

NEWS

INTERNATIONAL LABOR DEFENSE

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OKLAHOMA CRIMINAL SYNDICALISM PRISONER THANKS I.L.D. FOR AID

"What a great organization and fine friend the I. L. D. is," was the message of C. A. Lewis, who together with his wife and 17 year old son, Orval, was seized during the "liquor" warrant raids on 5 homes in Oklahoma City on August 17, and has been in prison ever since under criminal syndicalism charges, in an inspiring letter of thanks to the International Labor Defense, it was announced by that organization last week.

Mr. and Mrs. Lewis have been in jail for over two months now. Their son Orval, arrested with them, was released after being held incommunicado for three days only to be severely beaten by armed vigilantes who waited for him in the yard of the Lewis home to which he went immediately from prison. He was subsequently rearrested, jailed for about a week and then released on bail. At liberty now, he is assisting in the defense of his parents and watching over his 15 year old sister Wilma.

The full text of Mr. Lewis' letter to the I. L. D. follows:

"Oklahoma County Jail
October 21, 1940

"International Labor Defense

"Dear Friends:

"I was a member of the I. L. D. for some time a few years ago and have always been glad that there is such a fine organization. But it very vividly impresses one with the fact of what a great organization and fine friend the I. L. D. is, when one is locked up for months for the crime of wanting this to be a better world to live in. It is good to know that on the outside there is a strong organization of understanding people who are doing what they can for us. It helps make our lot more endurable to get the funds you send us for little necessities that jails don't furnish especially when we know you are doing all you can for our families as well. You ask if there are any particular problems pressing. I don't believe there are any insurmountable ones at present so far as me and my family are concerned. If anything comes up I will let you know.

"I want to thank you for your kind assistance. With best wishes, I am

"Sincerely your friend,

(Signed) C. A. Lewis."

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OKLAHOMA DEFENSE FIGHT WIDENS SCOPE

Entrance of Dies Committee, Filing of Motion for New Trial in Wood Case, Shaw Trial Chief Developments of Past Week

Major developments in the Oklahoma Criminal Syndicalism cases last week included the filing of a motion for a new trial for Robert Wood in the Oklahoma County District Court, the refusal thus far to postpone the trial of Alan Shaw set for October 28, and the entrance of Mr. Dies and his committee into the cases, according to the International Labor Defense's report for the week on the status of the defense in the Oklahoma cases.

Motion for a new trial in the case of Robert Wood, first of 12 defendants in the Oklahoma Criminal Syndicalism cases to be tried and sentenced to 10 years and \$5,000 fine, was filed by defense attorneys in the Oklahoma County District Court on October 23. Oral argument in behalf of the motion preceded formal sentencing of Wood on October 25. Wood faces possible arraignment and trial on a second count of criminal syndicalism and, if convicted, and additional 10-year sentence.

The motion for a new trial was based on 17 reversible errors charged to the original trial court. Among these were the fact that the indictment in the Wood case was "indefinite, uncertain and does not allege the commission of a public offense", the fact that the Oklahoma criminal syndicalism statute is unconstitutional and void since it "violates the Constitution of the State of Oklahoma which requires the subject matter of all bills passed by the legislature to be contained in the preamble"; the fact that the search warrant under which Wood's arrest was made was void--issued for seizure of intoxicating liquors only--not run in the name of the State of Oklahoma--not properly directed.

Second Criminal Syndicalism Trial Set for October 28

Alan Shaw, 22 years old, will go on trial for criminal syndicalism on Monday, October 28, in the Oklahoma County Court House before Judge Ben Arnold who presided over the Wood trial, unless last minute changes are made in the plans of the prosecution. County Attorney John Eberle has announced that the legality of the Communist Party "goes on trial with Shaw."

Mr. Dies Enters the Oklahoma Cases

The entrance of Mr. Martin Dies into the Oklahoma Criminal Syndicalism cases on October 19 not only added new strength to the contention of the International Labor Defense that it is the Bill of Rights and democracy which is on trial in Oklahoma but provided Mr. Dies via his committee employees with a set-back he little expected.

The direct tie-up between the Dies Committee and the prosecution in criminal syndicalism cases was charged by three distinguished citizens of Oklahoma who were hailed before committee investigators by means of subpoenas served by a county deputy sheriff and a detective of the Oklahoma city police department ordering them to appear and bring with them "all financial and membership records of the Communist Party of Oklahoma and letters, books, papers and other written matter concerning the Communist Party and members thereof."

Three of those summoned by Dies Committee investigators Wick Fowler and E. T. Seale were Rev. John B. Thompson, Dean of the Presbyterian Foundation of the University of Oklahoma and Chairman of the American Peace Mobilization; Rev. Paul S. Wright, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church and Dean Nick Comfort of the Oklahoma School of Religion. Others subpoenaed were Nena Beth Stapp, secretary of the Oklahoma Committee to Aid Political Prisoners and the wife of Alan Shaw one of the defendants in the c. s. cases, William Loe, described as an "investigator" for Oklahoma City and three other men.

