

NEXT STEPS IN THE HERNDON FIGHT

By ANDREW OVERGAARD

THE lily-white jury of the Fulton Superior Court in Atlanta, stirred to vicious fury by the sadist appeal to the prejudices of the southern slave markets, has sentenced a young Negro worker, Angelo Herndon, to serve 18 to 20 years on the chain gang, which means nothing else but a living death. The crime for which he was sentenced is organizing the Negro and white workers to fight for bread for themselves and their families in the city of Atlanta. The prosecution, in pleading that Herndon be executed, stated "That the theory of Communism was on trial as well as Herndon." (Associated Press dispatch, Atlanta, Jan. 18).

A sixty-year old statute from the Civil War period is being used by the Southern slave-owners and their representatives to stifle the voice of the working class and oppressed Negro people at the time of growing revolt against misery and starvation. Not only the sentence of Herndon but the coming trial of Ann Burlak, Secretary of the Textile Workers' Union, Herbert Newton, Negro leader of Chicago, and others, must be the signal of the most intense mass resistance on the part of the entire American working class to save these workers from the vicious chain gang, which has been so well portrayed in the exposures in Spivak's "Georgia Nigger."

THE slogan of the Communist Party for self determination for the Negroes in the Black Belt (where they are in the majority) namely, their right to governmental authority over this entire territory, instead of being ruled by a vicious dictatorship of white landlords, bosses and gunmen, representing only a small percentage of the population, figured largely in the trial. This vicious sentence, which follows in the wake of the share-cropper blood-

bath in Alabama, shows that the ruling class in the South, supported by the Republican and Democratic parties, and objectively aided by the leaders of the Socialist Party, are again demanding their pound of flesh on the altar of capitalism, and that the growing unity of the white and Negro toiling masses in the south as well as in the north has thrown fear into the hearts of the ruling class.

First, the burning of Sacco and Vanzetti in the electric chair under the Republican Governor Fuller; secondly, the vicious death sentences of the Scottsboro Boys by Southern "Democratic justice;" thirdly, the continuous incarceration of Tom Mooney behind prison bars by Democrats and Republicans aided by the labor misleaders; fourth, the killing of Negro sharecroppers in Alabama for the right to live — and now this last sentence of a fighting leader of the working class must serve to mobilize the masses of workers in the factories in the revolutionary trade unions as well as the rank and file members of the A. F. of L. and Socialist Party into a mighty protest wave and mass demonstrations to smash the whole system of chain gangs in the South, and establish the right of working-class organizations to exist also in Atlanta and the state of Georgia. Every mass organization must immediately come to the assistance of the International Labor Defense in organizing this movement. Every organization should immediately adopt protest resolutions and bombard the Governor in the state of Georgia as well as the Hoover administration and Governor Roosevelt, the representative of the party responsible for the lynching and enslaving of the Negro masses in the South.

Only the working class, by its mighty mass protest, will be able to save the victims of this latest capitalist class justice.