

Herndon, Labor Veteran at 25: To Speak at C. P. Convention



ANGELO HERNDON



MILTON HERNDON

Negro Youth Leader to Address Opening Garden Rally

By Beth McHenry

In May, 1934, a physically weak young man with an animated brave face was carried up the steps of Pennsylvania station to greet the 10,000 people who had come to welcome him.

That was after Angelo Herndon had been in jail for 19 months. After he had been in solitary confinement and under the whip of Southern jailers who alone know best how to inflict torture on Negro prisoners.

Angelo Herndon has faced many auditoriums full of fellow-workers and other sympathizers since that historic May afternoon when "mass pressure got him out of jail."

TO SPEAK AT CONVENTION

On May 26th, at the giant opening meeting of the 10th National Convention of the Communist Party in Madison Square Garden, Angelo Herndon will face another crowd of women and men to whom he represents that foremost part of our work, the struggle for the freedom of the Negro people in the United States.

At the last national convention of the Party, Angelo Herndon was elected to the Central Committee. Today he is national vice-president of the Young Communist League—active from morning till night in the young struggle for a happier world.

Angelo has been active in the Communist Party since 1930. He joined up down in Birmingham, Alabama, when he was 17 years old. His few years of living had been packed with enough of life's hard knocks to make him older than he was, aware of the need to do something to change things.

For Angelo, himself a worker in coal mines at the age of 13, was the son of a miner who died from pneumonia, contracted in the pit.

LABOR VETERAN

Angelo speaks in short graphic phrases. Of his home, he says:

"The economic status of my family was quite wretched. Our small income was only from my father's earnings."

In his 25th year, Angelo has the history of a real veteran of labor. His activity began in Birmingham, Alabama, the year he joined the Party. Thereafter, in Birmingham, in Chattanooga, Atlanta, and other industrial centers of the South, Angelo led people in their struggles for relief, for jobs, against discrimination.

Comrades he worked with tell stories of the unfailing heroic qualities of this young American Bolshevik. How he would rise from one boss attack on his person, on his life, often, to set about organizing anew.

A comrade older than Angelo mentioned how young Herndon came back from a siege in an Alabama jail, the welts from a beating still deep in his shoulders. This comrade suggested that Angelo rest up before going to a meeting.

"Instead," he recalled, "Angelo just took me on in a wrestling bout, to get up his energy before he went out."

Angelo won the bout, he added.

THEY GOT RELIEF

In the South of the crisis years, white people, too, listened and stopped to think when Angelo Herndon spoke with them. In Atlanta, Georgia, where he was section organizer of the Communist Party he led 6,000 white and Negro people to ask for relief.

They got the relief.

The Atlanta industrialists got Angelo Herndon.

Month after month he lay in the jail in Atlanta. Outside a tremendous campaign, led by the International Labor Defense, gathered momentum as it spread across the country.

The pennies and nickels of workers got Angelo Herndon out of that Southern jail.

The pressure of workers brought Angelo Herndon's case to the attention of the United States Supreme Court, forced that body to reverse the terrible 20-year sentence that had been inflicted on this young Negro hero.

Angelo is 25 years old, with a world of revolutionary experience behind him.

He comes to the 10th National Convention of the Communist Party well equipped to help form the policies that will lead the struggle for Democracy forward.

Swell People— The Kind You Meet Any Day in Harlem

Milton Herndon Branch of the Communist Party Discusses the Draft Constitution To Be Submitted at C. P. Convention

By Claudia Jones

It was on Tuesday night, in the heart of the so-called "better section" of Harlem, that a Party unit met to discuss the draft Constitution of the Communist Party, proposed for adoption at its 10th Convention.

The people composing this unit are ordinary people—the kind that you can meet in Harlem any day in the week. People who are domestic workers, drill workers, truck drivers, carpenters, social workers, unemployed workers.

But up there on the hill, Sugar Hill, it is dubbed, at 701 St. Nicholas Ave., these people were discussing the vital questions of jobs, unemployment, relief, security and peace that face the Negro people.

The branch is composed of 100 members, 95 of whom are Negro. Named for Milton Herndon, who died in Spain fighting fascism, they are fast making their center a place where people of the neighborhood visit. A number of the unemployed members of the branch are active in the Job Campaign now going on in Harlem.

At 9 o'clock promptly, with 30 people present, the meeting started with a singing of the "Internationale." The chairman of the meeting, an unemployed Negro actor, called the meeting to order.

The routine business on the agenda, which included a march of time skit, Daily Worker sales, house committee reports, literature sales, was disposed of in 25 minutes. All were anxious to get started on the Draft Constitution discussion. By the time they had reached this point on the agenda, 20 more people had arrived.

A young, white woman comrade, with glasses and curly black hair, read the draft constitution, section by section.

DISCUSS CITIZENSHIP

Section I was read: "The name of the Party shall be the Communist Party of the U. S." brought the remark from Alphonso Love, a militant A. F. of L. drill worker, "There's none better."

A West Indian-American worker asked the question whether anyone who hadn't declared his intention to become a citizen yet, could still be considered a member of the Communist Party. He was thinking, he said, of some West Indian friends of his who were not yet citizens, but were about to become Communist Party members.

To this, the organizer replied, that certainly they should become citizens. Anyone, he said, who believes in the principles of the Communist Party, believed in fighting for democracy in America would certainly want to become a citizen. The section dealing with the pledge of new members to the Communist Party was next read. The part of the pledge which called for "all Communists to give full support to all progressive movements"

was discussed by a number of the branch members.

THE RECOVERY PROGRAM

"Take the President's Job Recovery Program," said a Negro woman domestic worker, "you know that the Communists support the President's program, because even though it is limited, it provides three million jobs for the people who need it badly enough. The people know that the Communists are the best fighters for relief and jobs for the people, in spite of what the reactionaries say. This is what the pledge of the Communists to support progressive movements mean today."

The financial director asked for a re-reading of the section on dues, concerning members in good standing.

"The Communist Party," he said, "has no duPonts, Morgans, to support the organization. We must impress our members with this fact. Many times our members, if they would know of this, would pay up. They like to be in good standing. It's just like an insurance policy for us—when we find we are in arrears, we will pay up."

Article 6 of the proposed Constitution was next. "The Communist Party of the USA upholds the democratic achievements of the American people," Comrade Love, the organizer of the Branch took the

floor. He spoke of the cry of American reaction who would dub the Communists as a "subversive organization."

"What the reactionaries are really afraid of," he said, "is that the Communists will see to it that the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments to the Constitution are enforced. The danger they see of Communism is not that the Communists will destroy the Constitution, but that they will uphold it and enforce it." The issues of Scottsboro and Herndon show that the Communists mean what they say. Applause rang in that Workers Center.

PREAMBLE PROPOSED

And so on, section by section, participation by the branch members who considered their discussion and suggestions to the proposed draft constitution the most important thing they could be doing that evening. The time allotted for discussion of that evening was now over. A proposal was made that a preamble for the Constitution, be added to the draft proposal. It was to be sent in to the Central Committee. All pledged to think over the discussion of the evening and bring in any proposals they might have to the next meeting.

NEW MEMBERS JOIN

The headquarters are simple and attractive. Three posters adorn their walls. A large picture of Milton Herndon, with an American flag draped over it, a poster of Abraham Lincoln, which says, "Give aid to the South."

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