
Urgent Appeal to the Socialists of America: The War Has Ended, but the Prosecution and Persecution of Socialists Has Not. [July 10, 1919]

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Published in *St. Louis Labor*, whole no. 963 (July 19, 1919), pg. 8.

National Office Socialist Party
220 South Ashland Boulevard
Chicago, Ill., July 10, 1919.

To All Locals and Branches of the Socialist Party:

Comrades:—

Lay aside the Wings and look important facts in the face. The July Bulletin will contain a full statement of the Defense, Organization, and Propaganda Fund. It shows a balance on hand June 1, 1919, at \$1,576.21. Since the report was made out more than half of that balance has been paid out. The receipts for Defense and Organization average about \$30 per day for June and \$26 for July. It is impossible to continue the work properly with such amounts.

Here is the Situation Now.

The war has ended, but the prosecution and persecution of Socialists has not.

The Supreme Court has passed upon the Debs and O'Hare cases. They are serving their sentences — Debs 10 years in Atlanta, Ga., and Kate O'Hare 5 years in Jefferson City, Mo.

There is one more court of appeal — the masses. They must be fully informed of the crime committed against these comrades.

Are You Going to Help?

The amount collected during the 17 months is about an average of \$1.25 per member — a fraction more than 7 cents per month. Some comrades gave considerably more, while others gave less — some gave nothing.

That is the Past. The Future Lies Before Us.

And here is what we are expected to do:
First — Continue our efforts to secure the release of the class war prisoners.
Second — Provide prison comforts.
Third — Appeal to the higher courts those cases where convictions have been returned.

Here Are Some Cold Facts.

(a) A petition has been filed for rehearing in the [Emil] Herman case. He was under bond, but while on his way to Chicago last August to attend the organization conference he was arrested and his bond revoked. He has been held in the McNeil's Island Prison [WA] ever since. We must defend him against the unpardonable injustice he is suffering. This will cost at least \$1,000.

(b) Two of our Finnish comrades (editor and

business manager of a Finnish paper [*Toveri*]) were convicted in Astoria, Ore. Their prosecution is an attempt to destroy their paper. We cannot desert those comrades. The cost of defending them will not be less than \$2500.†

Will You Help?

(c) The case against Berger, Germer, Engdahl, Kruse, and Tucker is now in the Court of Appeals. The printing of the record, because of its size, will cost approximately \$4,000. These comrades are convicted and in the shadow of prison for 20 years for carrying out your instructions. What will you do to help?

Defend Them!

(d) There are 6 cases pending in Wisconsin that may be called for trial at any time. They involve Comrades [Oscar] Ameringer, [Edmund] Melms, [Victor] Berger, Arnold (State Secretary), and several others.

Their Defense Depends Upon Your Help.

(e) In California the State Secretary and State Organizer are to be tried under the "Criminal Syndicalist" law. With that law it is intended to destroy the Socialist movement in California by sending our spokesmen to prison.

What Is Your Answer?

The National Executive Committee has pledged the support of the party to these cases. Was the National Executive Committee correct in counting on you to stand by those who stand by you?

These comrades are giving their liberties and perhaps their lives to the cause of working class emancipation. These comrades are not afraid to go to jail, but

shall they go?

What Are You Going to Do to Keep Them Out? Let Us Be Frank With One Another.

At least \$15,000 is needed in the next 30 days to meet the most urgent demands. Anything short of that will be deserting them in their most critical hour.

There are thousands who have not yet contributed. There are thousands who have given freely and will give again.

There is no place or time for "Left Wing" or "Right Wing" in this crisis. Capitalists have their quarrels, but when it is a class crash they stand solid against labor. Will you be as class loyal as they?

What Do You Say?

Take the enclosed subscription blank and without delay canvass your local or branch members, your friends, your shopmates, your union, and all liberal or radical organizations.

Give as much as you can; it will encourage others.

Remember, this money is needed within 30 days. Your delay may mean that the comrades who fearlessly stood by you are sacrificed to Capitalism.

Take advantage of the meetings and demonstrations called for July 20th (see enclosed call) and place these facts before those attending.‡

Make prompt remittance to the National Office, Socialist Party, 220 South Ashland Blvd., Chicago, Ill.

Fraternally yours,

Adolph Germer,
Executive Secretary.

†- The editor of *Toveri* was William M. Reivo, who was sentenced to 2 years in prison, which he served at McNeil Island Penitentiary from May 6, 1919 to Jan. 26, 1921. The *Toveri* business manager mentioned here is believed to have been A.J. Partan, who was also sentenced to 2 years in prison, also served at McNeil Island from May 6, 1919 to Jan. 6, 1921. *Toveri* was not destroyed by the repression, eventually coming into the Communist Party's orbit.

‡- July 20-21, 1919 were worldwide days of protest against foreign intervention in Soviet Russia.

Edited with footnotes by Tim Davenport.

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