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San Francisco, Calif.

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Sincerely yours,

ASSOCIATED FARMERS OF CALIFORNIA, INC.

By: GUERNSEY FRAZER
Executive Secretary.

REPORT ON LEO GALLAGHER

Key To References

- ACLU Bull - American Civil Liberties Union weekly bulletin.
- CDT - Chicago Daily Times.
- CT - Chicago Tribune.
- DM - Daily Maroon (University of Chicago student paper).
- FP - Federated Press clipsheet. (Communist press service).
- LAT - Los Angeles Times
- LD - Labor Defender. (Official organ of International Labor Defense).
- ML - Milwaukee Leader (Milwaukee Socialist paper).
- NM - Communist weekly magazine New Masses.
- NS - New Student (National Student League at Univ. of Wisconsin magazine).
- NYTel - New York Telegram.
- NYT - New York Times.
- SR - Student Review (Official organ National Student League).
- VA - Voice of Action (Official Communist Party District 12 paper at Seattle).
- WW - Western Worker (Official Co. Party Dist. 13 paper, San Francisco.)

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Leo Gallagher, professor of Law at Southwestern University, Los Angeles, California from 1922 to 1932 was for a number of years an attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union in Los Angeles from which he graduated to the Communist "International Labor Defense" being the leading Communist attorney on the Pacific Coast.

Gallagher was Treasurer of the Communist "Friends of the Soviet Union in 1930 (Page 50 Part V. Vol. 4 Fish Committee Hearings in Los Angeles).

Gallagher was to speak at a Communist mass meeting at Cooperative Auditorium on conditions in Russia but the meeting was prevented by the police. (ACLU BULL 10-8-31).

During the summer of 1932, Gallagher was dismissed from Southwestern University. The American Civil Liberties year book "Land of the Pilgrim's Pride" 1932 states:

"The dismissal of Leo Gallagher as professor from the Southwestern University Law School faculty after ten years' service was due to his defense of radicals in the courts. At the time of his dismissal he was defending six young people arrested and charged with disturbing the peace for running around the stadium track at the Olympic Games displaying "Free Tom Mooney" banners."

FP 11-14-32 reported Gallagher as a speaker at a big San Francisco Tom Mooney mass meeting.

He was a member of the national committee of the Communist organized "Student Congress Against War" held at the University of Chicago in December 27, 28, 1932.

Signed a protest against "atrocities" of Kentucky officials against the striking Communist miners of Harlan and their defense representatives. FP 3-28-32.

FP 5-7-32 reported Gallagher as counsel defending Communist Meyer Baylin under arrest for disturbing the peace.

FP 11-14-32 reported Gallagher as a speaker at a Los Angeles Mooney Mass Meeting at Civic Auditorium with Theodore Dreiser, Lincoln Steffens and Paul Callicotte.

WW 1-2-33 reported Gallagher as counsel defending Greek Communist, Peter Panagopoulos indicted on two counts of criminal syndicalism asking for a larger hall for the trial "so that all the interested workers could hear the proceedings."

FP 2-17-33 reported Gallagher a member of a delegation from Communist groups in Los Angeles to the City Council to protest a raid on the John Reed Club. The delegation was ordered to submit its protest to a sub-committee but Gallagher objected. The president of the council ordered the delegates thrown out by the police which was done so forcibly that Gallagher had to be taken away in an ambulance.

WW 3-6-33 reported Gallagher as counsel for 5 Communists, Ezra Chase, John Hester, Bob Meyers, Bill Cooper and Freddy Dan under arrest for rioting at County Welfare offices, Los Angeles on January 18, 1933.

DW 1-17-33 carried the announcement of Gallagher's candidacy on the Communist ticket for the office of member of Los Angeles Board of Education.

FP 4-10-33 reported that Gallagher had sent 2000 attorneys a questionnaire relative to whether or not Tom Mooney should have a new trial to prove his innocence by introduction of evidence never before submitted.

SR March, 1933 reported Gallagher as a speaker at the Southern California Student Congress Against War on January 22, 1933.

DW 4-22-33 announced Gallagher as Communist candidate for Judge in Los Angeles.

A confidential report states that Gallagher and Lincoln Steffens visited Anita Whitney to hold a conference on the Tom Mooney case.

