



15 of the 18 leaders of Minneapolis Truckdrivers Union Local 544-CIO and of the Socialist Workers Party are shown marching to jail in Minneapolis on Dec. 31 to begin serving their twelve to sixteen month prison sentences in the Federal Penitentiary at Sandstone, Minn. Three were sent to Danbury, Conn. Penitentiary. The sole woman defendant, Grace Carlson, was later taken to the Federal Penitentiary at Alderson, W. Va.

18 UNION AND SOCIALIST LEADERS HAVE LOST THEIR FREEDOM

**THEIR FIGHT FOR PARDON IS ALSO
OUR FIGHT FOR THE BILL OF RIGHTS
AGAINST THE VICIOUS SMITH "GAG" ACT**

CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENSE COMMITTEE • 160 Fifth Ave. • New York

JAMES T. FARRELL, CHAIRMAN • JOHN DOS PASSOS, VICE-CHAIRMAN • GEORGE NOVACK, SECRETARY

FREE THE 18 MINNEAPOLIS PRISONERS

LABOR AND LIBERALS CONDEMN CONVICTIONS

NEW JERSEY STATE CIO COUNCIL

"My disagreement with their ideas forms the very basis of my strong conviction that their right to their beliefs and their freedom to express those beliefs ought to be strongly safeguarded. This principle, I believe, is the very rock upon which our democracy stands. This is the reason why the Executive Board of the organization which I head recorded itself in favor of protecting the civil rights of the defendants involved. Therefore, on behalf of the New Jersey State CIO Council, I would like to add my strong protest against the refusal of the Supreme Court of the United States to hear a case where the elements of freedom of speech are involved."—Irving Abramson, President

UNITED TRANSPORT EMPLOYEES-CIO

"The refusal of the United States Supreme Court to hear the case, the first appeal of any conviction under the notorious Smith "Gag" Act, is an indication of the anti-civil liberties temper of these times. We pledge our solidarity with you in the work that lies ahead to secure the freedom of the 18 defendants."—Willard Townsend, President.

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION

"This is a case which never should never have been brought to court under a law which should never have been passed. Never before has the Supreme Court refused to review a case of this importance."—Roger Baldwin, Director

THE NATION—Liberal Weekly

"The record of this prosecution is one to shame every decent American . . . A greater crime is the injury done the Bill of Rights by their prosecution and by the dangerous precedents established, from which the court has averted its face."—Jan. 15, 1944.

PM—N.Y. Daily

"To permit such convictions to stand is to establish a new and dangerous precedent. To refuse a hearing, after the lower courts have set aside the 'clear and present danger' rule, is to invite the disregard in war and peace of one of the principal constitutional doctrines safeguarding freedom of speech and press." Dec. 31, 1943.

ROCHESTER (N.Y.) RAILROAD COUNCIL

"We recognize this as a general attack on labor and therefore a fight that all labor must rally to. The Rochester Railroad Council goes on record condemning these convictions of workers under this law."

Recognizing the vital importance of the Minneapolis case to the entire labor movement and the cause of civil liberties, over 135 unions have already given support or contributed to our work. Among them are the United Transport Service Employees-CIO, the New Jersey State CIO Council, the St. Louis, Mo. Joint Council CIO, the San Francisco Industrial Union Council, 40 UAW-CIO Locals, 11 United Steel Workers locals, 7 United Rubber Workers locals together with dozens of other CIO, AFL and independent unions.

HERE ARE THE FACTS IN THE CASE

The prosecution arose out of a conflict over union policies between the progressive Minneapolis Local 544 and AFL Teamsters International President Daniel J. Tobin. In June 1941 when Local 544 by a majority vote transferred its affiliation from the AFL to the CIO, Tobin personally telegraphed President Roosevelt for help. Administration authorities seized this opportunity to indict the national leaders of the Socialist Workers Party together with the leaders of Local 544-CIO for their socialist views and union activities. The American Civil Liberties Union stated, in its protest to Attorney-General Biddle at that time: "The government interjected itself into an inter-union controversy in order to promote the interest of one side which supported the administration's policies."

After a five-week trial 18 of the original 29 defendants were found guilty of violating the Smith "Gag" Act. The prosecution's "evidence" consisted of certain statements alleged to have been made before witnesses who were mostly Tobin's agents or employees; or that they publicly sold literature of the Socialist Workers Party and books by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky which can be obtained in practically every public library in the country. Thus the 18 were convicted not for anything they did but solely because of their beliefs!

After the Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the convictions, the U.S. Supreme Court three times refused to review the case, even though these were the first convictions under the 1940 Smith "Gag" Act. This reactionary law, sponsored by poll-tax Congressman Howard Smith of Virginia, is the first since 1798 to make the expression of an opinion a federal crime.

The unjust imprisonment of the 18 sets a dangerous precedent which threatens your freedom and that of every American who may disagree with the administration's policies. The upholding of the Smith "Gag" Act now makes it a crime to exercise the right of free speech and creates a weapon which can be used to deprive other trade unionists and working class political parties of their democratic rights. Unions and liberals all over the country will feel the sting of this whip.

The Civil Rights Defense Committee is fighting a national campaign to obtain an unconditional Presidential pardon for the Minneapolis prisoners. They are the victims now. YOU MAY BE THE NEXT!

WHAT YOU MUST DO NOW

1. Write to President Roosevelt asking him to pardon the 18 Minneapolis prisoners and uphold the Bill of Rights.
2. Give all the money that you can to help in this fight to free the 18, repeal the Smith Act and provide relief for the wives and children of the prisoners.

I'LL HELP IN THE FIGHT!

JAMES T. FARRELL, Chairman
Civil Rights Defense Committee
160 Fifth Ave., N. Y. 10, N. Y.

Here is my contribution of \$..... for the
MINNEAPOLIS PRISONERS PARDON & RELIEF FUND.

Name

Address

City & State

I am writing to the President asking for a full pardon