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THE VOICE OF JULES LAVENNE ECHOES FROM WITHIN THE PRISON WALLS OF HALIFAX

JULES JAILED

Halifax Jail,
July 17th, 1910

Dear Comrades:

They have me behind the bars at last. You can tell the boys that I am not discouraged at all.

Saturday, July 16th. Detective Power came up to my home, accompanied by Mr. Umlah, County and Provincial Constable, with a warrant to arrest me. Power said, "Mr. Lavenne, I come here as a peacemaker. This gentleman," pointing to the other fellow, "and I want you to come to the Town Hall, where you can make some arrangements. Then this man will take you to Halifax. So get ready quick."

I got ready and a team with two horses was waiting outside. I told Power that I would sooner walk than ride in a scab team. But Power wanted me to get in. So we started away after I had kissed my wife and five little ones good bye.

On the way to the town Mr. Power said to me, "Jules: I am sorry to see you in this position." I think I told you this should be on our side. "Never, sir," was my answer, "I would rather die in the gutter than be a traitor to my class."

When we reached the town hall they put me in a cell. The news was soon spread around and while in the Springhill cell I was visited by a great number of friends and comrades. Miss Sophie Mushkat came and gave me words of comfort, and said she was proud to belong to a party in which there was a man made of the fight stuff like I was. I was also visited by Mr. Irwin, Dan McDougall, C. A. Bonnyman, representatives of the U. M. W., and Calvin Ward, Dan Matheson, George Marion, J. Elderman, and several others. The heart of every workingman of Springhill was with me. Even the small boys came to the window and said, "Goodbye, Jules. Cheer up, we're with you."

At five o'clock I was taken to the train for Halifax. A number of friends came to the station to see me away. I shook hands with them, and as we moved away I told the boys to keep up the fight and keep the Red Flag flying.

At Springhill Junction Comrade Miss Mushkat and I sang the Red Flag and the International. She presented me with a piece of red ribbon, and I entered the jail with it pinned on my coat beside my own. The jailer asked me what that represented. I said, "This is the color of the workingman's flag. The flag of Liberty carried by the Socialists all over the world."

I think I will be bailed out tomorrow. Will write soon.
No truce nor rest.

JULES LAVENNE.

ANARCHISTIC CAPITALISM

Halifax, Jail,
July 17, 1910.

Dear Comrade:—I am writing these few words from behind the bars. I am well and full of revolutionary spirit. I have been arrested on a trumped up charge of perjury; but this is only to keep me out of the town of Springhill. However, this sort of capitalist work will make the Socialist movement stronger than ever. The capitalists have shown once more that they are persistently lawless and therefore the worst kind of anarchists.

In Nova Scotia, as everywhere else, the capitalists have corrupted the Legislature. They have bribed government officials to let fraudulent contracts. They influence judges to send troops to Springhill. They have issued warrants to arrest and railroad poor ignorant workingmen away from their homes. They have hired thugs to stir up riots during strikes. They have committed perjury to escape taxes. They murder hundreds of people every year, in the factories, mills and mines of Canada by lack of safeguards and overwork of employees. They murder hundreds of people with adulterated food. They corrupt legislatures, judges, preachers and all institutions pertaining to society, with a few minor exceptions. They violate the child labor laws.

Capitalism drives men to political anarchy. It is the fruitful mother of exploitation, military oppression, infamations, lockouts, poverty, child labor, starvation, prostitution, graft. Socialism will abolish this rotten,

anarchistic capitalist system through the public ownership and democratic management of the means of production and distribution which are now used to exploit the mass of the people out of the bulk of the produce of their honest toil.

The capitalist has no more right to property which he did not earn than a burglar has. The capitalists did not make the natural resources. They did not create property or wealth. Therefore these things ought to be restored to their rightful owners, the whole people.

The capitalist system is upside down. Socialism will turn it right side up.

Yours without truce nor rest,

JULES LAVENNE.

FORWARD COMRADES!

Halifax Jail,
July 17th, 1910

Dear Comrades:

I am perfectly well and full of revolutionary spirit. My old but always young motto, "No truce nor rest," will defy the oppression of the capitalists. It will stand firm and true until the victory is ours.

Be of good cheer, comrade-soldiers in the vanguard of liberty, fellow-workers in the field of humanity. True, there is still much to be overcome. But still much has been won. It has been won by the devotion and heroism of the Revolvers who have gone before us, won by their toil; their blood and their agony. They rest in their honored graves. They have done their work and the trumpet-call of their memory summons us to do ours. They have gone, Ferrer, Dejuisseaux, Marx and others. But the mantle of their inspiration has descended upon us, and we will lift the banner that has fallen from their hands. We will raise the Red Flag that, under the bullets and in the dungeon, fell across, their dying forms. We will raise aloft the old standard, reddened with blood and blackened with flame, dimmed with the dust of toil and marked with the stains of suffering, but unsullied by even the faintest touch of dishonor.

