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MACHINERY AND MORALS

(By Covington Hall).

There appeared, in a recent issue of "The Item" an article entitled "The Trusts were not created by machinery" in which the "New York World" takes issue with George W. Perkins for so asserting. Says "The World":

"George W. Perkins before the Interstate Commerce Committee of the senate repeats a trust argument which is becoming quite the fashion nowadays.

This argument sets forth glibly enough that the laws of nature have just been repealed by the inventions of man, that "Edison is the father of trusts," that the steam engine, the telegraph and telephones have revolutionized the principles of political economy and metamorphosed the laws of business morality, that an assemblage of fly-wheels, pistons and connecting rods containing a heap of burning coals has relegated competition to the junkheap; that some wires and electro magnets and microphones have made honest what used to be dishonest, fair what used to be unfair, laudible what used to be criminal. This bit of sophistry had better be pricked before it goes any further.

Mr. Perkins and his friends ought to remember that every invention that facilitates monopoly equally facilitates competition. The long-distance telephone which enables two gentlemen of New York and Chicago to consummate a conspiracy in restraint of trade makes it equally easy for the Chicago gentleman to conduct from Chicago an enterprise in competition with that of the gentleman in New York. The locomotive which enables a trust to expand its monopoly from a locality to a continent makes it equally easy to project competition into any locality from a distance.

Machines do not change morals, nor do human contrivances give the lie to eternal truths.

The trust springs from no new invention called a steam engine or a telephone but from an old passion called greed. And this old passion can be best cured by an old invention: the lock of a prison door.

It can be noticed that neither of the papers quoted have brought forward a single FACT in support of their contention, and for the simple reason that they cannot; for the modern trust is so clearly the child of the machine that only they who think (?) while standing on their heads will attempt to deny it.

It was the invention of the steamship and the railroad that made modern transportation possible and made monopoly therein imperative and inevitable for, apart from these machines, there would be nothing worthy the name of a transportation system in existence, and system spells monopoly, and for the reason that it means the co-ordination of all the members of an industry into one consistent whole. And, too, the modern transportation system is the child of competition—the railroad COMPLETED the stage-coach, the express, the mail-train, the flat-boat and the schooner out of existence; the electric street car, the horse car and the steamship the sailing vessel out of existence.

And what is true of transportation is true of every other industry and public service operation in the world today—back of all, making them all possible, is the machine.

However, set forth, whether "glibly" or "disparagingly," the steam engine, the telegraph and the telephone HAVE revolutionized the principles of political economy and metamorphosed the laws of business morality, "relegated competition to the junk heap," "made honest what used to be dishonest, fair what used to be unfair, laudible what used to be criminal," and knocked into a cocked hat the naive assumption on the part of little business that the party rules governing its devotees were as one with the "laws of nature;" and this without acknowledging that business, big or little, has ever had, or ever will have any "morality" other than that summed up in the motto: "He takes, who has the power and he keeps who can."

The machine FORCES co-operative labor upon the race and, in so doing, changes the relations of men toward each other at the point where their most vital interests center, where their food, clothing and shelter is at stake, and compels them to re-adjust and revolutionize, not only their mode of living, but their ideas of law, justice, education, marriage, morals, religion, philosophy, and the form and structure of their governments, as well; wherefore, to assert that "machines do not change morals," is to assert that which is denied by the whole history of the race, written and legendary.

Neither the laws, Morals, customs or religions of this age are the same as were those of the age in which Joshua lived and made the sun and moon stand still or of the age when Holy Mother Church filled all Europe with miracles and misery. Morals, like all things else, change with the ever-changing environment of the race and are the direct product of its material surroundings. Outside of this: "Anything which injures the welfare of the race is immoral, anything which promotes its welfare is moral," there is no "law of morals." And, "human contrivances" do not "give the lie to eternal truths," because there is no such thing as "eternal truth," for truth is only truth when it squares with the known facts, and at any hour the ever-restless mind of man, delving into the mines of nature may discover and bring forth facts which will make that we accept as truth today a superstition or a lie.

Morals depend upon the necessities of the race and that only is truth which squares with the facts man gathers through experience, experiment and doubt.

It is because their environment and necessities are not the same that the working class and the capitalist class have drifted so wide

apart in their ideas of what is moral, lawful and right, and they will continue to drift yet wider and wider apart, and more rapidly, and their interests will clash more fiercely as the days roll on until the working class, driven by the necessity to improve its environment, rises in revolution, abolishes the capitalist class and founds on the ruins of the State the Industrial Democracy, wherein the earth and the social machinery will no longer be capital but commonwealth.

The machine did not only repeal the bourgeois "laws of nature," revolutionize his "principles of political economy," metamorphose his "laws of business morality" and create the Trust, but it also brought into existence the modern working class and is rapidly creating the Industrial Labor Union, the Revolution and the Socialist Republic.

Science and invention, chemistry and the machine, these are the mightiest agitators, propagandists and organizers working for the triumph of the blood red banner. And at the last, if "the trust springs from no new invention called a steam engine or a telephone but from an old passion called greed," capitalist society is still doomed for the greed of the working class, hunger-whetted, will compel it, even though it has to break every lock on every prison door in this world and in the world to come, to attempt and carry through the social revolution, for one of the main and principal causes promoting the revolution is the inability of the capitalist system to any longer satisfy the greed of the race, its desire for all the fruit of its labor, for more leisure, for more enlightenment, for more happiness, for more love and for a wider and more noble life.

B. C. WORKERS STARVING

THOUSANDS OF SLAVES STARVING IN VANCOUVER, B. C.—BIG PARADE OF 2,000 JOBLESS—POLICE CHARGE THE CROWD WITH CLUBS.

The demonstrations of the unemployed in Vancouver last week so exposed that city's misery and degradation that the Law and Order bunch put a stop to all outside meetings, including those formerly held in the public parks. The newspapers began to explain that there was no unemployment of a serious nature and that artful prostitute of capitalism, known as the Associated Charities, said that the unemployed were all "transients" and therefore undeserving. The first parade of unemployed was held on the 17th and 2,000 men were in line. The second held on the 20th and the number of marchers had greatly increased, although they still represented but a small proportion of the jobless men in Vancouver. The real estate sharks, realizing that the demonstration was hurting their graft, together with other "honest" business men who were afraid business would be harmed if the actual condition of the city were known, had the police ordered out to stop all open-air meetings. The result was, that on the 20th when the parade had proceeded to the main part of the city, the police, many of whom were mounted, charged the crowd. Six men were arrested, several were knocked down, and women and children who were just leaving a nickel show were ridden down by the mounted thugs. The slugging committee of the capitalist class were putting down the workers' agitation and trying to grind the toilers beneath the iron heel of the plunderers.

On the 21st the members of the I. W. W., the Socialist Party of Canada, and the A. F. of L., who were active participants in the former demonstrations, tried to hold a meeting on what is known as the Powell street football grounds—a public park. Before the meeting was concluded the mounted constables, followed by a swarm of brutes in blue and many plain clothes men of the despicable type that would disgrace a cess-pool, arrived upon the scene and dispersed the crowd. Two more men were arrested, making a total of 8. Three of these are members of the I. W. W. and the other five are either of the S. P. of C. or of the A. F. of L. The Trades and Labor Assembly has gone on record as being in favor of free speech and assemblage and as being willing to back up that right. The S. P. of C. are also backing the men, and this co-operation of forces regardless of differences, means that Vancouver will be in receipt of the dose that made other cities sit up and take notice. Seventy-four dollars have been collected (Jan. 21) to help carry on the work of gaining free speech and for the purpose of forcing Vancouver to take steps toward the alleviation of the starvation of the unemployed. The men who have this matter in hand will never be intimidated by the hellish prisons of Canada, or the lashings, the starvation system, and the hard convict work, enforced by the lickspittle lackeys of the employing class. Rebels, with red blood in their veins should get in readiness to give the necessary aid. Notice will be given if men or money are needed. Greetings to Aberdeen with the knowledge that Vancouver will soon be another red spot upon the map along with you.

