

Her Jailing Is Country's Shame

By WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

TO THE SHAME and discredit of our country, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn marks her 65th birthday in the women's penitentiary at Alderson, W. Va., where a victim of the Smith Act, she is imprisoned along with Claudia Jones and Betty Gannett. Her birthday should be utilized as an occasion to redouble the demand for her release and also that of all other victims of the war hysteria and McCarthyism in the U.S.

Elizabeth Flynn, born in New Hampshire, of Irish working class parents, has all her life been an active fighter in the front ranks of the working class. It was the writer's honor first to become acquainted with her during the famous free speech fight in Spokane, Wash., in 1909, when the militant IWW succeeded in breaking down an edict of the reactionary local government prohibiting street speaking in that city.

But this was only one of the scores of struggles of the IWW in which Elizabeth took a leading part. Prominent among them was the great Lawrence textile worker's strike of 1912, a struggle which marked a milestone in the general advance of the American working class. She also took part in many AFL strikes, in demonstrations of the unemployed, as



well as in innumerable political struggles of various sorts.

Elizabeth has long been a leader and fighter in the Communist Party. Her whole life experience prepared and conditioned her for this role in the class struggle. In singling her out as one of those to be railroaded to prison under the Smith Act and in violation of every concept of justice, the government was undertaking to retaliate against her for her lifelong struggle in defense of the workers' rights and for ultimate Social-

(Continued on Page 10)

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AUGUST, it seems, is a month of birthdays of special interest to those who fight for human freedom. On Aug. 10, Eugene Dennis will be 51 years old. In observing his birthday, it seems to us, nothing could be more appropriate than to print some excerpts from a historic speech Dennis made June 26, 1951, on the eve of his imprisonment under the Smith Act.

The Editors.

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... In this struggle, our reliance is on the united action of the American people—whose liberty and rights are inseparable from our own. We rely, in the first place, on the working people, on those who want peace and are ready to unite against the forces of fascist reaction—regardless of their agreement or

Foster's Tribute to Gurley Flynn

(Continued from Page 8)

ism. Her "trial," like that of the other Smith Act victims, was a public scandal, a smear and a blot upon democracy in this country. She was simply jailed by a reactionary government, which based its prosecution upon lying stool-pigeons, an intimidated jury, unscrupulous prosecutor, and a com-

plaisant judge.

DURING her half century of work and struggle in the labor movement. Elizabeth Flynn, among her many activities, has always paid close attention to the defense of political prisoners those fighters in the class struggle who, seized by the class enemy, have been rushed off to prison or to



Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and Tom Mooney

On Our Way

(Continued from Page 6)

states whose leading church groups maintained a stout white supremacy position. So die-hard was the position that Rev. DeLamotte was left without a congregation, the church leaders holding that the membership of white churches would not have

Robert B. Crawford, president of the Defenders of State Sovereignty and Individual Liberties, the statement that:

"The worst obstacle we face in the fight to preserve segregated schools in the South is the white preacher."

It was different during Reconstruction, Crawford said. And it

execution. Such cases have long been one of the most notorious features of ruthless American capitalism. Elizabeth took an active part in the defense of Sacco and Vanzetti, McNamara brothers, Mooney and Billings, scores of IWW fighters, the Scottsboro boys, the Rosenbergs, and many more. She, herself, has now become a class war victim, and she certainly is entitled to the active defense which she has helped to organize for so many others. America should be ashamed of itself, and especially so the labor movement, to permitting the force of reaction to frame-up and jail such a splendid working class fighter.

In recent months there has been a distinct lessening of the international tension which was used as a cover-up for the McCarthyites and other reactionaries in their creation of war hysteria and their efforts to establish fascism in this country. After Geneva there remains to be a further lessening of war tension and in all probability a diminution of anti-red hysteria in the United States. This will provide an increasingly favorable condition for exposing to the American people the outrages committed upon Elizabeth Flynn and upon many others under the Smith Act and other pro-fascist laws. The fighters for peace and democracy should take full advantage of this improved situation and they should insist upon the immediate release of comrades Flynn, Jones, Gannett, and all the other political prisoners. No better occasion can be had for resolving to do this than upon the 65th birthday of Elizabeth Flynn.