We will raise that glorious symbol of heroism and endurance they have bequeathed us. We will rush to the front to strike a blow for the human race. Now is the time for toil. No truce nor rest. There will be rest in the grave. Onward, Comrades. The day is dawning though the clouds obscure it.

The front of the enemy is not as strong as it was. Their battlements are dismantled at Glace Bay. Their redoubt is stormed at Springhill. The fires of martyrdom and quenched. The light of day has flashed through the roof of the dungeon. The gibbet is all but overthrown. The torture engine is broken. Their only weapon is starvation and this they will use as long as they remain in possession of the means of production and distribution.

Comrades in Liberty's Army, shoulder to shoulder, let us march on, undaunted. Our power is the splendid heroism of our fathers. Let us hand it down to our children with its glory—undimmed, so that a not remote future may shout for joy over the capture by the workers of the means of production and distribution and the establishment of collective ownership. Then the long war will be over. The victory will be won, and the world will be free.

Yours for the revolution without truce nor rest,

JULES LAVENNE.

Spain seems to be the next country which will cast off the restraint of feudalism and emerge into the full capitalist era. Canelajas, the Premier, backed by Alphonse the King, is limiting the power and prerogatives of the Catholic church and the monastic orders. But this capitalist reform has come late and the social revolution is dawning. Weyer, the butcher of Cuba, is in charge of the military forces. The ruling class has seen the coming spectre of the working class revolt. Barcelona is in upheaval again. Bilbao, where exists the great mines of Spain, is experiencing a strike; and from many other quarters comes news of the unrest of the workers. Spain has been long dormant. Yet the revolutionary forces have been at work. The economic modes of production have been changing. Therefore the awakening may be sudden.

**WE will Raise Aloft the Old Standard,
Reddened with Blood and Black-
ened with Flame, dimmed with the
dust of Toil and marked With the
stains of Suffering, but unsullied by even
the Faintest Touch of Dishonor.**

PRELIMINARY HEARING

Letter No. 4.
PRELIMINARY HEARING.
Halifax Jail,
July 18th, 1910

Dear Comrades,

At two o'clock I was called before Stipendiary Magistrate Dougall, for preliminary investigation. Mr. W. R. Tobin appeared on my behalf and Mr. M. H. Mellish represented the Company. The judge proceeded to read the charge against me. Two witnesses were questioned regarding the dismissal of the committal case over the injunction. Before the court adjourned Mr. W. R. Tobin made an application for bail and gave several reasons for it. Mr. Mellish objected to BAIL BEING GIVEN IN THE PERJURY CASE AS I WAS AN ACTIVE STRIKER. This is what Mellish said, "Lavenne is an active striker. I don't think that you should let him out on bail as he speaks six different languages and goes about speaking to OUR workmen and thereby interfering with our employees."

Now the charge laid against me is corrupt perjury and Mr. Mellish wanted to keep me in jail and away from Springhill because I speak seven languages and go about talking to their workmen. See the point? I suppose if I would go on their side as Mr. Power said, they would let me free. But I am made of revolutionary stuff and will die that way.

JULES LAVENNE.

Out On Bail

The following telegram was received last Thursday.

Cotton's Weekly, Cowansville,
Out on bail. Committed for trial before Grand Jury, October.

JULES LAVENNE.

Socialism does not stand for public ownership of what should be private property. Hats and coats will not be publicly used but will be the private possession of the wearers. But even now we have public ownership of many things which are privately used. The uniforms of the soldiers belong to the government. The blankets they sleep in are public property. The garbs of the prisoners belong to all the people. Although publicly owned, nevertheless these things are privately used. On the street railway systems the companies provide uniforms for the men. These belong to the company. But they are privately used. Even under capitalism there is much public ownership of private property and more private ownership of public property. Coal is a necessity for our cities. Yet the coal which the public need is privately owned. The railroads which the public use are private property. Socialism will make public what should be public and will leave in private ownership what should be private.

A mosquito works hard to land on your ear and suck your blood. A capitalist works hard to land on the workers and suck their labor power. Were a mosquito to be gifted with the power of speech and declare that once on the ear it should be allowed to draw blood, you would not listen, but would swat it just the same. But when a capitalist tells you how hard a job he had climbing on to the backs of the workers, you pity him and say he should be allowed to draw his revenues from your labor.