CHARLES NELSON,

Secretary No. 45 and 322, I. W. W.

Vancouver, B. C.

The union is the only organization that can raise your wages and shorten your hours; stand by it till the last foe expires.—Ex.

Textile Strike Grows Police Fight I. W. W.

(Continued from page one.)

the strike and there was a sea of hands waved in the air. His greetings to them when they returned after their long march through the streets were: "They were afraid of all sorts of things if you paraded. Bankers and business men said that there would be trouble all around; but everything has been smooth. I hope that you have demonstrated that the basis of this strike lies in the hearts of the people. Victory lies in your hands.

Even the capitalist dailies had no criticism to offer on the parade. The Globe, speaking of Ettor said: "The control which this leader from New York has over the strikers made up of so many nationalities is the marvel of disinterested persons."

All signs point to a great upbuilding of the Textile department of the Industrial Workers of the World. The strike will be won.

Labor Fakirs Not Wanted.

Questioned regarding the position of John Golden of Fall River, president of the United Textile Workers of America, leader Ettor said he did not and could not recognize the opposition labor leader in any way. He explained that his organization has no connection with the Industrial Workers of the World which is directing the strike here.

Ettor declared emphatically that Golden would not be acceptable to the strikers as one of the employees' representatives on any arbitration board. Nor, he believed, would State Senator Samuel Ross of New Bedford, who is international secretary of the Mule Spinners' Association, be acceptable. The names of both men have been mentioned.

Haywood to Raise Funds.

LAWRENCE, Mass., Jan. 24.—Prospects of an early settlement of the strike of 15,000 textile workers in this city looked dim tonight when the mill owners' representatives refused to enter a conference with a committee of 48 strikers in the presence of the state board of arbitration.

The hitch apparently came from the fact that the mill officials were empowered only to meet a committee of the striking employees of the mills instead of a general committee.

At an outdoor meeting this afternoon W. D. Haywood, former secretary-treasurer of the Western Federation of Miners, urged the strikers to remain firm and said he intended to go west soon and solicit aid for them. Referring to the presence of the militia in Lawrence, he said:

"I have been in other strikes where soldiers were at hand, but I never saw a strike defeated by soldiers. All you have to do is to keep the check upon yourselves, and not give the other side a chance to get you. If you must keep this strike on, we will do our best to shut off all railroad traffic in Lawrence."

Haywood expressed the opinion that it would not be impossible to stop the bringing of coal and other necessities to Lawrence, so that there would be no light or power in the mills. He also thought that if necessary, the soldiers could be starved out of Lawrence.

Aberdeen Free Speech Fight

(Continued from page one.)

Officials were who had the power to settle the affair. He did not come to the men in jail for information, but after several hours he sent to the men in Hoquiam asking who had authority to arrange a truce. The men there at once referred him to the men in jail, but it was several hours more before he could catch the idea that men in jail were rational beings who could make an agreement and abide by it.

However, when he saw there was no other place to go, and being assured that another group would speak on the streets that evening, he reluctantly sent to the jail requesting that a committee be sent up to arrange terms of a truce. A committee was formed, terms of a truce arranged, and all men released in fifteen minutes after the men were informed that the Mayor wished to treat with them.

One of the terms of the truce was that a committee from the I. W. W. and a delegation from the Citizens' Committee were to meet the next day, Jan. 12, to arrange the terms of a street speaking ordinance. These committees met twice, with the result that the I. W. W. was given everything they demanded, and the only terms required by the Citizens' Committee was the request that the I. W. W. would not crow over their victory to such an extent as to make the citizens of Aberdeen feel humiliated.

Thus the Free Speech Fight in Aberdeen passes into history as a clean-cut, unqualified victory for the Industrial Workers of the World.

The most noticeable feature of the fight, aside from the solidarity of the I. W. W., has been the very subservient position of the city officials at all times. They have acted merely as the messenger boys of the big interests which are headed by Banker W. J. Patterson. This has been freely acknowledged at all times by the Citizens' Committee, as when they took out the ten men on the night of Jan. 8 their spokesman said, "We, the business men, make the laws of Aberdeen and we propose to enforce them," thus proclaiming the city officials to be entirely out of the

(Continued from page one.)

meeting at the same place at an early date. We have volunteers who are willing to fight for free speech at the expense of the Exposition City. We will establish our rights in spite of all the master class efforts, through the medium of those pimps who wear brass buttons to hide the hollows in their gray matter, to put a stop to the onward march of the ONE BIG UNION.

AGITATION COMMITTEE,

Local No. 173, I. W. W.

San Francisco, Cal.

SLUGGERS IN FRISCO.

"Just ten days after the representative of greater capitalism of San Francisco took office, the quills of the porcupine made their appearance.

For some time the street speakers of the Industrial Workers of the World have been holding meetings in the vicinity of the employment agencies around Third and Howard streets. The vulturous habits of the "sharks" were made plain to the innocents that must buy a job. Of course, this is not to the liking of the beasts of prey that run the agencies. Under the "P. H." administration the English speaking I. W. W. men were not molested, though the Italian comrades had the officers "Union Labor" club dance upon their heads and had the pleasure of counting the bars of a "Union Labor" coop. But "P. H.'s" crowd waited until their political jobs were cooled off before the "rough stuff" was employed.

On Wednesday night, January 17th, Fellow Worker Wright was speaking to a large crowd of workers. Wright is a young man and has experience sufficient to have the "dope" on the layout. At the beginning of his speech he noted three officers in his audience. Quite naturally three officers, at one meeting, especially when they stand together and whisper causes a sort of commotion among the auditors. But notwithstanding the nuisance of three officers whispering among themselves, Wright continued in his exposure of capitalism.

The meeting had been in session one hour when suddenly, without warning, at a signal from one of the disorderly policemen, a rush was made on the crowd. With night sticks playing upon the heads and bodies of the surprised audience, the meeting was broken up by "mad bulls." One of the offending "cops" selected the speaker for a victim and after landing severe blows upon his body deliberately aimed a blow at his head, it struck home, cutting him frightfully. Then this very "officer of the law" yanked out his gun and, flourishing it madly, told Wright "that I. W. W. S. H.'s ought to go to the morgue." Wright and two others were arrested. Their trial takes place in a police court January 23. While in the "coop" a doctor was sent for and Wright's torn head was sewed up.

We can assure Mr. Rolph that FREE SPEECH will be maintained in San Francisco under his, as it has under past administrations.—From "Revolt."

controversy.

As another instance, when the I. W. W. committee was in conference with the delegation of the Citizens' Committee, Patterson did all the important talking for his committee and Mayor Parks merely assented to his statements. In the negotiations a difference of opinion arose as to the distance the speakers should stand from the "main stem." When this matter had been smoothed out to our satisfaction, Patterson instructed the Mayor to insert the number of feet in the draft of the ordinance under discussion, and then Patterson was the one who gave us his personal word that the City Council would pass the ordinance and the Mayor would sign it. This agreement was carried through without a dissenting vote.

