

The Revolutionary Age

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Debs, Haywood and Mooney

HERE is a prison. Its walls are dark and grim and cold, its windows barred with iron. The air that penetrates through its harsh openings becomes fetid, the sun-light cold and sickly. There is a sting in this prison that blights the air and the sun, and often the human soul. In this prison, in which prevails a spiritual and physical twilight, where the light becomes misty as if in shame, there are cells, and cells, and cells—of cold brutal iron, small and mocking the great open spaces of the earth. They are repressive, these cells; the walls are of iron, lowering as if to press you down, and they are bolted with bolts of iron. In these cells are beings—some of them are still men, others are things that once were men, and others who never had the opportunity to become men.

The beings in this prison are varied in character, varied in pursuits; but they have one thing in common—they have transgressed against the Law, have violated that which is the evil-symbol of the supremacy of Capitalism. And the Law, not concerning itself with these men as human beings, is much concerned with them once they violated the Thing that Capitalism uses to maintain its supremacy.

In this prison, in one of the small, dark, cold cells, there is an old man, whose soul is young and whose spirit is eternal. This young-old man is a criminal, condemned to ten years of penal servitude. His days are spent in clerical work, his evenings in thought, and his nights—let us hope—in sleep. He is a criminal, and there is a warden who orders him and guards who repress him. The repression is broken only by the unconquerable spirit of his soul, the monotony varied only by the ardor of his revolutionary convictions. That man is Eugene Debs.

Debs! A criminal? That man who has devoted himself to social service, whose flaming ideals light the way to freedom, who has wept with the broken and revolted with the rebel?

Yes—Debs! And in other cells are more of his character. Men who protested against injustice—Socialists and Anarchists and I. W. W.'s—who were a threat to Capitalism, and who were imprisoned by that Thing, the Law, the jackal of Capitalism.

Prisons, they say, are to repress those who violate the rights of man. But Debs has violated no man's rights, Debs has deprived no man of life or liberty. He has struggled to insure the rights of man, life and liberty have been ideals to which he has devoted all the mighty spirit of his mind and body. But he is in prison. He is there, because he spoke against the war and fratricide, because his ideal was to unite the workers of the world against Capitalism, because he is the symbol of that revolutionary movement which threatens to annihilate Capitalism. Debs is in prison as a revolutionary Socialist, as the representative of the oppressed proletariat. . . .

From this prison recently, there were released on bail William D. Haywood and some others of the scores of I. W. W.'s imprisoned by order of a bourgeois court. Nor did these deprive any man of life or liberty: they were active participants in the great social struggle to insure real life and liberty for the masses of the people. In these I. W. W.'s thrills the energy of the militant proletariat. Their hands are hardened by toil and their determination hardened by the implacable struggle of class against class. Their seamed faces are a litany of proletarian suffering. Their movement is a movement of the most despised and most despoiled of the working masses, aggressive and potential of a finer life. They have been brutally thrown out of towns where strikers required them—but their tormentors were not imprisoned; they have been lynched, but their lynchings still chuckle in satisfaction at the crime: they have been imprisoned illegally, but their captors and their judges are still at large, sleekly satisfied with things. Bourgeois morals, bourgeois law and the bourgeois soldiery have united against these I. W. W.'s. At a moment when

General Strike Call

Resolution adopted by "The General Strike Conference for the Liberation of Eugene V. Debs and All Political Class-war Prisoners," on March 23, 1919, at 232 North 9th St., Phila., Pa.

Whereas, Eugene V. Debs and other champions of the interests of the working class have been sentenced to long terms of imprisonment because they have had the courage to express their convictions, and have dared to affirm their loyalty to the working class; and

Whereas, these men and women are paying the price of their devotion to the interests of toiling humanity, under sentences more savage than any that have been imposed in Prussia and even in Czaristic Russia, thus proving that the instruments of law have been perverted into weapons of class oppression for vengeance and persecution;

Therefore, be it resolved, that we call upon the organized and unorganized workers of this country to declare a General Strike on May 1st, 1919, as the only effective step in the direction of securing the release of the class-war prisoners.

profiteers were transmuting the agony and the butchery of war into the gold of profits, these men struggled to organize the proletariat, to direct its action against the ruling class. They directed strikes—and they were arrested; they organized the workers to secure life and liberty—real—and they were imprisoned.

the predatory money interests of San Francisco. The employers determined to crush unionism, by means that are dark and infamous. There was a Preparedness Parade; a provocateur threw a bomb into the crowd (what an excellent opportunity to the ruling class: patriotic hysteria and dynamite, producing unthinking rage and hatred) and Mooney and other union agitators were arrested as the culprits. A corrupt District-Attorney, (agent of the Chamber of Commerce,) bribery, dishonesty, perjury,—all means necessary were used to convict them. They were convicted. Mooney was condemned to death: crush him, and crush the unions. But there was protest. There was proof of conspiracy and the innocence of Mooney. Insistent was the demand for a new trial: but the oppressors and their legal agents were in fear, a new trial might bring inescapable exposure of their sinister conspiracy. Under pressure of protest, Mooney's death sentence was "commuted" to life imprisonment. Clemency!—the vile and hypocritical clemency of the ravening beast of capital. Mooney and labor—they were on trial, they are in prison. . . .

