
The Great Conspiracy

[circa June 28, 1920]

Typeset four page leaflet, *The Great Conspiracy*. Chicago: National Defense Committee, n.d. [1920]. No author specified. Treasurer of the NDC was I.E. Ferguson. Specimen in C.E. Ruthenberg Papers, Ohio Historical Society, microfilm reel 1.

The Class Conflict in the Courts.

One hundred and twenty-seven men and women are on trial or will be tried in the courts of the state of Illinois during the summer and fall. These 127 men and women are members of the Communist Party and the Communist Labor Party who were indicted for conspiracy “to overthrow the existing form of government by force and violence and other unlawful means.”

The basis of the charge against them is that they participated in the conventions and the organization of the two parties mentioned.

According to the viewpoint of the capitalist prosecution these conventions were “the great conspiracy” to overthrow capitalist rule in this country. the charge is that the program of both organizations was to overthrow the existing government and replace it with the Soviet Republic and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

To make certain that none of those indicted would be able to escape the vengeance of the capitalist prosecutors, each individual has been separately indicted, and if the wholesale prosecution fails, they can be tried again individually.

The Indicted.

Those included in the indictments are:

Communist Labor Party:

Samuel Ash
Max Bedacht
Charles Baker
Paul Bernford
Oscar Jesse Brown
Jack Carney
Charles Clarahan
M.J. Christensen
C.A. Engelken
L.K. England
Mayer Dobrovsky
Edwin Firth
Harry A. Greenwood
Samuel F. Hankin
Robert Horsley
L.E. Katterfeld
Charles Katz
Niels Kjar
Charles Krumbein
J. Kunst
William Bross Lloyd
Edward Lindgren
Ludwig Lore
James A. Meisinger
John Nelson
Robert Norburg
Edgar Owens
Arthur Proctor
John Reed
Karl F. Sandburg
Jack Schiff
Perry Shipman
Alfred Shuster
Morris Stollar
Albert B. Stone
John Vogel
A. Wagenknecht
Walter Wolf.

Communist Party:

John J. Ballam	Max Anikovich
A. Bittelman	M. Berson
Maximilian Cohen	U. Bultuskis
Charles Dirba	J. Bolociuch
Daniel Elbaum	Frank Bush
I.E. Ferguson	W. Byczkowski
Louis C. Fraina	A. Chernia
N.I. Hourwich	Steve Dems
K.B. Kaross	B. Fabritz
Jay Lovestone	Joseph Falkner
Paul Petras	A. Fedrusjewsky
C.E. Ruthenberg	S. Gregorovich
John Schwartz	J. Gurgaitis
A. Stoklitsky	N.S. Hanoka
Oscar Tyverowsky	Joe Hovart
Harry M. Wicks	A. Jendowski
V.J. Andrules	L.A. Kaplan
J.H. Costrell	T. Kavaliasuskas
Leo Frankel	I. Kirstukos
F.M. Friedman	D. Kruzich
Joseph Kowalski	D.I. Lapka
Paul Ladan	John Machulaitis
P. Risga	A. Marinin
E. Balchunas	S. Markewics
George Selakovich	J. Newmoff
D.W. Spiro	M. Okman
Peter Omelianowich	Frank A. Pelligrino
Boris Shklar	Julius Polansky
Dennis E. Batt	Frank Pop
Nick Conrad	P. Pouzoulis
Michael Garfinkel	Floyd H. Richardson
Michael Geusenbergl	M. Ruchlis
Morris Gordin	P. Shoenbrun
A. Ivanoff	F.I. Semenchuk
S.A. Koppnagel	Joseph Shafir
Englebert Preis	N. Smith
Gus Shklar	L. Spitalnix
Felix Sokolwsky	Joseph Varna
Peter Stankovich	Stefan Wieglielski
E.N. Titus	F. Wilant
E. Andruzkievitch	J. Yampolsky

In addition to those included in the conspiracy charge, there are also separate indictments of a number of members of both organizations, not included in the conspiracy cases. Among the persons indicted separately are Marguerite Prevey, Rose Pastor Stokes, Helen Judd, and Clara Roffsky.

In addition to the Chicago cases other members of both organizations were indicted and are being tried in states all the way from New York on the Atlantic coast to California, Washington, and Oregon on the Pacific coast.

In New York City, Benjamin Gitlow, Harry Winitsky, and Jim Larkin have been tried and railroaded to Sing Sing, although an appeal has been made in each case. The trial of I.E. Ferguson and C.E. Ruthenberg on the same charge as that on which Larkin and Gitlow were railroaded, is set for the Fall months.

