

#8 - Weinberger, Ryan, Clayton, Mollie

WEINBERGER: One moment please. If I want you to say something, Miss Steimer, I will ask it. Now, I want to know what you and Jacob and the others had in mind when writing these leaflets. What kind of society did you and Jacob favor?

RYAN: Objection.

CLAYTON: Overruled. I want to hear the lady's point of view on all this.

MOLLIE: We believed in the establishment of a new social order where no group of people would be in power over any other. Private ownership would be abolished, and law replaced by mutual agreement. Instead of struggling simply to survive, every man and woman would strive to develop themselves to their fullest potential. To the fulfillment of this idea I shall devote all my energy, and, if necessary, to render my life for it.

CLAYTON (a broad grin, applauding): Well, now—that was something, wasn't it? More than worthy of your pretty uniform. But just one thing troubles me about all this, young lady. Is there any such place as you described?

MOLLIE: I said I shall work for it.

CLAYTON: But is there any such country now that you know of?

MOLLIE: At present, the workers of Russia are trying to establish something like it.

CLAYTON: They are only trying to?

MOLLIE: If your military should not crush them, they might succeed.

CLAYTON: But there isn't any other such country, at present?

MOLLIE (a beat): No.

CLAYTON: I didn't think so. All the other countries have governments, and laws.

MOLLIE: They do, to our sorrow.

CLAYTON: So you don't believe in any laws at all?

MOLLIE: Depends on what you mean by law.

CLAYTON: Well, do you believe people ought not kill each other? Or if somebody breaks into your house and steals all of your belongings, do you believe that person should give them back?

MOLLIE: You're not listening. If things were as I described, such crimes would not be committed.

CLAYTON: But since at present they are committed, then we need the laws?

MOLLIE: Because your system is rotten.

WEINBERGER: Miss Steimer, regarding the *leaflets*—

CLAYTON: Just a moment, Mr. Weinberger. (*to MOLLIE, lightly*): Well, how about the rotten laws we rotten people have for the protection of public morality? (*laughter in the courtroom.*)

MOLLIE: I don't think your laws do protect morality, just the opposite.

CLAYTON: How about the laws regulating marriage? Do you believe that whenever love grows cold in a marriage, the parties involved should be able to just pick up and wander off, like the beasts of the field? (*laughter.*)

MOLLIE: What is the use of the marriage relation, if the people's hearts are not related?

CLAYTON: So then you believe in the doctrine of free love? (*laughter.*) Or in polygamy? Actually for you it would be polyandry, where the woman has more than one husband— (*laughter.*) Or maybe you say "comrade." (*uproar.*)

MOLLIE: Is it not so that despite all your marriage laws, there are thousands and thousands of cases of infidelity anyway?

CLAYTON: People do sometimes violate their vows—

MOLLIE: Have you ever violated your vows?

CLAYTON: —and society is only trying to protect itself.

MOLLIE: Can you honestly say it succeeds?

CLAYTON: As much as it can it does; at least it tries.

MOLLIE: It tries in vain. (*a beat.*) *Have you?*

CLAYTON (*embarrassed*): Well, I don't think this has anything to do with this trial. (*suppressed laughter in gallery.*)

MOLLIE: Neither do I.

WEINBERGER: Your Honor, if Miss Steimer has finished her interrogation, I'd like to ask her a few questions myself. (*nervous laughter in gallery.*)

CLAYTON: I'd appreciate that, Brother Weinberger.

WEINBERGER: Miss Steimer, why did you distribute these leaflets?

MOLLIE: To call upon the workers to protest the fact that the Allies who claimed to be fighting for democracy were acting like the Germans by invading a neutral country and attacking the Russian Revolution.

WEINBERGER: You did not have any intention to uphold German militarism?

MOLLIE: I despise militarism wherever it exists. It is an unnecessary evil.

CLAYTON: Those are strong words, young lady.

MOLLIE: I speak them from the heart.

CLAYTON: I see you are wearing an armband. May I ask for what reason?

MOLLIE: I wear this in memory of Jacob Schwartz, who was killed by the police. (*RYAN gets up.*)

CLAYTON: Strike that last part.

MOLLIE: Which is precisely why I wear it.

CLAYTON: Schwartz was sort of a special friend of yours, wasn't he? A "comrade"?

MOLLIE (a beat): Yes. I think he was.

CLAYTON: I understand, you know. Grief over a loved one is a very hard thing. Maybe you've noticed that I myself am wearing a similar armband, and a gold star here. Would you like to know why I wear these tokens?

MOLLIE: I think you are about to say in any case.

CLAYTON: Yes, I am, because I'm proud of it! On May 30th of this year, an officer of the United States Army was killed by a bomb in France. He was a graduate of West Point, a brilliant man—everyone who knew him was in his shadow. As a career officer, when war was declared he could have easily remained at home, but instead he immediately decided that the only thing worthwhile was to be with the troops, right in the thick of things. How sweet it would have been for him to tread on German soil and annihilate the enemy as they deserve, but unfortunately, like all great patriots, the man was called upon to make the ultimate sacrifice. His name was Colonel Bertram Tracy Clayton, he was and remains the highest ranking officer slain in the War, and yes, I am proud to be his older brother.

WEINBERGER: All of us in the court offer you the most heartfelt condolences, Your Honor.

CLAYTON: I thank you, Counsel.

WEINBERGER: But may I just stress again here that in the leaflets my clients are not at all opposed to the war against Germany.

CLAYTON: She is, she just said she was against the military.

WEINBERGER: Militarism, Your Honor. Like the Kaiser—

CLAYTON: And that we were as bad as the Germans, she said that.

MOLLIE: Yes, I did.

CLAYTON: There! Now, this is just what I wanted to ask you straight out, Mollie, because I see you are grieving too and maybe you aren't thinking straight. But I just told you about my brother losing his life there on Flanders field, his body lying cold in the first warmth of spring. And what I want to know is, do you believe my brother died in vain?

MOLLIE (a beat): It depends. Did he die helping to extend the exploitation of workers around the world?

WEINBERGER: Your Honor—

CLAYTON: Bertram Clayton died for the sake of freedom!

MOLLIE (grave): Then yes, I am afraid he died in vain. (*a gasp in the courtroom; sorrowfully*): The war is a great black trap, and he fell right in.

CLAYTON (a beat; seething): Mr. Weinberger, I presume you are finished with this witness.