
Michigan in the Muck.

by Eugene V. Debs

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The state of Michigan, by the grace of the dollar-a-year patrioteers and their official hirelings and stool-pigeons, presents just now a sorry spectacle to the nation. The Wolverine State in which the then undesirable Republican party was born as a protest against slavery and gag rule, has been made, by the profit-mongers who now hold sway there, to repudiate and condemn its own honorable traditions, and to disgrace itself with a law the sole purpose of which is to strangle free speech and free assemblage, and reestablish slavery in an even more outrageous form than that against which the pioneers revolted three quarters of a century ago.

Michigan is in the filthy mire of capitalist politics in which all vital issues are determined by corrupt politicians, agents of the exploiting masters whose sole business it is to rob the workers and loot the nation.

It is not William Z. Foster, Charles E. Ruthenberg, Rose Pastor Stokes and other communists who are on trial today in Michigan today, but it is the state of Michigan itself that is in the dock and on trial before the nation and the world.

If the idiotic and criminal "criminal syndicalist" law enacted by political crooks to seal the lips of industrial slaves is allowed to prevail then the state of Michigan ought to be fenced off as a peonage plantation, and decent, self-respecting people warned to keep away under penalty of being gagged and locked up.

The people of Michigan, if susceptible to state pride, are certainly entitled to congratulate

themselves upon the trial staged for them by their Main Street morons which makes the state the laughing stock of the whole country.

Of course it never occurs to the political morons that a rotten legislature consisting of corporation tools has a thousand times more to do with disturbing the peace of the state and overthrowing the government of the nation than such a meeting as that of the communists at Bridgman which has thrown the dollar-a-year patriots and their 100% political mercenaries into a fit of violent hysteria.

As to the actual issues involved, the communists had as good a right to hold a convention in the state of Michigan and to discuss their affairs and formulate their program, any kind of a program that stopped short of the actual commission of crime penalized under the law, as the graft-infested Republican and Democratic parties have to hold such a convention. In the one case, whether they are right or wrong, the attending delegates were to seeking to correct the abuses from which the people suffer while in the other the deliberate purpose is to keep the people in subjection.

The naked proposition in Michigan is a very simple one. Have men the right to an opinion of their very own and the right to meet in public and discuss it? That is all there is to the question. The issue is clear-cut, complete, and simply stated. There is nothing beyond it in the Michigan case. The reams of "testimony" that have flooded the trial are camouflage; pure bunk and nothing else.

The actual purpose of this vicious and cow-

ardly attack stands out in bold relief to all but the stone-blind. It is not the communists alone who are to be strangled, but it is the entire labor movement, industrial and political, that is to be throttled the instant it becomes clarified and militant enough to be regarded as a menace to the Robbers' Roost in Wall street and their subsidiaries in the several states of the union.

And the most disgraceful part of all in this foul assault upon the Constitution and upon the elemental rights of citizenship it solemnly guarantees, is that taken by the federal government itself in raping the fundamental law under which it has its own existence. Not in all the centuries the tsars held barbaric sway in Russia was there a lower, meaner, more disgraceful and contemptible role enacted than that the so-called Department of justice in employing the foulest degenerates to set traps for men too rigidly honest and true to be bribed or bullied, that they might be branded with crime and ignominiously consigned to the pestilential black holes Uncle Sam maintains from the peculiar type of "criminal syndicalist."

It is entirely consistent that such a putrid government should have Harry Daugherty as the head of its Department of "Justice" and William Howard Taft, the father of the anti-Labor injunction in the United States, as the Chief "Justice" of its Supreme Court.

It is likewise entirely and Christianly consistent that such a plutocratic, graft-infested government should be the only one on the face of the earth to condemn men to life sentences in its hell-

holes for simply expressing aversion to human slaughter; the only government to murder a great soul by slow torture as it did Magon for the crime of being a civilized human being, and as it is now doing Tom Mooney for the same reason, though the whole world knows him to be absolutely innocent of the crime with which the marauding malefactors in California charged him, to conceal their own infamy and crime.

The duty of the American working class and indeed of all American people who love liberty and abhor despotism is as clear as the issue itself in the Michigan situation.

If we have intelligence enough to understand the vital issue at stake and courage enough to do our duty we will back up our comrades on trial in Michigan to the very last. We are on trial with them and in defending them against this atrocious attack we are simply defending ourselves and our own families and firesides.

American plutocracy must be boldly challenged and fearlessly met in this atrocious attempt to destroy the last vestiges of American liberty by gagging the lips and crushing the manhood and womanhood of the American people.

Let us all to the rescue with loyal hearts, willing hands and open purses, standing solidly behind our persecuted comrades in the true spirit of solidarity until this dastardly attack upon our cause, the cause of free speech, the cause of humanity, has been repelled and the rights of citizenship under the constitution completely vindicated.

Transcribed by Mitch Abidor.

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