

May Day Finds Many Fighters In Jail Cells

Labor Defense in U.S. Leads Campaigns for Class War Victims

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May Day 1935 finds the working-class faced with the most cruel and ruthless campaign of terror and repression, of war preparations, which

the world's imperialists have ever carried on. Their determination to crush the spirit of the masses fighting heroically against starvation knows no bounds or limits. Starvation, naked terror is becoming more and more their weapon.

There are two main drives to this campaign—to terrorize the masses directly, and to rob them of their leaders in the struggle by throwing them in jail.

On the international field, we see the imprisonment of Thaelmann in Germany, Rakosi in Hungary, Pena in Spain, Terraccini in Italy, the Rueggs in China, and thousands more in every capitalist and colonial country, suffering in the ruling-class dungeons, stolen by violence from the ranks of the working-class.

Drive Against Militants

In the United States, the imprisonment of the Sacramento trade-union leaders, the criminal syndicalism and "sedition" victims in Oregon, Oklahoma, and other states, the attempt to send Angelo Herndon to the chain-gang, the arrest of 36 men and 10 women in Gallup, New Mexico, on framed "murder" charges, the imprisonment of Charles Krumbein, New York district organizer of the Communist Party—these and literally thousands of other cases are examples of this terror.

While the working-class of the world pours into the streets on May Day in giant demonstrations, these prisoners sit in the gloomy dungeons of the world.

"The sun is not allowed to shine into the cells of our comrades in prison," Mike Gold, the working-class bard of America once wrote. "But on May Day their eyes pierce through the prison walls. They behold the sun shining on thousands of red banners, and they hear millions of strong voices raised in the International.

"No one can imprison or kill the spirit of May Day. It grows in the grass, it shines with the sun, it sings in millions of proletarian hearts."

While we on the outside help to make May Day a mighty, militant demonstration of the united front of solidarity against white terror, fascism, and imperialist war, we must remember the prisoners, who cannot be with us, and their bereaved families. May Day must be the day when our hand of solidarity is extended to them.

Heroic Fighters

Think on May 1st of the thousands of heroic revolutionaries in the power of the class enemy. Think of their families! Demand their freedom in a ringing shout.

The Scottsboro Boys, Angelo Herndon, Tom Mooney, J. B. McNamara—and thousands more in the U.S.A.—Thaelmann, Rakosi and the tens of thousands the world over must be freed!

And in our own country, while we think of the thousands of prisoners in fascist jails, we must think also of the scores of workers' leaders held by the government of our own country for deportation to these fascist lands, where imprisonment, torture, death, awaits them. The ruling-class seeks through this horror to frighten the millions of foreign-born workers from struggle, to separate their struggle from the struggle of the native-born, to rob both of their leaders who were born in other countries. The power of the working-class can stop these deportations.

Only in one country in the world—and it covers one-sixth of the earth's surface—are no working-class leaders, no victims of capitalist justice, in the jails. In the Soviet Union the workers rule, and there the masses come out freely on the streets to celebrate their victories of Socialist construction, their triumph over the forces of reaction, pledging solidarity with their class-brothers in the jails of capitalist lands, the millions of those murdered by the imperialist lords the world over.

Remember them on May Day

We must remember these victims, not only on May Day. They gave their freedom; we must give them our support. The toiling masses will support the tremendous campaigns waged by the I.L.D., for the freedom of all our political prisoners, of the Scottsboro boys, Herndon, Thaelmann, the Spanish and Cuban victims of reaction. Our tokens of solidarity must be backed up by real material aid to these prisoners and their families, in defense funds and in the prisoners' relief work of the International Labor Defense.

The necessity of building a strong, mass united front organization of defense and relief to the political prisoners comes home to us more forcefully, perhaps, on May Day, when we feel so keenly the absence of thousands of imprisoned working-class fighters from our marching ranks, than on any other day.

Join and build the International Labor Defense! Contribute to the defense and relief funds for political prisoners.

Greetings to the revolutionary fighters suffering behind the prison bars, and the barbed wire of the concentration camps!