
Cleveland Socialists Go to Jail for Cause

[Statement by C.E. Ruthenberg]

Unsigned report in *The Evening Call* [New York], v. 11, no. 14 (Jan. 17, 1918), pp. 1, 3.

(Special to *The Call*.)

CLEVELAND, Jan. 17 [1918].— Upon being informed of the decision of the United States Supreme Court, affirming the sentences of one year's imprisonment by the federal court of Ohio on himself, Charles Baker, and Alfred Wagenknecht, Charles E. Ruthenberg, Secretary of Local Cleveland, Socialist Party, and prominent Socialist speaker and lecturer said that: "We go to jail smilingly, and at the end of our year will return to work for the cause we believe in; the cause we fought for and will again fight for."

These 3 Socialists are the most prominent in Ohio. Wagenknecht is at present State Secretary of the Socialist Party of Ohio and Baker is the state organizer of the Socialist Party. Ruthenberg is also a member of the National Committee of the Socialist Party. At the last election he was the party candidate for Mayor of Cleveland, and at the last gubernatorial election was the party's candidate for Governor of the state.

The statement by Ruthenberg, speaking for Baker and Wagenknecht, follows:

The Supreme Court has decided we must spend a year in jail.

The crime for which we are convicted is truth telling. We believe in certain principles; we fought for those principles, and we go to jail ostensibly for inducing a certain Alphonse Schue not to register.

The charge is merely an excuse. Neither of us knew Schue; neither of us heard of him until his name appeared in the indictment against us.

The ruling class is always able to find a Judas. Schue was induced to say he heard our speeches, and had been influenced thereby not to register by the promise of his freedom.

It is not the Judas that is important. The important fact is that the ruling class feared our message to the workers and tried to silence that message. That fact should make a hundred willing workers take up the work we lay down.

Confident that that will be the result of our conviction — we go to jail smilingly, and at the end our year will return to work for the cause we believe in; the cause we fought for and will fight for again.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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