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The Mooney Strike

THE American workers are up against a great decision. Upon their action depends much that may happen in the days to come. This decision is whether they shall respond to the proposed general strike on July 5, to free Tom Mooney.

Response means action. It means power. It means power not only for the release of Mooney, but developing power for the release of the workers from the tyranny and exploitation of capital.

The decision no longer concerns Mooney alone. It concerns the whole working class, its action and its immediate destiny. Just as the conscious workers have used the Mooney case as a means of attack upon the whole system of Capitalism, just so the conscious capitalists have used Mooney as a means of attack upon the whole working class, and particularly the militant and class conscious elements among the workers.

The Mooney issue is a class issue. It is not an issue of "justice;" the justice of Capitalism is class justice. It is not an issue of "fair play" or of "legal rights." The issue is now an issue of power, and power alone will decide. It is an issue in the proletarian class struggle against Capitalism, and in the capitalist class struggle against the proletariat: and the issues of the class struggle are decided by power alone.

The capitalists control the government. They control the courts and the judiciary. They control the press. And all three are united against Mooney, against the workers, against Socialism. They have the power. Power must be met with power. The workers must break the power of the capitalists.

The answer of the workers to the tyranny of capital must be the mass power of the proletariat in action,—the general mass strike, the political strike against the state, to impose the workers' will upon the state.

The political strike is the most efficient weapon of the proletariat, equally in the immediate struggle against Capitalism and in the final struggle to introduce the dictatorship of the proletariat in order to realize Socialism.

A general strike for Tom Mooney would be a political strike,—a new departure in American labor history. It would be a potentially revolutionary mass movement, since it would break the old tradition of passive acceptance of the decisions of the state and introduce the new militant era of aggressive mass action to impose the will of the proletariat upon the state and society. Break the old tradition, awaken the consciousness of power in the proletariat, and great events would come.

A revolutionary act of real importance,—this is the fact comprised in a successful Mooney general strike. This general strike would threaten vested interests in two directions: the vested interests of the bureaucracy in the American Federation of Labor, and the vested interests of Capitalism, the supremacy of which depends upon the passivity of the workers.

These vested interests, accordingly, equally of "labor" and of capital, are united against a general strike for Tom Mooney. As usual, the labor misleaders of the A. F. of L. are coming to the rescue of Capitalism, betraying labor, crushing the development of a militant spirit among the workers.

It has been apparent all along that the vested interests of the bureaucrats in the A. F. of L. were sabotaging the Mooney case. They hesitate; they intrigue; they accepted in order to sabotage. These bureaucrats did all in their power to prevent a militant answer of labor to Mooney's appeal. The Mooney case became identified with the mass movement in the A. F. of L. to transform the organization and impose upon it a more militant policy; and in order to preserve the old order and their power, the bureaucrats and misleaders sabotaged Mooney in order to sabotage the upsurging militant spirit in the unions.

The A. F. of L. officials have made it clear again and again that they were against a general strike. Now comes the convention of the A. F. of L. with its decision not to support this strike,—in other words, to abandon Mooney and all class war prisoners to the mercy of the bourgeois courts, bourgeois justice and the bourgeois government.

This is sabotage. This is a betrayal, not simply of Mooney, who relatively is unimportant, but of the whole cause of militant labor. The decision of the

A. F. of L. is an act of treason to the workers and a surrender to Capitalism.

But the tyrants of capital do not depend upon their labor lieutenants in the A. F. of L. alone.

Capital has been consciously mobilizing public opinion in order to make the Mooney strike a fizzle. The discovery of alleged plots to "seize" the government, the dynamite "plots" and explosions,—all are part and parcel of the campaign to mobilize "public opinion" against militant labor and to terrorize labor into abandoning its plans for a general strike.

Capitalism is in dread of the proposed Mooney general strike. It realizes the potential revolutionary significance of the movement, and is organizing to crush it.

There are no arrests being made of the "bomb plotters." Apparently, that is unimportant—to capital.

The Final Call—Act!

The National Conference of the Left Wing of the Socialist Party meets Sunday, June 22, in New York City.

Considering the reactionary acts of the N. E. C., it is absolutely necessary that every Left Wing local should send delegates.

The future of revolutionary Socialism in our party, in large measure, depends upon this Conference.

Comrades, act! Send your delegates! Communicate with Max Cohen, 43 West 29th St., New York City.

On the referendum to elect international delegates of the Socialist Party, Texas, Pennsylvania, Oregon, Ohio and the District of Columbia give the following returns:

John Reed, 4312; Louis C. Fraina, 3364; C. E. Ruthenberg, 3256; A. Wagenknecht, 2515; I. E. Ferguson, 2039. These are all Left Wing candidates. The moderates: Victor Berger, 1123; A. Germer, 1053; Algernon Lee, 438; John M. Work, 473; Seymour Stedman, 829; A. Shiplacoff, 674; James O'Neal, 365.

The full returns are, from the District of Columbia and 15 states—Texas, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Florida, Rhode Island, Maine, Kentucky, Arkansas, Minnesota, Michigan and Massachusetts:

John Reed, 11,991; Louis C. Fraina, 10,441; A. Wagenknecht, 7938; C. E. Ruthenberg, 7,779; I. E. Ferguson, 4,577; Victor Berger, 2,262; A. Germer, 1961; Seymour Stedman, 1,618; A. Shiplacoff, 1,337; James O'Neal, 1,143; Algernon Lee, 1003; John M. Work, 930.

