A. F. of L. Convention

The Atlantic City convention of the A. F. of L., which has just adjourned, adopted a resolution instructing the executive council "to give their early attention to the devising of such practical ways and means as will aid in securing a new trial for Thomas J. Mooney, etc." The resolution as a whole is firm in tone, and if a determined effort is made by the executive council under the instructions in this resolution, Mooney and Billings will not only be granted new trials, but liberty. Since the adjournment of the convention assurances have been given the defense by members of the executive council that they will see to it that the whole spirit of this resolution is carried out. Regardless of attacks made by individual delegates, and the bitterness which naturally arises from such a stormy session as the Mooney issue occasioned at this year's convention, the defense wishes it understood that the fight for simple justice in the Mooney case is going on stronger than ever, and that the defense will co-operate with and work for or along side of any organization or individual seeking to re-establish right where monstrous injustices prevails.

Incidental to the resolution of instructions, however, the committee submitted, through one of its members, a supplementary finding or rider, which attacked the International Workers' Defense league for sending out the Mooney general strike ballot for the membership of labor at large to vote on, and this supplementary opinion further charged that representatives of the defense had made attacks against the A. F. of L. officials in short, the regular old standard charge of "disruptionists." In the debate following, Fry, of the committee, also charged funds of the defense had been misused to pay the expenses of delegates to the Mooney labor congress.

The policy of the International Workers' Defense league which has had charge of the Mooney defense has been to avoid wasting ammunition answering charges of our known enemies, either inside or outside of labor, and if we are to judge by the experience of the past three years, certain members of the recent resolutions' committee could not be classed as friends. This latest attack adds another heavy burden to the already weighty load of a long weary fight and in view of the more or less official nature of the attack it calls for some answer. This is the purpose of this open letter.

The reply of the defense to the charges made by individuals in the matter of the handling of funds can best be answered by a reference to the regular monthly financial statements published in the Tri-City Labor Review every month, under the audit and seal of delegates representing different unions affiliated with the defense league. These monthly financial statements are made part of a regular yearly financial statement, printed in pamphlet form, and this booklet is so arranged as to give comprehensive and detailed review of every dollar received and handled by the defense. These financial statements have been printed in thousands and mailed broadcast to labor papers, councils, local unions and internationals.

There have been cases of great moment in the history of labor in America, where large sums of money were collected and disbursed through the regular and authorized channels of organized labor, without even a semblance of an audit being made or a statement issued or an accounting rendered. It will not be the purpose of the Mooney defense, however, to delve into history of working class fights in order to ward off blows from reactionary individuals who have since the first dark days in this fight taken sides with the conspirators seeking the death of Mooney and the others. They have at last found courage enough to come out in the open, and the defense wishes to say to them that in the same measure as we have combatted the vicious corrupt forces outside of labor, we will in like measure turn the spotlight of reason on those calculating individuals in labor's ranks, whose only argument is suspicion and innuendo.

The defense has for three years withstood the combined attack of Fickert and the corporate interests, allied with certain debased labor politicians who depend for their livelihood and social prestige on favors which ooze up from the political slime of San Francisco. These types of labor officials are not indigenous to San Francisco, but are to be found in every city in our land—and invariably these types will be found opposing the Mooney defense either silently or openly.

Let us examine the so-called evidence on which the charge of misappropriation of funds was based. This charge was made entirely upon the contention that the expenses of the Mooney labor congress held in Chicago were paid, of a delegate from Boston as well as Delegate Schulberg from San Francisco, with the further inference that this was the general practice in organizing the congress. The simple facts are as follows: The Boston delegate referred to is probably William Cobbs who represented the Boston Central Labor union. In this case there was no funds on hand in the Boston council to meet transportation expenses, and Field Representative Morgan of the defense volunteered to raise necessary funds through a collection at a mass meeting which was to be held. On account of the inability of Bourke Cockran, the proposed speaker, to appear in Boston, this meeting was never held and Field Representative Morgan, in order to make good his agreement to provide transportation for the Boston delegates, wired home to his wife in Alameda, Cal., for the necessary funds and made good his obligation. Morgan has represented the defense since the first dark days in the fight when no one in the fight received or expected any salary. For the benefit of the financial investigators of the committee we desire to state that Morgan has never requested the defense league to reimburse him in any manner for the funds above advanced.