Miss Stapp refused to testify to the Dies employees on the grounds that they had no authority to question her without a member of the Congressional investigating committee present. The three ministers testified and then followed their testimony with a ringing statement denouncing the probe as "trumped up to intimidate and discredit them."

"We should like to state", their denunciation concluded, "to all parties concerned that we are Americans--real Americans in every sense of the word--and we shall continue to fight, despite this shameful attempt to intimidate us, for the strong functioning of democratic procedure and civil liberties."

The ministers' courageous stand was backed by their own church councils as well as by the Rev. H. W. Curtis, Moderator of the Presbyterian Synod of Oklahoma who stated: "I know that all three are fine Christian gentlemen. If we are beyond the place where any American citizen has freedom of conscience and the freedom to express himself, I'm afraid our government is no longer American."

Congressman Mike Monroney (5th district, Oklahoma) in a statement to the Oklahoma press upheld the three ministers as "as good American citizens as can be found anywhere."

"It's a shame", he continued, "with all the subversive activities going on all over the country that good citizens with liberal leanings can't speak their minds without getting smeared as Communists." Congressman Monroney amplified his statement with the fact that he had voted for the Dies Committee and hates Communists.

Rev. Thompson's treatment at the hands of the two employees of the Dies Committee was vigorously protested by the American Peace Mobilization of which he is chairman in a letter to President Roosevelt urging him to use influence and

authority to recommend to Congress that steps to be taken to curb "the extra-legal, unauthorized and unconstitutional functioning of its committee to investigate un-American activities."

The National Federation for Constitutional Liberties whose representative, Howard Lee, has been in Oklahoma for a number of weeks assisting with the defense of the criminal syndicalism victims protested the Dies Committee smear attempt with the statement: "This outrage should make it clear to everyone that it is not simply the Communists whom the Dies Committee wants to silence. The reactionary forces led by Dies are out to break up the trade unions, farm organizations and all opponents of war. In Oklahoma today, they are trying to establish precedents to that end. This is the path that Hitler took. The people of Oklahoma are determined that they shall not succeed in this. The newly formed Oklahoma Committee for Constitutional Liberties is planning a series of radio programs to answer this challenge."

The International Labor Defense denounced the action taken by the Dies Committee employees as "an attempt to terrorize persons in Oklahoma to appear and testify before investigators who have absolutely no authority to hold any hearings or to receive any material. Public indignation against the brazen attempt of the prosecution to strengthen its case against the criminal syndicalism defendants by introduction of a so-called Dies Committee investigation on the eve of the second trial in these cases is not only encouraging to all defenders of democracy, but the only proper answer to this further attempt to violate the Bill of Rights in Oklahoma."

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ILD URGES NATION-WIDE ACTION FOR PARDON OF KING, RAMSAY AND CONNER

Governor's Personal Visit to Men in Jail Shows Him Convinced of Their Innocence

Acting on information that political considerations in connection with the forthcoming elections may be delaying pardon action by Governor Culbert Olson in the case of Earl King, Ernest Ramsay and Frank Conner, militant maritime union leaders serving 20-year sentences in San Quentin Prison since 1937 on framed-up murder charges, the International Labor Defense last week urged nationwide pressure on California's governor urging him to pardon them at once

Olson has had the King-Ramsay-Conner pardon appeal under consideration for weeks. On October 10 he visited the men at San Quentin and questioned them personally. He revealed this in a press conference on October 15 in which he stated, "I spent half a day at the prison questioning them separately. I can't figure them out as the type of men who would deliberately participate in the murder of anyone."

Despite this statement, Gov. Olson has not yet acted on the pardon petition in their behalf. Immediately following the press conference, Hearst publications opened an attack on Olson, charging that he is trying to "curry favor with radicals."

The International Labor Defense urges all its members and friends to wire or write to Olson at once at Sacramento, California, calling upon him to pardon King, Ramsay and Conner without further delay.

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ILD HAILS DEFEAT OF OREGON ANTI-LABOR LAW AS VICTORY FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

Action by the Oregon State Supreme Court which, in a 5-to-1 decision last week, held that state's anti-labor anti-picketing law to be unconstitutional was hailed by the International Labor Defense as a victory for civil rights.

Passed two years ago, the anti-labor statute was considered one of the most stringent in the country. Under its provisions picketing was practically banned by limitation to "bona fide" labor disputes between "an employer and the majority of his employees"; boycott made illegal unless more than half of the employees of the firm involved were engaged in a labor dispute concerning wages, hours, working conditions; jurisdictional strikes were outlawed and political and fund raising activities of labor unions banned.

The International Labor Defense cooperated with other labor organizations which for two years carried the battle against the anti-labor law in the courts. The legal action which resulted in the law's defeat was brought by the AF of L, CIO and Railroad Brotherhoods.

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