

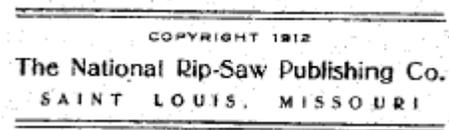
Red Kate Kindles Shaw

By Cara Jensen

I believe there might be an extra spark in the Shaw air to inspire people into activism. How poignant that we have a notorious example in our past - socialist activist Kate Richards O'Hare resided at 3955 Castleman from 1913 to 1917.

Touted as the most radical public figure in pre-World War I St. Louis, "Red Kate" spoke for victims of oppression, especially poor working women, and against entrenched economic and political interests. She worked tirelessly with local progressives for social change, but unlike most middle-class women she did cast her reform agenda in partisan terms. O'Hare was a socialist and editor of the *National Rip-Saw*, a socialist monthly published in St. Louis.

In 1910, Kate O'Hare ran for a congressional seat on the Socialist ballot, and in 1913 she represented the party at the Second International in London. In 1917, as chair of the party's Committee on War and Militarism, she spoke coast-to-coast against



U.S. entry into World War I. She was indicted under the Federal Espionage Act and imprisoned in the Missouri State Penitentiary with fellow activist Emma Goldman. In 1920, as the culmination of a nationwide campaign by socialists and civil libertarians, her sentence was commuted; she later received a full pardon from President Calvin Coolidge.



O'Hare's distress over conditions for female prisoners sparked a life-long crusade for penal reform. After leaving St. Louis, she became assistant director of the California Department of Penology where she implemented prison reform at San Quentin. Kate O'Hare was also active in Upton Sinclair's 1934 "End Poverty in California" campaign for the governorship.

Kate Richards O'Hare raised her young family in the Shaw neighborhood. She spent those years firming her ideals and beliefs and left the community stronger than when she arrived. I honor the spirit of Red Kate, who leaves a legacy to inspire subsequent generations of Shaw activists.