

PRESIDENT COOLIDGE NOT SPHINX TO NATION'S OPEN SHOP BOSSES

By JAY LOVESTONE

One of our leading financial papers recently called "Cal" Coolidge "the Sphinx of the White House." In this there is not a bit of truth. To the financiers and industrialists of the country Coolidge is anything but a Sphinx as far as Labor goes; and that after all is the most decisive gauge of a man in public office today. See where a man stands on the Labor problem, the class struggle, and you know where he is fundamentally lined up on the various issues confronting the country at any particular moment.

The whole record of President Coolidge betrays an unmitigated hostility to the working class and its struggle for the improvement of working and living conditions. It is in this light that the following estimate of our President by Mr. C. W. Barron, owner of the Boston News Bureau and Wall Street Journal and publisher of Barron's Weekly is of import:

"No man is better fitted or equipped to lead the United States in its present commanding position before the whole world. . . . The business interests of the country will go behind him as they went up behind Harding."

The Textile Strike of 1919

In February, 1919, a committee of textile strikers from Lawrence protested to Coolidge; then Governor, against the savage brutality of the mounted police in the strike. On Feb. 18th this Committee sought an audience with Governor Coolidge to lay before him the highhanded conduct of the Lawrence city authorities in refusing the workers the right to hold parades and meetings; the outrages, committed by the Cossacks; and to request his appointment of an impartial committee of investigation.

The Governor, Coolidge, refused even to see this committee of workers. His answer was merely an act of heaping insult upon injury in so far as the striking workers were concerned. Coolidge said that the matter of granting permission to parade was entirely in the hands of local authorities. His letter went on in the familiar strain of the capitalist sanctifiers of the law and order of profits:

"If the police have assaulted any persons without warrant of law, the matter should be brought to the attention of the criminal court. The results which you will secure from the great war and from your residence in America will be exactly what you desire to make them. It is my desire that each citizen of Massachusetts should have the equal protection of the laws and be supported to the extent of the power of the Commonwealth in his right to pursue a lawful occupation. I trust that you will co-operate with the duly constituted authorities of the city, state and nation to this end."

Thus did the aspiring Governor tell the workers to look for solace from the very courts that swung the heavy club of injunctions against them, and thus did Coolidge plainly tell the striking workers that they should shut up and put up, as a matter of gratitude to the country, with the Government acting as a protector of the "lawful" occupation of strike-breaking.

The Boston Police Strike

Many liberals, semi-Socialists and so-called Socialists have, since the ascendancy of Coolidge to the Executive Chair of the Presidency, passed sleepless nights pondering the legal, formal responsibility of Coolidge in the 1919 Boston Police Strike. These lovers of the pure truth of the law and adamant adherents of abstract justice, whatever that may be, have been saying that it's all a lie, that Coolidge never did break the strike of police, that he is getting away with credit which is not due him, and that he has therefore been "made by a myth."

All of this might be splendid stuff for filling the columns for the liberal gullibles while the reactionary press is rejoicing at the advent of a sworn enemy of the working class into the dominating position of the Government. A brief analysis of the Boston Police Strike shows that Coolidge was the man behind the guns and that whatever strikebreaking was done he must be given the discredit for it. Let us turn to the now famous Boston City Document Number 108. This is the report on the police strike made by the "citizens'" committee appointed by Mayor Peters.

The Police Department of Boston is part of the State and not part of the municipal Government. The Police Commissioner is appointed by and responsible to the Governor. In August, 1919, the Boston policemen began to talk strike because of the wretched conditions and low pay to which they were subjected. The police began to talk of affiliating their organization with the American Federation of Labor in order to rally the maximum support of Organized Labor behind them in their fight. No sooner was strike talk in the air than Coolidge hastened to assure the Mayor and Police Commissioner of his support. Apropos of this phase of the strike, Barron's Weekly for August 27, 1923, said:

"But long before the strike the Governor told the police commissioner that he would back him absolutely in his enforcement of the regulations of the service and the laws of the Commonwealth. He brought troops into the city, nomin-

ally for drill, and quartered them at the South Armory and the Cadet Armory; there they were held at the call of the proper officer. The officials immediately in charge could get the Governor, the Attorney General, the Governor's secretary, in five minutes by telephone."