CDT - 4-22-34 stated that Gallagher was refused summonses for trial witnesses at the pending Mooney trial and was forced to revise his preparations for the trial.

DW 6-7-33 reported Gallagher as a speaker at an anti-criminal syndicalism meeting in Los Angeles, June 10-33.

DW 7-11-33 reported selection of Gallagher as a member of a Communist international investigating committee to go to Germany to defend the Communists charged with burning the German Reichstag in Berlin.

DW 9-9-33 reported Gallagher as signing a communication to German authorities demanding the right to inspect Nazi camps and investigate the arson charges against Communists in Berlin.

DW 8-17-33 reported Gallagher as featured guest at big Communist rally in New York City on eve of his departure for Europe. He was quoted as stating "I pledge to do my utmost in the effort to free the four Communists and I ask your support to prevent the German Government from railroading these workers to death." The article also states:

"Spector told of Gallagher's record on the coast, naming particularly the Imperial Valley Cases and the Long Beach Case where Gallagher succeeded in freeing many workers. He also told how Gallagher taught workers self-defense in court, which has freed many workers the I.L.D. has been unable to defend."

In Berlin, Gallagher immediately got into trouble with the Nazi authorities and the CDT 10-14-33 reported him held for three hours under technical arrest over a letter he had written about the Communist George Dimitroff who was one of the German prisoners in connection with the arson case. Gallagher was released.

CT 10-15-33 reported that Gallagher had been excluded from the Reichstag fire trial.

CT 1-21-34 reported Gallagher expelled from Prussia as "an enemy of the State". His protests were unavailing.

The DW 2-23-34 reports Gallagher's return to the United States and he issues a warning of the peril to August Thaelman, a German prisoner and a Communist.

Sender Garlin, Communist leader and columnist for the Daily Worker, devoted a whole column to Gallagher in DW 2-26-34 stating in part:

"Up in Toronto this morning begins the trial of A. E. Smith, secretary of the Canadian Defense League, who is faced with the usual charge of 'sedition'. Leo Gallagher, fiery gray-haired ILD lawyer from Los Angeles was due in court this morning to aid in Smith's defense. But as we went to press last night word arrived that the Canadian authorities had barred him at the border

"Gallagher has just returned from Germany. He got off the boat in New York last Thursday and two days later was on his way to Toronto.

"He had gone to Nazi Germany to defend Georgi Dimitroff and the other framed Communist defendants in the Reichstag fire trial. Although he had a written retainer from Dimitroff as well as from Dimitroff's mother and sister, Gallagher was not permitted to participate in the defense.

"I remember the day I first met Leo Gallagher. It was in a courtroom in Long Beach, California, in the spring of 1932. Lieutenant 'Red' Hynes of the notorious Red Squad of Los Angeles had raided a lecture hall where Sam Darcy, district organizer of the Communist Party, was giving a talk on the crisis Gallagher, an ILD attorney, and at that time a professor in the law school of Southwestern University in Los Angeles (he was later dismissed) was reading to the judge and jury from Lenin's 'State and Revolution' to show just what the California capitalists meant by 'criminal syndicalism'

"Some time later, in the midst of his campaign for Judge of the Municipal Court on a United Workers ticket, Gallagher left for San Francisco to lead the fight for a new trial for Tom Mooney Although Gallagher was in San Francisco in connection with the Mooney trial during the entire period of the campaign, he polled 69,273 votes."

DW 3-23-34 reported Gallagher a speaker at a Paris Commune mass meeting at Paterson, New Jersey on March 24.

NM 2-13-34 named Gallagher as an honorary member of the Advisory committee of the Communist "Workers School" of San Francisco.

DW 3-20-34 cited Gallagher as one of a communist delegation to Mayor LaGuardia to protest police breaking up of Scottsboro protest meetings in Harlem. Other members of the delegation included Ada Wright, one of the Scottsboro mothers; Bruce, Herman McKawain and Clarina Michelson, all of them well known Communists in New York.

NS March, 1934 reported Gallagher as a speaker at the University of Wisconsin Student League in Madison, Wisconsin.

NM 5-1-34 publishes a letter from Gallagher in which he cites the existence of the Institute for the Study of Fascism in Paris and suggests contributions for it.

VA 5-8-34 states that Gallagher, in Cleveland, Ohio, on his way west with Mrs. Ada Wright, started a row in a Cleveland restaurant on April 10th when the restaurant would not serve the negress and both Mrs. Wright and he were thrown out and Gallagher sustained two broken ribs as a result of the fracas.