Secondly, in the case of Delegate Schulberg, transportation and expense was advanced to him from the defense funds direct for the reason that he is a member of the executive board of the defense league, and has been employed either as field representative or on the publicity staff of the defense since the early days of the fight. The union to which Schulberg belongs had been beaten in a long fight with the chamber of commerce crowd in San Francisco during the very time Mooney and the others were lying in jail. This union has been a friend of the defense straight through the fight and is a member of the league, and when it is considered that Schulberg has specific duties in the matter of publicity and in handling the printing of the minutes, etc., at the congress we submit that it takes a far-fetched system of ethics to challenge the good faith of the defense in either of these cases. This so-called evidence of misappropriation of funds is very much like Fickert's evidence which has buried Mooney and Billings for life.

The financial records of the defense in the Mooney case stand as a challenge to like records of any defense or strike in the annals of American labor's history.

Undoubtedly the persistency and the determination of the defense in carrying the issues involved in the Mooney case directly to the rank and file of the membership of the local unions without continually consulting executives as to necessary methods of procedure, etc., has occasioned this cry of "disruptionists."

Following the commutation of Mooney's death sentence to one of life imprisonment in November, 1918 the defense, desiring to place the whole question of future policy before organized labor, issued a "call for a labor congress on the Mooney case" which resulted in a congress being held in Chicago, January, 1919, representing over eleven hundred organizations with some nine hundred delegates present. This call was sent to every international union and oficial, as well as all locals and councils, etc., in the trade union movement but only about three internations felt concerned enough to meet with the delegates sent by eleven hundred local organizations to consider the liberty of some of their fellow trade unionists.

The plans outlined by the Mooney labor congress called for local unions to have their different internationals submit the question of a general strike for a vote of the membership. This plan found little or no support among the international officials. When it was apparent that the will of the rank and file, as represented in over eleven hundred organizations in the Mooney congress was to be defeated by the technical strategy of hostile officials, the defense then requested and received through a referendum, permission to submit the Mooney general strike vote to the membership of the local unions in the trade union movement of America for their decision.

It seems that this action in a great many instances was a mortal wound to the pride and jurisdiction of international officials and while refusing to send out the subject matter for the vote of their membership they nevertheless did not hesitate to act the part of the dog in the manger by hastily filling the mails with warnings against general strike votes, outlaw organizations, etc.

Believing that the membership throughout the country desired to be heard on the question of a general strike in the Mooney case, the defense sent out the ballots to take the general strike vote, and for the first time in the history of American labor the membership without regard to craft or trade divisions had a chance to express their decision on a question before them. This was the first plebiscite of American labor and it was held on a question of liberty.

The Mooney defense offers no apology for providing the ways and means for the membership of organized labor to in some measure express by their vote their decision on the momentous issues involved in the Mooney case.

So far about 125,000 ballots have been cast on the question of a general strike for Mooney and 105,000 voted yes, 20,000 voted no. On glancing through the list of unions voting, every craft and calling in labor is represented, and when all the opposition and other obstacles overcome are considered—the little petty criticisms from delegates in the Atlantic City convention of the American Federation of Labor sink into insignificance in the face of over 125,000 votes from the membership at large of labor. Who voices the expression of labor? Those individuals who think they carry the brains of labor around in their hip pockets or the great mass of workers in mines, mills and factories? We leave it to the men and women who work to give the answer.

The committee's warning against allowing "outsiders" to poll a strike vote is sound trade union policy and it was for this reason that the defense which is composed of trade unions only, limited the representation at the Mooney congress and all other activities connected with strike power or pure and simple labor matters, strictly to regular bona fide unions. The A. F. of L. by this very convention admitted that the only strike power the convention had was the power to recommend to affiliated organizations certain actions. Why, then, challenge the right of a group of local unions concerned in the defense of their own members, to organize a congress representative of the whole rank and file membership to consider ways and means to bring justice.

The strike power rests, in the last analysis, with the membership in local unions, and if they desire to express themselves on any question, what official, may we ask, has the audacity to censor the kind of questions they can vote on? The present need of American labor is to be able to act all together, all over the land, at the same time. The actual experience gained by the membership of labor in the locals and councils in taking the Mooney general strike vote is a million times more valuable than some of the committee's opinions or criticisms.

Secretary of labor, William B. Wilson, in addressing the convention touched on the Mooney case, and his opinion also was against the general strike for the reason, as he stated then, that labor did not have the right to try the issues involved—holding that it was the province of a jury—and also stating that the United States government was still investigating the facts.

With the deepest respect for the opinions of Secretary Wilson, we say, however, it should, nevertheless, be remembered that Judge Griffin in demanding a new trial for Mooney stated that a new trial should be held and another jury hear the facts, but the California supreme court and the United States supreme court have refused to order a new trial, claiming that, in spite of the perjury and fraud, the defendant is without remedy and the only relief now lies in a pardon through an act of clemency or mercy.

