

From the National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners

Chairman: Theodore Dreiser
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For Immediate Release

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DREISER TO TEST MINER RULE IN HARLAN

New York, Nov. 2, - Theodore Dreiser announced today that the committee of writers which he will head on a trip to Harlan, Ky., to investigate charges of official terrorism and gunman rule, will stage a free speech test for the miners' union in Harlan County, Nov. 8. Committee members will leave Tuesday for Pineville, Ky. where they will meet Nov. 5 and proceed in a body to Harlan the following day. The investigation is being conducted by the National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners.

The committee will consist of Mr. Dreiser, author of "An American Tragedy"; John Dos Passos, author of "Manhattan Transfer" and "The 42nd Parallel"; Bruce Crawford, editor of Crawford's Weekly, Norton, Va.; Charles Rumford Walker, author of "Steel" and "Bread and Fire"; Josephine Herbst, author of "Money for Love" and "Nothing is Sacred"; Lester Cohen, author of "Sweepings"; Samuel Ornitz, author of "Haunch, Paunch and Jowl", now connected with the Metro-Mayer-Goldwyn studios; and Anna Rochester, coal expert and author of "Labor and Coal."

H. D. James

In Pineville the committee will be greeted by a mass meeting of the National Miners Union, and the International Labor Defense. The miners charge that armed deputies have broken up every meeting they have tried to hold, even raking them with machine gun fire.

Mr. Dreiser, who is chairman of the National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners, states that the delegation will hold an open inquiry into the following charges:

1. The denial of all constitutional and civil rights, as well as ordinary human rights to 18,000 Harlan county miners and their families. This includes the driving of miners out of postoffices and withholding of their mail; compulsion to buy from company stores at high prices; invasion of homes without search warrants; arrests for possessing newspapers and magazines attacking the mine owners.

2. The kidnapping of union organizers and local miners active in the union; the shooting of newspaper reporters; the arrest of theological students and defense representatives, bringing aid to imprisoned miners' children, the dynamiting of relief cars and soup kitchens.

3. The eviction of miners from their homes and the death of miners' families from a hunger disease known locally as flux.

4. The indictment of 34 miners for murder on "flimsy evidence". Trials have been set in counties 200 miles away so that the miners, who are penniless, cannot afford to transport witnesses.

4. The murder of two miners operating a relief soup kitchen, both shot in the back by imported thugs. One such thug is said to have been brought from Chicago to teach the newly sworn-in deputies the use of tear gas bombs and machine guns.

"Sheriff Blair has announced since the formation of this committee that there is no terror in Harlan and he will welcome an investigation," declares Mr. Dreiser's statement. "We hear from authentic sources in Harlan, however, that the county is still as much an 'armed camp' as it was a month ago when Mr. Louis Stark of the New York Times fled to Chicago before feeling safe enough to release his news.

"We are informed that the miners, despite Sheriff Blair's denial are still not allowed to hold union meetings; that as the strike spreads in Straight Creek there are more arrests for 'criminal syndicalism' almost daily; and that even relief kitchens cannot function