
Raid on IWW Seen As Blind for Big Attack: Crushing of All Organizations Which Tell Truth is Expected in Washington Circles [events of Sept. 28, 1917]

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 29 [1917].— The arrest and jailing of 166 officials and leaders of the Industrial Workers of the World is admitted in Washington to be a blind to conceal the government's real aim to crush organizations which insist upon telling the truth about the war and peace.

The declaration of Assistant United States Attorney General William G. Fitts that the "IWW differs from the Socialists and from every form of legitimate organization" is generally interpreted as intended to conceal the capitalist motives back of the raids and arrests of both Socialists and IWW.

Those familiar with the program of the Department of Justice assert that Fitts' statement is evidently designed to lull the Socialists to sleep with the belief that the government does not intend to assail, and possibly destroy, their organization.

The campaign of the Department of Justice against the IWW did not originate with the department. It was stimulated months ago by the mill and mine capitalists of the West and Northwest.

Strike followed strike. The strikers "tied up" mill after mill and mine after mine. And a tied-up mill or a tied-up mine does not yield abundant profits for the labor exploiters.

The "labor situation" became so dividendless for the mill and mine capitalists that they besieged their legislative agents in Congress to initiate legislation prohibiting strikes and other methods used by the workers to enforce living wages and a decent working day.

Montana's Labor Revolt.

In Montana the labor revolt became so menacing to the prosperity of the dividend receivers and interest takers who owned that Phelps-Dodge-cursed state that Senator [Thomas J.] Walsh left the Senate and went to Montana to make a survey of the industrial battlefield.

Walsh loaded himself up with IWW literature and digested it with the thoroughness with which a chattel-slave-owning judge a generation ago might have digested the anti-slavery literature of those days.

He concerned himself more with the ultimate social and industrial aims and objects of the IWW than with the methods which it pursues in waging the class war.

Walsh discovered, of course, that the ultimate aims and objects of the IWW are the abolition of the wage system of production, along with all the other exploiting paraphernalia of capitalist society.

Whereupon Walsh reached this conclusion: "There is no place in the American system for such an organization, in peace or in war."

Found Nine Counts.

Walsh's finding against the IWW consists of nine counts. They are:

1. They teach that the wage earners and their employers have nothing whatever in common.

2. That there is no community of interest between the wage earners and their employers.

3. That a state of war is the natural relation between the wage earners and the employers.

4. That the wage earner should never be satisfied with the wages he gets, but should strike at all opportune times in order to secure whatever wages he can "extort" from his employer.

5. That "right" and "wrong" are meaningless terms in the wage earner's war for higher wages.

6. That a "fair return" on the capital invested by the labor exploiter is a joke.

7. That the employee ought never, collectively or otherwise, to agree upon a wage scale for any definite period of time and, if he has

done so, he ought to disregard his contract and strike when the propitious season comes.

8. "And all this is justified on the ground that whatever the employee gets is less than he deserves, since the entire product is his anyway, it being assumed that the product is the result wholly of the labor of the wage earner, the part which capital plays in production as well as managerial direction being disregarded."

9. "Then, it is inculcated that this warfare, unremitting and bitter, is to be regarded only as a temporary expedient until the wage earner shall eventually, by 'revolution' and 'direct action,' take over all wealth assumed, as suggested, to be wholly the product of labor."

Walsh Severely Jolted.

Such a social condition, which denies every right of the capitalist to live on the wealth produced by his wage slaves, struck Walsh as being in opposition to the fundamental principles established by the "fathers." He thereupon concludes:

"I need not say to you that there is no place in the American system for such an organization; either in peace or in war."

The arrest and jailing yesterday [Sept. 28, 1917] of the officers and leaders of the IWW is an attempt on the part of the government to save capitalists and capitalism from the ultimate destruction which the spread of Socialist facts and figures and organization ultimately will bring about.

Edited by Tim Davenport

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