
Government Agents Raid Unions in War on IWW: Conference of Labor Organization Will Be Held to Halt Spread of Bisbee Methods

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From *The Call's* Washington Bureau.

WASHINGTON, Sept. 3 [1917].— Agents of the Department of Justice have invaded the offices of William Green, Secretary-Treasurer of the United Mine Workers of America, in Indianapolis, seeking for evidence there of Industrial Workers of the World activities.

Word to this effect was brought to Washington today by John Murray, special organizer and delegate from the Arizona State Federation of Labor to secure assistance for the labor movement of Arizona against the copper barons and the "Loyalty League" movement. Murray went to Indianapolis to enlist the international officers of the coal miners' organization in the Arizona fight.

What has happened in the offices of the biggest union in the entire American Federation of Labor, in the zeal of the Washington officials to conduct a manhunt ostensibly against the IWW, is today reported to be taking place in many other cities where labor organizers have been active within the past fortnight.

At Grand Rapids, Mich., five organizers of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, who were seeking to form a union of clay miners, were arrested, and three were put on a train and told to leave the city. In various places in the states of Idaho and Washington organizers of unions in the AF of L have been "run out of town," and large numbers of the IWW have been placed under military arrest. An organizer of the International Association of Machinists was arrested recently at Michigan City, Ind., on suspicion.

Workers Officers Will Aid.

Murray brought back to Washington the pledge of the international officers of the United Mine Workers — President [John P.] White, Secretary-Treasurer Green, and Frank Hayes — that they would assist in calling a general conference of all national and international labor organizations within the AF of L to take steps to meet the nationwide war of suppression that has been started in the copper country and is spreading eastward.

The date of the conference has not been fixed. It is likely that President Gompers of the AF of L, at the convention to be held at Minneapolis, will make a speech giving a “warning” to the employers of the country that organized labor is presently going to insist that the laws be enforced for the protection of peaceful trade unionists.

Gompers will probably recite that the copper barons of Arizona are now importing armies of gunmen, such as were maintained in Colorado by Rockefeller, and that all union men are being given the choice of tearing up their union cards or of being deported from the state.

Likely to Vex Burnquist.

How these sentiments will “go down” with the rabidly anti-labor Governor of Minnesota [Joseph Burnquist], who has driven the People’s Council convention away, leaving the Gompers-*illeg.* conference without opposition is problematical.¹ So long as the Arizona Federation of Labor does not actually protect its organizers from arrest in Minnesota, the language to be used by the head of the AF of L will probably not be held against him.

On the other hand, the AF of L has not given any hint as to whether labor issues, such as the war upon organized labor in the metal mining states, including Minnesota, will be touched upon in the speeches at Minnesota.

¹ The first convention of the anti-war Peoples Council of America for Democracy and the Terms of Peace was to have been held in Minneapolis on Sept. 1, 1917, but was forced to relocate to Chicago when Gov. Joseph Burnquist banned the gathering. This rescheduled Chicago gathering was itself broken up by the police. Samuel Gompers was instrumental in organizing a pro-war counter-organization, the American Alliance for Labor and Democracy, which met as scheduled in Minneapolis from Sept. 5-7, 1917.

It is possible that Murray will arrange with various heads of international unions to issue a joint call for a conference in Washington soon, to take up the western struggle separately, and to organize a committee to conduct a legal prosecution of the perpetrators of the Bisbee deportation in the courts. They may also decide to bring a series of damage suits against the kidnapers, and to institute recall proceedings within the state against all public officials implicated in the lawless acts which have continued in the copper camps for two months past.

A telegram to AF of L headquarters today stated that the miners in the Globe and Miami [Arizona] mining districts have been forbidden to continue picketing. Five thousand men have been out on strike at Globe for the past seven weeks. Wholesale deportations, lynchings, and the burning of property of the strikers are among the incidents predicted as a result of the complete domination of the situation by the gunmen of the copper companies.

Repeated attempts have been made to get President Wilson to send sufficient troops into Arizona to quell the Loyalty League lawlessness and to restore civil order. One of the objects of the nationwide labor conference which the coal miners proposes is to bring pressure to bear upon the White House to do something in this direction right away.

Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport

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