MINNEAPOLIS LABOR CASE

*A report on work for 1944
in defense of the victims
of the Smith "Gag" Act*

25¢

CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENSE COMMITTEE
305 GRANT AVENUE○SAN FRANCISCO

SAN FRANCISCO, FEBRUARY 18, 1945.

TO THE FRIENDS OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENSE COMMITTEE:

The work of the CRDC in its fight against the vicious Smith
"Gag" Act necessarily went beyond the legal defense of the
indicted and the support of the prisoners and their families.
It also had to work for the repeal of this Act and to prevent
further attacks upon the labor and socialist movements. Its
job therefore was to arouse the widespread protests of organ-
ized labor and other sections of the American people interested
in preserving democratic rights.

In the history of labor cases in this country, no other defense
organization has been able to rally so much support in so short
a period. OVER 4,000,000 WORKERS, THROUGH THEIR UNIONS AND
FRATERNAL ORGANIZATIONS, appealed for the full pardon of the 18
members of the Minneapolis Teamsters Local 544-CIO and of the
Socialist Workers Party. Through the efforts of the supporters
of this fight, this labor case has become nationally known.

In San Francisco, where the branch work was typical of CRDC
activity throughout the country, nearly every union and liberal
organization in the Bay Area was contacted through letters or
speakers.

Because they recognize the Smith "Gag" Act as a danger to their
right of free speech, the following local organizations have
given their support to the case:

CIO Industrial Union Council, San Francisco: resolution

Intl. Longshoremen's & Warehousemen's Local 1-10: $50

AFL Brewers & Maltsters Local 7: resolution

Accion Democrata Espanola: letter to President Roosevelt; $10

Railroad Workers Joint Action Committee: resolution; $10

AFL Machinists Lodge 68: resolution; $25; another contribution

CIO Machinists Local 1304: contribution

AFL Piledrivers Local 34: letter to President Roosevelt

RR Locomotive Firemen & Engineers Lodge 143: resolution; $5.50

CIO Textile Workers Local 71: resolution

CIO Textile Workers Local 158: resolution; $10

AFL Millinery Workers Local 40: resolution

S.F. Committee Against Segregation & Discrimination: resolution

Natl. Assn. for the Advancement of Colored People: resolution

CIO United Furniture Workers Local 262: resolution; $25

Socialist Party: resolution; $1

Workmen's Sick & Death Benefit Fund: resolution

Workmen's Circle: resolution; $2

AFL Cooks Union Local 44: telegram to President Roosevelt

AFL Hatters Union Local 31: resolution

AFL Hodcarriers Local 36: resolution

CIO United Steel Workers Local 1684: $5

Warren K. Billings, Joseph James, and other prominent leaders in the defense of labor's rights, wrote letters to President Roosevelt asking full pardon for the 18. Over 750 signatures were collected on petitions which were sent to the Presidential Pardon Board.

Financial support is highly important in the activity of every defense organization. Every legal move is an expense. During the imprisonment $10 a month, the maximum permitted, was sent to each prisoner. Financial aid was supplied to their families. Upon release each prisoner received $100 to aid him in resuming normal life.

The San Francisco branch accepted a quota of $100 a month. It went well over this quota, sending in $1478.90 to the national office of the CRDC during 1944. This money came from social affairs, union contributions, contributions by individuals and individual monthly pledges.

Convicted because of their socialist beliefs and their union activity, the 18 went to prison January 1, 1944. All were released by January 24, 1945. Their full terms were served; their citizenship rights taken from them. This means that Smith "Gag" Act remains on the statute books and continues to be a danger to free speech and to organized labor.

As long as this threat remains, the Civil Rights Defense Committee will continue to work for the repeal of the Act. The task of securing the full pardon and regaining the rights of citizenship of the 18 remains before the Committee.