Socialism is growing fast these days. Formerly Socialism was not discussed. Now it is to the front. The capitalist apologists are busy endeavoring to explain away Socialist victories. It is constantly asserted that this Socialist or that Socialist is a reformer in disguise. And, even as the explanations are being made, new victories for revolutionary Socialism are being won.

A strike is a battle in the class struggle.

THE CLASS STRUGGLE

As long as capitalism controls there will be the class struggle. This is the struggle between the owning class and the working class. Some times this struggle is not so apparent as at other times. At times it blazes forth into a universal strike, rioting and rebellion.

As long as one class owns the machinery of production and distribution and takes toll of another class, the working class, before the working class will be allowed to use the machinery, just so long will there be a struggle between the two classes for their respective shares. The owning class will want big profits. The workers will want big wages. This is the basis of all strikes, lockouts, labor disputes.

Sometimes this struggle takes the form of a struggle for control. The strike is not for wages but for the recognition of the union, the right of a walking delegate to visit the shops. This struggle is often the most bitter because the class that controls the machines and conditions of work holds the whip hand. The owning class wants to control and will frequently grant a raise in wages while they will fight bitterly against recognizing the union.

This struggle can only end by the final triumph of one class or the other. Either the owning class must be ousted and the workers get all the product, or the working class must be ousted and the owning class get all the product. But if the working class is ousted, then there will be no workers to do the work and the masters will find the ownership of the means of production useless for profits. The struggle can only end in the triumph of the workers and the final ousting of the capitalists from the ownership of the machines which the toilers use.

A POOR EXCUSE

Charlie Hays may be a good railway president though I doubt it. One thing is sure. He has mighty poor reasoning powers. He talks like a tottering infant beginning arithmetic.

Charlie Hays says he cannot give the trainmen more pay. His road has not had all the things given to it that the C. P. R. has had. Therefore he cannot pay as much. The C. P. R. is pictured as rolling in wealth and the Grand Trunk is pictured as enduring great poverty.

The C. P. R. operated in 1909 9,640 miles of line. The Grand Trunk operated 3,122 in Canada. The C. P. R. had a gross income of \$70,438,000 and a net income of \$21,173,000. The Grand Trunk had a total income of \$28,000,000 and a net income of \$8,623,000. In proportion to business done the profits of the G. T. were greater than the profits of the C. P.

The Canadian Pacific for the year ending June 30th, 1909 paid its road trainmen \$3,209,990. The Grand Trunk paid its road trainmen \$1,091,790, or just about one third what the C. P. paid.

The C. P. R. stretches across a continent and is capitalized at \$372,000,000. The G. T. curves round the east and is capitalized at \$356,000,000. This is only the capitalization of the G. T. lines in Canada. The difference is that the C. P. bears a load of thirty-eight thousand dollars a mile and the G. T. bears a load of a hundred and twenty-one thousand dollars a mile.

So Hays has to wriggle and squirm and beat down his men to pay dividends. The interest and profit that Hays has to sweat from his workers is greater than what the C. P. has to sweat.

Charlie Hays has a mighty poor excuse to make why he should not pay standard wages.

The revolutionary worker is not contented with being robbed and then getting part of what has been stolen from him back in dols. He wants the full product of his labor power.

GRAND TRUNK STRIKE

On Monday, July 18th, at 9.30 p. m., the conductors and trainmen of the Grand Trunk went on strike. Three thousand five hundred men on the Grand Trunk and three hundred and fifty on the Central Vermont walked out. The Grand Trunk officials thereupon closed down the shops locking out five thousand men. About nine thousand men are directly affected. The number of men indirectly affected by the stopping of industrial establishments owing to lack of transportation facilities is at present undetermined.

The men are striking for standardization of pay and working rules. The Grand Trunk has been an old fossil. It has been run from London and been mismanaged. Its lines are waterlogged with stock certificates piled on stock certificates. Its capitalization is enormous. Its capitalization is a hundred and twenty-one thousand dollars a mile. The capitalization of the Canadian Pacific is thirty-eight thousand a mile. The C. P. R. stock is also waterlogged. Down in Texas there is a state law which requires the railroads to give a physical valuation to their lines for purposes of taxation. There the railways value their properties at about sixteen thousand dollars a mile.

Sixteen thousand dollars a mile in Texas, thirty-eight thousand dollars a mile for the C. P. R. You can see how the C. P. R. is loaded down with watered stock. Then the Grand Trunk Railway Company is capitalized at a hundred and twenty-one thousand dollars a mile. Think of it! Almost eight times the amount at which the Texas railways value themselves at, and three times the capitalization of the C. P. R.