The Disorderly Unemployed



"The Unemployed seemed well supplied with money—from a source which should be investigated. Several were drunk.—Daily Paper."

When it appeared that trouble was in the air the Police Commissioner pinned his faith in Herbert Parker as his counsel to answer the attacks of the policemen. This Mr. Parker, it is interesting to note, was formerly a State Attorney General, an intimate friend of Coolidge, and a graduate of the same school of corrupt vicious politics headed by the late Senator Murray Crane.

What is more, when Mayor Peters appointed his "Citizens' Committee" to make a report on the strike situation he picked those bankers and big business men closest to Coolidge so that all would work smoothly in the process of impartial investigation. At the head of this Committee stood James J. Storrow of the internationally known banking firm of Lee, Higginson and Co. Mr. Storrow is also a director and officer of the Columbia Rope Co., the Essex Co., the Fairbanks Morse Co., Franklin Foundation, Galveston Houston Electric Co., La Fayette Motors Co., Nash Motors Co., Railway and Light Securities Co., Springfield Railway Co., United States Smelting, Refining and Manufacturing Co., W. H. McElwain & Co., and Wm. Underwood & Co.

Among his associates were such powerful bankers and manufacturers high in the confidence of Coolidge as George E. Brock, President of the Home Savings Bank and Director of the Boylston National Bank of Boston, Market Trust Co., and the New England Mutual Life Insurance Co.; Mr. B. Preston Clark, director of B. C. Clark and Co., Treasurer, Cohasset Water Co., Vice-Pres., Plymouth Cordage Co., and member of the Executive Committee of the United States Smelting, Refining and Manufacturing Co.; John R. Macomber, a director of at least seven banking and commercial organizations; Patrick A. O'Connell, a director of at least eight banking and commercial organizations; James J. Phelan, of Hornblower and Weeks, and an officer of banks, lumber companies, insurance, and trust companies; A. C. Ratschky, the well-known Boston banker; and Fred S. Snyder of the Boston Chamber of Commerce and banker.

Coolidge's game here was to wait for the decisive moment and then hit hard. Says the Report of the Committee: "In justice to the Governor it should be stated that at all times he assured the members of your committee that whenever called upon for a military force he would procure sufficient men—if they could be secured—to maintain law and order." When the local constituted authorities had done all they could, Coolidge came in to clean up. He forthwith issued his order calling out the entire State Guard of Massachusetts and assumed full authority of the strike situation as Commander in Chief of the State forces. The strike was broken thru the display and employment of the military forces.

Then Coolidge followed up his strong-arm, strikebreaking tactics by denying the policemen even the limited right to organize that the Bankers Citizens' Committee accorded them. In his reply to Gompers seeking a reinstatement of the striking policemen Coolidge said:

"There is no right to strike against the public safety by anybody, anywhere, at any time. I shall support the Commissioner in the execution of law and order."

It was this browbeating attitude of Coolidge that was responsible for the local authorities refusing to reinstate the policemen who had struck. It was this dictatorial procedure on the part of Coolidge that uprooted even the faintest semblance of organization that the Bankers' Committee would allow the men.

Because of the policy of the mailed fist pursued by Coolidge, the big capitalists from coast to coast placed laurels on him and sang his praise to the tune of "Thank God for Coolidge." The employers rejoiced and the workers gnashed their teeth. It was Coolidge's unyielding hostility to unionism that made him a national hero of the enemies of labor.

Workers Know Coolidge as Enemy

In explaining his refusal to reinstate the policemen Coolidge boasted:

"There is an obligation to forgive, but it does not extend to the unrepentant. To give them aid and comfort is to support their evil doing and to become an accessory before the fact. A government which does that is a reproach to all civilization and will soon have on its hands the blood of its citizens. I have resisted and propose to continue in resistance to such action."

Such bitter hatred did this revengeful attitude of Coolidge engender among the workers that on July 21, 1920, the Executive Board of the Boston Telephone Operators' Union voted, in special session, not to participate in any Labor Day parade which was to be reviewed by the Governor. The workers expressly stated that they took this attitude because of Coolidge's conduct in the police strike.

