

The Street Car Strike in Denver

By Joe Bronson.

The men on the street car system of Denver voted overwhelmingly for the strike and on a Sunday morning the entire street car system of Denver was paralyzed. This was done in violation of a court order which, be it said to the credit of the strikers, they ignored entirely and for which their entire executive committee has since been sent to jail by one of the tools of the capitalist class.

The trouble started when the Denver Tramway Co. began importing thugs and professional strikebreakers under the jurisdiction of the notorious "Black-jack Jerome", a professional strike breaker from Frisco. They began operating a few cars screened with heavy wire and guarded by thugs with long-range rifles which they pointed towards the crowds which would gather naturally under such circumstances.

Before the riots the Denver Trades Assembly marched to the City Hall in a body and called the attention of the mayor to the danger of such procedure and requested him to remove the armed thugs. Of course he refused.

"Capitalist Justice"

One example of "capitalist justice" can be plainly seen by all the strikers. The members of executive committee of the union received a ninety-day sentence on one day and were taken to jail the next day, all appeal denied. "Black-jack Jerome", who was arrested for beating up one of his own men, who secured the warrant for his arrest, was immediately released on bond.

After the riots, as usual, the troops were called in and the Tramway Co. is operating (they claim) many cars under their protection. Many workers refuse to ride on the cars and the union is furnishing free buses for such to ride on. The awakening of class solidarity can be easily noted when one sees that the cars running in the residential sections of the well-to-do are crowded, while those running in working class districts are usually empty or only partly filled.

Talk of a General Strike.

It can be said to the credit of the railroad shopmen that they are ready to walk out in sympathy at a moment's notice. There has been much talk of a general strike, but nothing has come of it yet. The conservatives, as usual, raised

the same old objections. The international officials would not consent; their "sacred contracts" must be fulfilled; "public sentiment" would be against them, etc. All the old familiar bunc which paralyzes the workers when they ought to be aggressive and united for action.

Of course they are willing to raise money, and many of the strikers with whom the writer has talked are actually deluded with the idea that they can win this strike with money. They forget that "big business", which is supporting the Tramway Co. as a solid body, can raise a thousand times as much money for the purpose of defeating the strike as the men can raise to win it.

All admit that this is the beginning of the great fight of the employers for the open shop and the destruction of labor organization of all kinds. And at the very start of the struggle the employers are solidly bound together, showing an undivided front to the workers. The workers, on the other hand are hampered by the separate organization of antiquated craft unions, "sacred contracts" not to strike until a certain date when the boss is fully prepared and, worst of all, they are demoralized by the insane idea that in some way or another, through the "sympathy" of the public, the fair-mindedness of some of the employers or the fair words of capitalist politicians they can get what they want without fighting for it.

Fighting Spirit of Strikers.

Still, the situation is more hopeful than it has ever been here in Denver. The street car strikers are showing a fighting spirit that is bound to inspire all other workers in time. The courage of their executive committee in going to jail rather than obey the injunction of a capitalist court is something new for craft union officials. And that great spontaneous act of mobbing the office of the Denver Post, the paper that has fought the strikers so viciously and lied about them so shamelessly, is an indication that the workers are awakening to the fact that capitalist newspapers are the deadly enemies of the workers. The logical consequence of this knowledge should be an effort to build up and support the working class press.