LD June, 1934 publishes an article "Our Anti-Fascist Campaign" in which he tells of the situation in Austria and Germany and points out the heroism being displayed by German and Austrian Communists in combatting Fascism in those countries.

DW 5-22-34 cites Gallagher as a member of the Advisory Council of the Sacramento Workers School.

ML 6-29 cites Gallagher as a member of the International Judicial Committee, a Communist ACLU International legal body.

WW 6-25-34 states: "Behind the bars of the Los Angeles City Jail, Archie Brown today signed his declaration of candidacy on the Communist ticket for State Treasurer. The papers were presented to him for his signature by Leo Gallagher, I.L.D. Attorney."

WW 6-4-34 in an article "2000 CHEER GALLAGHER AT L.A. MEET," stated:

"Before an audience that jammed every available seat, Leo Gallagher last night spoke at the Mason Theatre, reporting on his part in the defense of Dimitroff in Nazi Germany and exposing the Hitler reign of terror"

"Hundreds of workers greeted Gallagher at the depot when he returned to this city where he for years as International Labor Defense attorney, he defended hundreds of cases of workers jailed for class activity. Immediately after arriving Gallagher went to the San Pedro waterfront where in the Moose Hall he spoke to the striking longshoremen and seamen."

WW 5-28-34 quotes Gallagher as stating: "I am very pleased that the Communist Party has endorsed my candidacy for Associate Justice of the Supreme Court. I consider it a very great honor that the Communist Party has enough confidence in me to do this."

LAT 7-11-34 states: "For passing the lie to Deputy City Attorney Christensen after being once warned several days ago for a similar offense, Leo Gallagher, attorney defending Six asserted radicals was adjudged guilty of contempt of court and fined \$50.00 with an alternative twenty-five days in jail by Municipal Judge Crum yesterday."

"The sentence was stayed until next Tuesday, Judge Crum indicating that if the trial is not concluded by that date he will order another stay until the end of the trial."

WW 8-1-34 states that 29 workers jailed in Sacramento are facing criminal syndicalism charges and that District Attorney Neil McAllister is appealing for an injunction "similar to the famous Busick injunction of 1919 which was used against the IWW." It states further that "Attorney Leo Gallagher of the I.L. D., defending the arrested workers, is pressing a fight against the injunction."

DW 8-11-34 reports that Sam Darcy and Leo Gallagher are to speak at the Masson Theatre on August 17th in support of Gallagher's candidacy for Associate Judge.

August 15 - It is reported from reliable sources that Gallagher has been retained to represent Caroline Decker, Albert Hougardy and Pat Chambers, alias John Ernest Williams, and various other Communists in Sacramento, and he will be assisted by Attorney O'Hara of Sacramento, whose office is said to be 320 Capitol National Bank Building, Sacramento.

Further, that \$25,000 has been requested by Gallagher and granted to him through the International Labor Defense and the American Civil Liberties Union; that Gallagher has been in close touch continuously with William Z. Foster, twice candidate for Presidency on the Communist ticket, now in California, and believed to be "resting" in or near Pasadena, California. There is a possibility that John Beardsley, Los Angeles, American Civil Liberties Attorney, Grover Johnson, Pasadena, American Civil Liberties Attorney, and other attorneys who have been active in Communistic affairs will assist Gallagher.

Gallagher is a candidate for Associate Justice of the Supreme Court in the State of California, Office No. 1, Full Term. Opposing him are Judge Emmett Seawell and Judge Hartley Shaw, both outstanding California jurists.

Headquarters for Gallagher's campaign are being set up throughout the State, but are invariably used as a "front" for the International Labor Defense, unit of the Communist Party. The headquarters in Sacramento and Los Angeles have been particularly active. Gallagher's headquarters are at 1005 Market Street, San Francisco, and his headquarters in Sacramento are, as yet, not disclosed, although it is rumored that a headquarters is about to be opened. Both of these headquarters, as noted, will be the center of activity for Communistic work.

