



Wm. L. Patterson, now first vice-president of the I.L.D.



Congressman John M. Coffee, who participated in the round table discussion on Criminal Syndicalism laws at the I.L.D. Conference.

The National Conference of the International Labor Defense was convened in Washington on June 19, 20 and 21 to celebrate victories won and advances made, to plan our perspectives, to gather strength, to lay out a program for future activities.

While we were deliberating, some of the greatest struggles between labor and the economic royalists of our land were in progress. Major battles in this struggle are still being fought on the steel front in seven states, in the auto, transport and marine industries, on the WPA projects and among the unemployed. In every corner of the land, the drive goes on for the organization of American labor into powerful industrial unions.

Our purpose was not only to devise ways and means of helping strengthen the forces of labor against terror but also in defense of the democratic and civil rights of all the people in this country. Our purpose, and our conference distinctly underlines this, is to mobilize and unite the justice loving people

of the United States in defense of their rights; to develop unity in the struggle against reaction, involving broader sections of the population in a united front of defense and solidarity.

Our conference was a mighty step forward in this direction. Thirteen important national organizations cooperated. Five progressive congressmen participated together with the delegates from I.L.D. branches and fraternal representatives from trade unions and other organizations in round table discussions that struck at the roots of the problem of preservation and extension of civil rights in America today.

The work that our organization has done in behalf of the victims of terror and reaction has made its power felt, and those of us who have worked for years in the International Labor Defense listened with deep joy to such descriptions of our work as that given by John P. Davis, secretary of the National Negro Congress and Vito Marcantonio, our newly elected president.

Said John P. Davis:

"I am of course glad to be here to bring to this conference the warmest fraternal greetings from the National Negro Congress and the Negro people. I think that I can speak for my people and say that to you and your officers, the Negro people owe a special debt of gratitude. We owe that debt because of the scores and hundreds of Negro workers that this organization has defended. We owe that debt because of the brilliant victories which you have won in the case of Angelo Herndon and which will undoubtedly be yours in the case of the nine innocent Scottsboro boys. But I think more than this we owe that debt of gratitude to you because you have taught us a new technique in fighting for our liberation, you have taught us the technique of mass pressure and I believe in the struggles which are to come, though we will still remember the Scottsboro boys and their case, though we will still remember Angelo Herndon's signal victory, the thing for which we will be most grateful is the third thing, the fact that you have taught us the meaning of unity, the meaning of stirring up the masses of people in defense of their liberties."

Said Mr. Marcantonio:

"I recognize the International Labor Defense as the most progressive and outstanding militant organization for the protection and preservation and extension of democratic rights in the United States of America. I am very happy to be associated with the I.L.D., particularly because of its glorious past. Its fighting record, its honest record has given the International Labor Defense prestige throughout the United States. . . . I am confident that American democracy will survive. But to assure that democracy, to preserve it, to extend it, and that its benefits be shared more and more by the workers and farmers of this country, we need an organization like the International Labor Defense to militantly go into the front trenches of the struggle to preserve these rights."

Said Mr. Enrique de la Casa:

"I speak as the Acting Ambassador and representative of the Spanish Republic in the United States. I am very happy to have this opportunity and privilege to come before the International Labor Defense Conference to personally thank you for your kind interest and sympathy toward the helpless and innocent victims of the Fascist invasion of my country."

I want to take this opportunity of publicly thanking all those who helped to make our conference the success that it was—to Congressmen Coffee, Teigan, O'Connell, Vorhees and Honeyman; to Mr. Rockwell Kent, Mr. Morgan, Mr. Davis, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Emerson and Gifford Cochran of the National Committee for Defense of Political Prisoners; to the Washington Tom Mooney Defense Committee and the representatives of the NAACP whose speeches are reprinted

DEFENSE - SOLIDARITY - UNITY

"We know where we are going, we know what we must do to get there, and we are on our way." A report on the National Conference of the International Labor Defense held in Washington, D. C., June 19, 20 and 21, 1937.

By ANNA DAMON

in this issue: to the Spanish embassy and all the rest. I want especially to thank Earl Browder, general secretary of the Communist Party, not only for his cooperation in our conference, but for the aid that his party has always given to our campaigns and the struggle for civil rights.

The program for the future was clearly defined by our conference. With world democracy in the balance in Spain, we realized that we cannot merely take sides or adopt resolutions and general principles. Ours is a specific task. The lives of human beings are at stake and we must help to save them. We must organize support for the defenders of democracy in Spain, for the women and children of Spain.

Our conference discussed and examined our activities in broadening the unity of the defense front. We reviewed our campaigns

for Herndon, Simpson, Scottsboro; our participation in such trade union defense work as that done around the Modesto case, the King-Ramsay-Conner case, Gallup and others; during the maritime strike on the east coast by our New York State Committee.

We examined our international work around the political prisoners in specific countries—Brazil, Puerto Rico, where again our New York State Committee did a fine job, Cuba.

We gave special attention to the problem of strengthening our own organization, increasing its membership, by a strenuous campaign for affiliations, for a new type of individual membership—a supporting membership. All of these organizational changes were embodied in a draft constitution which will now be submitted to the membership for discussion and ratification by referendum.



Vito Marcantonio, president.