The Grand Trunk men want to have their wages standardized. They want to be put on the same basis as the other railway men of Canada. But Charlie Hays, General Manager of the Grand Trunk says no. The Grand Trunk cannot afford to pay the trainmen what other trainmen are getting. The men must wait until the owners of the certificates piled up against the railway get their dividends on their watered stock. Charlie trots out that old argument that the investors must get their profits before the workers get their pay.

Did you ever hear of such nonsense? The old waterlogged Grand Trunk must pay the money the people of Canada earn and contribute over to the London owners of the paper certificates and good Canadian workers must take what is left.

But Charlie is magnanimous. The people of Canada, through their spendthrift politicians, Laurier, Fielding et al are giving big bonuses to the Grand Trunk Pacific. The politicians are pouring the people's money into the paws of the same crew that is sucking the Grand Trunk. Charlie says that if the men will but wait until the capitalists who control his road get their paws on the people's money through the new western system the men will get their pay raised.

Is it any wonder that the men struck? They do not like the kind of hot air and poor pay that Charlie hands out to them.

Charlie Hays says he cannot afford to pay the men better wages. Then Charlie Hays should be gently but firmly separated from his job. Charlie Hays says that his London masters insist upon getting their unearned revenues upon waterlogged stock. If these London financiers are going to be greedy like this then they show they are not worthy of being allowed to hold property in Canada. Let the Canadian people gently but firmly separate them from their railroad. LET THE PEOPLE OF CANADA EXPROPRIATE THE GRAND TRUNK AND THE GRAND TRUNK PACIFIC.

Let the people confiscate the railroads. Then the workers would not need to strike as the traffic returns would be sufficient to pay big wages. But, better still, let there be public ownership and democratic management, not only of the railroads, but also all other means of production and distribution.

The trainmen on the Grand Trunk have struck. The engineers keep on working. Thus the workers divided against themselves have a harder fight to fight.

SOLIDARITY

Last year there were about a hundred and twenty-four thousand railway employees on the railroads of Canada. There are as many, if not more, employed this year. In the present strike there are about nine thousand on strike for better conditions. The other hundred and fifteen thousand keep right on working.

The trainmen go out on strike. Conductors, brakemen, baggagemen, yardmen cease to work because of poor pay. It is the Brotherhood of Trainmen that is affected. The trains become scab and scabs take the place of the striking trainmen. Nevertheless the engineers still continue to pull the scab trains and the firemen still continue shovelling coal to give the power to pull the scab trains.

The shops are closed down by the railway officials in consequence of the strike. Five thousand men are locked out. The trackhands still continue the work of keeping the tracks in repair and the telegraphers still keep the keys clicking to guide the scab trains to their destination.

Unionism is good. Therefore let there be more of it. The workers must unite if they want to achieve their own emancipation. On the C. P. R. the shop men struck last year. And their fellow workers in other branches kept on working.

The craft union is better than no union at all. Craft unions have been growing in power. They are developing larger activities. Greater numbers of workers are uniting under one head.

But it will be a glorious day for the transportation workers of Canada when they realize that the interest of one group is the interest of all the various workers. When a strike of trainmen will mean the strike of engineers, conductors, telegraphers, shopmen and all the workers of the various branches.

But the transportation workers are but one branch of the workers of Canada. There are the coal miners who mine the coal for the railways. There are the steel workers who make the steel for the rails. There are the hosts of workers who produce other things on wage labor.

All these classes at times have to fight for better working conditions. They are all working at machinery owned by others and must fight those others for a better living wage.

When the workers of Canada realize that they are all one in interest against those who own the machinery then we may see a powerful organization rise that will protect the workers against exploitation. Such an organization will be able to control industry and eliminate those who live off what the workers are now forced to part with because of the divisions among themselves.

POLITICAL ACTION

Industrial action is good, but political action is better.

Here is a group of four thousand men who want an increase of wages. They strike for it. They endure suffering and hardship. They pile up debts for themselves which they have to pay off when the strike is finished.

Every little while some group of workers consider that they are having too much taken out of their pay envelopes by their bosses. They go on strike. Now it is the C. N. R. shopmen at Winnipeg, the Montreal bricklayers and masons, the mill hands at Megantic, P. Q., the G. T. R. conductors and trainmen, the Springhill miners and many others.

While these workers are on strike their fellow workers in other lines of work keep on at their tasks. Later on these other workers walk out and the former strikers keep on working.

Thus goes on the seesaw of strike and work, work and strike on the industrial field. While the political field is overlooked by many.

There would be no necessity of strikes were the workers united on the political field for the abolition of the master class.

The Phoenix Bridge Company was paid \$3,600,000 for the work done on the Quebec bridge which fell into the river resulting in a death list of eighty workers. It now seems that the same company which failed the first time will be given a new contract to build the bridge over again. Capitalism works the same in Canada as it does in other countries.