
Legion Mob Kidnaps Kate O'Hare in Idaho:

**Driven for Hours Through Desert by
Band of 20, Socialist Lecturer is Released,
Penniless, in Nevada:**

*Marshal of Montello Arrests Ten Members
of Abducting Party — State Appealed to:*

**Mrs. O'Hare Wires Idaho Governor
Demanding Assurances of Safety
to Return and Make Charges.**

Published in the *New York Call*, v. 14, no. 184 (July 3, 1921), pp. 1-2.

MONTELLO, Nevada, July 2 [1921].— I was kidnapped from my room in Twin Falls, Idaho, by a mob claiming to be members of the American Legion, thrown into an auto, and driven for hours through the desert. I was forced to leave Kathleen and all my money and tickets. At the edge of this city I was released without money or means of reaching Kathleen or the railroad.

Ten members of the mob have been arrested by the Marshal of Montello.

I have appealed to the Governor of Idaho to insure my safety in order to return and prefer charges.

(The above dispatch from Kate Richards O'Hare was received by The Call early yesterday morning.)

• • • • •

(Special to *The Call*.)

TWIN FALLS, Idaho, July 2 [1921].— Kate Richards O'Hare, well-known Socialist lecturer and writer and editor of *The National Ripsaw*, was taken from the home of H.H. Freidheim, a friend, last night by a party of 20 men, who said they were members of the American Legion.

Mrs. O'Hare's daughter, Kathleen, and Freidheim were away from home at the time of the kidnapping. Mrs. Freidheim and her son, Jensenius, identified two of the leaders as Frederick Snook and Carl Delong, members of the American Legion. Mrs. Freidheim declared that the men expressed themselves as determined to send Mrs. O'Hare from the state. It was assumed that they intended to put Mrs. O'Hare on an eastbound train from some station in a nearby state.

The sheriff and other officials at Twin Falls promised Miss O'Hare and Freidheim to do something about it. Officials in nearby towns were notified to be on the lookout for Mrs. O'Hare. Two automobiles, with Mrs. O'Hare in one, were reported from Hollister, 20 miles south of here.

Stands on Legal Rights.

Mrs. O'Hare reached this place with her daughter yesterday at noon, in the course of a tour of the West in the interests of her magazine, *The National Ripsaw*. She lectured on Thursday at Vale, Oregon. She had received a telegram at Vale from Freidheim warning her that coming here might result in dangerous consequences. The American Legion had been stirring up feeling against her ever since her lecture here was announced.

In reply to Freidheim's telegram, Mrs. O'Hare wired back that she would stand upon her constitutional rights and fill her lecture engagement in Twin Falls.

Mrs. O'Hare had spoken here on two previous occasions. Several patriotic organizations had registered their disapproval of her lecture scheduled for last night.

There was no counter-demonstration on the part of local citizens and visitors from out-of-town who were planning to attend Mrs.

O'Hare's lecture. When she failed to appear on the lecture platform, the audience quietly dispersed and went to their homes.

• • • • •

(Special to *The Call*.)

GIRARD, Kan., July 2 [1921]. — Interruption of the lecture tour of Kate Richards O'Hare, well-known Socialist lecturer, writer, and editor, on behalf of her magazine, *The National Ripsaw*, by a band of kidnapers at Twin Falls, Idaho, caused widespread consternation among the citizens of this city, who had known Mrs. O'Hare for her lovable personality.

Tools of Business Men.

Her husband, Frank P. O'Hare, has received word that she is safe in Montello, Nev., and that 10 of her abductors are under arrest.

Mr. O'Hare is of the opinion that the kidnapers were not Twin Falls men, but were American Legion members acting as the tools of the Chamber of Commerce in a leading city of Minnesota. This organization, O'Hare declared, has been obstructing Mrs. O'Hare's lectures in various Western towns and cities for several years. He said that abductions had been attempted by agents of this organization before, and the one at Twin Falls "just happened to be a success."

Yesterday O'Hare received the following telegram from his daughter Kathleen at Twin Falls:

Mama was forcibly kidnapped from Freidheim's residence by 20 men directed by Carl Delong and Frederick Snook, members of the American Legion, while I was away with Freidheim. This happened in the presence of Mrs. Freidheim and Jensenius. They declared she would be deported from the state. The sheriff promised to do something. Will keep you posted. I am all right.

