
Letter to the Editor of the *New York Call Magazine,* from Jack Carney [Oct. 21, 1917]

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Editor, The Forum:

In your issue of the 2nd inst. [Oct. 2, 1917] a "Rochester Socialist" writes gloomily of the Russian revolution in that cold, feelingless strain that is generally found with the scientific Socialist. Some of our comrades think that the Socialist philosophy carries with it a yardstick, and unless certain events can be measured by it, then good-night.

No one suggests for one moment that the Russian comrades have lost anything; surely, it must be clearly conceded that Russia without tsarism is better than Russia with it. I do not believe that the capitalist class is telling everything about Russia and, furthermore, I believe that [Alexander] Kerensky does not possess the power that is attributed to him. Let us not lose faith in the Russian comrades. How many of us would like to see the same amount of freedom that the Russians enjoy existing in America?

As regards Tom Mann, that part of the letter was taken from the *Western Clarion*,¹ and it was written by people who did not understand the situation then prevailing in South Africa. As one of those who assisted in sending Tom Mann, I want to say that it was absolutely necessary to keep the men together. It would have been quite easy to stampede the miners of the Transvaal, so with the sending of Tom Mann all that was avoided. In conversation with Mary Fitzgerald on her arrival in Ireland she admitted, in an interview, that it was the best thing that we could have done. I went out of my way and

¹ Weekly newspaper of the impossibilist Socialist Party of Canada.

questioned the leaders of the strike when they were deported to England, and they were mighty glad that Tom Mann went there.

Let us not bury our heads too deeply in philosophy. We may miss sight of the things that are going around us today. However much our Rochester comrade may deny industrial action, what a fine thing it would be today if Eugene V. Debs was in Samuel Gompers' place. The men of the federation today require a lead, and Gompers has given them the wrong lead. Debs would do as much for the labor movement if he had Gompers' job as Tom Mann did for the African movement. Let us put forth all our energy, and when we have achieved as much as our Russian comrades, then we will be better able to exercise them.

It seems the way that poor old warhorse, [Joshua] Wanhope,² is being attacked we are getting too darned serious about little things, and failing to notice the lessons of the big things.

Yours,

Jack Carney.

Edited with footnotes by Tim Davenport

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² Chief editorialist for the *New York Call's* Sunday magazine.