A rousing street meeting was held on the evening of Jan. 18 and everything passed along without a hitch. The crowd was large, but orderly and attentive, and the speakers dwelt on the necessity of thorough organization. There were several police in attendance, and they had an hour of nothing to do as we had our own committee to police the meeting.

The state of mind of the Citizens' Committee of Aberdeen is perhaps best describe in one of the daily papers which said recently: "We will now sit back and watch San Francisco show how to squelch the I. W. W."

C. E. PAYNE,

W. I. FISHER,

J. T. MCCARTHY,

Committee.

NOTICE!

Financial account of the Aberdeen Free Speech Fight will appear next week.—Ed.

BUILDING WORKERS ORGANIZE.

I. W. W. headquarters in Oakland was crowded to the doors Wednesday night with building trades workers to organize the new union of Building Workers of Oakland. George Speed of San Francisco was the principal speaker. A committee was elected to secure a larger hall for the next meeting. About 200 have signed the charter roll.—Oakland World.

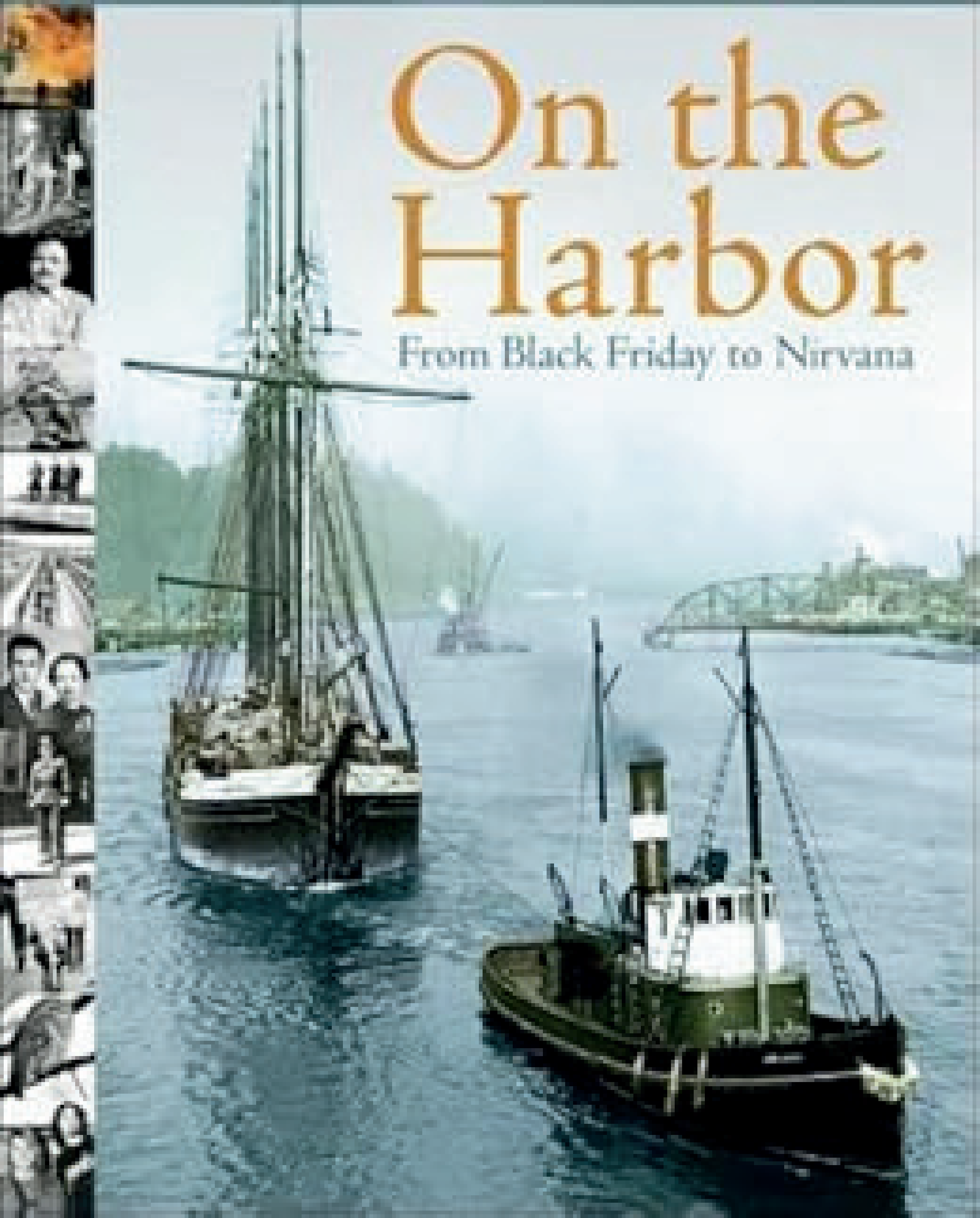
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On the Harbor

From Black Friday to Nirvana



Nov. 23, 1911:

The Industrial Workers of the World descend on Aberdeen en masse

NOTABLE MOMENTS FOR THE WOBBLIES

JAN. 31, 1910

Mixed Local No. 354 of the Industrial Workers of the World is chartered in Aberdeen.

AUG. 2, 1911

Aberdeen City Council adopts Ordinance No. 1084, limiting public speaking to a two-block area away from downtown.

NOV. 23, 1911

Police turn fire hoses on 3,000 Wobblies and sympathizers gathered outside Aberdeen City Hall to protest the jailing of three public speakers who defied the ban.

NOV. 24, 1911

Armed with ax-handles and wagon wheel spokes, a committee of five hundred businessmen patrol the streets for Wobblies, filling the Aberdeen jail. At midnight, the prisoners are released at the edge of town.

DEC. 6, 1911

Five Wobbly leaders who have returned to Aberdeen are beaten and left at the city limits. The IWW offers a \$5,000 reward for the names of the vigilantes.

JAN. 12, 1912

Aberdeen's mayor and Wobbly leaders agree to a compromise: Street speaking is still restricted, but allowed in the busiest parts of town.

MARCH 15, 1920

After a two-month trial, a jury in Montesano returns its verdict on eleven Wobblies charged with murder in the Centralia "massacre." Of the defendants, one is declared insane, two are acquitted, and the others are found guilty of second-degree murder.

'Those Damn Wobblies!'

*When the union's inspiration through
the workers' blood shall run,*

*There can be no power greater
anywhere beneath the sun.*

*Yet what force on Earth is weaker
than the feeble strength of one?*

But the union makes us strong.

Solidarity forever!

Solidarity forever!

Solidarity forever!

For the union makes us strong!

— "Solidarity Forever"
by Ralph Chaplin

HISTORY DOES NOT DETAIL what "Big Bill" Haywood of the Industrial Workers of the World told the "footloose rebels" who descended on Aberdeen in the fall of 1911 to organize timber workers and defend the Bill of Rights.

In Hoquiam, a few months earlier, his message to a large crowd was reported only as "The Coming Victory of Labor."

But from Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, the IWW's "Rebel Girl," we know that the former miner never failed to bring a crowd to its feet when he explained why the "Wobblies" were different from the craft unions in the American Federation of Labor.

"The A F of L organizes likes this," the IWW firebrand would declare, separating his fingers as far apart as they would go.

To textile mill workers in Massachusetts, he would give each finger a name: "Weavers. Loomfixers. Dyers. Spinners." In Aberdeen, it was most likely "Loggers. Sawmill workers. Shingle weavers. Saw filers. Boom men."