REPORT ON PAT CHAMBERS

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On September 1, 1930 Pat Chambers was arrested in Los Angeles, Calif. participating in a Communist unemployed demonstration in the public street one block from the Plaza. He was a representative of the Trade Union Unity League. The meeting was held without a permit and when Olson, another Communist was lifted to the shoulders of another comrade and began to speak he was arrested. Chambers then attempted the same thing as did Yamaguchi and a woman, Reynor. They were convicted of unlawful assembly. An appeal was taken and the Appellate Division, Superior Court, Los Angeles County handed down a decision in September, 1931 upholding the decision of the lower court.

Chambers was again arrested in the San Joaquin Valley in November, 1933, leading a strike of cotton pickers and was indicted for criminal syndicalism. He was booked under the name of John Williams and held in the Visalia jail. Bail was fixed at \$10,000. He was defended by attorney A. L. Wirin, representing the American Civil Liberties Union.

He was later released and in January, 1934 another warrant was issued for his arrest and El Centro, Calif. was searched in an attempt to locate him.

In February, 1934 Chambers was a representative of the Communist Party at the Socialist Party convention held in Los Angeles.

Arrested near Brawley, California with S. C. Alexander, both being organizers for the Cannery and Agricultural Workers Industrial Union. They were released after several days in jail on a writ of habeas corpus obtained by their attorneys on March 22nd.

The San Francisco Chronicle of June 29, 1934 reported an interview with Chambers in which he was quoted as saying; "We'll keep on calling strikes among the agricultural workers in California until we get better conditions. Unless we can get settlements very soon, I am afraid it means violence." He also stated that the workers were ready to arm to defend themselves.

Chambers was arrested again on July 20th in Sacramento in raids on the Communist Party headquarters and Workers School and is held on criminal syndicalism charges.

REPORT ON ABRAHAM LINCOLN WIRIN

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Abraham Lincoln Wirin, generally referred to as A. L. Wirin, is an American Civil Liberties Union attorney from Los Angeles, California who has also served in the capacity of attorney for the Communist "International Labor Defense" which is the American Section of the International Red Aid of Moscow.

The Daily Worker, official daily newspaper of the Communist Party of the U.S.A., issue of June 24, 1933, states in part:

"Los Angeles:- Over 100 agricultural workers from Hicks Camp packed the courtroom at El Montt when the six organizers of the Agricultural Workers Industrial Union were brought to trial on charges of 'vagrancy'..... Wirin of the International Labor Defense is handling the case."

The Militant, official organ of the Communist League of America (Trotskyite faction), issue of November 4, 1933, states in part:

"Deliberate cold-blooded murder is the description given by attorney A. L. Wirin of the Civil Liberties Union after a four day's investigation of the shootings in the San Joaquin Valley, Calif., during the cotton pickers strike. Two Mexican strikers were shot and killed at Pixley and one at Arvin, a score have been injured, many seriously."

The Militant, November 11, 1933, states in part:

"Cotton pickers arrested following the attacks on the strikers by the growers' armed 'committees of protection' in the San Joaquin Valley, Calif., will be defended by A. L. Wirin of the Southern California branch of the A. C. L. U..... The indictment against Pat Chambers, the leader of the strikers, for criminal syndicalism is called a frame-up by Mr. Wirin."

The Militant, December 23, 1933, states in part:

"Trial of Pat Chambers, leader of the cotton pickers' strike in the San Joaquin Valley on the charge of criminal syndicalism ended with a hung jury. He was defended by the Civil Liberties Union attorney, A. L. Wirin, who in this case was also representing the International Labor Defense.

"The case is of vital importance because of the effort of the prosecution to make the criminal syndicalism law cover all threats of violence made during a strike."

Labor Action, official organ of the American Workers Party (Musteite) issue of March 1, 1934 states in part as follows:

"Kidnapped, robbed and beaten by the 'forces of law and order', A. L. Wirin, attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union, began a counter-attack against his assailants this week. Sent into Imperial Valley to safeguard the rights to free speech and free assemblage for exploited Mexican workers in that territory, he was kidnapped by a group of wealthy vegetable growers, robbed of \$25.00 in cash, a fountain pen, a brief case and wrist watch and released after being beaten.

"The attack upon the Civil Liberties Union attorney was the culmination of a series of attacks upon Imperial Valley workers. Not only ranchers and growers are responsible for these acts of violence, but also State officials. This is not at all peculiar when it is realized that both of these groups are the same. Further, Governor Rolph, the lynching advocate, is compelling the State Motor Vehicle Department to use State Highway Patrolmen in the Imperial Valley strikes."

