
Inside Story of Cincinnati Raid: American Legion Rioters Led by Professional Strikebreakers; Machinists' Desk Rifled.

[event of Nov. 18, 1919]

by Joseph W. Sharts

Unsigned article in the *Miami Valley Socialist* [Dayton, OH],
v. 7, whole no. 405 (Dec. 12, 1919), pg. 1. Attributed to editor Joseph W. Sharts.

The true story of public commotions is always somewhat different from what the general public is told by capitalist news organs. There are hidden strings which are seldom afterwards uncovered.

On the night of November 18 [1919], a mob of about 300 persons, most of them members of Robert E. Bentley Post of the American Legion, marched down Vine Street in Cincinnati, Ohio, about 10:30 pm, having laid their plans and devised their plot at the Brunett House.

They were headed by a "Jack" Manly and an "ex-Sergeant" A.N. Cooper; but most of the leading participants had held military commissions; they came of the class who got commissions and was, in fact — as is usually the case — a mob of young businessmen and young rowdies from the best families.

They halted in front of 1314 Vine Street, the Socialist headquarters, at that time deserted. A few formed a pyramid and Cooper, mounting on their shoulders, gained the second-story window. Others followed; and presently the lower doors were opened from within.

Then began the systematic plunder and pillage of Socialist properties. Bundles of radical literature were brought out and heaped up in the street on the tarwood pavement and set afire by the young gentlemen, who had never read a line

of Socialist literature in their bright young lives.

Policemen were present under the leadership of Lieutenant Messerschmidt; but the eminent respectability of the mob and the "patriotic" nature of the performance, as well as the unpopularity of the party whose property was being burglarized and plundered, caused the police to stand politely aside. They acted as ushers, bowing the mob in and an out of the doors and merely cautioning them not to break the window glass — because windows were insured!

Amid a noisy demonstration of "patriotism" on the street in front, the wicked Socialist literature went up in flames and smoke.

So much the crowd saw. So much the public knows since, from the newspapers, with more or less cock-a-doodle-doo over the brave exploit.

The Inside Story.

Now for the inside story. For this we are indebted to Joseph C. Haering, business agent at 1214 Vine Street of District No. 27 of the International Association of Machinists.

The Machinists' organization was also using the Socialist hall in conjunction with their business offices one block away.

The Machinists had a locked desk at Socialist Hall which contained some important papers

relating to the local class struggle between the organized workers and the National Metal Trades Association — a counter-organization of labor-hating employers.

J.M. Manly is the secretary of the Cincinnati branch of National Metal Trades Association, with offices at 705 Elm Street.

Manly holds the same relation to the Cincinnati labor unions that A.C. Marshall does to those of Dayton.

The “Jack” Manly who headed the patriotic mob is the son of the secretary of the strikebreaking organization.

The A.N. Cooper, the “hero” of the raid, the man who fired the blood of the brainless young fools at the Burnett House with tales of incendiary IWW literature — is a certain Alvie Cooper, a well-known professional strikebreaker.

This Cooper is the man who is reported in the newspapers as having made a careful survey of

the building in the afternoon, beforehand, with a couple of accomplices.

Now there is another interesting incident to the patriotic raid:

The Machinists’ desk was broken open and rifled of its contents, while literature lay piled around it untouched!

It may be that even the most patriotic readers of the Cincinnati exploit may begin to comprehend the truth of the old saying that mobs do not start up from spontaneous combustion. This mob was no exception. It was started by a few interested persons; and it may be possible to surmise who they were.

“Patriotism” has been worked overtime of late by the Employers’ Associations and never more strenuously than in the Cincinnati raid.

The pity of it is, the great mass of Henries will never hear the truth!

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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