

# Pacific Sailors Fight To Preserve Militancy Against C.P. Assaults

By Glen Trimble

SAN FRANCISCO.—The recent decisions of the Sailors Union of the Pacific are calculated to steer an independent and genuinely progressive course which may go far to extricate west coast labor from the storm that has been precipitated by Stalinist CIO leadership and reactionary A. F. of L. counter attack.

First the Sailors have called a coastwise conference of seamen—sailors, firemen and cooks and stewards—to meet October 15th for the purpose of uniting the three seagoing crafts in a single union. Second, it has brought the question of national affiliation into the open by a public statement of their own position and a demand on both the CIO and the AF of L for a clear and unequivocal public reply.

Third, the Sailors have strongly condemned, by unanimous vote, the tactics of both sides in the current Teamster-Longshoremen's jurisdictional fight and have adopted a policy "which will leave us in a strong position to help the rank and file workers involved in this dispute, and leave us free to act as a unifying force in the labor movement."

## Spearhead of Militancy

The importance of these decisions and their relation to the total west coast picture can be shown by sketching in the background of that picture. Historically the waterfront workers and, more particularly, the sailors have been the spearhead of militant trade unions on the Pacific. Organized in 1885, the S.U.P. brought together the first California State Federation of Labor, launched the San Francisco Labor Council, and initiated the powerful Maritime Federation of the Pacific. Their victorious struggles have inspired the organization of thousands of "uptown" and "inland" workers, and their constant insistence on rank and file control has made their constitution a model that all other progressive strive for. The Sailors emerged from the 1936-37 strike with a closed shop, union hiring hall agreement superior to that of any comparably large union in the United States. At the close of that strike the entire labor movement in this region was on the up-grade and the decisive importance of the waterfront workers in this progress was admitted by employers and workers alike.

## Green Repulsed

At that time (fall and winter of 1936-37) the CIO was an influential factor in West Coast labor circles. Except for a few scattered, isolated, and largely discredited 100 per cent reactionary Green supporters, the CIO was not regarded as a dual or rival organization. The unity of State Federation and Central Labor Councils was unbroken and Green's expulsion demands were filed in the waste basket with the sole effect of further isolating the reactionaries and strengthening the progressives in these bodies.

The announced program of the CIO—organization of the unorganized, concentration on industrial organization in the unorganized mass production industries, preservation of economic unity in local and regional labor bodies, and opposition to interference with or raids on existing labor

organizations—won majority support in every state federation and almost every city and county council up and down the coast. Even the ultra-reactionary Los Angeles Labor Council could not muster a majority for expulsion in the face of the unassailability of this program—unassailable because the program was actually being practiced. Substantial progress was made in organizing the unorganized; the organized crafts were not only not being interfered with, they were gaining membership and strength as a result of the general advance. No wonder, then, that practically every West Coast delegate to the 1936 A. F. of L. convention was pro CIO and opposed to the Executive Council. This general trend continued until about May of this year. The program and practice of the CIO strengthened not only its own position but that of all progressive in both A. F. of L. and CIO unions. Many reactionaries were on the skids, others were forced to whistle a progressive tune or maintain a cagey silence. Yet today the California State Federation of Labor has just completed its most reactionary convention in years. The CIO affiliates and "suspects" are being expelled up and down the coast. Red-baiting is more open and vicious than it has been since the Palmer raids. Union after union and city after city is torn with labor civil war. The keystone of West Coast labor, the Maritime Federation of the Pacific, is threatened with destruction. Discredited and buried labor fakery have come from under their rocks to enjoy a place in the sun. Genuine progressives in both CIO and A. F. of L. are facing the techniques of slander, persecution and elimination developed in the Moscow trials and found equally useful by Stalinist CIO commissars and frankly reactionary A. F. of L. pie-cards.

## CIO Leadership at Fault

The responsibility for this almost complete reversal lies directly with the CIO leadership. The policy of reactionaries in the A. F. of L. has not changed; the policy of the CIO has. So drastically that they have supplied Green and Co.'s scattered and discredited generals with an army and a complete arsenal of authentic war materials. This article deals only with the Pacific Coast, whether or not the shoe fits elsewhere I am not in a position to judge. Here every fundamental of CIO policy has been rudely and abruptly reversed and effect has inexorably followed cause.

Disorganization of the organized has supplanted organization of the unorganized in the practice of the local CIO leaders. No union is too small or too far removed from mass production and basic industry to escape the attention of the CIO. Office workers, cleaners and dyers, butchers, retail clerks, newsboys—all the trifling odds and ends are "concentration points," while organization in oil, lumber, and

agriculture is feeble and largely unsuccessful. The standard motion in local Labor Councils (just prior to expulsion) is not one for a drive to organize the millions of unorganized but one for a referendum of all organized locals, regardless of their national or international unions, on CIO or A. F. of L. affiliation. While this blunt policy of local and craft raids has a thin "democratic" sugar coating, the democratic argument is given shocking rebuttal by the increasing bureaucracy from top to bottom of the West Coast CIO. In this process the Lewis henchmen, trained in the United Mine Workers school of bureaucracy, are outdone by the swarm of Stalinists who are gleefully carrying their adventurist game into the trade union field.

