

Vigilante Plot Bared To Kill Dorothy Ray, Hancock, on Release

Hangman's Noose, Knout and Open Grave Figure in Threats of California Bosses; Hancock's Mother in Desperate Appeal

By Cyril Briggs

A hangman's noose and a steel studded knout, an open grave bearing the name of a living man, and an "identification visit," by Vigilantes on two imprisoned lettuce strike leaders are among the gruesome factors in a sinister conspiracy by California bosses to torture and murder 19-year

A.F.L. Painter Tells of Parley Against War

Protest Grows Against Green's Anti-"Red" Edict in Chicago

(Daily Worker Midwest Bureau)

CHICAGO, Oct. 12.—In spite of attempts by Fitzpatrick, president of the Chicago Federation of Labor, to shut up the speaker, Elmer Johnson of Painters Local 637, made a stirring report of the 2nd U. S. Congress Against War and Fascism held here Sept. 28 to 30.

Emphasizing the strong trade union representation in the Congress, Johnson drove home emphatically the importance to labor of the struggle against war and fascism and the need for united action.

Answers Fitzpatrick

Fitzpatrick shouted, "Delegate, you are taking up the time of this meeting. Please confine yourself to the business of your organization."

"This is the business of our organization," retorted Johnson. "My local is calling a special meeting to discuss it. There is nothing more important for our unions than the fight against war and fascism."

(Daily Worker Midwest Bureau)

Protest Anti-"Red" Drive

CHICAGO, Oct. 12. — Repeated protests against the vicious anti-Red program of William Green's communication to A. F. of L. unions calling for the expulsion of Communists led John Fitzpatrick, head of the Chicago Federation of Labor, to shut off discussion of the matter by delegates at the last C. F. of L. meeting.

Delegate after delegate took the floor after the communication had been read, to speak against this attempt to split the working class. An obvious majority was against publishing the communication in the Chicago Federationist.

Green's Letter Denounced

Elmer Johnson, recording secretary of Painters Local 637, exposed the dangerous character of Green's letter in the light of his own experience in union activity.

"In my experience in the local union, together with Progressives who fight for lower dues and better working conditions, we have been called Communists by the reactionaries. This communication will help reactionaries in all locals to prevent a militant struggle of their membership."

He pointed out the use of the "Red Scare" in the Frisco strike. He then stated that the attack was what we would expect from the employers, but that, coming from the A. F. of L. president, it was a completely vicious statement.

Democracy in Unions

"We must fight to keep all our members," he concluded. "we must stand for democracy in the unions, for freedom of expression and political opinion."

John Hecker then asked the body if it was the policy to expel political enemies from the unions why the unions didn't clean out the Republican and Democratic politicians who act as betrayers of the labor movement. He pointed out that it was Communists who were always in the front ranks of the picket lines.

In the midst of what was the stormiest meeting of the C. F. of L. in months, a Socialist, Leatherman, of the Pocketbook Makers Union, made a talk supporting the whole Green program while pretending to oppose it. He stated definitely that he was in agreement with 90 per cent of Green's statement. He was against the motion (he said) to publish Green's letter in the Federationist because he believed Communists should not be expelled from the unions, but should be left without influence. He proposed that the locals make it a standing rule that Communists could not be on the ballot in union elections.

About a dozen speakers all told spoke against the motion, and John Fitzpatrick finally took the floor in a desperate attempt to prevent rejection of the anti-Red stand. He pleaded with the delegates promising that no one of them would be expelled. He ranted about Communist "boring from within" tactics and then cut loose with some high powered oratory about Communism being a cancerous growth, a festering object, etc., etc., etc.

When he finished a dozen delegates demanded the floor, but Fitzpatrick hastily rushed the matter to a vote without further discussion. At least 25 per cent of the delegates voted against publication of the letter, and most of the rest abstained. However, the machine was able to muster enough votes to pass the motion by a small majority.

old Dorothy Ray and Stanley Hancock upon their release within the next few days from an Imperial Valley jail, where they have been held and tortured for the past six months for their activities in the lettuce strike of last January.

The hangman's noose and steel studded knout were mailed to Hancock together with a note threatening him with death for his activities as an organizer of the Cannery and Agricultural Workers Industrial Union. Another threatening note was left in the open grave at the foot of which vigilantes had set up a crude sign bearing Hancock's name.

Communist Candidate Protests Terror

A few nights ago, Hancock was called into the sheriff's office to be "interviewed" by two strangers. Exactly the same procedure had preceded the release of Antonio Solorzano, who on the night of his release was subjected to a fearful beating by a band of eight armed vigilantes and left for dead. Solorzano is also an organizer of the union. Numerous other acts of bestial violence have been carried out against the union's organizers and members, as Pettis Perry, Negro Communist candidate for Lieutenant-Governor of California, points out in a letter to Sheriff George L. Campbell at El Centro, Calif., denouncing the sheriff's refusal to take measures for the protection of Ray and Hancock:

"It has been demonstrated during the past ten months, by a long unbroken series of outrages, that there is no act too degraded, none too cowardly, for these police-protected vigilantes to commit in the service of the rulers of Imperial Valley. At the time of their release, Dorothy Ray and Stanley Hancock will each be in danger of the usual many-against-one vigilante attacks. Your failure to answer letters requesting that you set a definite date for their release, adds to their danger."

Hancock's Mother in Desperate Appeal

It is thus not surprising that the threats against the lives of Ray and Hancock have aroused the deepest concern and indignation among California workers, or that Hancock's mother, living in daily dread of hearing of the murder of her son, has been impelled to address several desperate appeals, all unanswered and unacknowledged, to Governor Frank Merriam and other California and federal officials.

"I have a normal mother's deep affection for her son and regard for his welfare and safety," Mrs. Mary Hancock points out in a letter, copies of which have been sent to Gov. Merriam, U. S. Attorney General Homer Cummings, U. S. Webb, State Attorney General; George L. Campbell, sheriff of Imperial County; Ed. F. Cooper, sheriff of San Diego County, and Ray Cato, chief of State Highway Patrol. "In justifiable desperation I am now addressing you in the interests of your official duties and from the common standpoint of humanitarian citizens. At the same time, as you would probably do if our situations were reversed, I am appealing for such support as I can get from lay bodies and newspaper readers over the country."

Mrs. Hancock informs these officials of the developments already reported in this article, and declares: "I am writing both to demand and to plead for safe conduct for my son and Miss Ray. . . . I want to know exactly when my son and Miss Ray are to be released and I want them safely escorted to their homes in San Diego. . . . Between the 13th and the 19th of this month, they will have satisfied the 'justice' of an Imperial court, and should be rendered immune from further molestation."

Demands Protection for Two Organizers

"If you are intent upon giving Communism another martyr or two, and if the coming of Communism will guarantee a classless society in which all other mothers' sons will be safe, I suppose that I should not complain, but I want the issue to be plain to you. Will you be parties to the further destruction of public respect for capitalistic justice, or will you afford released and therefore free citizens the protection which is their due and your duty to provide?"

The threat against these two working class fighters, the open aid being given by the authorities to the fascist gangs plotting their murder, should arouse the indignation of every decent citizen. Protests should be wired at once to the California authorities and the federal government, demanding protection and the safe delivery of the two organizers to their families and the working class of San Diego who are ready to take steps for their protection.

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