It is not three men who are imprisoned. It is you and I who are imprisoned, the workers, the suffering and the oppressed. They have imprisoned the militant proletariat. In Debs, they have imprisoned revolutionary Socialism; in Haywood, they have imprisoned revolutionary industrial unionism; in Mooney, they have imprisoned the militant elements of union labor. And they were conscious—these calculatingly malevolent representatives of Capitalism—of what they were doing. In these three forces—revolutionary Socialism, revolutionary industrial unionism, and the militant elements of union labor—the representatives of Capitalism recognized the developing threat to their supremacy. They decided to throttle the threat.

Their decision is suggestive. It should provoke our thought—and action. The unity of these three revolutionary, or potentially revolutionary, forces, means real power, a real proletarian threat to Capitalism. The action of our class enemy indicates our own action—unity for action and the conquest of power of these conscious forces of the proletariat.

Action! It is a mighty word. It is a mighty decision. But the decision must be invoked. Labor, speak and act!

The war was used against labor. As it was and as it is, so shall it be, unless revolutionary labor speaks—and acts.

The representatives of labor are being imprisoned. Our comrades are being caged. The representatives of Capitalism are not concerned in individuals, but in movements. It is our movement and its ideals—it is you and I—who are being imprisoned.

Shall you tolerate this organized conspiracy? Shall you allow this process of throttling the revolutionary movement to proceed?

They are using might against our movement—let us answer might with might, the might of the industrial proletariat! They are using coercion against our movement—let us coerce Capitalism and the representatives of Capitalism!

Speak? Yes; but not enough. The time for action has come.

Let labor use its industrial might. We must develop and organize a political strike of the masses to force the release of our imprisoned comrades. This is the order of the day. Out of the mills and mines and shops must come the workers, they must down tools, not for more wages or lower hours, but for a finer end—the release of our class war prisoners—a revolutionary act potential of larger things.

No evasion. No hesitancy. . . . Not through miserable appeals to those who have imprisoned our comrades, not through a ghastly "amnesty"—but through the militant action of the conscious proletariat must we open the prison gates. The iron battalions of the proletariat must answer Capitalism!

RUSSIAN SOCIALIST FEDERATED SOVIET REPUBLIC.

**On whose side are you?
Workers' or capitalists'?**

The peoples of the world are not divided by nationality, but by class. What interest have you in common with your master? Even if he is your fellow countryman, even if he is of the same race as you are, does that prevent him from robbing you? Does that prevent him from making you work for as many hours as possible, for as little money as possible? — Not in the least.

Even during the war, when you the working people are sacrificing your lives, your all, the capitalists have continued to exploit you, and your families.

The sole aim of the capitalist, is profit.

They make profit out of food. They make profit out of the uniforms you wear. They make profit out of the guns you use. The war has been for them an Aladdin's Cave from which to draw wealth beyond the dreams of avarice.

What has been the cause of death, destruction, ruin, and despair, has been for the capitalists a means of piling up colossal fortunes, both now, and in the future.

All profit is wrong from our class, from the sweat, and blood, and tears of the working people. It is the same in all countries. In England, in France, in Germany, in Austria, and in Russia. Does nationality count? — No! It is class that counts.

Working class or capitalist class, on which side are you?

Capitalists have investments in all countries. Where their money is there their hearts are also. They are as patriotic for them. But they always remain loyal to their class.

Against the working class the capitalists of all countries are united. — They understand the class war. There are only two camps, the workers' camp and the capitalist's camp.

In which camp are you?

The interests of the workers of all countries are the same. No matter where you live, in England, France, Germany, if you are a workman you must work for a master, and he will only employ you if he can obtain a profit out of your labor.

The workers are always opposed to the master.

In England great strikes are now proceeding, because while you have come here to fight for "liberty", the master class at home wants to impose industrial servitude upon your fellow workers.

Real freedom, economic, and social freedom will only be achieved when the workers of all countries overthrow the master class, and take control in their own hands.

We in Russia have done this. We have abolished Capitalism and Landedom in Russia. We have a workers' government.

Your capitalists know that our revolution is a menace to them. They fear that the workers in other countries will follow our example.

They are therefore supporting the Russian capitalists against us. They are determined to crush our revolution, and put the landlords, capitalists, and the Tsar back again.

And you have been brought here for that purpose.

What are you, a workman or a capitalist? If you are a workman, then you must be on our side, for we are workmen too. We are of the same class.

Learn from the capitalists, and be loyal to your class.

An injury to the workers of one country, is an injury to the workers of all countries.

If you help to crush our revolution, you will only be helping to hasten the shackles of wage slavery more firmly on yourselves.

Refuse to do the work of our common enemy, the capitalist!!

Join with us in the fight against capitalism, and war!!

Workers of all countries unite!!

To satisfy General March, U. S. A., who would like to see a specimen of the "potent" Bolshevik propaganda that produced a mutiny of American troops, we print this photographic reproduction of a Bolshevik leaflet circulated among Allied troops in Murmansk.

Some are still in prison, some are out on bail, pending an appeal to the supreme court; but their punishment is decided upon. They are rebels, not criminals; this makes them deserve imprisonment, surely, since they are more dangerous to Capitalism than the criminal. . . .

In this prison—in another city but still this prison, the prison of Capitalism—is Thomas Mooney, the union agitator and organizer. A worker—but an agitator, the crime of crimes. . . . Mooney threatened