Mr. Wirin apparently had enough of California strikes as he next appears in New York City attached to the staff of the national office of the American Civil Liberties Union as counsel. In "Liberty Under the New Deal", official 1933-1934 report of the American Civil Liberties Union, appears on pages 32, 33, 34 and 35, a report of the Southern California branch of the American Civil Liberties Union made by Clinton J. Taft, Director, which states in part:

"In the San Joaquin Valley, where the union (Cannery and Agricultural Workers Industrial Union - Communist) finally won an advance from 40 cents a hundred pounds to 75 cents for picking cotton, Vigilantes made their appearance. Several serious clashes took place resulting in the death of three strikers and the wounding of several. Attorney A. L. Wirin of Los Angeles, as our representative, instituted heavy damage suits against lawless public officials charging them with malicious arrest and false imprisonment of strike leaders, in an unlawful conspiracy to break the strike. Upon refusal of the prosecuting officials to file any charges against the murderers, he caused damage suits to be filed against the wealthy ranchers who did the shooting. He also defended Pat Chambers, leader of the strike, indicted under California's criminal syndicalism law. The trial having resulted in a hung jury, the proceedings were dismissed. Frame-up charges of murder against nine workers defended by Mr. Wirin, who represented them for the International Labor Defense, were also dismissed.

"Imperial Valley for five months has been under a virtual Fascist regime to prevent the organization of workers Vigilantes originating in American Legion Halls, and fostered by both growers and officials, local and State, have run rampant. Four attorneys who went into the valley to defend workers in courts were either kidnaped, robbed, beaten up, or in one instance, jailed for many days. Attorney A. L. Wirin was one of the victims. It is noteworthy that the leader of the kidnaping party was dressed in the uniform of a State Highway Patrol officer

"Attorney A. L. Wirin of our staff, who was enabled by an appropriation from the national office, to give his entire time to the work here from May, 1933 to March, 1934, has been transferred to national headquarters, greatly to our regret."

Although there is adequate proof of the close alignment of the American Civil Liberties Union with Communism, it is interesting to note the Communist "court cases" handled by the American Civil Liberties Union, as published on page 53 of "Liberty Under the New Deal." They are as follows:

"Expenditures

1. For the Scottsboro, Alabama defense (met by contributions from friends above, and McMurtrie Fund and turned over to Scottsboro Counsel) \$3,124.90
2. Illinois Coal fields warfare investigation, meetings, and publicity 767.57
3. Appeal of convictions of Tampa, Fla., cigar workers imprisoned for a strike riot and freed 525.00
4. Attorney's and court expenses in contesting martial law in the Gallup, New Mexico coal fields 374.55
5. Defense of Angelo Herndon, Negro Communist prosecuted for incitement to insurrection, Atlanta, Georgia. 252.83
6. San Jose, Calif. lynching investigation 219.85
9. Attorney's fees in defense of textile strikers, Ashboro, N.C. 100.00
10. Test of the "move-on" ordinance, Norfolk, Va. 100.00
11. Test of deportation proceedings against Frank Borich, Pittsburgh 100.00
13. Appeal from convictions of Alice Burke and Wirt Taylor, ILD organizers, Fairfield, Alabama. 80.50

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| 15. Investigating commissions report to the Governor of Kentucky on the Harlan strike | \$ 67.50 |
| 16. Deportation case of Tom Andonoff | 60.00 |
| 17. Aid to ILD defense of striking coal miners, Carbon County, Utah | 50.00 |
| 18. Investigation of Tuskalooosa, Ala. lynchings | 50.00 |
| 19. Miscellaneous cases in amounts under \$50.00 | 595.00 |

In New York City as a counsel for the national office of the American Civil Liberties Union, Wirin at once burst into print. Referring to a trial of Communists arrested at a Scottsboro protest meeting in New York City, the Daily Worker, March 22, 1934, states in part:

"Unlike the opening day of the hearings, representatives of the press were permitted to be present as a result of the vigorous protest filed with Mayor LaGuardia on Monday by workers and a delegation consisting of Joseph Tauber and David Freeman, attorneys for the International Labor Defense, and A. L. Wirin of the Civil Liberties Union."

The New York Tribune of April 14, 1934 reported Wirin as a speaker at the Communist "National Student League" 1 hour strike at City College of New York. This was part of a national student strike against war on all campuses.

