

the boy was himself a victim, and was in a terrible state, not because of being deprived of his liberty as such, but because that meant being deprived of his opportunity to use cocaine—unless he could secure it surreptitiously in prison. Another had been convicted of selling liquor to soldiers; still another for the crime of burglary. . . . An Assistant District Attorney had come in, and a friend of my co-criminal, Ralph Cheney, tried to make him see our crime in its true light as a political offense. But the D. A. wouldn't; he told us: "I sympathize with these other men here, they are ignorant and the victims of circumstances; but you—your crime is unforgiveable, since it is a conscious and wilful assault upon law and order." . . .

The crime of crimes is an assault upon the prevailing ideology, upon the prevailing social order, upon the supremacy of Capitalism. Ordinary crimes are considered normal, natural; they are not a menace to the prevailing system: on the contrary, they are a necessary phase of this system, a means for its preservation. The criminal against law and order is the ally of the criminal of law and order—a holy alliance characteristic of a society based on class divisions. But the political criminal is dangerous; and the loftier his purposes are, the greater becomes his danger to Capitalism.

It is natural, accordingly, that the political criminal should find no sympathy among the defenders of law and order. The ordinary criminal, naturally, is treated brutally, since brutality is inherent in the beast of Capital; but the political criminal is treated even more brutally, with a conscious and purposeful brutality—the brutality of the slave owner toward slaves in revolt. This is emphasized all the more, as the American Government recognizes no such thing as political crimes—a tactical necessity to prevent the development of class consciousness. The political criminal must endure all the ignominy of the ordinary criminal, plus. This refusal to recognize political crimes is a consequence of the illusions of democracy and strengthens these illusions.

Perhaps no belligerent government has been as savage

toward its political criminals as has the American Government—a fact blisteringly characterizing our democracy. All the evidence indicates that the Conscientious Objectors in this country have had infinitely more suffering and ignominy inflicted upon them than the Conscientious Objectors in England. Karl Liebknecht and William Dittmann urge the people in Berlin to open revolt, and are given sentences of four and a half and three and a half years; in New York City, four Russian men are given twenty years each, and one Russian girl fifteen years in prison, for issuing a leaflet declaring that President Wilson was a hypocrite in his policy on Russia. Fritz Adler in Austria assassinates Premier Sturgkh, and is given thirteen years in prison; Eugene V. Debs makes a speech, and is sentenced to ten years. Our political criminals are treated miserably, denied opportunity for free communication with their comrades; a revolutionary Socialist in Italy is convicted of treason, receives four years in prison, and while in prison edits the Socialist daily newspaper, *L'Avanti!*

All this is a consequence of the vicious and unparalleled repressive character of the Espionage Laws. Nowhere, not even in Germany, were the laws against freedom of expression as severe as in our Espionage Acts. These measures were passed to punish enemy espionage; but instead of being used against the enemy, they were most frequently and severely used against the Socialist and the radical. Is Germany or Socialism the real enemy of Capitalism and Imperialism? The crime of crimes was not espionage, but awakening the consciousness of the masses; and the Department of Justice acted accordingly.

The class character of political crimes is still more apparent in the cases of industrial agitation. The I. W. W. trial, with its savage verdict, clearly indicates that the assault upon the industrial supremacy of Capitalism is considered more dangerous than the assault upon morals. All the testimony proved that the I. W. W. defendants had been engaged in industrial agitation, in organizing strikes for