

# Chain Gang Horrors To Be Shown on Tour

## Model of Cage in Which Georgia Convicts Spend Nights to Be Displayed in Important Cities— Angelo Herndon to Speak at Each Meeting

A steel cage on wheels is touring the United States. It is a model, complete in every dreadful detail, of the chain-gang cage in which Georgia convicts spend their tortured nights. It is a cage of this sort that awaits Angelo Herndon unless workers, by mass protests, resolutions, and the speeding of the two million signature campaign to the Government of Georgia, save him from the chain-gang.

In every important city of the United States, from New York to San Francisco, this cage will be on display to the people. Angelo Herndon himself will appear at each meeting.

### Two-Thirds Actual Size

The cage is two-thirds actual size—twelve feet in length and seven feet high. It has the bars, the iron bunks, the filthy burlap straw-stuffed mattresses. It is equipped with spotlight and loud-speaker.

It was under the auspices of John L. Spivak, whose book "Georgia Nigger" a few years ago revealed to a horrified world the cruelties of the Georgia chain-gang, that this cage was built. This is Spivak's description of the convict cage, and of the life the chain-gang prisoners live, as he found them in his first-hand investigation in Georgia:

"The steel cage on wheels, with latticed iron bars, is like a huge circus wagon in which ferocious beasts of the jungle are penned. Thin mattresses covered the iron bunks ranging the length of the cage on either side in three three-decker tiers. The six nearest the sold steel door were reserved for whites.

### Flies, Mosquitoes, Vermin

"Flies hummed in the cage. Flies and mosquitoes were always entering through holes in the screen covering the bars and buzzing desperately to get out again. They were worse than the vermin you scratched at incessantly.

"A Negro moved restlessly. His legs hurt. A steel spike resembling an ordinary pick extended ten inches in front and behind each ankle. The twenty-pound weight had rubbed against his feet until one leg had become infected. Shackle poison, convicts called it. He had asked for a doctor and the guard's fist had crashed against his mouth.

"Under a stool covered with wet newspapers, was a zinc tub, and the smell of its contents drew flies and mosquitoes nightly to feed in it. In the stifling heat the stench mingled with the stagnant odor of the nearby swamps and hung heavy in the cage.

### No Water to Wash

"A well three hundred yards from the barbed wire fence supplies water

to the camp but the trustees are too busy preparing and serving breakfast to trouble about water for convicts. And when you sweat in a stinking cess-pool all night you are too tired to pump water to wash your face and hands even if you are given permission to go for it yourself. You soon forget that you want to be clean when you dig dirt all day and sleep in it all night.

"The dingy mess hall is lit by a kerosene lamp hanging from a beam and its yellow light glints off the six greasy, wooden benches at the greasier tables on each side of the hall. A swarm of flies buzz angrily.

"You gulp the unsavory coffee from a tin cup and with a tin spoon scoop mouthfuls of flour gravy, bits of salt pork and grits that is your portion before being led to the day's work.

### On the Road

"On the road, the sweat rolls down your body and the clothes cling to it as though water had been poured over you, and the dust of a Georgia road gets in your nose and eyes and ears and covers you with a reddish film. You shovel fourteen times to the minute, minute after minute, hour after hour."

To illustrate the horrors of the chain-gang, volunteers will be asked for in each city in which the truck stops, to don the striped convict suits and take the part of prisoners.

In addition to the cage, there will be on display the sweat-box, in which prisoners stand upright for hours, with only a small hole through which to breathe. Spivak described this sweat-box as "a coffin of thick wood standing upright, in which men have prayed for a merciful bullet to end their agony." There will be the stocks, in which convicts lie suspended three inches from the ground, their entire weight hanging from their wrists.

### Documents Show Torture

On the sides of the truck, are enlarged photostatic copies of documents from the Georgia prison files and photographs of prisoners enduring torture. The documents show how the chain-gang physicians whitewash the murder of prisoners. There is a copy of an official punishment report from the Monroe County Chain-gang, listing punishments for one week: "In stock forty minutes for refusing to work." "Chains for talking back." "Stripes and placed under gun for cutting up." "Double shackles for fighting on job."

It is in the midst of such tortures as this that Angelo Herndon, 22 years old, has been condemned to spend 18 to 20 years — for the "crime" of asking for bread for the hungry.