The New York Post, June 22, 1934, referring to the strike of the Communist Furniture Workers Industrial Union in Jersey City, New Jersey, stated as follows:

"Three other reporters and A. L. Wirin, general counsel of the American Civil Liberties Union who were also observing the picketing, were ordered to the police station but were released

"Wirin, the counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union announced he would defend the two prisoners. He also said he planned to bring suit for \$100,000 damages against Mayor Hague, Chief of Police Daniel Casey, the three patrolmen and the police lieutenant who figured in today's arrests."

This case received considerable publicity because of the arrest of Alfred Bingham, son of ex-Senator Robert Bingham, and Corliss Lamont, son of Financier Thomas Lamont. Both these men are in the ranks of the revolutionary groups. Both are American Civil Liberties Union Directors.

When Lamont, who was arrested on the Communist picket line at Jersey City, went to court for trial he was accompanied by a battery of lawyers including Professor Jerome Michael of the Columbia Law School. Others were Associate Professor Herbert Wechsler, of the Columbia University Law School, and A. L. Wirin and Abraham L. Isserman, attorneys for the American Civil Liberties Union. (N.Y. Times 7-6-34)

In "Man", edited by Anarchist Marcus Graham, an alias for Robert Parsons, "A journal of the Anarchist Ideal and Movement Issued by the International Group of San Francisco" with "Correspondence address, 1000 Jefferson Street, Oakland, California, U.S.A." July, 1934, appears the following, on page 128:

"A. L. Wirin, Counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union of New York City: 'Run a little notice in your next issue requesting all readers annoyed by immigration officers to send in the facts to you or to us. (100 Fifth Avenue, New York City, N.Y.)' "

In the Federated Press daily clipsheet of August 1, 1934 appears the following:

"Federal intervention to end the 'wave of anti-red hysteria sweeping the Pacific Coast' was urged August 1 on the Department of Justice by A. L. Wirin, counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union.

"The Civil Liberties attorney called to the attention of the Labor Department that Secretary Perkins' wire regarding deportations of San Francisco strike leaders misquoted the law in saying that any alien 'who teaches Communism' is liable for deportation. The statute, Wirin insisted, does not mention Communism.

"The Department of Justice was asked to intervene in California on the ground that local officials and vigilantes have conspired to violate the constitutional rights of workers. They should be brought immediately before a federal grand jury, Wirin said.

"The situation in California' he said, 'is the most serious since the days of the Palmer raids just after the war. To blame radicals for serious strikes is a convenient trick of employers to escape responsibility for unspeakable wages and working conditions. Anti-red hysteria is contagious. After the outbreaks in San Francisco, two members of a Communist opposition group were arrested in Minneapolis and public statements were made by the Citizen's Alliance, an organization of employers, and the Chief of Police Johannes that reds were responsible for the truck drivers' strike. If the federal government takes a strong stand against such lawless assaults on minority and labor groups, the spread of red-baiting to the East may be prevented.'"

Wirin led a delegation of liberals to confer with Secretary Perkins on the raids on radicals in California, in New York on Friday. Last January he was kidnapped and beaten in Imperial Valley, California, when he attempted to hold a meeting for the union.

Office of the Secretary

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REPORT ON ALBERT HOUGARDY

Albert Hougardy was reported in the Producers News (official organ of the Communist "United Farmers League") published at Plentywood, Montana, under date of September 30, 1932, as ordering a bundle of Producers News from Reno, Nevada for which he sent in the money.

Quoted as Hougardy in San Francisco Chronicle of June 29th, 1934, an organizer of the Cannery and Agricultural Workers Industrial Union in the Sacramento district saying: "We have nothing to hide. We are merely carrying out the details of a program prescribed by the Communist International to unseat the existing capitalistic system of government and substitute a control similar in principle and operation to that of Soviet Russia."

Hougardy was a candidate for Congress in the August 28 primary election in the Third Congressional District in California.

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REPORT ON CAROLINE DECKER, alias
CAROLINE JOHNSTONE, alias CAROLINE
SOMARLY

Caroline Decker appeared in the Pittsburgh District #5 of the Communist Party about October, 1932. She is reported to be Caroline Drew also who was associated with the Communist leader Alfred Wagnknecht in the East but this has not been definitely established.