A later telegram from Kathleen O'Hare reads:

Everything all right. Destination of kidnapers learned. More details later.

Wires She's "All Right."

The following telegram was received from Mrs. O'Hare at Montello, Nevada:

Don't be alarmed. Whatever you read in the papers, I am all right.

Until this word was received from Mrs. O'Hare herself, all friends here were uneasy. They remembered that it has been little more than a year since she was released from the Federal prison at Jefferson City, Mo., by order of President Wilson, after she had served 13 months of a 5-year term following conviction on a charge of violating the Espionage Act.

News that Mrs. O'Hare was safe caused a duplication of the rejoicing after here released on May 29, 1920, from the Jefferson City prison.

The incident at Twin Falls, Idaho, has served to recall among Mrs. O'Hare's friends here the trying days of war hysteria and her arrest in North Dakota following her lecture on July 17, 1917, at Bowen, ND. The same lecture on "Socialism and the World War" had previously been delivered by Mrs. O'Hare no less than 140 times, many of the lectures following the entry of the United States into the war.

Mrs. O'Hare was tried in December 1917, and sentenced by Federal Judge Martin J. Wade, of Des Moines, to 5 years in the Federal Prison for Women at Jefferson City. The trial took place in Bismarck, ND, and only 5 witnesses, out of several hundred auditors, were allowed to give their account of her lecture at Bowen, ND.

Appeal Was Denied.

Mrs. O'Hare took an appeal to the highest court, but the conviction, as in the case of Eugene V. Debs and other political prisoners, was confirmed. ON April 12, 1919, the day before Debs entered the prison at Moundsville, W.Va., Mrs. O'Hare began serving her sentence at Jefferson City. A wave of protest swept the country. Socialists, radicals, and liberals were outspoken in their demand for an investigation of the prosecution of Mrs. O'Hare in North Dakota. Congress

proved apathetic. President Wilson was occupied with the League of Nations, which was to bring in the era of good will, of a world "safe for democracy." It remained for persons without official authority, and more, without government funds to back them, to undertake the investigation, which proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that Mrs. O'Hare was the victim of a frame-up.

Still the government remained silent. It was only when Mrs. O'Hare showed an uncomfortable tendency to give intelligent study to the conditions at Jefferson City prison; when the women of the nation demanded that this American mother be restored to her home, her husband, and her 4 children; when labor organizations, Socialists, liberals, and Americans calling themselves by no name sent protest after protest to Washington, that President Wilson was aroused from his lethargy sufficiently to sign the order releasing Kate Richards O'Hare.

On her release her friends and followers deluged her with telegrams. Many tributes were paid to her in the columns of *The Call*, on the lecture platforms, around the hearth-fires, and in a multitude of hearts. More than ever before Kate O'Hare's place in the affections of her fellow-beings was brought home.

Few gave voice to this feeling with more simplicity, more directness, and more power than did Irwin St. John Tucker, himself a victim of the government's war hysteria. Out of his prison experience Tucker said of Mrs. O'Hare:

"Kate O'Hare's body is released. Her soul never was in prison. Out of the horror and agony of her prison cell she has sent inspiration.

Has Always Been a Power.

"As soon as she went into the prison at Jefferson City, the hard and dreary lot of the inmates there began to be enlightened. She secured ventilation for the suffocating work room. She secured decent and palatable food. She secured a measure of decent service and humane treatment. Her coming made all the difference.

“Frank P. O’Hare must share every word of praise that is given to Kate. The two of them together form one great soul, a power and a glory which is given to few generations to witness.

“Kate has always been a power. But now she comes out of Gethsemane with a soul deepened by drinking of the cup of agony, which the world’s despairing ones must drain. The sins of many were laid upon her innocent soul, and by her stripes shall the souls of many be healed.”

The facts underlying Mrs. O’Hare’s arrest and subsequent conviction for an alleged violation of the Espionage Act were investigated by Socialist National Committeeman [George] Roewer. Affidavits secured by Roewer showed that the town of Bowen was divided between the Non-Partisan League and the reactionaries, and further divided between the factions supporting two families, the Tottens and the Phelans. Mrs. O’Hare, besides having the support of the Non-Partisan League, stayed with a Totten in Bowen.