In 14 of these states (Pennsylvania and the District of Columbia not in) the vote on International Secretary is: Kate Richards O'Hare, 7,317; Morris Hillquit, 2,422.

The vote in Local Buffalo, New York (expelled for being Left Wing) on international delegates is: John Reed, 307; Louis C. Fraina, 285; C. E. Ruthenberg, 271; I. E. Ferguson, 67; Victor Berger, 61; Kate O'Hare gets 145 votes and Morris Hillquit 80.

For National Executive Committee in District One—three states, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Maine, the vote is: Louis C. Fraina, 3130; N. I. Hourwich, 2,544; E. Lindgren, 1,472; L. Lore, 940; Morris Hillquit, 838; James O'Neal, 688; A. Shiplacoff, 319. Local Buffalo for N. E. C. votes: L. C. Fraina, 259; N. I. Hourwich, 205; E. I. Lindgren, 150; Morris Hillquit, 83.

These are partial results, indicating a Left Wing sweep, that a reactionary N. E. C. is trying to sabotage for the moderates.

But the explosions are being used as a pretext to deport radicals, as a means of mobilizing sentiment against militant labor, as a means of breaking the Mooney strike. The newspapers report that another explosion is scheduled for July 4; how do they know, and is it not a move to terrorize people and break the strike?

Capitalism visions dark days ahead. It visions social storms of great fury, and is preparing itself.

This preparation is sinister. It consists of plans for using terror against the working class, for using armed force in strikes, for a more ruthless use of the courts against labor, together with the cowering of labor into accepting a passive policy of dependence upon the benevolence of the state.

The sinister conspiracy of capital against militant labor must be broken. It must be broken by a more intense revolutionary agitation, by a more aggressive policy of Socialism. It must be broken by making a success of the Mooney strike, if not on July 5, then

after: the struggle to get the masses in action must never cease.

This means, moreover, broadening the scope of the Mooney strike. It must become a strike for the release of all class war prisoners, who are prisoners of the class war against Capitalism. Mooney is a symbol of the class war; and the Mooney strike must become a symbol of class power and militancy, to release all the prisoners of the militant working class.

These class war prisoners were captured in the front lines of the war against Capitalism. They were at the posts of danger, they struggled valiantly; and they were imprisoned consciously and calculatingly to weaken the power of the workers, to strengthen the power of the capitalists. They must be released.

The moderates, in the A. F. of L. and in the Socialist Party, urge a campaign for "amnesty." The labor lieutenants of the capitalist class in the unions urge faith in the government and in the courts. The moderates imagine that the mobilization of bourgeois liberal public opinion will compel an "amnesty."

All that will not accomplish anything. The issue is an issue of the class war, and power alone decides in the class war as in ordinary war. You cannot depend upon the courts. You cannot depend upon public opinion. You can depend upon your own mass power alone. You must not ask the government, you must compel the government to release our class war prisoners.

Ask the government that imprisoned our worker-comrades to release them? Depend upon this reactionary government of the capitalists to free the enemies of the capitalists? Charity is not a factor in the social struggle. Justice is a weapon in the struggle of class against class. Mercy is the lying fraud of a ruling class intent upon maintaining its own ascendancy.

All that is paltering with the issue. Paltering is very pleasing to the capitalists, but disastrous to the workers.

Power! That is the requirement of the militant proletariat. Power is the means that will break the power of the capitalists. The power of the proletariat alone will compel concessions and ultimately unconditional surrender.

The mass strike, the political strike, means power. It means the consciousness of class and the power that comes of this consciousness. The political mass strike will weaken the power of the state, make the power of the capitalists totter. There is no other method. The class struggle is not waged with words, but with deeds; it is not a pink-tea affair, but an implacable war to the end. In this war the workers must use force,—the force of their control of industry, the force that comes out of mass power, out of mass action.

The class struggle is flaring up implacably. Under the oppression of Capitalism, the workers are compelled to get into action. Illusions are being broken. New fetters are being forged for the proletariat, a new tyranny organizing itself. Capitalism is resorting to the most desperate means to preserve itself. It imprisons, it shoots, it destroys peace, happiness, democracy, that it may reign in plunder and in power. The workers must act against this evil system of things.

The class struggle is flaring up implacably. In the midst of war and death and tyranny, the proletariat is acquiring a new consciousness and new purposes. It stirs, uneasily, unaware of its strength; but it stirs. And capital trembles. Capital realizes that should this stir become conscious, definite action, it would mean the end of the world,—for Capitalism. But it would mean a new world for the workers.

The issue of the class war prisoners is an issue of the class struggle. On this issue, and all other issues, the militant proletariat must wage war against Capitalism. It must wage this war, consciously, unceasingly, implacably.

The proletariat must wage the class war with new means, with more militant tactics than used of old. The strike must broaden its character; the workers must realize that they need power, class power in order to conquer Capitalism. Class power comes out of class action; and the unifying centre of class action is the mass political strike,—Socialist mass action to conquer the power of the state and of Capitalism.