She was arrested in Pittsburgh on October 10th in connection with a Communist meeting. Her police photo number is 27189. Her address at the time was 2564 Center Avenue, Pittsburgh. Her description gives her age as 21; Height - 4 feet 8-3/4 inches; Weight - 107; Build - Medium; Hair - Blonde; Complexion - Medium; Occupation - Stenographer; Eyes - Blue.
F.P.C. - 17 - M - 10
3 - M - 11

She was booked under the name of Johnson - Caroline.

On October 20, 1932 she was present at an Unemployed Council Mass Meeting at Pythian Temple. Center Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pa. where she was introduced as one of the speakers under the name of "Caroline Somarly, Party office secretary just released from jail."

She preceded Jack Johnstone to the Pittsburgh district and as soon as he arrived to succeed Carl Price alias Carl Reeve as District organizer, he appointed her office secretary.

A confidential report from Pittsburgh under date of January 24th 1932 states about Caroline Decker as follows:

"Caroline Decker, alias Caroline Johnstone, is said to be the legal wife of Jack Johnstone, District Organizer. Most of the time she lives apart from him and changes rooming houses every few weeks on account of not paying rent. She came to Pittsburgh a few weeks before Johnstone arrived. As soon as Johnstone came she was assigned as office secretary in the district which position she now holds. She is very active in the Young Communist League and Pioneer groups. She is a hard working girl and time is not a question for her if she can help some group in a meeting or agitation, in fact in all struggles.

"Caroline Decker is very well liked by all branches and she has a convincing way with workers. Negro groups think she is wonderful and different groups demand her presence at meetings. She speaks very pleasantly with a kind voice and smile, which makes the listeners think she is ready to do anything for the entire working class, even for the individuals. She is the most respected female in the radical movement and can straighten out matters where other higher leaders fail."

A report on a membership meeting of the Communist Party held November 10, 1932 in Walton Hall, Pittsburgh, at which Decker was one of the speakers states as follows:

"Caroline Decker, alias Johnstone, followed Chapa. She submitted a plan from the Central Committee for the sending of a children's delegation to the White House for Thanksgiving. She urged that all Party members assist the Young Communist League in the organization of a children's delegation and to start activities in all the schools. Special leaflets for this work are to be given distribution among school children."

A report dated November 19th advises of the election of a delegation of twenty children from the Pittsburgh area for the children's march to the White House on Thanksgiving and states:

"Caroline Decker is supposed to be the leader of the children's delegation. She is the district stenographer and youth organizer. She will be assisted by A. W. Waller from Coverdale who is a section and youth organizer."

On March 17th, 1933 it was reported that Decker along with Frank Hill, Edith Briscoe, Fred Griffith was assigned to McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania "to concentrate and try to gain control of the Federal Enameling & Stamping Co. strike, and call meetings of these workers as soon as possible."

Some time in the late spring of 1933, Decker was transferred from the Pittsburgh district and next appeared in the Southern California district in connection with the Camery and Agricultural Workers Industrial Union of the Trade Union Unity League.

In November, 1933 Caroline Decker was reported as the leader of the cotton picker strikers in the San Joaquin Valley, Calif.

On April 22, 1934 Decker was the scheduled speaker at the forum of the International Workers Order at the Mission Workers Neighborhood House, San Francisco, Calif.

Was in Sacramento on June 28th at which time she is quoted as stating: "if in the process of getting better living and working conditions it is necessary for the working class to overthrow the Government - then that means overthrow of the Government." At this time Decker was functioning as secretary of the Cannery and Agricultural Workers Industrial Union, a section of the Communist Trade Union Unity League, which, in turn, is the American section of the Red International of Labor Unions, the labor section of the Communist (Third) International.

The Los Angeles Times of July 17th reported Decker in the Arvin district organizing a strike of grape pickers. State Director of Industrial Relations, Timothy A. Reardon stated that Decker had written him last January of her intention to organize a state-wide strike of agricultural workers and asserted that she had 29,000 members available.

It was reported that in June, 1934 the apricot growers in the vicinity of Brentwood, Calif. refused to deal with a committee of strikers because Caroline Decker was a member of the committee.

It is reported that Caroline Decker, Pat Chambers and a number of lesser Communists were arrested in Sacramento County in July and are held on charges of criminal syndicalism.