The capitalists on the other hand forthwith showed their appreciation of the strikebreaking services rendered them by the President. At the Massachusetts State Convention of the Republican Party a special resolution lauding Coolidge was passed on October 4, 1919. During the sessions of the Republican National Convention in 1920 "Big Business" paid its tribute to him. Gov. Morrow, of Kentucky, was chosen to notify Coolidge of his nomination as Vice-President. It is interesting to note that this Governor Morrow is himself a strikebreaker of the first order. He made his reputation in the following manner, indicated by a telegram sent to the late President Harding by Representative Herman Q. Thompson on February 5, 1922:

"Governor Morrow has sent troops to our town, shooting and killing men and women. Please act."

It was indeed fine strategy to have a man who has used tanks and machine guns to mow down striking

steel workers at Newport, Ky., be the one to make the nomination speech for a man who rode into power because of his prowess in crushing a strike.

And in the Republican Handbook for the 1920 campaign, describing Coolidge's fitness for the job of Vice-President, we find the following paean of praise sung of him by the President of a railroad:

"If I had a dispute with my men and Coolidge was the arbitrator, I would be glad to have the men be represented by any lawyer that they chose; and I would be willing to leave my side of the case in his hands without making a plea at all."

Coolidge has not changed his stripes since then. Addressing the "Boston Business Men" in November, 1920, he boasted that his election was the best proof of the fact that "Labor" has been laid low in its aspiration to power. He reminded his friends, the Boston Bankers, that in January, 1920, he had, in an address before the Dartmouth Alumni, warned Organized Labor to keep in mind that it could not live without the law and that the election results bore out his contention one hundred per cent.

Finally, today, confronted with the anthracite coal miner's strike, President Coolidge is pursuing the same strategy he followed in the Boston Police Strike. His first step was to appear impartial. His second step was to have the nearest local authorities exhaust every possibility of avoiding a strike. Then he will step in as the hero of the hour and by a great fanfare and military display and threat to use force and violence he will attempt to cajole the strikers into submission.

Failing in threats, Coolidge will not hesitate to pit all the military and judicial and financial resources of the most powerful strikebreaking Government on earth against the workers struggling for improved conditions.

Steel Bosses of Nova Scotia in Effort to Break Trade Unions

By JOHN A. McRURY

(Staff Correspondent, Federated Press and "The Worker")

SYDNEY, Nova Scotia.—Having prevented the steelworkers from gaining a 20 per cent wage increase, the British Empire Steel Corporation is working for the destruction of their union. Having blacklisted the best union men the corporation thinks this is an opportune time to organize a "co-operative plan of employes representation," in other words, a company union is going to be formed to smash the steelworkers' union. Twice during the past year the company has tried to get the men to accept this plan, but has failed.

A fund, called the Nova Scotia Workers' Defense fund, has been started to assist the blacklisted miners and steelworkers, who are discriminated against for activities during the steel-coal strike of July and August. This fund is also used to defray court charges of a score of workers that are being tried. The entire trade union movement has been circularized and \$2,500 has already been contributed.

Letters to the Editor

Ex-Soldier Wants to Know

Editor, The Worker: I would like to become acquainted more fully with the Communist program, and also know where I could find an English local of the Workers Party.

An ex-soldier, and one-time member of the American Legion, I began thinking for myself as a result of associating with members of the I. W. W. on a trip thru the Northwest. I returned to New York, and for two years have been an ardent advocate for parliamentary Socialism. (Due to my individual agitation activities I have found it hard to keep steadily employed.)

But as I note that the attempt to be "respectable" on the part of Socialist and so-called social-democratic and Labor Parties of the various nations robs them of their revolutionary working class character, and that they tend to become mere petty bourgeois reformist movements, I am beginning to feel that the working class cannot emancipate itself thru the conquest of political machinery of Capitalism. For such a conquest would not injure the power of the capitalist class—economically—and their control and credit would still leave them the means to destroy any effort to establish Socialism. And to this end they would use Direct Action (paid mercenaries, etc.), if necessary. So, with other reasons, I have come to the conclusion that only by completely abolishing the power of our capitalist masters FIRST, and setting up our Governmental machinery on ENTIRELY DIFFERENT Lines to govern a working class republic, with collective control and ownership of production, et. al. AFTERWARD, can the workers permanently establish their own regime.

If I am in line with the Communist position I would like to be of service to the movement. P. F. S., N. Y. C.

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