Anna Damon, national secretary.



Robert W. Dunn, treasurer.

MEET OUR NEW OFFICERS

National President—Vito Marcantonio
First National Vice-President—William L. Patterson
National Vice-Presidents—Richard B. Moore, Jan Wittenber, Andrew Newhoff, Henry Shepard, Elaine Black.
National Secretary—Anna Damon
Assistant National Secretary—Louis Colman
National Treasurer—Robert W. Dunn
National Prisoners' Relief Director—Rose Baron
National Organizer—Samuel L. Dlugin

Labor Defender Editor—Sasha Small
Members of the National Committee, in addition to officers: Dirk de Jonge, Lawrence Simpson, Leo Gallagher, La Rue McCormick, Robert Fitzgerald, Grover Johnson, Irvin Goodman, Lillian Goodman, Ben Davis, Jr., John P. Davis, Ella Reeve Bloor, Rockwell Kent, Angelo Herndon, Gifford Cochran, James Waterman Wise, Rojelio Gomez, Dwight C. Morgan, Robert Parker, Errol White, Alfred L. Ellis, Mary A. Sweres, Albert Simmons.

It is impossible here to go into great detail about all the organizational proposals adopted by our conference—the new type of officers, of I.L.D. committees, of national representatives in various states, proposals for educational work, for changes and improvements in the Labor Defender and a new quarterly publication for inner I.L.D. problems.

Our perspective for our Prisoners Relief work follows along the lines of the general outlook. We propose to adopt all short term prisoners who are in jail for labor activity; to adopt the widows and orphans of those killed in economic struggles and lynchings; to broaden the personnel of our relief work by setting up committees nationally and in the states, presided over by prominent individuals and representatives of trade unions.

We have arrived at the point where we must pause and try to get the complete picture of all that lies before us.

It is a wide road with many lanes, many avenues of approach but it leads unalterably in one direction. Our tasks are many, they cover many fields—relief, defense, civil rights, international solidarity, publicity and education. Our work takes the greatest variety of forms and methods—everything from sending a single post card to securing the cooperation and giving our cooperation to movements and organizations on a national and international scale. Our aims are clear—winning the support of the widest sections of the American people.

We have already made the first strides along the road that leads to our goal. Our fine Round Table discussions proved that. At the opening of the next session of Congress we intend to hold another round table and organizational conference, even better, more successful than this one, to register our gains and make our influence felt. We have already become a force in American public life—a force that commands respect and that has won admiration and support. It is a tribute to 12 long years of Jimmy Higgins work by tens of thousands of men and women who made great sacrifices to accomplish it. Several of those who started us on our way are gone—they did not live to see the fruits of their labors. Others had their health undermined by the great burden of work—outstanding among these is William L. Patterson, our first vice-president, who gave the last ounce of his health and strength to the most unselfish service in building a defense and relief movement.

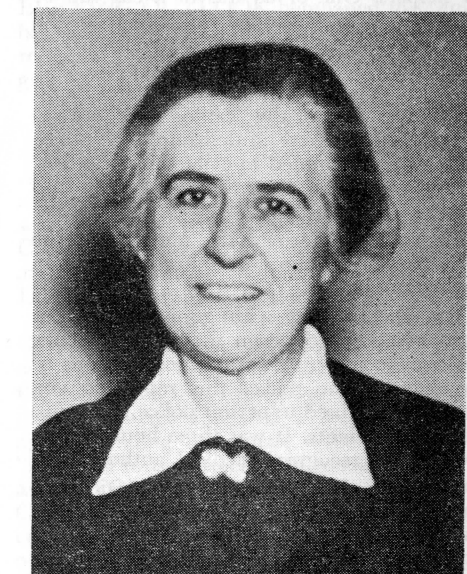
Our position in America today was won as a result of our accomplishments and these were made possible by something that few other organizations can boast—hundreds upon hundreds of volunteer workers, veterans and new recruits who gave unflinchingly of their time and energy and ability to carry through the great task. Mr. Marcantonio once said that the I.L.D. was the most patriotic of American organizations because of the work it has done to defend and preserve those rights and institutions which are this country's proudest boast.

We are proud to be described as such, and we know that as we advance along the road of progress ever wider sections of the American population will be convinced that it is their road too, and if we approach them properly—and we will if we develop our new methods of work proposed—we will have them marching with us in a very short time, united into a powerful movement of

defense and solidarity. This movement will bring hope and cheer into every prison cell where men and women wait patiently and with confidence for the aid which it is our duty to bring them. This movement will assure every victim of violence and reaction that he and his family are not alone, not abandoned, but have powerful allies and friends to care for their needs—a movement which will provide a tremendous bulwark in defense of democracy and freedom, a shield against fascism, a living unity of purpose that will swing the jail doors open for Mooney, Billings, McNamara, for Thaelmann, Prestes and the Scottsboro boys—for all those thousands of heroes and heroines who were ready to risk their lives and freedom to make this world a better place for all of us to live in. We know where we are going, we know what we must do to get there, and we are on our way.



Richard B. Moore, New England secretary, I.L.D., elected vice-president at our National Conference.



Mrs. Nan Honeyman, congresswoman from Oregon, who participated in the round table discussion on Civil Rights at the I.L.D. Conference.