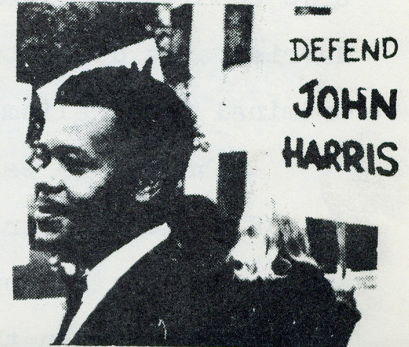


TRADE UNION COMMITTEE TO DEFEND JOHN HARRIS
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JOHN HARRIS AND THE ANTI-LABOR CRIMINAL SYNDICALISM ACT



On September 20, 1966, John Harris, Progressive Labor Party organizer in Watts, was arrested and charged with two counts of violating the Criminal Syndicalism Act. On each count he faces one to fourteen years imprisonment.

What was his crime? John Harris passed out leaflets. The leaflets he gave out pointed to the cruel living conditions that face the working people in the South Los Angeles ghetto, including some of the following facts of life:

- 1) 37% of the men are unemployed.
- 2) Men who are working earn a little more than half of what the white worker earns.
- 3) In the past 5 years the average income of whites in Los Angeles has increased 15% while that of the people in the ghetto has decreased 8%.
- 4) Prices are higher and quality lower for rent, food, etc.
- 5) Only 14% of the families own an automobile and public transportation is poor.
- 6) There are no public hospitals.
- 7) There are only 1/3 the number of doctors available compared with a white community this size.
- 8) The infant mortality rate is 150% higher than in the white community.
- 9) 25% of all 6 year old children are not enrolled in school (one year after they are supposed to be).
- 10) 2/3 of all students entering high school will drop out.

John Harris also pointed to the terrorism which the Los Angeles Police Department practices on the Afro-American working people within the ghetto and called for resistance and struggle.

For demanding jobs and the right to live, for exposing the true conditions of the people living in South Los Angeles, John Harris faces up to twenty-eight years imprisonment under the Criminal Syndicalism Act.

John Harris was born and raised in Birmingham, Alabama, the son of a steelworker. From his earliest years he was exposed to systematic racial oppression and injustice, and he early determined to fight it. When the freedom riders came to town in 1960 he joined them. In 1964 he left school to go to Mississippi. There, for a year and a half, he was project director for SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) in Sunflower County—stronghold of the Ku Klux Klan. There he was arrested and beaten by the police, and his home was attacked by the Klan. From his experience in Mississippi he concluded that a more basic change in society was necessary. He left the South and came to Los Angeles shortly after the Watts uprising, here joining the Progressive Labor Party.

WHY ARE TRADE UNIONISTS DEFENDING JOHN HARRIS?

The trade union movement has been faced from the beginning with continuous attack. The employers want to weaken and eventually destroy the effective organizations of the working people. Injunctions, open shop drives, direct government intervention in the internal affairs of unions, laws such as Taft-Hartley and Landrum-Griffin, frame-ups of important leaders—there is no device that the employers and their agents will not use to render the unions impotent. One of the most insidious methods of attack has been anti-labor legislation and the use of the courts to cripple trade unionism in our country.

In 1919 the employers of California pushed through the state legislature the Criminal Syndicalism Act. This law says that it is illegal to advocate "change in industrial ownership" or "political

change" by unlawful means. Originally the Criminal Syndicalism Act was directed at one of the most militant wings of the organized workers in California, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). The IWW was singled out for special attack because it favored organizing the unorganized, unskilled workers, and the industrial (rather than craft) form of organization. (Later, in the Thirties, the working people used these same ideas to build the CIO.)

In 1937 the Associated Farmers were successful in using the Criminal Syndicalism Act to defeat a farm labor organizing drive in the San Joaquin Valley. Ten farm labor organizers were railroaded to prison.

Today it is John Harris who is under attack.

Of all the people in our society, it is only the working men and women who really understand the necessity of solidarity. Working people adopted the idea that AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL. This is one of the strongest concepts of trade unionism. The Trade Union Committee to Defend John Harris needs your support.

You and Your Union Can:

1. Pass a resolution supporting John Harris and demanding that the anti-labor Criminal Syndicalism Act be removed from the books.
2. Send money. Funds are urgently needed to pay court costs.
3. Send a representative to work on the Trade Union Committee to Defend John Harris.
4. Circulate a petition demanding that all charges be dropped and an end to the Criminal Syndicalism Act and all similar laws.

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