

Back Steve Nelson's Defense

By WM. Z. FOSTER

NEVER in the entire history of the U.S. has there been such an onslaught against the popular liberties and constitutional rights of the workers and the whole American people as during the years since the end of World War II in 1945.

This persecution was a direct reflection of the aggressive, post-war militaristic policies of Wall Street's imperialism, which received such a setback from world peace pressure at the recent "summit" conference at Geneva.

Taking advantage of existing world tension, and as a means to increase that tension, the reactionaries have outdone themselves in terrorizing the people by various types of McCarthyite practices and legislation.

Of all the labor frameup cases of this period, one of the very worst is that of Steve Nelson, well-known fighter in the cause of labor. In the state courts of the Pittsburgh district, he was convicted in January, 1952, by typical stoolpigeon evidence, and without any substance in fact, he was cynically sentenced to 20 years in jail on a manufactured charge for "sedition." As if this brutal condemnation were not enough, the Federal Government, also on the basis of the testimony of professional perjurers, also kangarooed him on Aug. 20, 1953, under the Smith Act, and



gave him another five year term in prison.

NELSON, in addition to the crying injustice of these savage sentences, which were cooked up entirely upon lying testimony, was also subjected to the most outrageous treatment in jail. Bail was denied him for eight months, and he was kept in prison, undergoing periods of solitary confinement, bread and water diet, and all sorts of indignities.

Only partial relief from these injustices was secured when the Pennsylvania Supreme Court in September, 1952, released Nelson on \$20,000 bail, and agreed to review his case. This action of the Pittsburgh courts was too revolting for the upper court to accept.

On Jan. 25, 1954, that court issued its important decision reversing his conviction.

NELSON'S CASE is highly important, representing as it does an extreme danger to reaction in the courts. It is also doubly important in that the defense's challenge to the constitutionality of the Pennsylvania Sedition Law also carries with it a challenge to the legality of the many anti-labor laws that have been rammed through various state legislatures during the past ten years. This is why the State's attorneys of 27 states having such laws, are appealing to the U. S. Supreme Court against the reversal decision of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court in the Nelson case.

It is also why the AFL and the CIO have displayed much interest in this case. The constitutional fate of the many

right-to-work (right-to-scab) laws enacted during recent years in the states will probably depend upon the outcome of the Nelson Sedition case in the U.S. Supreme Court. Organized labor and the masses of workers should show far more activity in this highly significant case than has as yet been done. Particularly are funds necessary to pay the mounting legal expenses.

The Nelson case is now in a critical stage. On Nov. 15 it will be argued before the U.S. Supreme Court. This should stimulate general activities in the defense, the collection of funds, the sending of protests to Attorney General Brownell and the like.

Contributions should be sent to Connie Bart, of the Committee to Defend Steve Nelson, Room 200, 6 East 17 Street, N.Y. 3. Steve Nelson must be freed. His cause is the cause of the working class, of the whole American people.

UAW to Aid Strike At Westinghouse

WASHINGTON, Nov. 7.—The CIO United Auto Workers announced here a donation of \$20,000 towards the strike fund of the CIO International Union of Electrical Workers' four-week walkout of 44,000 Westinghouse workers.

Support for the strike, currently the largest in the country, was also pledged by David J. McDonald, of the CIO United Steelworkers of America, and president George Meany and secretary-treasurer William Schnitzler of the AFL.