

The Class Character of Bourgeois Mercy

By N. I. Hourwich

THE meaning of life to Mooney is still—prison! "Clemency" means a living death—to an innocent man!

Could we expect anything better from capitalist "justice"? Of course not! For the release of Mooney, or even a new trial of his case, would be at the same time a verdict of "guilty" for the whole system of "capitalist justice." A new trial, on the eve of the execution of the death sentence, would mean putting on trial all those who, during two and a half years, kept Mooney in prison, energetically denying him justice, and who for a long time tried to fasten the noose around his neck, and would have succeeded had it not been for the intervention of organized labor, in America as well as in other countries. Granting a new trial would mean "undermining the foundations of law and order," and not a single defender of "law and order" would, of course venture upon such a sacrilegious task.

Two and a half years ago Capitalism, with the aid of its mercenary agents and lackeys, wrenched Mooney from the ranks of the fighters in the cause of labor. And now the same predatory interests favor "clemency" for Mooney—and the purpose is the same—striking at labor.

The Governor of California, in granting "cle-

mency" to Mooney, declares he ventured on that act of "mercy" upon the "urgent requests" of President Wilson. But President Wilson has more than once appealed to the Governor to pardon Mooney, and the last request of this character was sent as far back as March of last year. A question arises, then, why has California's Governor met the request of President Wilson just on the eve of a threatened general strike throughout the land? Are we not justified in suspecting that the threat of a general strike and not the "urgent requests" of President Wilson has been the whip that lashed the "merciful" governor on to act?

True, the Governor, foreseeing the possibility of such "unfounded" suspicions, attempts to produce some sort of explanation of his tardiness. But the "explanations" are so empty that they will convince no one.

In order to do away finally with any "unfounded" suspicions regarding the true character of the matter, the Governor solemnly declares that he "refuses to recognize this case as in any fashion representing a clash between capital and labor." But if this is so, if the Mooney case is one of the thousands of ordinary "criminal cases" having

nothing in common with the struggle between labor and capital, the question arises: Why did President Wilson in the letters to Gov. Stephens printed in the papers, constantly allude to the "international significance" of the Mooney case.

What, one may ask, is the international significance attached to the pardoning or, on the contrary, the sentencing of an "ordinary criminal" as Governor Stephens is picturing Mooney?

And what a pigmy is this unfortunate governor who attempts with all sorts of absurd-comical assurances and caricature "grand" gestures to get rid of that indisputable fact of life—that it was not the requests of any sort from above, but the working classes, their just and severe wrath, which stopped the hand of the executioner.

But, of course, the working class will not be deceived by this tawdry act of "mercy"—a bone thrown to the dog. The workers threat of a general strike, the evident determination to immediately begin to act, only owing to this did they succeed in wresting this act of "mercy" from the strong claws of the capitalist Cerberus. And the working class will not stop at that; with energy multiplied by this first victory, the working class will continue the struggle, until Mooney shall be set free and return to the ranks of the fighters in the cause of labor from which he was snatched.