

Illinois' Gil Green 'Celebrates' His 51st Birthday

(While it is a few days past Gil Green's birthday, we are taking the liberty of reprinting the following article by Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, which was printed in the Daily Worker, prior to Gil Green's birthday. The editors of The Worker are pleased to inform our readers that Elizabeth Gurley Flynn will be in Chicago shortly as part of a nationwide tour).

By ELIZABETH GURLEY FLYNN

On Sept. 24, Gil Green will be 51 years old. It is customary to say "celebrate a birthday." But this he cannot do. He will spend this birthday alone in Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary, an old forbidding looking fortress-like structure on the lonely plains of Kansas. It will be the seventh birthday that political persecution has forced Gil to spend far from his family and friends. For his mother, his wife, his daughter and two sons, his brother and a host of others near and dear in Chicago, it will be a sad day. For all of us it should be a day to salute this gallant fighter and to pledge our aid to his family to help secure his release.

Gil Green can well be called a premature Smith Act defendant, as can all of us who have served prison sentences, in view of today's news. If our appeals could have been prolonged and we had been able to remain on bail, maybe we would never have had to serve time.

I say this in light of practically all present Smith Act cases now being referred back to Appeal Courts and the unwillingness of some Government attorneys to proceed with new trials after the recent Supreme Court decisions. And now comes the splendid victory, a court reversal of the convictions of all five Connecticut defendants. (I rejoice for all of them, but am particularly happy that Martha Stone will not go to Alderson Women's prison).

IN THE Connecticut decision the Appellate judges wrote an epitaph for all Smith Act verdicts when they said:

"We would mock both fair trial and free speech as meaningful constitutional guarantees were we to ignore the deficiencies of this record."

Imagine what joy such news bring to Gil Green and Harry Winston in their prison cells! Our joy outside could be far greater, however, if they were not in these cells.



GIL GREEN

Both were defendants in the original Smith Act trial at Foley Square.

They are now serving sentences of eight years—first five-year sentences in that case, and later three years were added for "contempt of court" in failing to appear in 1951 when the Supreme Court upheld their convictions. The penalty for contempt is usually either a few months in jail or a moderate fine. These contempt sentences are now on appeal to the U. S. Supreme Court, as without precedent in harshness and vindictive quality.

They commenced serving in February, 1956, when they voluntarily surrendered. Even with statutory good time off, they will be compelled to remain in prison until some time in 1963. Only one who has been there can fully realize what a lifetime away such a release date must seem to them. Let us fight to secure their immediate release.

GIL GREEN was a vigorous youth leader in the

stormy days of the 30s. I am sure many New Yorkers will remember him as a capable chairman of the N. Y. State Communist Party, in the early 40s, before he assumed a similar post in Illinois. He was a member of the National Committee at the time of his arrest, and, like all the members of the 13-member committee of that period, he was a living refutation of the lies and slanders hurled at Communists.

On the eve of his reappearance Gil wrote to Edward A. Lahey of the Chicago Daily News: "I am guilty of no crime, and least of all the ridiculous charge of conspiring to overthrow the government by force. I have been a fugitive not from justice but from injustice." Much could be written on Communists as warm, likeable human beings, so well personified by Gil Green.

In honor of his approaching birthday I am appealing to you to do several things, that can help bring his freedom nearer. First of all send a birthday greeting to Gil Green. He was injured recently in a fall in a prison shop and has been laid up in a wheel chair. Even if he does not personally receive these greetings he will be immensely cheered to know that they are there. And he will know, as I did, just how many messages are there for him, by way of the very effective "grapevine" that exists in every prison. It helps guarantee decent treatment for a prisoner to have the authorities aware how much concern there is on the outside.

Address your greetings to Gil Green, P.M.B. 73335, Leavenworth, Kansas.

Second, write a letter to President Eisenhower, urging the release of Gil Green, Henry Winston and others similarly affected.

Lastly, send a copy of your appeal for amnesty to Mrs. Lil Green, Box 1570, Chicago, 80, Ill. It will be of great cheer also to the Green family to hear from you. They are doing a tremendous job of letter writing, speaking and personal appeals, to help secure Gil's release.

A big effort now, in the present favorable atmosphere, can be successful. Let us make our slogan "A Happy, Free Christmas" for Gil Green, Henry Winston and Irving Potash. Once these three are released there will be no Smith Act prisoners. Let us guarantee there will be no more!