Then Haywood would thunder, "The IWW organizes like this!" — tightly clenching his big fist and shaking it at the bosses.

It was a time when most workers were virtual serfs — "wage slaves," in the words of the IWW. The Northwest, where loggers and mill hands

worked long hours for little pay in dangerous conditions, was fertile ground for the Wobblies. They believed that if all of the nation's workers joined in "One Big Union" and went on strike they could peacefully overthrow the bosses and captains of industry. Lawmakers called this philosophy "syndicalism," as in an illegal syndicate.

In the words of the preamble to the IWW constitution: "It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism."

The capitalists, naturally, wanted to do away with the IWW.

Chamber of Commerce managers argued that most labor unions were "alien," out to subvert free enterprise, and none more so than "Those damn Wobblies!" "The Red Viper." "Bolsheviks."

They're "half anarchistic, half socialist and altogether militant," John J. Carney, editor of the *Semi-Weekly Aberdeen Herald* warned. He added that the IWW "seeks to dictate terms to employers ... under pain of wreck and ruin of their property. It is not an industrial body of workers, but of meddlers."

Billy Patterson, Aberdeen's leading banker; Dudley G. Allen, secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, and mill managers like Neil Cooney had the "Wobbly horrors."

The San Diego Tribune editorialized in 1912 that hanging was "none too good" for the Wobblies. They were "excrement," and decent folk ought to mobilize to "club them down."

In the winter of 1911-12, the city fathers did just that as they fought the Wobblies on the streets of Aberdeen.

Given their reputation for harboring sinister, "foreign" ideas, the irony was that the Wobblies sounded the call to action over defense of a bedrock democratic principle — free speech. The battle ended with a draw, as both sides claimed victory and moved on.

But if the struggle was about empowering the working class with better pay and an eight-hour day, eliminating bug-infested bunkhouses and se-



Wobblies plastered thousands of stickers like this on boxcars, lampposts and storefronts. (Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University)

AS THEY SAW IT

"Aberdeen is the best little city on the map. Especially is this true of its citizenship. The men who have built it act as a unit when they see the necessity for it. ...

"This invading band is seen as a menace. Organization is effected at once. Action is prompt, swift and sure.

"It was inspiring to see the law-abiding men of this city — hundreds of them — rise in Elks' hall yesterday and pledge their aid to the preservation of order in this community.

"No man could witness it without being moved, none without a determination to support our institutions, and none without pride in the city that could rear such men.

"The Industrial Workers of the World, whatever they are, have not built this city. They have contributed nothing toward it. They have the right to live here if they will keep the peace, live like decent citizens and observe the laws.

"When they step over these lines, they have no right here.

"Men who affect to despise the government that gives them the right of free speech, who condemn and flout the constitution, have small right to appeal to the government they outrage or to search for warrant in the constitution for their unlawful acts.

"This is not a backwoods camp, but a modern, civilized city. The days of the Gohls have gone by, as those who attempt to revive them will learn to their cost."

— "Aberdeen and the I.W.W.," *Aberdeen Daily World*, Nov. 25, 1911

THE SPOKANE FIGHT

The Wobblies' 1909 free-speech fight in Spokane was the model for the street skirmishes to follow, including the set-to in Aberdeen in 1911-12.

When IWW speakers started drawing big crowds, the Spokane City Council banned all street meetings, with an exemption for the Salvation Army, which rankled the Wobblies.

As soon as one "fellow worker" was hauled off a soapbox, another immediately took his place. Soon the Spokane City Jail was jammed. By the time the city fathers surrendered, the episode had cost them \$125,000 — more than \$2 million in today's dollars.

"Over 600 members came from the four corners of the country in response to the call of the IWW," said Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, the only woman in the IWW leadership.

"Spokane was the scene of vicious police brutality," she wrote in "The Rebel Girl." "Police officers kicked, struck and abused the prisoners. Twenty-eight men were forced into a cell 7-by-8 feet. It took four cops to close the cell door. This was called the 'sweat box.' The steam was turned on until the men nearly suffocated ... Then they were placed in ice-cold cells and 'third-degreed' in a weakened state."



Members of the Industrial Workers of the World stand outside an IWW hall. Although the city in which this photo was taken is not known, the men's clothing and demeanor are similar to IWW organizers in Aberdeen in the fall of 1911, when the Wobblies began one of their free speech fights with the city fathers. (MSSSCUA, University of Washington Libraries, Negative 3286)

curing medical care for injured workers, the Wobblies could rightly claim that in the long haul they won the war.

And though the Wobblies had a short lifespan on the Harbor, they eventually won here, too.

The seeds of the Harbor's reputation as a hotbed of militant unionism were planted during the IWW uprising in 1911-12 and fertilized by the "Red Scare" repression of "treasonous labor conspiracies" during World War I.

Then they grew like Jack's beanstalk during the Depression with the coming of the New Deal labor laws. The highly successful organizing drives among longshoremen and loggers in the 1930s were led by Communists and other leftists, many of whom had once ridden the rails, proudly displaying their IWW "red cards." Aberdeen, once a town as rock-ribbed Republican as could be found, ended up a haven for Democrats and labor organizers.

Though Bill Haywood had founded the Wobblies in Chicago in 1905, it was several years before they made their way to the Northwest.

There was some interest on the Harbor in 1907, when a mill strike led by the IWW hit Portland. By 1910, a dozen locals had started up in Wash-

ington state, mostly in Seattle and Spokane. Then, on January 31, 1910, Mixed Local No. 354 was chartered in Aberdeen and began holding meetings at a hall at Wishkah and K streets.

As in their celebrated free-speech fight in Spokane two years earlier, when the Wobblies outfoxed and embarrassed the establishment, the IWW's goal in Aberdeen was to force the city fathers to rescind restrictions on street-corner oratory.

IWW organizers appealed to workers of all nationalities — recent immigrants in particular — as they railed against the terrible conditions faced by migrant "bindlestiffs" who carried all their worldly possessions in a blanket roll.

Another bone of contention was the use of job sharks, rather than union halls, to supply the mills and logging camps. The conditions in the camps and mills were so miserable that turnover was astounding. The bosses hired agents to snare fresh bodies. In 1911, the sharks in Portland, Seattle, Tacoma and Aberdeen were charging \$2 to get a guy hired on as a choker setter. Then they'd split the fees with the boss loggers back at the camps.

"Don't Buy Jobs!" admonished one of the famous stickers that Wobblies plastered on boxcars and storefronts.

"Stories of abuse, plots and plans to keep the men coming and going to and from the camps so the sharks could collect the job fees often were common gossip. There also was the 'clearinghouse' set up by employers to check and keep a record of possible troublemakers," one worker wrote.

"So outrageous was the racket that we commonly spoke of every job having 'three crews' — one coming, one going and one working," former IWW Len De Caux said in his book, "The Living Spirit of the Wobblies."

The mammoth Grays Harbor Commercial Co. plant in Cosmopolis was notorious. The workers called it the "Western Penitentiary" because the conditions were so terrible. But it was more like a revolving door than a prison. The workers were exploited by both the sharks and the bosses.

One study revealed that the annual rate of labor turnover in lumber camps was as high as 600 percent during this era.

The IWW organizers started their street-speaking efforts in Aberdeen downtown at Heron and G, close to the Sailors' Union hall, "where off-duty laborers passed and congregated," Northwest historian Charles Pierce LeWarne wrote in an essay on the Aberdeen free-speech fight. "The favored spot was also near the saloon of Councilman John O'Hare. The City Council, alarmed by a group that they considered disruptive at best and anarchistic at worst, forbade street speaking in the locality. For the time being, the IWW complied."

