

Arise, Ye Hosts of Liberty! **(March 6, 1909)**

The advance of capitalism to plutocracy has shorn the common people of their liberties until but few remain. The national congress and state legislatures, reinforced by federal, state and county judges, have, by statute and decree, so buttressed capital upon the one hand and so enjoined and restricted labor upon the other that a situation confronts the people which must alarm them if they are not dead to every sentiment of manhood and deaf to every appeal of their vanishing freedom.

Not only are these forces of oppression working within national boundary lines, but they have spread over all other nations, and now operate on an international scale. This is one of the results of capitalist development. American capitalists have over a billion dollars invested in Mexican railroads, mines, smelters and other industries: they have multiplied millions invested in Russian bonds and in the bonds of other despotisms and monarchies of the Old World. Likewise, the capitalists of Russia, England, Mexico, and other nations are the owners of millions of acres of land and billions of invested wealth in the United States.

This is the secret of the diplomatic intrigues between the United States and Russia and the United States and Mexico for the capture and return of political refugees.

They used to be patriots and lionized; under the American flag, now they are criminals and hounded to death.

And the American people have remained quiescent under these monstrous perversions of the fundamental principles upon which their republic was founded!

Is it not time to awaken from this hideous nightmare? Has not the plutocracy gone far enough? Is it not about time to rise in our might and shake off the vampire? Is there any possible excuse for the present slavish conditions except our own craven cowardice? Are we to remain as inert as clams until the last drop of blood has been drained and the last spark of liberty extinguished?

Behold Antonio Araujo, Flores Magon, Antonio Villarreal, Librado Rivera, and Manuel Sarabia, the Mexican patriots, who, for more than fifteen months have been festering in the bastilles of our boasted republic for

the heinous crime of having attempted to emancipate their countrymen from the filth and squalor of peon slavery.

Behold Samuel Gompers, John Mitchell, and Frank Morrison, leaders of the American Federation of Labor, sentenced to jail for the atrocious crime of having in cold blood mentioned the name of a capitalist!

Behold Jan Pouren, the Russian refugee hunted down and thrown into an American prison by the American police, under orders from the Russian tsar for the monstrous crime of having objected to the starvation, exile, torture, and assassination of men, women and children in his native land.

Behold M. R. Preston and Joseph Smith, labor unionists, in felon's stripes, in the penitentiary at Carson City, Nevada, for the shocking crime of having protected a friendless working girl and slaying, in self defense, the employer who had wronged her.¹

Behold Fred D. Warren under heavy bail for the outrageous crime of having offered a reward for a fugitive from justice charged with murder.

Of the men here named who are in jail or penitentiary, or out temporarily under bail, five are Mexican patriots, cultured, educated gentlemen. battling bravely to ameliorate the awful conditions of their robbed and enslaved fellow beings; one is a Russian peasant, honest to the core, who protested against the butcheries of the tsar and fled to an asylum to find a dungeon; five are labor leaders of prominence, who, had they been capitalists, would have been extolled in florid phrase for the acts which have brought them to prison doors, and the remaining one is a socialist editor who has fearlessly denounced the crimes of the plutocracy and loyally served the cause of right and justice.

These eleven men should and shall be set free. The only crime with which their names are associated is their conviction.

The cause of these men and a number of others of lesser prominence who are in jails all over the country, and who are equally innocent, is the cause of the people.

It is your cause and my cause and the sentence of these men is your disgrace and my disgrace. But for our cowardice the capitalist courts would never have dared to convict them. It is therefore your conviction and my conviction. The brand of shame is upon you and me and there is but one way to remove it and that is by rising as *men* all over this country and issuing our united protest in terms that will shake plutocratic courts to their foundations.

Let the names of these eleven men be committed to memory by every unionist, by every wage worker, and by every man, woman, and child who would preserve the little liberty there remains in the United States before the last spark of it has been totally extinguished.

Let the courts which have convicted and Imprisoned these men be denounced in the name of that liberty which the founders of this republic fought and died for, and handed down to their children.

Let us unite all our forces, whatever differences there may be, until these men are liberated.

Let us bold a thousand indignation meetings and in swelling numbers vow we shall not retreat-until these libertarians are free.

Let us rally this very day, a million strong, resolved to do our duty and blot out our disgrace; to arouse the sleeping hosts and stir the nation from center to circumference with our protest of indignation and our demand for liberation.

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¹ On March 10, 1907, Goldfield, Nevada restaurant owner John Silva was killed by two walking delegates of the Industrial Workers of the World, M.R. Preston and Joseph W. Smith. The pair had been picketing Silva's establishment as "unfair to labor" over an incident involving back pay for a waitress who had left Silva's employment. In the dispute which resulted, Silva brandished a gun towards Preston, who fired and fatally wounded the restaurateur, later claiming that he had acted in self-defense. On May 27, Preston was convicted of second degree murder and sentenced to 25 years in state prison for shooting Preston while Smith received a term of 10 years for involuntary manslaughter for his role as an accessory to the crime. The Socialist Labor Party briefly nominated Preston as its candidate for president of the United States in 1908 before replacing him with another candidate.