This is the very principle on which the whole defense has refused to compromise. There can be no such act as clemency or mercy to innocent men convicted through a conspiracy of fraud and perjury. Therefore the defense believes that some new remedy will have to be provided by federal procedure or executive order, because all the "recognized processes" have been exhausted without relief.

It has been charged that the Mooney defense were all radicals anyhow—pro-bolsheviks, etc. From our observation we believe the day has passed in rank and file labor meetings in America when reactionary officials can assassinate the character of any different minded member by yelling, "he is a radical, an anarchist, a bolshevik." If we may presume to express again the opinions voiced by the rank and file in the Mooney labor congress in Chicago, we unhesitatingly declare that we did hope the A. F. of L., the official body of American labor, would be big enough to look beyond the struggle of imperialists for indemnities and new boundaries and grant to the Russian working people some real recognition of the struggle they are making against the world to build a real democracy. What harm has the soviet government of Russia done to labor? If the desire to enjoy the six-hour day and to have some real voice and control in industry, and to see the estates of land barons divided among the people are principles and examples of the soviet style of government, then there are millions of American workers who do not care whether some delegate back in a convention yells bolshevik till doomsday, for they have the same hopes and desires.

There is one bright spot, however, in the work of the Atlantic City convention, and that was the attitude of the convention toward the growing power of the courts in the issuing of injunctions. The advice of the convention was to throw aside "recognized processes," and disobey court processes and injunctions "which sap our liberties and destroy our fundamental rights."

Rumors have been persistent that the parties actually guilty of the preparedness day tragedy would soon be caught. But the Mooney defense wishes to recall the fact that Fickert and Oxman and Cunha and Henshaw and all the others were all caught by dictaphone records secured by United States government secret service operatives. These records exposed in the Densmore report showed Fickert et al. framing up another perjury like the one which was used to bury Mooney and Billings and yet these officers of "law and order" are at liberty, while Mooney and Billings are still in jail for life. We trust that the day will never come when labor will allow its fighters and organizers to be selected as innocent victims and decoys and be placed behind prison walls to await the pleasure of authorities in apprehending the guilty. W. Bourke Cockran, in one of his arguments, stated that the one great and real difference between an autocracy and a democracy was that in a democracy the citizen was clothed with the protection of the great freemen's doctrine—"the presumption of innocence" which was just the reverse of an autocracy. Mooney and Billings and the others never had the benefit of this right, and now after they have proven their innocence and the federal government itself has proven the fraud and perjury of the district attorney, and exposed this whole conspiracy against justice, is it right or just that Mooney and Billings should be confined behind prison walls under life sentence while the authorities pursue the guilty?

Not a single letter or suggestion even has reached the defense from any of the unions which have voted to express their protest by a general strike to recall their decision in this matter. There is no change in the status of the defense, there is no relief apparent, there is more need than ever for a determined expression and protest to the end that justice be done in the Mooney case.

Every great reform has to come through some protest of the people and our liberties are only maintained in the same measure that we defend them.

Just as this open letter is being written, press dispatches from Washington, D. C., note that reactionary forces in congress are attacking Secretary of Labor Wilson's administration and, as part of this attack, are calling for the details in connection with the Densmore report on the Mooney case. The resolution introduced on this matter wants to know how it came that the United States department of labor, through Densmore, dared to investigate the crooks and perjurers in the district attorney's office. Unable to attack the truth of the Densmore report, the political lick-spittles of the vested interests in congress have now centered their attack on the violation of the sacred rights and immunity of kings and officialdom.

The terrible condition of industrial affairs exposed in the industrial relations commissions report, with which Frank P. Walsh was connected, is mere child's play compared with the astounding fact of criminal conspiracy between district attorneys and other officers of the law the under-world and big business.

The Mooney defense wants to print five million copies of the Densmore report, if possible, and place one in the hands of every organized worker and as many other citizens as possible, and this will be a job worthy of the support of every individual and local union in the whole labor movement.

The whole Mooney fight has been a fight made by the rank and file and has liberated three of the intended victims and has now placed the state of California itself on trial for still holding in prison Mooney and Billings. This fight will only be finally successful through the constant pounding on the prison gates until the spirit of justice in America is at last aroused to demand the liberation of the last two victims.

In closing this open letter let us add that, if there is any record in the Mooney case which would justify not only a general strike but a revolution almost, it is the paragraph taken from the Densmore report which sums up the "Judd Episode" concerning the attempt of District Attorney Fickert and a Burns detective and others to deliberately frame up on a woman of good repute so that they would be in a position to blast her character and soul, if she refused to perjure herself; let this paragraph or the record stand as an answer to the critics of the defense, and also stand as a call to those in the ranks of labor who believe that liberty is worth fighting for—to keep up the fight to the finish.

