

Through the Terror in Atlanta Rises the Mighty Movement For Angelo Herndon's Freedom

By MARY MACK

Fortunately, I was alone when he came into the place where I am employed. "Are you," he questioned, "Mary Mack?" And when I nodded my head in affirmation, he continued: "I'm from the New Masses."

My heart leaped. A comrade! But instantly, caution raised the ugly thought: perhaps another of Hearst's sneaking spies, of whom the South, particularly Atlanta, has been full. My eyebrows went up disdainfully. In the coldest tone that I could muster, I asked: "And what does the New Masses have to do with me?"

He looked at me intently for a moment, and then, understandingly, he began to smile. "Your cousin sent me here," he explained. "You see, I want to borrow your typewriter."

Still Cautious

I began to thaw a bit. The cousin angle seemed logical — but still, I wasn't sure. How well we know: one misstep, one slight case of mistaken identity meant the jeopardy of the working class movement in Atlanta. It would precipitate the ruthless, terroristic, brutal crushing of the links in the chain we're so painstakingly forging at the price of many sacrifices.

"What is this cousin's name?" I asked. Patiently he gave it to me from a little black notebook. As I reached for the phone to verify this, I thought mentally: I must tell him that names in notebooks is a bad practice. And while the operator was ringing my number, I mused: yes, he must be from New York. I can tell by his indiscretions. Imagine carrying names around like that! And he's wearing a heavy overcoat, though the day is warm and, as yet, we've had no cold weather. His eyes were keen. I smiled at the way they were observing everything.

My cousin was reached by phone, and when his identity was established, I learned he was Joe North who came to Atlanta to report for the New Masses when Herndon came to Atlanta to surrender. (Later, at a meeting, I bewailed the fact that I had kept Comrade North waiting in such a cold and distant manner until I had made the right connections. "What must he think of such a comrade?" I asked. Wise Comrade Steve consoled me: "Don't worry, he should have no thoughts other than admiration for your revolutionary ability.")

Sees Herndon

With the key to my home in his pocket and with the instructions where to find the typewriter, North left hurriedly, for Angelo was waiting in a taxicab outside.

It was indiscreet. It was throwing all caution to the winds. But a force that was greater than reason made me unable to resist this chance of greeting Angelo Herndon. With Joseph North, I approached the cab. "Angelo," said North, "do you know this comrade?" He didn't know me, only knowing of me, through my letters written to a mutual friend. To me, he looked different from his pictures. No photograph portrayed the vividness of his smile, the determined gleam of his eyes. Our conversation, accompanied by the clicking of the taxicab meter, was necessarily brief. In another moment the cab was out of sight.

Two weeks have passed—but two weeks that have not been idle ones. "Free Angelo Herndon" leaflets have fluttered from the skies down to Atlanta's famous Peachtree Street on numerous occasions. Overnight, fences and sidewalks have been painted red with: "Save Angelo Herndon." And today is Nov. 12, the day of the habeas corpus hearing for Angelo Herndon.

Dismal Setting

A more dismal day could not be found. Torrents of rain pour from darkened skies. On shallow streets, sidewalks are submerged by water rushing into sewers. People walk

gingerly. Chins are huddled into upturned collars.

A previously planned phone call at 2 p. m. helps to substantiate my tale to my boss of my father's illness, and I'm off to the courthouse.

I am several minutes late and the proceedings have already begun. On the eighth floor, at the doors of Judge Dorsey's courtroom, four Negro women floor-sweepers, floor mops still in hand, peer in through the door glass for a glimpse of Herndon. I push through and take a seat in the courtroom as unobtrusively as possible. My eyes immediately seek out Herndon. He sits erect, broad of shoulder. I note the tired look upon his face. The short time in Fulton Tower has already left its mark. Other comrades are in the audience, but no looks of recognition pass between us.

Herndon's Composure

Mr. Sutherland, an attorney for the defense, is speaking. Flash-light pictures are being taken of Angelo from various angles. I marvel at his composure. (Oh, leader of the toiling masses, are you made of iron?)

I surreptitiously look around the audience. With delight I see that many Negroes braved the weather to attend. A young woman on the front spectator row is taking notes.

Major J. Walter LeCraw, prosecutor, is talking and now he and Mr. Sutherland are arguing about the admission of certain evidence. Angelo shifts in his seat. He turns his head for a brief glimpse of the audience. I shout to him with my heart: We, your comrades, are here. Never will we forsake you!

Three o'clock. Four o'clock. Time passes silently.

Hearing Over

Whitney North Seymour, of New York, is pleading the unconstitutionality of the insurrection law. I remember a phone call promised a comrade waiting to hear the events of the proceedings. I slip out to a phone booth. I complete my call, which, to an outsider, seemed more like an invitation to a dance. (But the information I had to give hit the mark all right.)

I go back to the courtroom and find, to my dismay, that the hearing was recessed at 5 p. m. until tomorrow morning by Judge Dorsey.

Dreadfully I go out into the rain. Fulton Tower doors have swung shut on Herndon again. Suddenly, I don't mind the wet . . . the damp chill. A fire is burning within me. Beneath the solemn skies I vow that our Angelo Herndon will be free again!

Editorial Note

The following story, written by an Atlanta girl, shows the tremendous inspiration to white and black toilers throughout the South of the courageous stand of Angelo Herndon, and the broadening united movement in his defense.

To carry on the campaign, broaden it further, to make the voice of the masses effectively heard, intensification of the campaign for signatures to Governor Talmadge demanding his freedom is an essential. Funds are needed to carry on the legal steps begun in the Atlanta habeas corpus hearing, and to carry on the campaign as a whole. Send money to the International Labor Defense, 80 East 11th Street, New York City. Herndon signatures to the Herndon petition committee at the same address.

Food Consumption Up

MOSCOW, Nov. 18 (FP). — The Soviet consumer is eating more and better food following abolition of the card system. Purchases of meat in October went 40 per cent beyond original estimates, of butter, 95 per cent, and of vegetable oil, 84 per cent, a preliminary summary of turnover figures for 30 towns shows. An abundance and variety of produce is flowing through retail shops to the consumer, whose material well-being is steadily rising.