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# Nine Questions and Eight Answers About the Michigan “Red Raid” Cases.

A leaflet of the Labor Defense Council, circa Oct. 1922.

Copy in the Comintern Archive, f. 515, op. 1, d. 159, ll. 19-20.

## 1. What is This Case?

On August 21, 1922, seventeen men were arrested in Bridgman, a little town of Berrien County, Michigan. On August 26, 1922, a raid was made on the first annual convention of the Trade Union Educational League in Chicago and three more were arrested. Nineteen of these twenty men have been charged with being communists and are held under the Michigan State Criminal Syndicalism Law.

There is no Federal law in the United States under which the holding of, or preaching of Communist doctrines by citizens is a crime. Yet the raids and arrests were made under the direction of and with the cooperation of the United States Department of Justice. Not a single overt act has been committed by, or charged against any of these defendants. They are being railroaded to jail solely because they are militant leaders of the working class and as such, are dangerous to the boss class.

## 2. When Did These Raids Occur?

The summer of 1922 in the United States has been the scene of unprecedented industrial warfare. Half a million coal miners have been on strike in defense of a decent standard of living and for the preservation of their union. 400,000 railroad shopmen have been on strike; 200,000 textile workers have been on strike for much the same causes.

Workers in every part of the country, in every industry and trade, have been the butt of the most vicious attacks on the part of the employing class. The open shop campaign had reached its height. Labor, persecuted and repressed, insulted and goaded beyond anything it could bear, had armed for defensive battle and was meeting the onslaught with the best weapon it could bring — the strike.

Everywhere, where the workers so much as dared to resist; wherever workers raised their might in battle, they were met with the most ruthless attacks on the part of the employers. Everywhere, where industrial struggle was going on the government, local, state, and federal, was lined up 100% on the side of the employer. Everywhere the forces of the government were thrown into the battle against the workers. The courts and all other government apparatus joined with the bosses to drive back the strikers. The government armed forces, the police, the Department of Justice, the militia, and the regular army, fought with the boss-owned armies of private gunmen, to intimidate, terrorize, and murder striking workers.

In West Virginia, Colorado, and Pennsylvania the warfare against the coal miners raged more bitterly, more ruthlessly, than ever before. Herrin, Ill., the scene of a brilliant and heroic defense on the part of union miners, became the scene of persecution by the Illinois Chamber of Commerce.

In Chicago while making application for the

infamous injunction that swept from the workers the last vestige of freedom, Attorney General Daugherty acting on behalf of the United States government stated,

*“The armed force of the government will be utilized if necessary...to prevent the unions from destroying the open shop...”*

Such was the background of the Michigan Red Raids.

### 3. Who Are the Men Involved?

The nineteen men who are being held in this case are all of them active militants in the American Labor movement. All but three are American citizens. All of them are trade unionists, all are vitally concerned in making the trade unions fighting bodies of the working class. Many of those arrested are nationally and internationally famous as practical constructive revolutionists. Many of them have brilliant records in the American Labor movement.

**William Z. Foster** is perhaps the most widely known militant trade unionist in the United States. His reputation has traveled far from the confines of this country and he is famous in every country of the world where a labor movement has been developed. As a constructive worker in the trade union movement, he is trusted and respected by all those who have the welfare of the working class at heart, and feared and hated by the employing class. As a militant trade unionist he leads an ever growing army of militants inside the trade unions and draws the wrath and fear of those reactionary trade union officials who for so long have held in check the growth and power of the American labor movement. His actual accomplishments are too many to mention here. Foremost among them, however, have been his leadership in the organization of 400,000 steel work-

ers and the fearless battle he waged with them against the steel trust, in which he came within an ace of defeating this most powerful organization of American capital. It was Foster who organized the stockyard workers. It was Foster who in his articles about Russia enlightened thousands of American workers as to the truth of the Russian situation. Foster is also the author of numerous other books and pamphlets dealing constructively with the problems of labor.

**C.E. Ruthenberg**, national secretary of the Workers Party, has long been known as a leader in the working class political movement. He has already served two prison terms for activity in that movement, one of a year in the Canton workhouse in connection with the speeches made in opposition to the war and to conscription, and another of 1 1/2 years in New York State penitentiaries.

**William F. Dunne**, member of Electrical Workers Union, was formerly editor of the *Butte Daily Bulletin*, active in the great miners and metal trades union strike in Butte in 1917, hated by the Copper Trust, active for years in the organized labor movement as organizer, speaker, writer, now labor editor of *The Worker*, New York. Dunne was on his way back to Butte, Mont., again take charge of *Butte Bulletin* and start a nationwide campaign for the organization of the metal miners. He was convicted of sedition in Montana for defying the corporation-owned State Council of Defense during the war.

**Charles Krumbein**, member of the Steamfitters Union, well-known for his activities in the Chicago labor movement, delegate to the Chicago Federation of Labor, he is already sentenced to a year in the Cook County jail for conviction under Illinois State Criminal Syndicalism law.

