

confidence in him. They come to him, Negro and white alike, with their ills. One youngster, he looked no more than 20, came up to show the doctor what the shackles had done to his left leg.

He had the leg of his striped trousers rolled up and the ring, about half an inch thick to which the chain is soldered, hung loosely around his ankles. The skin on his leg was raw. Not even the rags, which all prisoners wind around the lower part of their legs just above the ankle to hold that ring in place, had stopped its gnawing attack.

"That ring is too tight, doc," he said.

The armed guard was behind us in an instant. "You want it loose enough to slip off, don't you?"

Old Dr. Bussey poked around the prisoner's leg and looking up at the guard with a stern glance said quietly, "I want a bigger ring put on that man's leg—right away." His voice carried authority and the smile on the young Negro's face (he is serving a life sentence for murder) told me that he knew the doctor's word was law and the ring would be changed.

ple come here representing one of the most gigantic rackets in the United States, the racket of Communism."

We were quick to demand proofs which Murrell assured us he could easily supply from his "files."

Still with marked courtesy and to end the dispute, Governor Talmadge interrupted. Murrell, ill at ease and not given to successful speech making, breathed relief.

In reply to a query as to how a snake bite had left him a few days before, the Governor said drily: "Some say it must have killed the snake." The interview was ended.

We left the office with Murrell, Henson and their retinue. Murrell swelled visibly as he told us that "we drove the Communists out of Atlanta six months ago." This being the case we were at a loss for an explanation of the need for the Fulton County Americanism Commission, organized just two months ago, "first sponsored," Murrell gloated, "by our Legion Post."

"You know," he confided, "ever since we cleaned up on the Reds, I've been getting threatening phone calls. It scares my wife. . . . And the cowards won't come out in the open."

We assured him that "all well-known men are subject to nuisances of that kind." Missing the point, Murrell smiled at the compliment.

The proofs of the racketeering charges, it seemed, were in Mr. Henson's office. We went there. Now we learned that the documents had been returned to Solicitor General Boykin's office. Henson tried unsuccessfully to make an appointment for us. "Anyhow," he said, "we have a whole truck load full of that stuff and it would take days to weed it out."

"But," added our stalwart Legionnaire Murrell, "we'll get it out for you by this afternoon. . . . And you don't mean to tell me you all came down here just for the trip, do you? Or just for expenses?" We answered, knowing that it was useless to answer.

Suddenly, Murrell's trump card: "Your names are in Mrs. Dilling's *Red Net Work*, aren't they?" We admitted that that distinction was probably ours, "along with Mrs. Roosevelt, Rex Tugwell and others." Murrell, seriously, his blank eyes lighting up for the moment: "Of course. They're both Reds. Mrs. Roosevelt advocated social equality between white and black." (This was news to us.) "And Tugwell," he added, "wrote that collective farms might be a good idea."

The influence of the Governor's campaign speeches was becoming clear. So was our Legionnaire's attempt to divert the discussion from the Herndon case.

Henson referred laughingly to the attack on us in Alabama a few days before which left two bullet holes in our car. "I guess it was a frame-up like the Governor of Alabama said."

Then, even more jovially, "You don't

## 2. On Behalf of Angelo Herndon

ALFRED HIRSCH

IN THE stately reception room outside the Governor's office in Atlanta's State Capitol was a picture of Roosevelt, a bronze bust of Governor Eugene Talmadge, free copies of his own newspaper, *The Statesman*, secretaries, newspapermen, photographers and a cluster of ten or fifteen individuals representing Post No. 1 of the Atlanta American Legion and the Fulton County (Atlanta) Americanism Commission. The latter is composed of the Legion, the local Men of Justice, the D.A.R., the Daughters of the Confederacy, the Elks and—you can make up the rest of the list for yourself. The aim: "Wipe out Communism." The text book: Mrs. Dilling's *Red Net Work*.