Wobblies complained that lumber companies used job sharks instead of union halls. (Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University)



Later that summer, the city fathers decided to make the ban more official.

On August 2, 1911, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. 1084, limiting public speaking to a two-block area from I Street to Broadway between River and Hume streets. Violators would be fined \$100, though one councilman hinted that police would look the other way for the Salvation Army, which had taken to the streets to "win souls for the Lord."

That rankled the Wobblies, who ridiculed the "sky pilots" and "Jesus screamers" in the IWW's *Industrial Worker*.

The more philosophical of the IWW argued that the "Starvation Army" was preventing their longed-for revolution by keeping the poorest of the poor content and meagerly fed. Meantime, Wobbly martyr Joe Hill's mischievous hymn, "The Preacher and the Slave," sung to the tune of "In the Sweet Bye and Bye," poked fun at the drum-and-bugle evangelists:

*Long-haired preachers come out every night,
Try to tell you what's wrong and what's right;
But when asked how 'bout something to eat
They will answer with voices so sweet:*

*You will eat, bye and bye,
In that glorious land above the sky;
Work and pray, live on hay,
You'll get pie in the sky when you die.*

*The starvation army they play,
They sing and they clap and they pray.
Till they get all your coin on the drum,
Then they tell you when you are on the bum:*

*You will eat, bye and bye,
In that glorious land above the sky;
Work and pray, live on hay,
You'll get pie in the sky when you die.*

Aberdeen Socialists worked with the IWW to protest the ordinance and its one-sided enforcement. Hoping to have it repealed, the Wobblies threatened to just ignore it as the Salvation Army had been doing. Councilman R.J. Hilts, who was sympathetic to the radical organizers, managed to get their complaints referred to the council's Street Committee.

THE REBEL GIRL

Although only 20 years old, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn was a mesmerizing rabble rouser. The Spokane papers described her as "one of the most dangerous of the IWWs." The *Los Angeles Times* called her one of the "She-Dogs of Anarchy."

Gurley Flynn, pregnant, was tossed in the "tank" at Spokane overnight in 1910 for "conspiracy to incite men to violate the law." The edition of the IWW's *Industrial Worker* featuring her account of the experience was confiscated in Spokane but it aroused widespread indignation around the nation. The Aberdeen papers closely followed her exploits.

Gurley Flynn was convicted and sentenced to ninety days in jail, but promptly released on bail.

"If she had not formed a dangerous organization, not sung the Red Flag song, had not called Justice Mann an illiterate old fool, had not preached the gospel of discord and discontent, I would have ignored her," the prosecutor said.

However, when she was acquitted after a second trial, he was livid. How could such a thing happen in a God-fearing town like Spokane? he demanded of the jury foreman.

The foreman replied, "She ain't a criminal, Fred, an' you know it! If you think this jury, or any jury, is goin' to send that pretty Irish girl to jail merely for bein' big-hearted an' idealistic to mix with all those whores and crooks down at the pen, you've got another guess comin'."

Gurley Flynn, who went on to become one of the top leaders of the Communist Party of the U.S., came to Grays Harbor to rally support for the IWW in 1917 after the Everett "massacre" when several Wobblies were killed by a hated sheriff and a platoon of well-armed, liquored-up new "deputies."

THE WOBBLIES BEGIN

The Industrial Workers of the World was born in Chicago on June 27, 1905.

Lacking a gavel, William D. "Big Bill" Haywood, a leader of the militant Western Federation of Miners, picked up a piece of board, whacked the lectern and boomed, "Fellow workers, this is the Continental Congress of the working class."

The audience included "about 200 socialists, anarchists, radical miners and revolutionary industrial unionists," according to Joyce L. Kornbluh's anthology of IWW lore, "Rebel Voices."

Behind Haywood on the platform was a who's who of radical unionism, including Eugene V. Debs, the legendary leader of the American Socialist Party; Mother Mary Jones, at 75 still one of the most formidable labor agitators in the world; Thomas J. Hagerty, the Roman Catholic priest who edited the American Labor Union's *Voice of Labor*; and Lucy Parsons, widow of an anarchist who was executed in the wake of the Haymarket Riot in Chicago in 1886.

The IWW "planned to combine the American working class, and eventually wage earners all over the world, into one big trade union with an industrial basis, a syndicalist philosophy and a revolutionary aim," Patrick Renshaw writes in "The Wobblies," possibly the clearest and most objective account of the IWW's history.

"Its industrial departments were to act as syndicalist shadows of American capitalism, so that after the revolution they could quickly step in and help govern the workers' commonwealth.

"The revolution was to be achieved by a series of strikes, leading to a general strike that would force the capitalists to capitulate. Thus, the IWW was to be both the embryo of the new society and the revolutionary instrument for achieving it."

On October 11, 1911, the council agreed to reconsider the ordinance, but debate was one-sided. William A. Thorn, chief Wobbly organizer for the Aberdeen-Hoquiam area, was denied the chance to speak, and the meeting was cut short so that the councilmen could attend a performance by Gertrude Hoffman at the Grand Theater.

After the meeting, Thorn cornered the mayor and several councilmen in the lobby of City Hall and began haranguing them about the ordinance. Councilman John Myles, a former police officer, took affront, and swung at the Wobbly with a right haymaker, knocking him to the floor.

"It was the first 'violence' of the campaign," LeWarne notes. More was to come.

IWW leaders in Chicago telegraphed the mayor that if the ordinance wasn't lifted, the IWW would "make grass grow in the streets" even "if it took twenty years."

Still, it took a month for things to really heat up as Wobblies poured into Aberdeen from all over the West.

The first major confrontation occurred on November 23, 1911, when Wobbly organizer W.I. "Windy" Fisher set up his soap box within the no-speaking zone. For an hour, police ignored him at the order of Police Chief Louis D. Templeman.

So Fisher picked up his soap box and marched to City Hall, where the City Council was meeting. IWW organizer James M. Train was the first to begin speaking, and he was immediately arrested. When the crowd of 3,000 did not promptly disperse, the police chief ordered the Fire Department to administer a "water cure" with fire hoses.

Mayor James W. Parks "himself assisted in directing the nozzle against the would-be rioters," according to the *Grays Harbor Post*. "The rioters were many, if not nearly all, imported from other places."

In fact, the crowd was laced with local Greeks and Finns, whose habits annoyed merchants. Not only did they want better pay, they sent all their spare money back to help kinfolk in the old country instead of spending it locally as "American family men do."

Speaking a block away, Fisher told the crowd that the fight was on. "They are coming by the thousands!" he yelled. "We'll take over Grays Harbor."

The next morning, a local judge proposed a truce to the Wobblies. The three men in jail would be released if the IWW promised to quit public

speaking until after their trial. The IWW agreed and the men were set free, but the Wobblies went ahead with plans for a mass meeting that night at the Empire Theater.

On the other side, the city fathers organized, too.

At noon, the twelve-member executive committee of the Chamber of Commerce met with Mayor Parks in the Washington Hotel. The Wobblies were getting strength from numbers; the mayor wanted the businessmen to do the same. He called a mass meeting for that afternoon.

"And they came," Ben K. Weatherwax related years later in his popular radio show on Harbor history. "The clerks and the doctors, the butchers and the lawyers; the mill operators and most of their crewmen. The little sawdust town was practically closed up when 3 o'clock rolled around — 500 of them packed the Elks Temple and hundreds more overflowed into the streets."

