

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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TERRORIZATION OF OKLAHOMA CITY POPULATION FOLLOWS OPENING OF C. S. TRIALS

I.L.D. Reports Red-Baiting By Prosecution Used to Obscure Constitutional Issues

"There is something wrong with the Americanism of public officials when they attempt to deprive even a Communist of the right of free speech.

"That is a right for which Thomas Jefferson fought. Acts of officials who are becoming less and less hesitant about trampling upon the constitutions of both state and nation, are acts of dictatorship."

--- OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMAN October, 1936

Hitler storm-troops tactics, carried out by Oklahoma City's co-called EMERGENCY DEFENSE BATTALION which is "investigating" persons who received letters asking aid to the defendants in the Oklahoma criminal syndicalism cases now on trial in Oklahoma City, were denounced by the International Labor Defense last week. The statement protested against the prosecution's "clear attempt to obscure the constitutional issues involved in the cases" by furthering tactics calculated to produce a condition of hysteria.

The activities of the EMERGENCY DEFENSE BATTALION were announced by its secretary, Sam Sullivan, who said his group was acting on complaints received from persons who had gotten appeals from the local Oklahoma Defense Committee stating, "We have nowhere to look for support but to the people--help us."

The first of the Oklahoma C. S. victims to be placed on trial was Robert Wood, Oklahoma state secretary of the Communist Party. Though the state's entire case is based on books, papers, records seized under liquor search warrants in raids last August 17th whose illegality was conceded by District Judge Ben Arnold, the prosecution's opening blast clearly indicated the state's intention of making a witch hunt out of the criminal syndicalism cases. Defense motions to suppress evidence illegally seized brought the admission from Judge Arnold that the "warrants may have been faulty" but he overruled the defense motions as immaterial to the case. In his opinion, said the judge, THE OFFICERS NEEDED NO SEARCH WARRANTS AT ALL.

The International Labor Defense, which has retained David J. Bentall of Illinois who together with Stanley Belden and George Croom, local Oklahoma counsel, is conducting the legal defense in the Oklahoma cases, protested the obvious terrorizing tactics of the prosecution.

"Having thrown the Bill of Rights to the winds in the raids, arrests, outrageous bail set, brutal treatment of the victims in jail before trial, the Oklahoma authorities are now proceeding to obscure the constitutional issues in these cases by injecting red-baiting which has terrorization of the jury and the entire community as its obvious aim," the I.L.D. statement said.

"In selecting the jury on September 30th, the opening day of the trial, Assistant County Attorney John Eberle asked prospective talesman questions designed to insure conviction by red-baiting. They were asked whether they belonged to organizations which had declared themselves against Communism and the Communist Party; whether they believed the state has a right to protect itself by passing laws on criminal syndicalism."

"In his opening statement to the jury Prosecutor Eberle announced that the state's evidence will be that 'Josef Stalin has taken a great interest in this country'; that is has 'a photograph taken at the University of Oklahoma showing colored and white people standing together'; that among the evidence he intended to introduce was a pamphlet called 'I didn't raise my boy to be a soldier for Wall Street'.

"The defense in all its motions is emphasizing the constitutional aspects of the case, the denial of the Bill of Rights, the fact that the Oklahoma criminal syndicalism law is unconstitutional and void since Title 1 of the Alien Registration Act of 1940 enacted a Federal criminal syndicalism law leaving the states powerless to institute prosecutions under any similar state laws."

The I. L. D. announced that it has launched a nation-wide campaign for support of the Oklahoma defense and that financial assistance which is greatly needed may be sent directly to the International Labor Defense, 112 East 19th St., New York City.

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ILD HAILS PONTIAC VICTORY FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

Hailing the freedom of the three Pontiac, Illinois, criminal syndicalism defendants as a victory for civil rights throughout the country, the International Labor Defense last week called for greater support to the defense fight for the remaining four c. s. cases in Illinois.

The Pontiac three were freed when the grand jury failed to find grounds upon which to indict them for "criminal syndicalism." The three young people were originally arrested for collecting signatures on Communist Party election petitions.

The four remaining criminal syndicalism cases in Illinois will go on trial in Lewistown some time after the middle of October. The defendants-- Ira Silbar, I. L. D. attorney, George Gibbs, Jane Curtiss and Mary Wilson face ten year prison terms. They are out on bail awaiting trial. Though the charges against both women and Mr. Gibbs at the time of their arrest was soliciting signatures to Communist Party election petitions (Mr. Silbar was present only as an observer to protect the constitutional rights of the solicitors) the grand jury indictment states in eight almost identical counts that the Lewistown four on the "twenty-first day of July, 1940 unlawfully, knowingly, wickedly, maliciously and feloniously did organize and aid in the organization of a certain society and association, to wit: the Communist Party."

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TWO NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS JOIN ILD ALIEN REGISTRATION REPEAL CAMPAIGN T

The Washington Commonwealth Federation with its 300 affiliated trade union and progressive groups, as well as the Federation of Architects Engineers Chemists and Technicians have thrown their full support behind the I. L. D. campaign for repeal of the Alien Registration Act, it was announced by the International Labor Defense last week.

Requests for additional petitions can now be filled, the I. L. D. further announced to all organizations and individuals whose orders arrived after the initial edition of both poster and letter-head size petitions had been exhausted. The new petitions which are available at 112 East 19th Street, N.Y.C., display the Marcantonio Repealer H. J. Res. 598.

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EIGHTH LYNCHING OF YEAR DISCLOSED

Roosevelt Jones, 26, was killed at Dyersburg, Tenn., on August 3, in what has since been verified as the eighth lynching of 1940, it was announced by the International Labor Defense last week.

The I. L. D. also urged additional pressure on all members of the United States Senate for passage of the Anti-Lynching Bill during this session of Congress.

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ILD ANNOUNCES FILING OF APPEAL IN WPA TEST CASES

Filing of a brief in the United States Circuit Court of Appeals in the New York WPA affidavit test case in behalf of George Raymond Carroll was announced by the International Labor Defense last week.

Mr. Carroll was dismissed last June for refusing to sign the witch-hunt affidavit required of all WPA workers swearing they were neither Communist nor Bundists. The Federal District Court to which the case was first taken ruled it had no jurisdiction since less than \$3,000 was involved. The appeal to the higher court stresses the point that the civil rights involved certainly "exceed in value the jurisdictional amount of \$3,000."

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