

Millionaire "Bread Trust" Profiteer Freed After Murder; Innocent Workers in Prison

By MAX SHACHTMAN

The self-admitted murderer of a penniless ex-Sailor has been released from the indictment returned against him six months ago. The murder, he says, was committed in self-defense as the result of repeated extortions by blackmail of money from the accused by a so-called "ring" of whom the dead man was a member.

The murderer is Walter S. Ward, the eldest son of the head of the Ward Baking Company, "The Bread Trust." He refused to state on what grounds blackmail had been extorted. The members of the "Ring" whom he named were never found, and are believed to be the heroes of one of the most ingenious pieces of fiction of the season.

Ward, Sr., who was given as a witness, ran away from subpoena servers and could not be found. The prosecuting attorney, Fred E. Weeks, who procured an indictment only when public feeling had been raised to a high pitch, vacillated continually in bringing the case before the Grand Jury. During the administration of the party to which Weeks belongs, the Republican, the entire party machinery was brought to bear on every effort to free the murderer without trial. Now the Democratic attorney Mr. Arthur Howland is in office.

On being questioned he said that he could bring up the case to another Grand Jury, but that he had no expectation of doing so at present, which means it will never be done.

Now, why is it that Ward, the millionaire, can murder a man in cold blood, for all the evidence points to the absurdity of the ex-sailor, Clarence Peters, having attacked him. Why is it that this man can concoct such a palpably cock-and-bull story and get by with it? Why was this brute admitted to such low bail as \$10,000 merely because he did not want to spend a few weeks in jail? Why were all the powers that be arraigned on his side to see that he should not come to justice? Why the many other incidents that are so incredible but true?

There is only one answer. The murderer is a millionaire, the son of a millionaire, who is head of a millionaire corporation. That is the one and only reason for all the solicitorousness shown for his freedom.

Contrast this situation with that of the murderer who was sentenced with such dispatch, Abe Becker, the Bronx truck-driver. Contrast this with the attitude of the courts, the prosecuting attorneys, the political parties of Capital, the administrative bodies of all kinds and the kept press when a Communist or an I. W. W. is brought into court. Compare the servile zeal of the prosecutors in the trial of a worker with the laxity shown in the Ward case. Compare the miserable falsehoods of Ward and how they were ignored and excused, to the readiness of the prosecutor of Sacco and Vanzetti to jump on any minute piece of testimony that did not concur with another. Place side by side the bail figures of a man who admits a murder and of a radical worker who is only accused of, let us say, attending a meeting. Contrast the attitude of the State and National judicial departments in the Michigan Communist cases, with that of the inattentiveness in the Ward case. Compare the evasion of court service by Ward, Sr., to the kidnapping of Moyer, Haywood and Pettibone. Compare the position of tolerance taken by the Judge in the Ward case with the illegal aggressiveness of the kept puppets in the cases

of the Chicago wobblies, the New York Communist cases, Sacco and Vanzetti and the innumerable other instances of the bitter persecution of those who give their all for the cause of Labor. Compare, finally, all the angles of the case of the millionaire with those of any case where the ideals and principles of Labor are involved, and you will be forced to come to the same conclusion at which we arrive. . .

The courts, like every other institution under bourgeois democracy, is an instrument for the upholding of the present order and the vindictive suppression of all that opposes it. If a member of the master class is ever brought to trial, he is shown every consideration. If a member of the working class is in the same position he is shown every inconsideration. A confessed criminal of the bourgeoisie can get by with any sort of a ridiculous tale. An accused worker finds it bitterly hard to gain freedom with even the most obviously true defense. A fat bourgeois may kill a man, seduce a girl, murder, hang, tar and feather and what not a negro or a worker, with impunity. A political party of the workers must eke out a fugitive existence underground. . .

The scandal of Ward's release stinks so atrociously that even so jaundiced a sheet as the New York "Daily News" lets out a mild squeak of protest. But it will never be mentioned again and they will continue to feed the workers their daily garbage. How different was the protest when Len Small released the Illinois Communists! His resignation was demanded by the fearless hero Jack Pershing, and at a meeting some yelled out "Hang Small!"

So it goes under Capitalism. Ward, the murderer goes free. Ford, Suhr, Mooney, Billings, Chicago and Wichita wobblies, Blankenstein and Jake Dolla, the New York Communists, Kowalski, and many, many others still waste their lives in their "steel-bound coffin of a cell". Others are on the waiting list. . .

This, Workers of America, is Democracy. You know how the fairy tale runs: "Liberty—Pursuit of Happiness—Freedom—Same Law for Rich as for Poor . . ."