Then, armed with what the *Grays Harbor Post* described as "unromantic but business-like hickory wagon spokes and axe handles," the businessman's militia patrolled the streets to head off an "IWW invasion."

They raided the IWW headquarters above W.N. Mack's cigar store at 406 East Heron Street and seized a quantity of red flags and tags the free speech campaigners had been pinning to their jackets. The tags declared "Free Speech, Free Press and Free Assemblage," adding that wearers were willing "to go to jail to defend our rights."

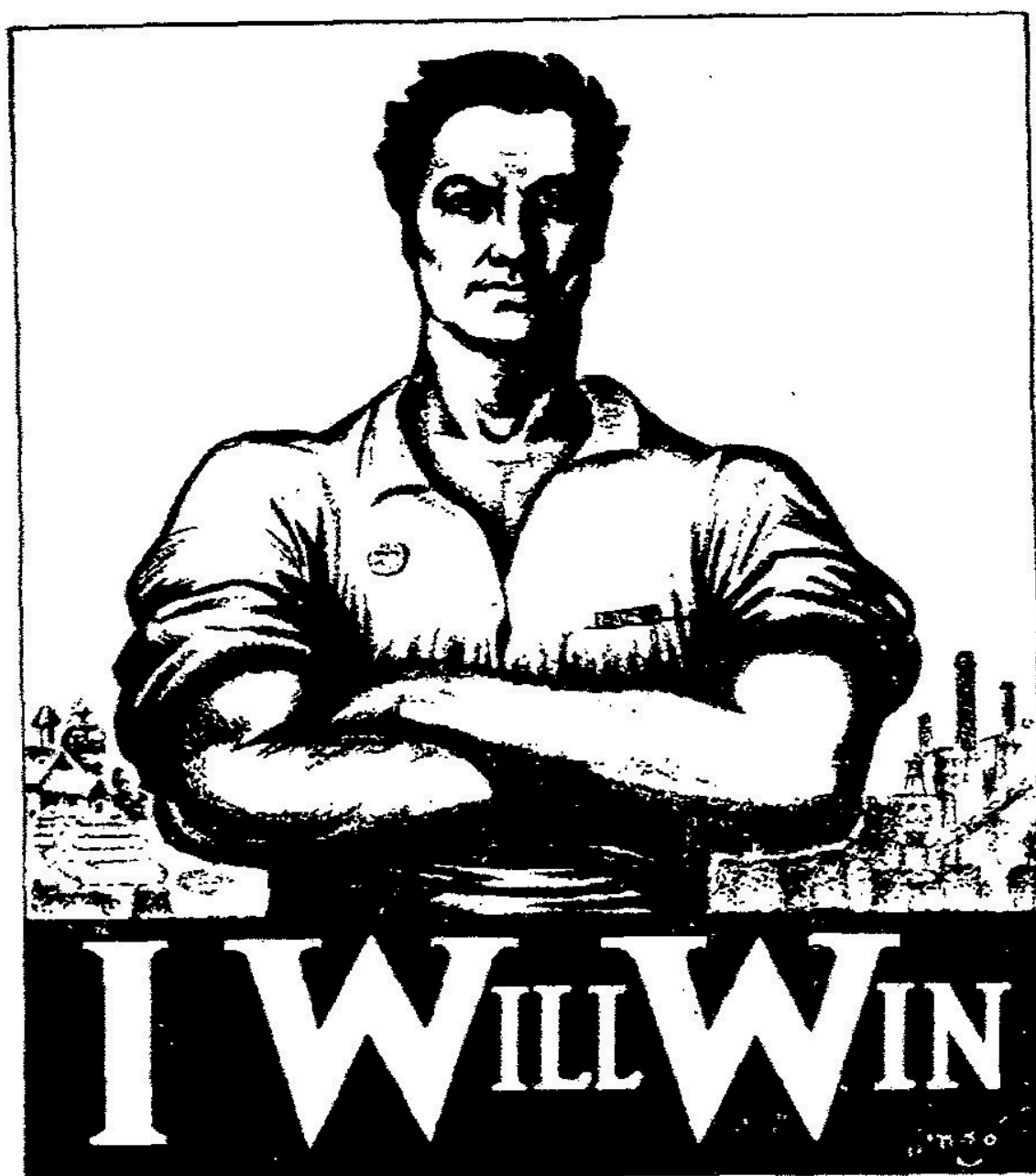
They would soon get a chance to test that conviction.

The Wobblies arrived for their planned meeting at the theater to find the entrance roped off and themselves under arrest. Most marched stoically to jail; others denied knowing anything about the IWW even though they were wearing red Wobbly badges.

The IWWs had brought Spokane to its knees in 1909 by clogging the jail and courts with their sheer numbers, but Aberdeen's city fathers, bolstered by Billy Patterson's businessman militia, moved quickly to expel the ringleaders and subdue the threat.

At midnight, the vigilante brigade showed up at the City Jail and escorted their prisoners to the outskirts of town.

"The march halted near the base of Think-of-Me Hill at the eastern edge of the town," wrote



SONGS

To Fan the Flames of Discontent

The cover of an Industrial Workers of the World "Little Red Song Book" shows typical Wobbly artwork. Inside were stirring songs like "Solidarity Forever" and the wry "Preacher and the Slave." (Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University)

LeWarne. "In the glare of automobile headlights, the prisoners were lined up several feet apart, and each was given two loaves of bread."

But, in the words of a famous IWW banner displayed during a textile workers' strike back East, the Wobblies wanted "bread and roses too" — or as the IWW preamble put it, "all the good things of life."

"Some refused the bread; some 'like true victors in the strife ... threw his dirty dole in the gutter.'"

Mayor Parks stood atop an improvised platform and did some soapboxing of his own:

"What we have done we did by taking the law in our own hands. You men go and never return. God bless you if you remain away, but God help you if you ever return."

WHAT'S A 'WOBBLY'?

Why are members of the Industrial Workers of the World called "Wobblies"?

Etymologists have been debating the question for nearly ninety years.

In "The American Language," H.L. Mencken says, "The origin of 'wobbly' is thus given by Mortimer Downing, a member of the IWW in its heyday:

"In Vancouver, in 1911, we had a number of Chinese members, and one restaurant keeper would trust any member for meals. He could not pronounce the letter w, but called it wobble, and would ask: 'You I Wobble Wobble?' and when the (union) card was shown, credit was unlimited. Thereafter, the laughing term among us was 'I Wobbly Wobbly.'"

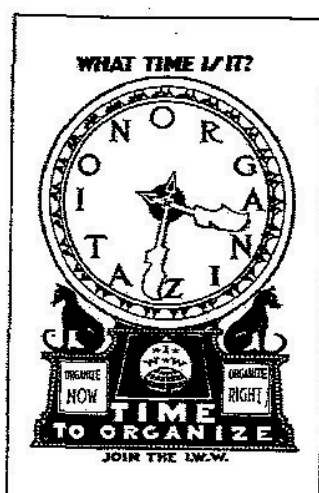
Mencken added, "To me it seems unlikely."

But Stewart Holbrook, the "lowbrow historian" who often visited Grays Harbor, repeats the story with the variation that when the Chinese man "wanted to tell the boys that he was a good IWW man, the best he could do was 'Me likee Eye Wobbly Wobbly.'"

