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THE CRUSADER

Iola, Kansas.

Government by Gunmen

By John Kenneth Turner

SHALL HE FORFEIT HIS LIFE? Many thoughtful champions of labor pay the Galloos for his Part in the Fight? What is Your Answer?

One of the most vivid pictures remaining from my 15,000-mile journey undertaken in the investigation of government by gunmen is that of a fat-headed, blue-eyed youth, slight of frame, who peered at me from behind the steel bars of a prison. Back hand gripped a vertical rod, the smooth, pale face looking out between. The prison cell was six feet square. Some pitiful touches had been made in the hope of warning it and partially concealing the fact that it was a dungeon. Two paste-board notices dangled by strings: "Hitch your wagon to a star" and "If you can't smile at the worst, you're a failure." Another cartoon had a portion of one old wall in it; two live mice in a cage of blue-eyed youth. There were a few books: "Workers of America! Organize!" and "World's Great Events." Crowding the narrow cot was a typewriter.

"Hitch all a part of the fight," remarked the young man on the other side of the bars, with a quiet smile, "—all a part of the fight."

Yes, it was all a part of the fight—the fight of the workers for bread. The prisoner was a victim—a sufferer because of his own devotion and courage in the struggle to feed and clothe his brothers.

The fight for bread. "All a part of the fight," he said. It was a part of the fight of the workers for bread. And if those who wish to steal the bread of the workers, as to the fight for another world, it was a part of the fight. He said that the slender, patient prisoner will change his name to a name of resistance. He will pay on the galloos for his part in the fight.

The name of the prisoner was John. He was a white man, 24 years old, a machinist and former employee of the Illinois Central railroad. He is held without bail and is to be tried for murder in a city and county where justice has been driven from her temple; where a masked, machine-gunned, operated by springs in the hands of those who are in the business of stealing the bread of the workers, rule in the place of justice; where jury trials are a pretense; where the "law" is but a weapon for beating down the man who is especially the man who sells and fights.

ordinary citizen—a business man—may not even have been arrested. But the Illinois Central had marked Carl Person for a job after another since the death of Clinton, and the county government, are but branches of the legal department of the Illinois Central railroad.

As Carl Person is the victim of a deliberate frame-up of a great corporation, in which a private gunman took a necessary and criminal part, his story properly belongs in this series on government by gunmen.

Railroads Keystone of Industry. The future of the working class movement depends more on the men who operate the railroads than it does upon the workers in any other single industry. The terrible beatings that the railroad organizations received in the '70s, the destruction of the A. R. U. in 1894, and the letter was that the great transportation companies have always waged against the unions of their employees, have forced the railroads to lay their present organization on most conservative lines.

The result has been success. While several of the railroad crafts are still very poorly organized, the brotherhoods, as a whole, are more powerful than the labor organizations in any other trusted industry in the country.

The movement toward the federation of the dozen or so railroad brotherhoods has only recently begun. Realizing that federation will multiply the power of the organizations many fold and render them relatively impregnable, the railroads are fighting the movement lightly. A number of skirmishes over this point have occurred. Last year, for example, just past, and as this is written, I am informed by a high official of one of the railroad brotherhoods that the greatest railroad strike in the history of America is possible before the end of 1914.

Person's editorial breathed the spirit of idealism. His editorial was masterpiece of the literature of revolt. The Strike Bulletin was an inspiration to the union shop men to attempt their back-bone; it held them in line. Wherefore, the Illinois Central plotted to "get" the Strike Bulletin—and Carl Person.

The "legal department" of every railroad is political first and legal second. It is in politics for the purpose of dealing with such emergencies as the Illinois Central faced at Clinton. They send their own lawyers to the bench and the governor's chair, their own superintendents, doctors officials—or the relative thereof—into the public office.

From which it will be seen that the Illinois Central was out to get the Illinois Central. The daily newspapers of the town point in the news to the Illinois Central.

The first step was to try to drive the young attorney down from Clinton by threats. The second was to beat him up. In April, 1913, Person was jumped upon, knocked down and beaten by a team of men on the street of Clinton, a neighboring town. The thugs were headed by one Bill Leighton, an Illinois Central strikebreaker.

Person was taken to the Illinois Central hospital to be treated for his wounds. The Illinois Central's responsible headmen in Clinton charged Person with the crime of "murder" of Carl Person for the "murder" of "our fellow citizen," Thus Person. Some incidents were charged against Person.

On being locked up, Person denied the sheriff to permit his friends to send a photographer, in order that his brutal and battered condition might be preserved as evidence for the trial. The sheriff, obviously for the purpose of defeating justice, refused the request.

One of the daily papers came out denouncing Person as a "foreigner and Socialist," pronounced him a murderer at once and for his blood. There were a number of witnesses to the killing, who stood ready to testify that the shots were fired in self-defense.

Person was hired by Railroad. Person had referred to Mueser's past in the strike bulletin, and the railroad had been told that Mueser was a "good fellow." There was a little doubt that he was encouraged by his superior to attack the editor—most likely hired by the railroad.

The tragedy occurred December 30, 1913. I went over the ground carefully myself, and from all accounts it is the strongest case of self-defense.

On the night of December 30, 1913, Mueser hung about the streets of Clinton, accompanied by a man who agreed to point out Person, but the latter did not appear. The next morning Mueser wrote to me: "I'm going up to beat."

Because of the previous assault and the constant threat of Mueser being placed against him, Person had purchased a Savage automatic pistol, which he carried about with him. Early in the afternoon of December 30, Mueser was escorted from his "work" at the railroad shops and went upstairs with a shotgun. Later, Mueser was shot in the back by the office and attack him.

Person, in a state of collapse, something with pain and exhaustion, sought the shelter of the Illinois Central. He was taken to the Illinois Central hospital to be treated for his wounds. The Illinois Central's responsible headmen in Clinton charged Person with the crime of "murder" of Carl Person for the "murder" of "our fellow citizen," Thus Person. Some incidents were charged against Person.

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