

How the Campaign for Angelo Herndon Can Be Broadened

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PART II

In the first part of this article, we said of the Herndon signature petition campaign: "It is safe to say that the campaign has only begun, and that its growing impetus will speed it up tenfold and more in the next weeks."

This statement is based, of course, on the assumption that the organizations involved, and especially the International Labor Defense, will themselves increase the speed and intensity of their work, will strain every effort to broaden the campaign and develop the united front around it. This means real hard work, along clearly defined, concrete lines of endeavor, in every city in the country.

"Free Herndon" Committees

As the campaign develops, new forms of activity and organization will have to be developed with it, and the work among the trade unions must be greatly increased. This is what we must discuss now. In the actual work of collecting signatures in the shops, at meetings, on the streets, etc., we have already gained considerable experience. This will have to be the subject of a special article.

First of all, it is now necessary to form Free Angelo Herndon Committees in every city, to coordinate the work of the campaign. Steps have already been taken in

this direction in New York City. The recent Herndon conference in Philadelphia, and the forthcoming conference in Pittsburgh, offer an excellent basis from which to work. But these are only three cities, and only a beginning even in these. The trade unions are still very little involved even here.

These committees should be set up through a conference of all organizations participating in the campaign in each city, with invited representatives from other organizations, and especially from trade unions. Such conferences can be arranged and called within a very short time.

Out of these conferences should come:

1. Concrete plans for broadening the campaign in each city, for penetrating trade unions and other organizations and involving them in the activities.
2. The election of an executive committee which will meet periodically to check up on the work done, and develop further activity.
3. Establishment of quotas of signatures to be collected by each organization, and of funds to be raised for the expense of the campaign.

Specific Actions

4. Specific plans for organization of delegations to visit public officials—Congressmen, Senators, May-

ors, Judges, etc.—to secure their signatures to the petitions and endorsement of the campaign.

5. Specific assignments for visiting of trade unions, especially those which have already gone on record in the Mooney, Gallup and Scottsboro campaigns, and those who have in the past been supported by the I. L. D., to involve them in the collection of signatures. Similar assignments in regard to other organizations, churches, fraternal groups, clubs, etc.

6. Plans for united action in the form of meetings and demonstrations demanding the freedom of Herndon, on Oct. 1, when the United States Supreme Court reconvenes, with the application for re-hearing of the Herndon appeal before it.

These actions on Oct. 1 should be planned at once, at informal meetings and conferences initiated by the I.L.D., with the representatives that can be gotten together of the participating organizations. Concrete plans for meetings and demonstrations should be worked out for presentation to the Herndon conferences for endorsement and support.

Check-up on Petitions

7. The executive committee must make all necessary arrangements for the actual turning in of the filled petition-lists, so that a def-

inite check can be made from week to week, both locally and nationally, on the progress of the campaign as measured by the number of signatures received.

The point on finances in the above plan is an important one. Without money, the Herndon campaign cannot go on. The printing of petitions, leaflets, folders and other material, the postage, and other expenses involved, are very high. Along with all plans for activity, plans for financing the campaign, both locally and on a national scale, must be made.

Struggle for Other Victims

Finally, we come to the question of building the International Labor Defense in this campaign. Obtaining of temporary support from individuals and organizations for the Herndon campaign is of extreme importance. But it is not enough. The capitalist terror is increasing daily, and through every campaign the organization of defense and relief to its victims must be built, stronger than ever, to meet the tasks before it.

Collective affiliation to the I.L.D. of the organizations drawn into the Herndon campaign must be a major objective, as well as the all-important recruiting of individual members and building of branches.

On the basis of the support gained for the freedom of Angelo

Herndon, we must win the support of these organizations and individuals, for the defense and relief of the ever-growing numbers of victims of capitalist terror. We can in thousands of cases win such support for the fight to free Tom Mooney, Warren K. Billings, J. B. McNamara, Ernst Thaelmann; the Gallup miners, the Scottsboro boys, the Sacramento prisoners, and the hundreds more of political prisoners in the United States and the fascist and colonial countries. Relief for these prisoners and their families will appeal strongly to those who join the fight for Herndon.

Through the broadest distribution of the Labor Defender, and the literature of the I. L. D., we can stir this interest, and by following it up organizationally we can translate it into action, and into membership—affiliated and individual—in the I. L. D.

During the Herndon tour, and the tour of Donald Burke and the chain-gang cage replica, many individuals have been recruited for the I. L. D. It is necessary to follow up each of these recruits, and see that not a day is lost in bringing them actually into the organizations. This recruiting must be extended, and must become, for every member of the I. L. D., an essential part of his day-to-day work in the Herndon campaign.