

the Socialists will suffer most under this system need not be emphasized. But this is merely by the way. Much more dangerous is the step-wise militarization of the United States, of which the present conscription act is but the beginning. When our masters took this step, they were determined that it should never be retraced, that compulsory military service shall become a permanent institution in times of peace as well as in times of war. Politicians like Roosevelt and Taft, the Hearst papers, the *Times*, *Evening Mail*, *Sun*, *Globe*, and many of the influential papers all over the country, have given expression openly to this demand, and will accomplish their purpose unless a strong movement to crush this militaristic element sets in at once.

The fight against the conscription bill, and against the law, after the bill was passed, in street, hall and mass demonstrations, has been the task of the hour.

It is regrettable that the Socialist Party locals, as such, in Greater New York, for instance, arranged no anti-conscription meetings whatsoever. A number of districts, on the contrary, did splendid work. But even these few demonstrations were disturbed and disrupted by civil and military authorities to the best of their ability. They sent soldiers who played the role of provocateurs, made arrests and arrogated to themselves other police rights. The police of the Mitchel "Reform" Administration, not to be outdone, called meetings of hallkeepers and warned them of renting out their establishments for such purposes. It has become almost impossible to carry on propaganda for the recall of this shameful law. Freedom of assemblage has been practically annihilated by our war for democracy. New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit and Cleveland are examples.

Almost immediately those other tried and proven friends of our capitalist social order, the courts, became active. Young people whose only crime lay in the distribution of handbills advertising an anti-conscription meeting, were sentenced to two years in prison and a fine of \$10,000. It was openly admitted that the defendants brought this severe judgment

upon themselves because they proudly declared that they were anarchists, and refused to say *pater peccavi* in order to escape punishment. Similar punishments were meted out almost daily. A veritable reign of terror swept the country. Whoever took prominent part in the movement for the repeal of the conscription law was blacklisted, arrested on the slightest provocation, and haled before the courts.

One of the most flagrant of these cases was the arrest and trial of the two anarchist leaders, Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman. Their fearless agitation had become an eyesore to the authorities. Their meetings were packed; tens of thousands stood upon the streets. The frantic efforts of police and militia to quell them notwithstanding. No means were too low and too despicable; and still the meetings were held, and the attendance increased from week to week. As a last resort Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman were arrested, placed under an outrageous bail of \$25,000, convicted, and sentenced to two years in prison and a fine of \$10,000, although not the slightest proof of the existence of a conspiracy to make the registration law ineffectual could be brought against them. The judge who sat in these cases found himself, like so many prominent German- and Austro-Americans, when America entered the war, in a sorry predicament. Their vociferous German patriotism has placed them under the painful necessity of proving their true-blue Americanism to the world—and that as conspicuously as possible. This same Federal judge also showed by the exceedingly mild punishment meted out to two young college students who had repudiated their bold anti-militaristic position, that his intention was rather to intimidate and terrorize than to punish, a conception foreign to our law.

That the fight to make the United States safe for democracy is very necessary, the well known case of Harry Aurin shows. On July 4th, Aurin distributed a circular containing simply paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Declaration of Independence and the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, followed by the question: "Does our government live up to these principles?" For this crime he was sentenced by a New York