"I have said that the Judd episode speaks for itself. I should like to go a step further, if I could do so without violating the proper formality of a government report, and venture the observation that the episode shouts aloud to heaven, and that its voice is the despairing cry of justice forsaken, sinking into the quicksands and treacherous lime of violence and perjury. There is something here very heartrending and very appealing perhaps the very poignancy of the cry will arouse public conscience and speed the necessary measures for rescue."

HEIRESS AND AVIATOR HUSBAND

Alice Gordon Drexel, one of America's greatest heiresses, only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John R. Drexel of New York and granddaughter of the late Anthony Drexel of Philadelphia, and Capt. William Barrett, air force, U. S. A., with whom she eloped recently. Their marriage "shocked and surprised" the bride's parents.

ALASKAN RAILROAD NEARS COMPLETION

When Finished Will Extend Over 500 Miles. Charges of Lax Methods Are False, Says Governor.

Juneau, Alaska, July 5.—(By the United Press).—"The Alaskan railroad, now 75 per cent complete, will be of wonderful benefit to Alaska in improving industrial conditions, and thus will the whole Pacific coast be benefitted by increased trade," declared Thomas Riggs, Jr., governor of Alaska, in an exclusive interview with the United Press today.

The governor nailed as false the charges that lax methods are being used in constructing the road.

"The road is being well and economically constructed, no matter what ulterior motive attacks have been made thereon," he said.

The railroad extends from Seward, an ice-free port, to Fairbanks, a distance of 471 miles. Necessary branches bring the total mileage to more than 500, according to Riggs.

"When complete, the railroad will serve a long-felt want," said the governor. It may not for years pay maintenance and operating charges but it will gradually open up a territory rich in mining possibilities and farming opportunities. Two coal fields are tapped. The principal one—the Matanuska field—holds promise of being an export field for high grade bituminous coal, in which the Pacific coast is lacking. The Nenana field will supply the interior country with fuel for industrial and domestic purposes, displacing wood, which is rapidly disappearing from around the more settled districts.

"Not the least function performed will be found in cutting down the time consumed in travel and in constant service rendered. As it is now, it takes freight about a month to travel from Seattle to Fairbanks and this only during the season of open river navagation. With the railroad in operation, freight will and at Fairbanks within a week from the date of shipping. There will be no large stocks on hand subject to market fluctuations, deterioration insurance, overstock and loss. High prices will be reduced by the elimination of such unfavorable factors, and a constant supply of seasonable supplies is assured. A dredge man now, in case of a break down, with no spare parts at hand, for instance, must close his operations for the season and lay off a crew perhaps brought all the way from the states under pay. With the railroad in operation within a week the part can be replaced and the boat placed once more in operation."

Governor Riggs emphasized the immense distances involved.

"Imagine all the states east of the Mississippi without a railroad," he said, "dependent almost entirely on navigable waters as highways with a source of supply in England. Include in your picture a wagonroad impassable for part of the year between Pittsburg and Philadelphia, and a jerk-water railroad between Baltimore and New York. It was conditions like these that caused the secretary of the interior to take up and push through the Alaska railroad project."

DUNCAN OF SEATTLE MAKES TELLING POINT

Tells People of the East Since Prohibition Went Into Effect Workers Are Better Off.

By GEORGE WEST.

New York, June 30, 1919.—The good people of the east who read the daily papers and who have pictured the Seattle strikers as bloodthirsty rioters intent on rapine and murder are just recovering from a severe shock.

The east generally had its breath taken when James Duncan of Seattle led a strong minority in opposition to Mr. Gompers on the prohibition question at the American Federation of Labor convention at Atlantic City. Mr. Gompers personally led the fight for the wets, and won, but it is Mr. Duncan who got all the honors.

Said the New York Evening Post in an editorial:

"Mr. Duncan of Seattle made a telling point when he stated that since prohibition had gone into effect there the workers have been better clad and fed and more self-respecting; and that if they ever went on a pilgrimage to Washington they would pay their own expenses instead of letting the brewers do it. That bit of frankness will surely give pause to many an honest delegate before he steps on the Washington special (of the liquor man) next Saturday. It is, as Mr. Duncan said, ridiculous that at the present juncture such measures as daylight saving and prohibition should appear to be considered as matters of the highest importance by the official leadership of the federation."

GOES TO SPOKANE.

J. B. Patterson, for the last three years manager of the Butte branch of the Underwood Typewriter company, has gone to Spokane to accept a similar position there with the same company. Mr. Patterson had been a resident of Butte for 27 years.

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