**Caleb Harrison**, member of the Machinists Union, was at one time candidate for Vice President of the United States on the Socialist Labor Party ticket. He has been known and ac-

tive in the labor movement for many years.

**Earl Browder** is managing editor of the Labor Herald, official organ of the Trade Union Educational League. This magazine with its constructive treatment of the problems of the American labor movement and its inspiration to the militant trade unionists, has stricken fear in the hearts of all those who are opposed to advance of labor. Browder has already served two years in the Federal penitentiary at Leavenworth for his activities in opposition to the world war.

**Philip Aronberg**, member of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of Chicago.

**Cyril Lambkin**, manager of the House of Masses in Detroit.

**John Mihelic**, member of the Machinists Union in Kansas City.

**Elmer McMillin**, member of the Machinists Union in St. Louis.

**William Reynolds**, member of the carpenters' union in Detroit, delegate to the Detroit Fed-

eration of Labor.

**Alex Bail**, member of the International Ladies Garment Workers in Philadelphia.

**Seth Nordling**, carpenter and longshoreman of Portland, Oregon.

**T.R. Sullivan** of St. Louis, who also served two years in Leavenworth on charge of obstructing the draft.

**Norman Tallentire**, of San Francisco, member of the carpenters' union, widely known for his activity in the Mooney case.

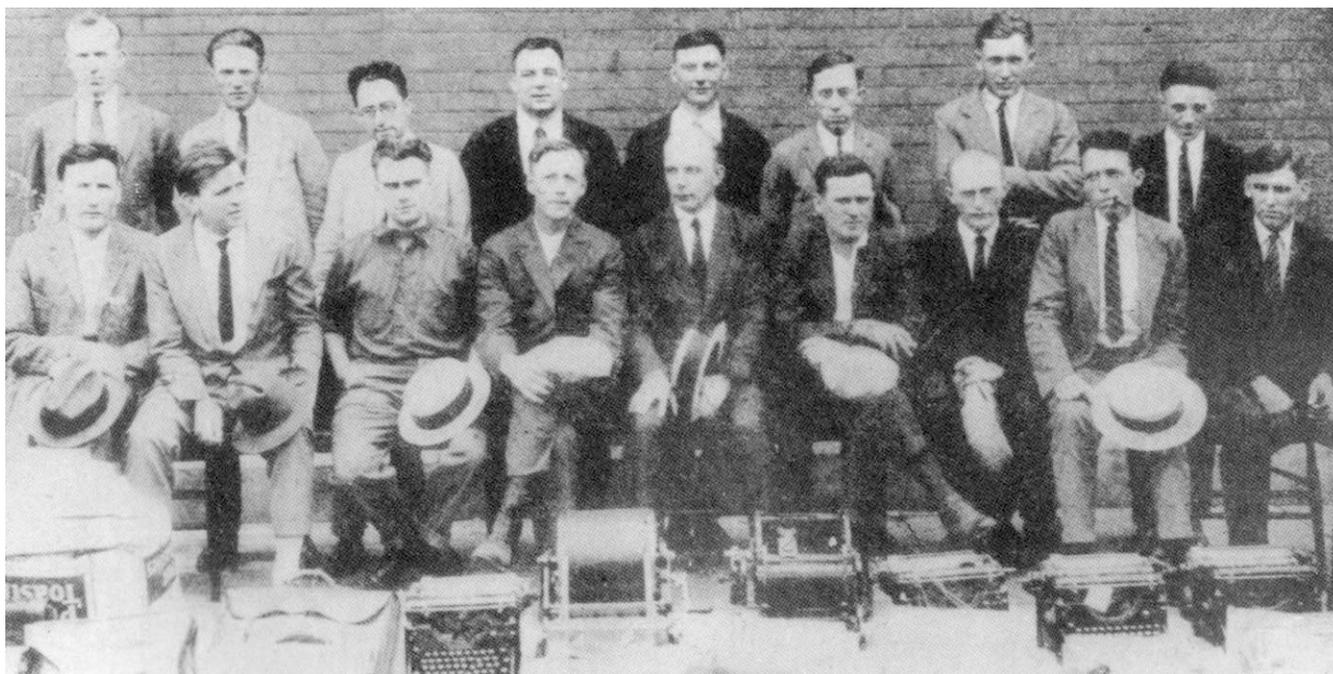
**Max Lerner** of New York.

**Thomas O'Flaherty**, railway worker and longshoreman.

**Gene Bechtold** and **Charles Erickson**, active members of the Young Workers League of Chicago.

All these men are active and well known in the labor movement in their respective localities. Space does not allow a detailed statement of their records.

### *The August 1922 Bridgman Communist Convention Arrestees*



**Back Row (L-R):** 1. Thomas O'Flaherty; 2. Charles Erickson; 3. Cyril Lambkin; 4. William Dunne; 5. John Mihelic; 6. Alex Bail; 7. W.E. Reynolds; 8. "Ashworth" (Police spy Francis Morrow).

