

An Interview with Angelo Herndon in Atlanta Jail

By WILLIAM L. PATTERSON

(Communist candidate for mayor of New York City, who has just returned from a trip through the South, visiting the Scottsboro boys and their parents, Angelo Herndon, the Logan Circle prisoners in Washington, and other class-war victims).

IN the same jail that held the Atlanta "6", sits Angelo Herndon, 19 year old Negro leader of the Unemployed Council of Atlanta, Georgia. The bosses' court has fixed his bail at \$5,000. A grand jury of landlords and mill owners has indicted him under a law passed in 1880. Conviction on this charge, "inciting to insurrection", carries with it the death penalty. Angelo Herndon was guilty of demanding relief—immediate relief—for starving unemployed and part time workers.

STARVATION IN GEORGIA.

Thousands of workers face starvation now in Atlanta, Georgia. Many of them have but recently come in from the plantations where they were share croppers or tenant farmers, never in their lives out of the shadow of starvation. Most of them are Negroes. They were ready to struggle—but against whom? They did not understand who was responsible for their misery. Herndon harnessed this urge to fight for life around the unemployed councils.

"Bread and work and against imperialist war."

"Immediate relief and unemployment insurance at the expense of the landlords and mill owners and their government."

THE masses understood these slogans. Particularly the Negro masses, robbed of the land, their national heritage, denied all economic, political and social rights accorded others, these masses rallied to the struggle.

The first demonstration Herndon led demanding relief he was arrested. No charge was placed against his name. Then after a search of his room he was charged with "inciting to insurrection". They allege his demand for bread for starving workers constitutes an attempt to overthrow the government of Georgia. This is to say that to grant relief to starving unemployed workers would be to destroy the government. Are workers then to do without bread?

HERNDON'S MESSAGE.

In the county jail Herndon said to the writer: "Tell the workers to broaden the mass organizations. Build the unemployed councils. Only mass pressure will secure relief. Only mass pressure will free the Scottsboro boys, Tom Mooney, me and the other class war prisoners."

"If you cannot get bail for me I can stay here a little longer. My spirit grows stronger every day. The future belongs to us, the toiling masses."

Only the might of a united fighting working class can free Angelo Herndon and the other prisoners of the class struggle. The cry "rally to the defense of Herndon" must be raised. Build the International Labor Defense, defender of Angelo Herndon, into a mass defense organization.