

UNITY for Labor's Prisoners

The National Executive Committee of the INTERNATIONAL LABOR DEFENSE makes public its formal statement on the question of unity in the defense movement, the future of the I.L.D., and the building of one powerful united defense organization in the United States
—ANNA DAMON



New York's finest don't take a chance.



Neither do the plain clothesmen—when dealing with strikers.

The 1936 presidential election campaign is already filling the air with high sounding words and many phrases concerning the *welfare* of the citizens of the United States. The first three months of the year 1936 have hardly come and gone but the outlines of this *welfare* are already clearly defined.

With the perfection of plans for slashing relief and relief work, terror against the unemployed resisting starvation and misery is sharpening. Employed workers, trade unionists, striking for the right to organize, against wage cuts, for union recognition—have met organized vigilante violence in addition to sharp police terror.

Battered heads, jail sentences, repressive measures on every hand are the lot of the American people struggling for the *welfare* promised them in the election campaign speeches.

Not satisfied with state criminal syndical-

ism and sedition laws like the one which imprisoned the Sacramento defendants and which now exist in 34 states, reactionaries are now advocating federal legislation along similar lines.

State and Federal legislatures are crowded with scores of bills and proposed laws for further curtailment of the remnants of our civil liberties. One hundred bills increasing the viciousness of America's deportation system are now before the Congress in Washington. The most favored of these—the Kerr bill—provides for arrests without warrant of anyone suspected of being an "undesirable" alien. Nineteen states now have laws requiring teachers to take oaths of loyalty—loyalty that depends on the opinions of school boards and superintendents, who, like those in Georgia, define loyalty as *"refraining from directly or indirectly subscribing to or teaching any theory of government or economics or of social relations which is inconsistent with the fundamental principles of patriotism and high ideals of Americanism."*

The infamous *"Incitement to Disaffection Bill"* (providing severe penalties for "interfering" with the armed forces) is on the verge of passing the House of Representatives. *It has, of course, the full backing of army and navy officials various "patriotic" organizations and the Hearst press.* Congressmen who are opposed to the bill state. *"This bill, then proposes in effect to use a twelve inch gun to kill a gnat. . . . It is a piece of Hitleristic fascism."*

Strikes during 1936 have been attacked or threatened with attack by vigilantes (West Coast, Pekin, Ill., Akron, Ohio, Sharecrop-

pers, Barberton.) There is a pressing danger that these illegal terrorist groups may become a permanent factor in American life.

In Germany, Italy, Poland, China, lands where fascism and white terror take a daily toll of life and freedom, the number of political prisoners has grown to hundreds of thousands. Rule by murder, torture, the death penalty, prevails. Organizations which aim to aid the victims, to care for their wives and children are suppressed and can function only illegally—endangering the lives of those who continue this work of solidarity.

The number of labor's prisoners in the United States grows daily. Last year saw some 17,000 arrests and prison terms for those who dared to resist the attacks of terror and reaction. Thousands of men and women are at this moment serving prison terms throughout the country for labor activity. Eighty five of them (at this moment on the relief rolls of the Prisoners Relief Dept. of the I.L.D.), truly savage terms—45 to 60 years at hard labor for the Gallup miners, 8 to 10 years at hard labor for the Burlington textile workers, 75 years for Haywood Patterson, long years on the chain gang for Negro miners, sharecroppers, trade unionists in the blood-stained South, still standing life sentences for Tom Mooney, Warren K. Billings, J. B. McNamara and Kentucky miners, seven years at hard labor for Dirk De Jonge latest victim of Oregon's criminal syndicalism law, 14 years for the same charge in California, Angelo Herndon still has an 18 to 20 year sentence on the Georgia chain gang hanging
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An elevator striker—like all the others pictured on this page—falls into the hand of the New York Police.

UNITY FOR LABOR'S PRISONERS

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over his head—the list grows longer daily.

From every side the call for organized defense grows louder and more insistent—from the longshoremen on every coast, from the miners, smelters, cannery workers, textile hands, etc.

From every side the need for relief to the wives and children of labor's prisoners, for some assurance that they will not starve or go homeless, becomes more pressing.

For almost eleven years now the International Labor Defense has tried to answer these calls, has made very effort to shoulder the burden of this grave responsibility of organizing the forces of defense and relief for labor's prisoners. Every year as the terror reached out into broader sections of the American population the responsibilities of defense and financial support to Labor's Prisoners grew heavier.

Today with the front of attack against workers, farmers, middle class people wider than it ever was before, the necessity for widening the front of defense and relief is imperative.

The I.L.D. has for many months now advanced the slogan—one permanent powerful united defense organization in the United States; one powerful bulwark against the menace of fascism at home and abroad. The I.L.D. has worked consistently for united action on the defense field and can record splendid achievements in the case of Angelo Herndon. It has further advanced the cause of unity in the Scottsboro, Sacramento and Gallup cases through the formation of representative committees as well as by giving sustained support to the Mooney, Tampa, Terre Haute and other cases conducted by other organizations. The I.L.D. is convinced of the burning necessity of uniting the forces of all organizations, all individuals that hold liberty and justice dear.

The I.L.D. today is determined to strengthen its forces, solidify its own ranks, to double its energy in the field of defense and relief as it marches forward towards this unity. It pledges to stand ready as ever before to champion the cause of workers persecuted for their labor activity, because of their nationality or color, because of their insistence

on the right to live. It pledges to continue to build the united front, in defense of men and women who fall victim to the program of the reactionaries at home and abroad.

It pledges to strengthen its apparatus for collecting and providing relief to the wives and children of those behind the bars in labor's cause; to see that they are cared for, that their homes are not destroyed until the breadwinner of the family is restored to them once more. It pledges never to allow labor's prisoners to be forgotten in their cells behind high stone walls, to make their voices heard throughout the land, to make their days a little easier to bear by constant messages and signs of solidarity, by distributing the "Help Labor's Prisoners"—10c Stamp among hundreds of thousands of Americans.

Labor Defense is one of the sharpest needs of American labor in this critical moment in our national life—one powerful united organization is the only adequate answer to these needs. The National Executive Committee of the I.L.D. stands committed to the pledge to build such an organization. It is convinced that the American people will support this program and will rally to the aid of labor's prisoners and their families.

ANGELO HERNDON

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The Negro Worker: from black . . . from white I got a letter— but how can I go tell me, how can I go

The Workers: son, we're getting together o son, son, we're getting together—no shot gun—no pistol—can blow us down

Getting Together!

no bosses
lock you from us

Getting Together!

america's builders

Getting Together!

starving millions
GETTING TOGETHER!
break your chains
smash your cell
claim you
free you
ANGELO HERNDON!