

THE I. L. D. FACES THE FUTURE

By ANNA DAMON

Acting National Secretary, International Labor Defense

Headlines in the press of the United States, almost daily bring to the attention of millions new tasks for the I.L.D., tasks which take us far afield around the country and around the world.

In its ten years of existence, the I.L.D. has done a good job. It has won many victories. It has accomplished a lot of work. It has spread its influence over the face of the globe. But it has not done a job that is good enough.

Let us examine some of these headlines, accomplishments, and most of all the situation facing us, so that we can judge of the problems ahead, and how we can do a better job.

I use the headlines in the press as an index because they are a sort of a barometer.

In one week we saw the following:

Minor and Levinson Kidnapped in New Mexico; I.L.D. Secretary kidnapped in Birmingham; Two Labor Organizers Kidnapped in Kansas City; Perkins Aids Frame-up of 10 Gallup Miners; Machine Guns Mow Down Cuban Liberationists; New Frame-up Against J. B. McNamara in San Quentin; Tom Mooney's Fight for Freedom

Labor Defense Councils (1922-1925); I.W.L.D. formed in 1916

THE MENACE
of
'CRIMINAL SYNDICALISM'

War Time Repression by the Federal Government is Continued Through the States.

THE LABOR DEFENSE COUNCIL
Room 307—166 West Washington Street, Chicago, Illinois.

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Enters New Phase; Four Anti-Fascist Prisoners Murdered in Germany; U. S. Department of Labor Seeks to Deport Communists to Germany; I.L.D. Appeals Sacramento Criminal Syndicalism Convictions; Victoria Price Swears New False Charges Against Scottsboro Boys.

The list for any single week could fill this page.

The tasks of the I.L.D. are not confined to the shores of the United States. Its solidarity with the victims of class

International solidarity—in Toledo, Ohio



justice take it to Germany where thousands of fascist victims lie in dungeons, to Bulgaria, Spain, Austria. Our work of organizing moral and material sup-

Defense groups before the I.L.D. was formed.

port for the victims of white terror takes us to the torture chambers of Cuba, Haiti, the Philippines where Wall Street's iron fist reaches those who dare to oppose its rule. The rising toll of hundreds and thousands of new victims of white terror in Kuomintang, China, adds to the responsibilities, the debt of international solidarity of the I.L.D.

On the other side of this grim picture of terror and persecution, we see the answer of ever greater and more solidly organized mass action. It is even reflected in the political life of the country, as pressure forces the defeat in state legislatures of new repressive bills; as the California legislature votes to recommend the freedom of Tom

National Defense Committee (1919-1921) established during the Palmer "Red" Raids.

International Workers' Defense League
Justice for the Workers Everywhere
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National Defense Committee No. 4
New York Division
FOR THE DEFENSE AND RELIEF OF CLASS WAR PRISONERS AND DEPORTEES



(Film and Foto League)

Left to right: Anna Damon, acting national secretary, I.L.D.; Frank Griffin, field organizer N. Y. district I.L.D.; Rose Baron, secretary Prisoners' Relief Department, leading the I.L.D. contingent in the May Day Parade.

Mooney—"to get rid of him once and for all."

The number of long term political prisoners in the United States increases by leaps and bounds. There are twenty per cent more long-termers in jail today than there were two months ago. Ten per cent more wives and children of these political prisoners are on the rolls of our Prisoners' Relief Department.

Even in jail, the persecution does not cease. Torture—physical and mental—is the rule for political prisoners in the United States. And worst of all is the suffering that comes from the knowledge of the hardships their families are undergoing on the outside—starving,

Labor Defender, official organ of the I.L.D. made its first appearance in January, 1926

A graphic record of labor defense can be found in the pages of Labor Defender

LABOR DEFENDER October 1927
The Death Mask - Vanzetti
10¢

LABOR DEFENDER July 1929
SMASH THE MURDER FRAME-UP
DEFEND GASTONIA STRIKERS
10¢

LABOR DEFENDER November 5
10¢

LABOR DEFENDER SCOTTSBORO BOYS FACE LYNCING

LABOR DEFENDER Release all class war prisoners

without clothes, discriminated against and persecuted by relief officials.