## Bridges Line Fatal

The essence of present West Coast CIO policy under the Brophy-Lewis appointed West Coast director, Harry Bridges, is dual union war on the A. F. of L. leadership and membership in a showdown struggle for power. The original CIO programmatic slogans are trotted out from time to time for what they are worth but it is transparently clear to both the A. F. of L. leadership and membership that they are not worth practicing. Bridges' reputation for militancy was pretty thoroughly blasted in the 1936 strike when he consistently opposed both the strike itself and every militant tactic for winning it. His reputation for being both a Stalinist machine man and an accomplished and ruthless bureaucrat in his own right has, on the other hand, been more and more firmly established with the years. Autonomy, independent leadership, democratic control, militancy, these are all terms antithetical to Bridges' "Directorship".

As a consequence, the progressives in the A. F. of L. who defended and fought for the CIO program and against splitting the labor movement find themselves efluted at every turn by the actual character of Bridges' CIO on the West Coast. They may try to defend what the CIO ought to be but in the meantime the overjoyed reactionaries are successfully rallying the membership for the necessary task of fighting what the CIO on the West Coast is—a disruptive force which is openly splitting where and what it can and threatens to weaken and possibly destroy the economic power of all existing labor organizations on the coast.

(Concluded in next issue)

## New Headquarters

The "Socialist Appeal" Office have moved to 116 University Place, New York City. All correspondence should be mailed to this new address.

The local office of the New York Socialist Party (Left Wing Branches) and the National Offices of the Young Peoples Socialist League are now also located at this address.

# More S. P. Locals Endorse Chicago Convention

(Continued from page 1) on the party constitution and all the principles of party democracy by ignoring the demands of party locals for referendums and a special convention to register the will of the party membership." The Local decided to join the other revolutionary socialist organizations in endorsing the call for the special convention. The Local is composed largely of active militants in the steel industry and the steel workers' union.

## Austin Hits Traitors

Similar action has been taken, by unanimous vote, in the Austin, Minnesota, local of the party, which has been active in the organizing work of the packing house workers of that locality. Aline Ollman, Local Secretary, reports the adoption of a resolution endorsing the call for "an emergency party convention for the purpose of throwing out the traitors, determining the will of the party membership on all important party problems and re-establishing the party on the foundation of revolutionary socialism."

Desperate but futile efforts are being made by the LaGuardia-Socialists in control of the national party machinery to halt the sweeping progress of the left wing. The expulsions of left-wingers who refuse to betray their socialist principles for a membership book in the Thomas-Tyler clique, continue throughout the country, without, however, affecting either the determination or the activity of the militants.

Now, according to the Call, Roy E. Burt, who has been in charge of directing the work of splitting the party, is leaving on a "western tour" in a hopeless effort to mend the broken fences of the right wing. Starting with Minneapolis and St. Paul, Burt is scheduled to tour through the Northwest, returning by way of California, Utah and Colorado. Virtually all the territory he plans to cover is solidly left wing. Nobody can envy Burt the reception he is certain to get from the Locals he intends to visit, practically all of which have already voted to attend the special convention of the revolutionary socialists in Chicago.

# CIO-AFL Unity

(Continued from page 1) fact that the active militants in the unions are faced with a job that urgently calls for action. It is the job of organizing inside the unions, both CIO and AFL, for the advancement of the ideas and practices of militant, class unionism and of union democracy.

In the CIO, no less than in the AFL and even more so in some of the industrial unions, the officialdom has established a basically undemocratic regime which is bureaucratically maintained against the interests of the membership and of the union generally. Hand in hand with this pernicious system, goes the practise of "labor-employer cooperation", which tears the very heart out of fighting unionism. The class collaboration policies of Hillman and Lewis are not one whit different or better than those of Green and Frey. By undermining the militancy and self-reliance of the workers, these policies end by petrifying and paralyzing the unions. In-

stead of fighting organizations concerned with defending the interests of the workers, they become transformed, as in the case of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, into instruments for guaranteeing profitable industries to the employers.

The fight for industrial unionism is not a fight for labor-bureaucrats like Lewis, Hillman, Martin and Bridges. It is only part of the movement to make labor more efficient and effective in its unceasing struggle against its exploiters. Industrial unionism without a class struggle policy, a class struggle leadership, and democracy in the ranks, is like having a motor working on one cylinder.

The job of uniting the labor movement into a mighty and invincible weapon lies with the true progressives and the class-conscious militants in the ranks. Upon their unity and determination depends American labor progress in the next period.

# Cleveland Socialists Launched New Activity After Ohio Conference of Left Wingers

The Cleveland local opened their new headquarters on Sunday, October 17 with a statewide active workers conference. 40 leading comrades from Akron, Youngstown, Toledo, and Cleveland participated in the discussion which included both organizational and political problems.

All reports pointed to increased growth and activity. Reports were given by comrades representing the steel, auto, rubber, and truck drivers unions. The second Sunday in November was set aside for a continuation of the conference for pre-convention discussion.

The new Cleveland headquarters located at 737 Prospect Ave. (room 305) in the heart of the downtown district, consists of a sizable office and a hall which can seat 100 for lectures and

meetings and which can accommodate socials. This is the first time in more than seven years that Cleveland Socialists can boast a hall of their own. It is planned to open a bookshop shortly.

A regular fortnightly forum will be started on Friday, October 29th with Comrade Harry Milton as the opening speaker. Two regular weekly classes will be held. One class in elementary Marxism will be led by comrade Henry Clark, and another in strategy and tactics of the revolutionary movement will be led by comrade John Brahtin.

Plans are under way for a celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Russian Revolution and for the holding of a gala affair to acquaint the workers of Cleveland with the new home of revolutionary Socialism.