

Masses Can Smash Slave Laws, Herndon Says

By ANGELO HERNDON

The U. S. Supreme Court has heard the attorneys for the International Labor Defense, and the representatives of the Georgia lynch-rulers, argue the question of whether or not I am to go to the chain gang for eighteen to twenty years. What happens to this case will be determined, to a large extent, by whether or not the masses of people, within the next few weeks, organize sufficient mass protest to force from the Supreme Court judges a correct decision.

I myself sat in the Supreme Court throughout the hearings, and I am under no illusions as to the "fairness" and "impartiality" of the nine old men of the court. The hostility of some of the judges was quite obvious to me and to others who attended the hearing.

Yes, it is true that Whitney North Seymour, attorney for the I. L. D., did a good job in proving the unconstitutionality of the old "slave insurrection" law under which I was indicted, and the denial in Georgia of the rights of free speech, press and assembly. But we must never

forget that what is involved is not legal technicalities. What is involved here, for the Southern rulers, is their right to rule over the Negro people and, through their oppression of the Negroes, to keep a tighter grip on the white workers.

Makes Lynch Plea

J. Walter Lecraw, prosecutor for the state of Georgia, made a vicious lynch plea before the Supreme Court. He asked the Court to uphold the antiquated slave law, and my conviction, on the ground that "the Communists favor taking over the Black Belt of the South and giving the land to the 'niggers' instead of to the white people."

The Southern rulers are far more frightened today than they were at the time of my arrest in July, 1932. I had led a demonstration of a thousand people to the Fulton County courthouse in Atlanta, for unemployment relief. Though the County Commissioners swore there wasn't a cent to be had, they voted, almost at once, an appropriation of \$6,000 for the hungry people.

This demonstration frightened the

Georgia ruling-class almost out of its wits. Today the struggle for unemployment relief, for unemployment insurance, is far stronger all over the United States than it was at that time. More than a million workers have endorsed House Bill 2827, the Workers Unemployment Insurance Bill drafted by the Communist Party. If in 1932 the employers were afraid that they might have to put a few crumbs into the mouths of the starving people, think what they must fear today!

The white rulers have plenty of other reasons to be frightened. For the second time the U. S. Supreme Court has been forced to reverse the death sentences against the Scottsboro boys. And for the first time in our history they have been forced to give a clear-cut decision that the Negro people have the right to serve on juries. Think what this means to the white governing class, which has built up its wealth and its rulership on the basis of keeping Negroes in subjection.

More and more the American rulers are resorting to fascist attacks, fascist laws, fascist methods to crush the workers. "Criminal syndicalism" laws, long unused in many states, are now being dusted off and brought forward as the means of repressing the militant movements of the workers. In other states, "criminal syndicalism" laws are being drafted and pushed through the legislature. These laws are as repressive to the rights of the workers to speak, meet, organize as is the "slave insurrection" law of Georgia.

Mass pressure has again snatched the Scottsboro boys from the electric chair. Mass pressure forced the fascist hangmen to release Dimitroff and his comrades in Germany. If we apply this same weapon to the Herndon case, the Supreme Court will be forced to yield.

Every day and every hour counts. Flood the Supreme Court with telegrams and resolutions. Everyone who wants to protect his rights, has his place in this mass movement.