Northwest writer Doug Honig says another theory is that "Wobbly" sprang from the IWW's many Scandinavian immigrants who similarly tripped in pronouncing "Wobble-You."

"Another possible derivation," historian Patrick Renshaw says, "is from the 'wobble saw,' a circular saw mounted askew to cut a groove wider than its own thickness, though when Max Hayes, the American socialist, first used the word 'wobbly' he meant simply unstable."

In any case, "Wobbly" spread from camp to camp, boxcar to boxcar. The IWWs laughingly greeted one another with, "I Wobbly Wobbly," until it was picked up by the IWW press and became a part of everyday speech in America.



A typical Wobbly sticker.
(Walter P. Reuther Library,
Wayne State University)

THE BLACK CAT

The first use in print of "Wobbly" as a nickname for the Industrial Workers of the World apparently came in 1911 when Harrison Gray Otis, the anti-labor editor of the Los Angeles Times, denounced the "Wobblies" and other radicals after his offices were dynamited during an open shop dispute.

Wobblies were often denounced as violent anarchists. It was a reputation they didn't deserve.

It was true that IWW stickers and cartoons often featured their famous black cat ("sabo-cat," "sab-cat" or "sabo-tabby" in Wobblyese) symbolizing sabotage. But passive resistance, slow-downs, sit-downs or walk-outs were the IWW's usual style, not dynamiting.

"Big Bill" Haywood, the charismatic Wobbly leader, often warned strikers that violence and dynamite were their worst enemies. However, he also used violent hyperbole to rally fellow workers.

"I'm a two-gun man from the West," the one-eyed former miner liked to say, producing a IWW membership card from one pocket and a just-as-red Socialist Party of America card from the other.

While the Wobblies regrouped in Montesano, the rest of the Harbor cities prepared for a fight.

Police and volunteers patrolled trains into town looking for IWW organizers on their way into town. The mayors of the major Harbor cities met for a conference in Elma. More members of the citizens' brigade were sworn in and an emergency alarm system set up.

Free-speech rallies at the Finnish Hall drew big crowds. But when five Wobbly leaders came to Aberdeen on December 6, 1911, the vigilantes again escorted them out of town in the middle of the night. This time, there was no peace offering of loaves of bread. The Wobblies were blindfolded, kicked and beaten, and one had his teeth knocked out.

The Wobblies offered a \$5,000 reward for the names of the vigilantes. The only one identified, Jimmy Barton, was given liquor and sent to California after being gently chastised by the mayor. The IWW distributed 4,000 copies each of two pamphlets explaining their position and urged followers throughout the West to come join the fight in Aberdeen.

Despite the Wobblies' threats and the fears of the city fathers, a hundred men supposedly en route from Spokane and the promised 5,000 — then, 45,000 — from St. Louis never showed up. But both the city and the IWW scored enough publicity from the rumors to keep their backers riled up.

In January of 1912, the City Council passed another ordinance, this time outlawing all street speaking. The Salvation Army was quietly asked to lay low until things quieted down.

The Wobblies decided to make one last stand.

On the night of January 10, they staged another free speech protest. Clayton E. "Stumpy" Payne, a Wobbly writer and organizer who had come to Aberdeen to rally his fellow workers, spent the night in jail with eighteen other Wobs and IWW sympathizers. When the cops plopped him in the communal cell, Stumpy received a hero's welcome from the other inmates and promptly joined in the merriment.

Stumpy recalled that "One boy who had taken a 'vacation' from college to attend the free speech fight had composed a 'yell' and this was frequently shouted with all their power: 'Who are we? IWW, don't you see! First in war, first in peace, first in the

hands of the Aberdeen police. Rah! Rah! Rah!! IWW!'

"As the City Council had been called into extra session to consider the situation, and their meeting hall was just above the tank where we were locked in, there was always extra emphasis put on the 'IWW' for their benefit," Stumpy wrote later in the One Big Union Monthly newspaper.

The Wobblies clanged the bars rhythmically — "battleship building," in IWW parlance — and serenaded their keepers "boisterously" "all through the night" and into the next morning.

Confronted with singing, soapboxing, a boycott of local merchants and bad publicity, "Aberdeen officials had had their fill of the free-speech fight."

The city fathers were anxious "to avoid a destructive conflict such as had engulfed Spokane two years earlier," LeWarne notes. "They were frightened by visions of Wobbly hordes descending upon their city and concerned that industrial conflict could hinder the growth of the Harbor area."

On January 12, 1912, a settlement was reached "and both sides claimed victory."

The city fathers consented to street speaking, which meant the IWW, having made its point, would move to the next town.

The Wobblies conceded only that they would "not crow over their victory to such an extent as to make the citizens of Aberdeen humiliated."

"The whole Northwest applauded Grays Harbor's handling of its IWW problem," Weatherwax wrote in his radio script. "C.R. Case, president of the Washington state Federation of Labor, said the citizens had taken the right course. 'Nothing,' he said, about the IWWs, was in common with the cause of organized labor.

"But the IWWs were not whipped. They had placed the curse on Grays Harbor..."

Wobbly agitators played a key role in a massive strike the following spring that closed every wood-working plant on the Harbor. They continued to recruit here and elsewhere, while the free-speech fight moved on to other cities, including Fresno and San Diego. And though they had limited success in forcing conditions to improve — and even worse luck in joining the workers of the world into "One Big Union" and overthrowing capitalism — the IWW had set the stage.

The timber industry eventually met many of the Wobbly demands, such as clean bedding and the eight-hour day, during World War I. Frightened of paralyzing strikes that could harm logging of spruce for military planes, the U.S. Army created a special Spruce Production Division. With military efficiency, the "Spruce Army" improved conditions more than the Wobblies ever had.

Ironically, the free speech fights fought for short-term gain ended up being one of the Wobblies' greatest legacies. In towns like Aberdeen, the IWW's stand for the First Amendment set the ground rules for nonviolent protest that would lead to more successful union organizing in the coming decades. In a sense, they were spiritual forerunners too of the civil rights marches and sit-ins of the 1960s.

Sadly, the Wobblies themselves did not find much glory in their time. On the Harbor, their last stand was the trial of the "Centralia massacre" defendants.

On November 11, 1919, in what became one of the most controversial incidents in American labor history, members of the newly formed American Legion staged a parade in Centralia to celebrate the first anniversary of the end to World War I. The parade wound past the IWW Hall. Suddenly, some marchers broke ranks and charged the radicals' headquarters. Shots rang out.

Who fired first will be debated eternally, but four Legionnaires died. That night, vigilantes terrorized Wobbly prisoners in the jail and hanged one from a railroad bridge over the Chehalis River. Legend has it that the hapless Wob was castrated by the vigilantes. However, there is no evidence to support the mutilation story, as John McClelland Jr. points out in his painstakingly researched, evenhanded book, "Wobbly War."

The two-month trial of the IWW defendants was held in Montesano, on a change of venue, beginning on January 26, 1920. Unfortunately, "Montesano was the equal of Centralia in its hatred of anything that bore a Wobbly taint," McClelland notes.

Special sheriff's deputies, most of them Legionnaires, and uniformed veterans of the World War packed the town and the courtroom.

The IWW, fearing mass arrests, or worse, was unwilling to attempt to mobilize an army of its own.

The *Industrial Worker* reported: "Montesano is crowded with gunmen, stool pigeons, newspaper reporters and the morbidly curious, and more are coming in every day. Every train brings ex-servicemen."

