

POLICE CHIEF IS SUED BY WORKER FOR FALSE ARREST

Shows Bias in Favor of Steel Trust Tool

By A. JAKIRA.

PITTSBURGH, Pa., Feb. 8.—“Ham” Brown, chief of Aliquippa police, is sued for ten thousand dollars damages by Pete Muselin, of Woodlawn, Pa. The action against Brown was taken by Muselin after Brown raided a meeting of a picnic committee of the Woodlawn Croatian Benefit Union and placed under arrest several men found in the house. No warrant was produced when the arrests took place, and all were released after being in jail for several hours. The arrests took place on July 7th last year. Muselin with the aid of the International Labor Defense and the American Civil Liberties Union brought suit against the chief of police.

Raise Religious Issue.

The case opened in Beaver County court Friday, Feb. 4th. After the jury was picked the attorneys called upon Pete Muselin, the plaintiff in the case, as the first witness. To the great surprise of all Muselin was not permitted to take the oath until he answered questions as to his religious beliefs.

The objections raised by Muselin's attorneys were overruled by the judge. Muselin was refused the right to take the stand to testify in his own behalf, a procedure never heard of in the courts even of Pennsylvania. The next witness, Mrs. Zima, was also questioned about her religious beliefs. When she answered that she believed in god, she was further asked in what god she believed, and whether she expected a punishment after she died and if yes what punishment she expected.

Judge Yields.

It was only after the court adjournment that the judge had to admit that he made a mistake by permitting such questions and promised to eliminate the questions about religion in the next sessions of the court.

Police Chief Drunk.

Pete Muselin was then permitted to take the witness stand on Saturday morning and was subjected to a three hour direct and cross examination. He testified that “Ham” Brown raided the meeting while he was intoxicated and used a language which could not be repeated in court, that four men were handcuffed and that Brown said that he needed no warrant.

Senator Craig, the attorney for Brown, proceeded to prove that Muselin was a “Bolshevik” and submitted as evidence some Communist books seized in the raids on Armistice day. A bust of Lenin was also introduced as evidence. Mr. Wilson, the attorney for Muselin, objected vigorously against using as evidence in this civil case literature which was not found during the illegal raid on July 7th, but the judge overruled the objection. Muselin was then subjected to a grilling in regards to his personal beliefs about the overthrow of the American government and the establishment of a Soviet government in the United States. The objections against these questions were overruled by the judge.

Served U. S. Army.

Considerable excitement was caused in court when Muselin under cross examination stated that he had served in the U. S. army during the war and that he became a Communist after he returned from France and after he saw that the war was carried on in the interests of the big business and not for democracy.

An attempt to introduce as evidence the official tabulation of the votes cast in the elections last November 2nd showing that the Workers Party was on the ballot in this state was overruled by the judge, who continually took the side of Hamilton Brown.

Trial Adjourned.

The court adjourned at 12 noon on Saturday and will continue the case next week. A large number of witnesses are expected to be called in by both sides. This is the first case of its kind in Pennsylvania, attempting to stop the iron rule of the steel and coal trust in this state. Two other suits for damages are pending in court against the same “Ham” Brown as the result of the false arrest on July seventh.