to turn their backs, and took their pistols. Then he told them not to stir for five minutes and made for the bushes.

That's why I say if we had a dozen Kratschmarek's things would look different here. In 1935 I saw him once more. Fifteen years prison for Kratschmarek, the man who once had been a laughing stock among us.

New Wrinkle In "Welfare" Brings Jail To Worker

A new wrinkle in "welfare" work on the part of the authorities of Hennepin County, in which is situated Minneapolis, is revealed in their latest tactics to persecute and terrorize the relief clients under their charge.

TESTIMONY IGNORED

Despite the fact that Ross's wife testified that Ross had always been willing to provide for his family, the testimony of Mrs. Davis carried more weight with the reactionary judge and jury, so Ross was sentenced although the jury recommended clemency.

Teamster's Campaign Gains in San Pedro

With the ending of the maritime strike the San Pedro Local of the Teamsters Union, taking advantage of the resumption of movement of freight to and from the harbor district, are attempting to organize completely the seven to eight thousand truck drivers who work in and around San Diego, Wilmington and Long Beach.

When union organizers attempted to go onto the Matson Company docks in order to talk to and sign up those drivers who were not packing a union card, the Company called on the police department to prevent this so-called trespass on their property.

The Union now has more than 60 per cent of the Harbor district truck drivers in its ranks. These men are determined to let nothing stand in the way of making the motor transport industry 100 per cent union.