

Worker Solidarity and Mouth Revolutionists (March 16, 1907)

The case of our kidnapped comrades is now in the United States Senate, admitted by the unanimous consent of that body and supported by signed and sealed petitions and resolutions representing more than two million organized workers spread over all the states and territories of the Union.

For one strongly opposed, as is the writer, to going before a capitalist legislative body to ask anything in the interest of the working class, this may seem strange and inconsistent; and so it is in a sense, and there must be some extraordinary feature of the case to justify it.

As a matter of fact, the kidnapping of our comrades by conspiracy of the governors of two states adds this extraordinary element to the case, and makes of it a special cause no less than a great emergency in which the lives of loyal comrades are at stake; and, under such circumstances, it is not strange that there should be departure from our usual tactics in dealing with the enemy.

Taking another view of the matter, kidnapping is not necessarily a feature of the class struggle, nor is it binding upon us to confine ourselves to class struggle tactics in dealing with that crime.

Assistance Without Compensation

There are thousands upon thousands of capitalists and supporters of capitalist institutions who are avowedly opposed to the crime of kidnapping, as perpetrated upon our comrades, and are ready to join in any effort to redress the wrong done and punish those responsible for it; and not a few of these are in the congress of the United States.

A man does not have to be a workingman, or a socialist, to be opposed to the crime of kidnapping, especially when it is compounded into murder by the chief magistrates of the people.

Proceeding on the theory that all that was needed to defeat the conspiracy and set our comrades free was the light of publicity, we came to Washington with the hope and expectation of having the plot laid bare and

facts made known in the supreme councils of the nation. In this we have succeeded, and to the fullest extent hoped for.

While the time was too short for the passage of any measure, the case was introduced and admitted to the congressional records and the foundation thus laid for further action at the next session.

One of the most remarkable elements in the proceedings at Washington was the marvelously swift response of the organized hosts of the nation. Within ten days signed and sealed documents, speaking for more than two million workingmen, were rushed into the national capital. It is certain that in thirty days more, the number of workers and others petitioning and protesting could have been increased to five million. All this preliminary work was done quietly to prevent the enemy from wholly excluding the matter from consideration and barring it from the records, as could have been done under the rules by a single objection in the closing days of the short session of congress just adjourned.

New York Conference

In this connection, while giving general credit to the organized workers all over the country for their gratifying activity in this emergency, special mention must be made of the invaluable aid rendered by our New York comrades under the auspices of the Moyer and Haywood Conference. This provisional organization spreads over a large territory, and its constituent elements are under such control that quick action can be secured in such an emergency as this, and when the call reached them from Washington, within 24 hours the petitions and resolutions were rolling in by scores from all over the New England and Eastern states.

In all my experience in the labor movement I have never had such a gratifying surprise. When I presented that case to Senator Carmack, of Tennessee, and we were planning for its introduction in the senate, he suggested that we could make but little progress, and probably none at all, unless we had petitions from a large number of organized workingmen. The time being very short, I used the telegraph and immediate delivery service in reaching our most active workers as far west as the Rocky Mountains, and in less than ten days, as already stated, the mails brought demands for an investigation representing more than two million of the organized labor forces.

It was truly a marvel to me, this perfect flood of communications, denoting a condition of activity and of solidarity on the part of the workers without a parallel in the history of the movement.

Mouth Revolutionists

There are a few, and fortunately only a few, who are inclined to sneer at these efforts to save our comrades. They are of that small element who profess to be completely enlisted in the cause and contemptuously wave aside all claims of individual consideration. Some of these have been frank enough to say that Moyer, Haywood, and Pettibone ought to be allowed to go to the gallows rather than compromise our revolutionary propaganda.

These gentlemen are what may be called *mouth revolutionists*.

They never do anything to get their own necks in the noose.

When the battle is on they are never up against the guns, but always in the rear telling how it ought to be done and pronouncing judgment upon those who are at the front doing the fighting. They are very brave in their willingness to sacrifice the lives of others, but they never jeopardize their own. If but for fifteen minutes these so-called revolutionists were in the shoes of Moyer, Haywood, and Pettibone, looking into the nooses dangling before their eyes, they would make the most abject pleas to save their necks by any possible means.

The writer is one who believes in sacrificing all for the cause, but absolutely nothing unnecessarily. The spirit of mock heroics and revolutionary bravado should not prevent us from saving the life of a single comrade by any conceivable means within our power, and in such a fight as the we are now waging against a gang of desperate kidnapers and murderers an form of strategy is allowable, and it is not only our right but our duty to use any weapon with which we can deal an effective blow to the enemy.

Taking this view of the situation, it appears quite certain that the most telling work yet done in the interest of our imprisoned comrades has been done here in Washington through the power of organized labor during the past two weeks.

Protest Jarred Statesmen

Never before has such a petition been filed with the congress of the United States. The members of the conservative old senate were never more surprised.

Within five minutes after it was read everybody about the capital was talking about it, and there was an air of suppressed excitement over it. The Washington papers have given a full and fair account of it, incorporating the salient points in our petition. The Associated Press has also sent the matte over the wires, thus placing the protest of labor and its demand for an investigation before practically the whole population of the country.

The impending investigation by congress will undoubtedly have an immediate effect upon the cases against our comrades. The conspirators and kidnapers know that such an investigation will bring to light all the hidden horrors which up to this time they have been able to conceal; and they know furthermore that it will also reveal a state of industrial and political facts which will put all the capitalist powers on the defensive and give the socialist movement such an impetus as it has never known.

Unless the prosecution is abandoned, the next congress will surely order an investigation. Scores of senators and congressmen openly declare themselves in favor of it, and insist that it shall be done.

For the first time since their arrest I now feel that our comrades are safe. But we know the enemy and are taking no chances.

We shall press the fight more vigorously than ever and keep it up all along the line *until Moyer, Haywood, and Pettibone are free.*

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