**Front Row (L-R):** 1. Norman Tallentire; 2. Caleb Harrison; 3. Gene Bechtold; 4. Seth Nordling; 5. C.E. Ruthenberg; 6. Charles Krumbein; 7. Max Lerner; 8. T.R. Sullivan; 9. Elmer McMillan.

#### **4. Why Were These Men Arrested?**

In looking over the records of these 19 labor militants, it is not difficult to imagine why these men have been singled out for persecution. When the employing class finds the time ripe for an attack on the labor movement, it is always the outstanding labor militants who have to bear the heaviest burden. The long and shameful record of the outrages that have been perpetrated against the workers of this country is only too evident to those who know the history of the labor movement. Spies, Parsons, and the other militants who were hanged in Chicago in connection with the Haymarket riots of 1887, Debs in connection with the railroad strike in 1892, Mooney and Billings, Sacco and Vanzetti, all these cases show only too plainly the tactics of the government. The employing class fully recognizes that the labor militants are the life and breath of the labor movement and that with them out of the way, the labor movement is handicapped and doomed to impotency.

In 1922 the United States Government and the American employing class, faced by a nationwide industrial conflict, by the growing discontent and rebellious spirit of the American working class, by nationwide strikes that were fast threatening to spread into a nationwide general strike, knew its task and lost no time in performing it. "Remove the labor militants, the revolutionaries!" Such were the slogans and the deeds of the bosses.

#### **5. What Do These Raids Mean to the Labor Movement?**

The American labor movement has never before realized so clearly that an attack on the militants is an attack on the entire labor movement. *The New Majority*, the official organ of the Chicago Federation of Labor, in an article of Septem-

ber 16th, states, "Now more than ever is it plain that the cause of the victims of the Daugherty raids is the concern of the labor movement and that an attack on 'reds' is a covert attack on unionism."

The Michigan State Federation of Labor, in its recent annual convention passed vigorous resolutions demanding that the governor of Michigan and the prosecuting attorney of Berrien County quash the indictments against the labor men arrested in the Red Raid of August 21.

The Michigan Red Raid is part and parcel of the government attack on union labor and the government's efforts to outlaw and crush the labor movement.

#### **6. What is the Labor Defense Council?**

The Labor Defense Council is a national organization which has been organized to raise funds and carry on legal defense of the workers prosecuted under the Michigan criminal syndicalism law. The defense agitation is to take the form of publicity against infringement upon the right of free speech, free press, and freedom of assemblage and against limitation upon the right of strike and the use of injunctions in labor disputes.

The provisional National Executive Committee is composed of Dennis E. Batt, editor of the *Detroit Labor News*, official organ of the Detroit Federation of Labor, Roger N. Baldwin, director of American Civil Liberties Union, Robert M. Buck, editor of *The New Majority*, official organ of the Chicago Federation of Labor, Eugene V. Debs, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, secretary of the Workers' Defense Union, and Moritz J. Loeb. This committee is cooperating with a committee representing the defendants, composed of Earl R. Browder, William F. Dunne, William Z. Foster, and C.E. Ruthenberg. Local Defense Councils formed as delegate bodies with representatives from trade unions, local political parties, and labor fraternal organizations, have already been formed in Chicago, New York, Detroit, Minne-

apolis, Milwaukee, Cleveland, and in numerous smaller towns and cities. Many more are in the process of formation.

### **7. What is the Full Purpose of the Labor Defense Council?**

While the Labor Defense Council has been organized primarily to defend the victims of the Michigan Red Raids, its complete purpose is far greater than this. The Michigan cases are only the culmination of attack after attack on the American labor movement. They are only the latest outrages against the workers. They are only part of the campaign to take away from American workers the last vestiges of their civil rights. Free speech, free press, freedom of assemblage are things of the past as far as labor is concerned. The right to organize, the right to strike, and to picket, these are left only in words. Injunctions, criminal prosecution on framed up charges, deliberate armed attacks of the workers by government forces, these are the order of the day. A Federal Industrial Court Law patterned after the notorious Kansas Law, which will enslave the American workers in a much more ruthless, brutal, and terrible slavery than was ever known by the negroes of the south is the next move on the government program. The Labor Defense Council stands as a rallying ground against these widespread and terrible attacks, and calls on the workers of America of every opinion and political belief to unite to withstand these forces and to prepare a counterattack.

### **8. What Can You Do?**

You can support the Labor Defense Council.

You can support it with money to carry on its work.

You can sacrifice out of your slender incomes, money which will enable the Labor Defense Council to make its force felt throughout the length and breadth of this country.

You can give funds to supply the legal defense in the Michigan cases.

You can rally your labor organizations, your local union, your fraternal society, your labor political party to the support of the Labor Defense Council that will be established in your town.

You can distribute the Labor Defense Council literature and solicit funds from the workers you meet. You can make the Labor Defense Council serve the crying need of the American working class.

### **9. What Will You Do?**

That is for you to answer.

## **Labor Defense Council**

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