To meet these growing needs, we have developed increased activity in our work of prisoners' relief. We have in the past six months collected \$2,915 for the prisoners and their families in the United States and \$1,320 for the victims of fascism and Wall Street terror abroad.

But these sums are totally inadequate to meet the need, to supply the prisoners with small comforts in jail and to maintain their families until they are free. We are just beginning to make the turn which is necessary to give the relief of political prisoners the prime importance it must have in the work of the I.L.D. branches. The scores of

I.L.D. headquarters in the heart of Imperial Valley, California.



oners relief in many cities are an important step forward.

The pages of the LABOR DEFENDER have recorded most of the outstanding victories won by the I.L.D. in the last ten years. The Scottsboro decisions, the freedom that has been won for hundreds of imprisoned workers, the excellent work of our district I.L.D. organizations in developing broad united front defense movements in California, Harlem, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Illinois, Detroit, Pittsburgh. In the early years of its existence the I.L.D. conducted many nation wide defense campaigns around cases arising out of major economic battles that blazed up in different sections of the country. In recent years the economic struggles conducted by the American labor movement have been more widespread and of longer duration. Our districts have become an integral part of these battles on the economic front. Within their own territories they have organized effective united front defense of thousands, of workers fighting on the picket lines victimized because they were battling for the right to live, to organize. These basic units of the I.L.D., the branches, the districts, have made a living reality of the symbol of the I.L.D.—the shield of the working class.

Among the Negro people the I.L.D. today, because of its record in defense of their basic rights, has won a place that few organizations reached. In (Continued on page 46)

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some sections of the South, the I.L.D. has become the symbol of hope and courage.

Good progress in the direction of increased agitational work has also been made in the past six months. One hundred and twenty-five thousand pamphlets were issued in *one week alone* by the New York district and the national office on the Gallup situation, the Burlington frame-up and the terror in Cuba. A pamphlet on sedition bills and laws was issued by the Philadelphia district; on the Hillsboro CS cases by Chicago and scores of thousands of folders issued and sold on **WHAT TO DO WHEN UNDER ARREST** and **WHEN HELD FOR DEPORTATION**; more scores of thousands of folders and leaflets on Scottsboro, Herndon, Burlington.

On the tenth anniversary of the I.L.D. it is proper that we should take stock of our organization. The I.L.D. counts its friends and supporters in hundreds of thousands—its members scarcely in tens of thousands.

Why? Because there has been no consistent effort to get these friends and sympathizers of the I.L.D. into the organization as members, to get their organizations to affiliate collectively with us. But there is another reason too. There are many misconceptions as to what is a good I.L.D. member. While many members of the I.L.D. willingly give much of their time to its work, there are many more who can only pay their dues, accept and support the program and campaigns, but do very little active work. These also are good members, and we must make every effort to keep them in the organization.

The I.L.D. must learn to develop the greatest flexibility in the organization of defense and relief activities. We must initiate for example, defense movements through the organization of the broadest defense committees in which the trade unions will play the leading role. In these committees the I.L.D. must of course participate and cooperate with all the forces it can muster. It must become the center of united front activity with its chief aim to draw in the largest masses of toilers and their friends.

In all of our activities we must have as a major perspective the recruiting of thousands of new members.

Finally, and of the greatest immediate importance in facing the future,—we must broaden the leadership within our organization. There are three phases to this question: first we must draw in new forces from every section

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of the population; second we must train these new, young forces, extending the I.L.D. study circles and schools; third, we must place these newcomers into leading positions with a view to eliminating as greatly as possible staffs of paid functionaries.

The future is full of tremendous responsibilities for the I.L.D. But it is also full of tremendous opportunities for growth and strength. With ten years of glorious history behind us, a history that has carried the name and the message of the I.L.D. into almost every corner of the land, that has established heroic traditions of labor defense and solidarity, let us go forward with an organization strong enough, broad enough to meet the future and the tasks which it will bring.