The unusual gathering was in our honor: to hear what the four of us—Miss Shirley Hopkins of Truro, Mass., Emmett Gowen, LaVergne, Tenn., Bruce Crawford, Norton, Va. and myself—had to say to the Governor about the Angelo Herndon case, about the petition campaign initiated by the International Labor Defense, about the slave law dating back to 1861 on which Herndon had been convicted.

We were shown into the Governor's office. The acme of courtesy, he immediately asked us if "these other gentlemen" who crowded in at our heels, were members of our party. We answered in the negative but hastened to assure Georgia's chief executive that we had no objection to their presence.

Talmadge, arch opponent of Roosevelt's A.A.A. program which he claims encroaches on states' rights by taking money from the Georgia tobacco farmer via the processing tax to hand it to the Iowa wheat grower, does not hide his national political aspirations. Himself the owner of several farms, he is a stocky, vigorous man about forty. Only the day before, at the grand opening of the Georgia tobacco market he had stated that "the issues of the next election are those of Americanism vs. Communism," (i.e. Roosevelt is the "Communist"). While this gave the lead to our friends who had joined the conference uninvited, the Governor was careful to give no indication of that fact.

On the contrary, he listened attentively while we told him (largely for the benefit of the group standing behind us) that we had not come to Georgia to discuss economic or political issues. Our object, we said, was to present the Herndon case to him, to indicate the rather obvious bias of the conviction, to urge a pardon and to suggest that the Governor send a message to the state legislature proposing repeal of the antiquated law on which Herndon had been sentenced to eighteen to twenty years on the Georgia chain gang.

The Governor told us he had never read the record of the case, asked questions about it, advised us to go through the proper legal steps leading to a pardon and assured us he would give it careful consideration. He admitted that the case "smacks of a political conviction" and that he is "not so hot on political prosecutions."

While we were finishing our account of the relief demonstration which had led to Herndon's arrest, Mr. A. L. Henson, president of the local Americanism Commission and head of the State Veterans' Bureau with offices in the Capitol, broke in:

"Your Excellency," he said, "these folks are misrepresenting the facts. If Herndon had been indicted for begging bread anybody in Georgia would subscribe to that. But Herndon was trying to set up a nigger soviet republic. That's what he's convicted for. . . . I've even got the map he had."

Our questions brought out the fact that this map was a chart showing, through shading, sections of the southern states in which the Negro population predominates, which serves as the cover for the pamphlet "The Communist Position on the Negro Question." Herndon admittedly possessed this pamphlet but, by no stretch of the imagination, had he been shown to have advocated its contents. Such distinctions are nebulous ones to many Georgians, blinded by a hate of something beyond their understanding.

Kenneth Murrell, leader of the local American Legion, addressing us rather than the Governor, now blurted out: "You peo-

have to be afraid here. Nothing will happen to you. But, if anyone in Georgia takes a shot at you, you won't get off so easy. We don't miss the mark in this state."

"Do you know," another man said, "that Herndon called the Supreme Court names, talked against the Governor and the President?" Bruce Crawford answered that "Roosevelt had made clear his opinion of the Supreme Court following the N.R.A. decision." "And," he went on, "you only have to go back downstairs to see a Democratic governor who openly opposes Roosevelt."

Henson, a shade more clever than Murrell and his followers, came back to the point, or thought he did: "We're going to do our level best to see that anyone can say anything not accompanied by an overt act. This government under the Constitution has created the best government in the world. It's nearly

perfect. We admit there are economic upsets but these occur everywhere."

Still asking for proofs of nefarious racketeering, getting more and more evasive replies, we left.

We learned later that we were followed constantly until we left Atlanta towards evening. Evidently we constituted a dangerous menace to our "nearly perfect" government.

Henson, Murrell and their little coterie, were probably thinking: "The 'Reds' have been repulsed. Victory is ours."

The four members of the National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners felt differently: They had seen the bared minds of emotionally patriotic fools. . . . They have hopes that continued pressure upon Governor Talmadge will bring about Herndon's freedom.