One of the 5 witnesses against Mrs. O’Hare was J.E. James, a businessman of Bowen. James testified to hearing the two alleged remarks singled out as the basis for the prosecution. These alleged remarks were to the effect that “our boys are going to France to be used as fertilizer,” and that “mothers of soldiers were no better than brood sows.”

Witness Changed His View.

Roewer secured an affidavit from a man who overheard this same James say after the lecture that it has been a fine speech; that he had seen nothing the matter with it; that Mrs. O’Hare had gone a little strong at times with here Socialism, but that the speech as a whole had had sound educational value.

J. Louis Engdahl, one of the 5 Socialists indicted and convicted in Chicago during the war on charges similar to those brought against Mrs. O’Hare, in reporting the unearthing of fresh material regarding the justice of her trial and conviction, declared:

“Kate O’Hare was a former International Secretary of the Socialist Party. When the emergency anti-war convention of the Socialist Party gathered at St. Louis in April 1917, she received the highest vote for

the place of honor on the Committee on War and Militarism. She therefore became the committee's chairman, and her name appeared first on the report that sent the St. Louis Proclamation to the convention for discussion and adoption. All this Kate O'Hare considered as but part of her work in the working class movement.

"After the convention she continued her work as a speaker and writer in the Socialist movement. Her activities would not have aroused the forces of government anywhere except in a nation that has surrendered itself to blind prejudices, a consuming jingoism that paraded its despotism behind a masked hypocrisy consisting of subtle and meaningless phrases.

"Kate O'Hare, like so many others, in time became the victim of the Democratic administration's double-dealing. She could have easily escaped the consequences had she surrendered her integrity. This she refused to do, and she was put to trial in a hostile environment, before a prejudiced judge, under conditions that made conviction sure and severe sentence certain. She was sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment for making a speech that would have passed almost unnoticed in any other civilized land.

Refused to Surrender.

"There was yet a time for surrender. Yet she held true to her cause and its principles in the face of lawyers' advice, in spite of the overwhelming heart tug of her four children, rapidly approaching young womanhood and young manhood. The dark prospect of soon entering a hell could have been completely wiped away by a capitulation to the forces of the dominant social order.

"But there was no capitulation, no surrender, no weakening anywhere. That is why Kate O'Hare suffered the prison martyrdom that comes to those who champion the cause of the oppressed and down-trodden.

"If the broad masses of the workers had remained as true to their spokesmen as spokesmen like Kate O'Hare remained true to them, then we would have no class war prisoners today. But Kate O'Hare and the others have advanced even beyond the vanguard of their own class."

Some of the passages in Mrs. O'Hare's lecture, which resulted in here imprisonment, are:

When the governments of Europe and the clergy of Europe demanded of the women that they give themselves in marriage or out, in order that men might "breed before they die," that was not the crime of maddened passion, it was the cold-blooded crime of brutal selfishness, and by that crime the women of Europe were reduced to the status of breeding animals on a stock farm.

You sneered at us and said that Socialism would people the world with illegitimate children. Socialism never came, but the world war came, and our faces scorch with shame when we think of the illegitimate children of the war zone.

In Europe there are thousands of babies, and thousands more will be. These are illegitimate, ill-begotten children. They are children whose fathers they will never know, whose fathers' language they will never speak. These children are not the fruit of marriage; they are not the flowers of love; they were not begotten in wedlock and decency. These are the children of invasion and rapine and outrage.

They tell you that we are opposing enlistment. This is not true. Please understand me now and do not misquote what I say. If any young man feels that it is his duty to enlist, then, with all my heart, I say, "Go and God bless you. Your blood may enrich the battlefields of France, but that may be for the best."

For these remarks, taken out of a long lecture and twisted to suit the ends of "justice," Kate Richards O'Hare was sentenced to 5 years in prison, and it was only one of the curious flashes of rightmindedness that sometimes went beyond words that induced President Wilson to put a period to that trying experience after 13 months of jail.

Although Kate Richards O'Hare is accepted by her devoted friends and followers as one of the dispensations of Providence, given without any deserving of her, but given without limit, the emergency never fails to show that these same friends and followers are not insensible of her worth and their hearts sprint out to her anew, renewing their loyalty to her and to the cause for which she stands.

Edited by Tim Davenport

1000 Flowers Publishing, Corvallis, OR · February 2014 · Non-commercial reproduction permitted.