The Real Conspiracy.

The real conspiracy in these cases is the conspiracy of the capitalist class to smash the militant working class movement in this country. The organization in this country of parties adhering to the program of the Bolsheviki sent a shiver of fear down the spine of the capitalist exploiters, who were already nervous because of the general world development and the militant action of the working class everywhere.

They proposed to smash this movement at the very beginning — if prosecution would do it. They mobilized all their forces against it in the raids at the beginning of the year.

The result was the arrest of FOUR THOUSAND WORKERS who were held for DEPORTATION AND IMPRISONMENT. The story of the methods used and the brutalities to which these workers were subjected has only recently come to light. When the full story is told it will show these raids in their true light, as the first manifestation of the “iron heel” in the United States, for nowhere in the world has there ever been such a concentrated attack and widespread arrests of those adhering to the working class movement.

The Fight Against Deportation.

During the past six months the Communist groups have been carrying on a courageous struggle against the deportation of the thousands of workers arrested in the January raids. All the resources of the defense organization have been mobilized to fight the case of every one of the thousands whom the capitalists proposed to eject from the country.

While hundreds of workers have been deported in spite of the fight made for them, other hundreds have been saved for the working class movement. In Chicago, out of 81 deportation cases, the government has been compelled to cancel 73. In other cities a large proportion of cancellations were secured through legal resistance.

This fight to protect the comrades facing deportation has drained the treasuries of the defense organizations. Tens of thousands of dollars were expended for attorneys' fees and to secure the release of those in jail on bond while the cases were pending. Thousands of dollars were needed for relief for the families of those held on deportation charges.

At a time when practically all the money collected has been used in the deportation fight the trials of those indicted are being set and the Communist Movement faces an even more bitter struggle to save hundreds of its members from imprisonment.

The CLP Trial.

What these trials mean is being shown in the CLP case. The selection of jurors for the trial of the 42 comrades indicted in this case was begun on May 10 [1920]. Seven weeks have elapsed at the time this is written and the jury has not been completed. Over 1200 prospective jurors have been examined, but not one out of a hundred has been accepted. The introduction of evidence will probably take another two months. The case has already cost tens of thousands of dollars and will cost

much more before the trial is completed and if an appeal is necessary.

Following the CLP trial will come the CP trial, which may take even longer, because of the greater number of defendants. In addition there are scores of individual cases to be defended throughout the country.

Your Help Is Needed.

The men and women involved in these cases are workers who are engaged in the workers' struggle for freedom from the oppression and exploitation of capitalism. They are not indicted for acts committed in their interests as individuals, but for doing their duty in the class struggle. They have a right to expect the support of every worker who grasps the significance of the struggle.

While the cards are always stacked against the worker who is brought into the courts on a charge involving the class struggle, the machinery of the capitalist courts does not always work efficiently. It sometimes slips a cog. It is sometimes possible to save those who get into the claws of the capitalist prosecution for carrying on the class struggle, and to accomplish this every technical means must be employed. It is through fighting to the last ditch against capitalist persecution that the morale of the working class movement is upheld.

The National Defense Committee has undertaken the work of raising funds to fight the cases involving Communists. Its major task will be to raise the funds necessary to fight the "great conspiracy" cases, but so far as the money received makes that possible, it will render assistance in every pending case against Communists.

Will you help it perform this task?

We are sending you enclosed a Defense Fund Subscription List. We ask you to go among those you know and secure as large contributions as possible. There are thousands of men and women who will be glad to contribute. We are dependent upon you to reach them.

You need not have any fear in circulating this list, for there is nothing illegal in raising funds for defense, even of Communists.

The answer which you make and the others who receive this appeal make, the quickness of your response, will be a thermometer showing the fighting spirit of the working class movement in this country.

Will you make a response that will inspire all those who are bearing the brunt of the struggle against capitalism with a new courage and enthusiasm, and make it quickly?

The workers' struggle calls for your support against the "great conspiracy" of the capitalists. The need for that support is great. If it is not given it will mean the sacrifice of hundreds of loyal comrades.

**GIVE IT QUICKLY AND
IN THE MEASURE THAT IS NEEDED.**

National Defense Committee

**I.E. Ferguson
Max Bedacht
L.E. Katterfeld
C.E. Ruthenberg
Edgar Owens**

Make all remittance payable to I.E. Ferguson, Treasurer, and mail to:

**I.E. Ferguson, Treasurer,
Room 303 — 166 W. Washington St., Chicago, Ill.**

Edited by Tim Davenport

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