In the midst of the trial, Gov. Louis Hart had the U.S. Army send in 80 fully equipped soldiers from the 35th Infantry Division at Camp Lewis as a "precautionary measure." It was rumored that the IWW was sending commandoes to bust the defendants out of jail.

As Montesano residents looked on in amazement, the troops detoured, marched up Main Street and bivouacked on the Courthouse lawn.

In the end, eight Wobblies were convicted of second-degree murder and sentenced to lengthy terms.

A "Labor Jury" and a fact-finding panel from an interfaith alliance — Catholics, Protestants and Jews — concluded that it was a kangaroo court that should shock the sensibilities of people of faith everywhere.

Things weren't much better in the rest of the country.

On the night of January 2, 1920, the U.S. government launched one of the most breathtaking assaults on constitutional rights in American history — the so-called "Palmer Raids."

U.S. Attorney General Mitchell Palmer, with the assistance of a young aide named J. Edgar Hoover, ordered raids nationwide against Wobblies, Communists and other "undesirables." About 10,000 homes, union halls, mills and factories and fraternal lodges catering to immigrants were targeted. About 2,500 people were jailed, and hundreds deported.

Bill Haywood, a shadow of his former self, jumped bail and fled to Russia.

There were Wobbly uprisings in the Northwest, including the Harbor, as late as 1924, but the IWW — always loose on organization — was now rudderless. Many Wobblies joined the Communist Party, went underground, bided their time.

On the Harbor, resentment over decades of union repression accreted over the next fourteen years until charismatic new leaders emerged during the Depression. Dock workers and timber workers forged a formidable alliance. The speechmaking was sometimes incendiary, but always free — thanks to the Wobblies.

WHAT TO READ

Here are some of the best books and major articles on the colorful history of the Industrial Workers of the World:

"The Wobblies, The Story of Syndicalism in the United States," by Patrick Renshaw, Doubleday & Co., 1967; new edition, National Book Network, 1999.

"Iron in Her Soul, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and the American Left," by Helen C. Camp, Washington State University Press, 1995.

"The Rebel Girl, (My First Life 1906-1926)," by Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, International Publishers; new edition 1994.

"Bread — And Roses, The Struggle of American Labor, 1865-1915," by Milton Meltzer, Facts on File.

"The Living Spirit of The Wobblies," by Len De Caux, International Publishers, 1978.

"Wobbly, The Rough-and-Tumble Story of an American Radical," by Ralph Chaplin, The University of Chicago Press.

"Wobbly War, The Centralia Story," by John McClelland Jr., Washington State Historical Society, 1987.

"Rebels of the Woods: the IWW in the Pacific Northwest," by Robert L. Tyler, University of Oregon Books, 1967.

"Wildmen, Wobblies & Whistle Punks, Stewart Holbrook's Lowdown Northwest," edited by Brian Booth, Oregon State University Press, 1995.

"Washingtonians, A Biographical Portrait of the State," (see "The Black Cat: The Wobblies," by Doug Honig), Sasquatch Books, 1988.

"Utopias on Puget Sound, 1885-1915," by Charles Pierce LeWane, the University of Washington Press, 1995.

A 'footloose rebel' sees the Aberdeen free speech fight up close



The Industrial Workers of the World label graced pennants, pamphlets and stickers. (Daily World Archives)

NOTABLE DATES FOR 'STUMPY' PAYNE

1869

Clayton E. "Stumpy" Payne born.

1905

Payne attends the founding convention of the Industrial Workers of the World.

FALL OF 1911

As secretary of the Free Speech Committee, Payne comes to Aberdeen for the Wobbly fight against a city ordinance restricting street speaking.

MARCH 1919

"The Mainspring of Action," an account of the Aberdeen fight, appears in the *One Big Union Monthly*.

JULY 1955

Payne, 85, serves a six-month term as editor of the *Industrial Worker*. That same year, he attends the IWW convention as the only living charter member.

1963

Payne dies. "He was a serious rebel with an amount of dignity and urbanity that was rare," notes the *Industrial Worker* in a tribute. "He remained a dedicated Wobbly to the end of his days."

Stumpy's Night in Jail

Clayton E. "Stumpy" Payne (1869-1963), a founding member of the Industrial Workers of the World, hoboed from Chicago to Grays Harbor in the winter of 1911 to help organize the Wobbly free-speech fight with Aberdeen's establishment. Stumpy, 42 years old but still a "footloose rebel" to the core, was secretary of the IWW's national Free Speech Committee.

The former stump rancher had also been a carpenter, farm hand and railroad worker. In 1905, he attended the founding convention of the IWW in Chicago and heard organizer "Big Bill" Haywood declare, "Fellow workers, this is the Continental Congress of the working class."

Payne immediately became one of the most enthusiastic Wobbly organizers. He was also a natural-born reporter with a lively eye for detail and puckish sense of humor. In 1955, at the age of 85, Payne served a six-month stint as editor of the *Industrial Worker* and attended the IWW's fiftieth anniversary convention — the only charter member in attendance.

In a tribute to Payne, who died at the age of 94 in 1963, the editor of the IWW's *Industrial Worker* wrote: "He was a serious rebel with an amount of dignity and urbanity that was rare. He remained a dedicated Wobbly to the end of his days."

The following is his account of the 1911 free speech fight in Aberdeen. It originally appeared in *One Big Union Monthly*, a Wobbly newsletter, in March of 1919.

IN THE FALL OF 1911 OCCURRED THE the Aberdeen, Washington, Free Speech fight. Although shorter than many of the contests of this character that took place thruout the West shortly before and after that time, it was, while it lasted, one of the most bitterly contested struggles in which the organization took part.

Also, it was by all odds the most clean-cut victory that was won by the organization in struggles of this character.

One phase of the fight that has not to my knowledge been touched upon was the psychology of the men who took part in it at the time the final and winning attack was made to regain the use of the

streets for purposes of agitation. I had an exceptional opportunity to observe this state of mind, which for a better term may be properly called a religious fervor.

I had been for some time the secretary for the Free Speech Committee, and had been in the town for about six weeks before the evening of January 10, 1912, when the grand rush was made to use the streets for "free speech."

As I had the correspondence of the Committee in hand at the time, I was ordered not to take any part in the demonstration for that night. However, someone had been making it his business to find out my business, and this, together with my interest in the proceedings, made a change in the program, and this change gave me the opportunity to observe this psychological phenomenon.

The demonstration was timed for 6 p.m., when it was figured the members of the Citizens' Club would be at supper, and it was thought this would give some of the men a chance to make a few minutes' talk before they could be arrested. Fifteen men had been selected to make the first attack. The manner of selecting them was by refusing to permit any one to speak unless he plainly stated that he would speak anyhow, permit or none. The Committee had decided that fifteen should be the number, but seventeen was the number that actually took part in the "speaking."

Wishing to be able to make a first-hand report of what took place in the streets, I went among the crowd, which in a few minutes after six o'clock had grown to some 3,000 persons, all eager to see the demonstration. These were gathered around the principal street corner, but there was no one in the center of the street. By common consent this was left entirely to the participants in the battle.

The first speaker would have been able to hold a crowd with a speech of half an hour or more had he been allowed the time, but he was ar-

FELLOW WORKERS:



Remember!

WE ARE IN HERE FOR YOU; YOU ARE OUT THERE FOR US

A Wobbly handbill exhorts the "fellow workers" to remember their brothers-in-arms. (Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University)

WRITING FOR THE IWW

The lively Industrial Workers of the World press boasted many itinerant correspondents who spiced their reports with Wobblyese.

Stewart Holbrook, the famed Northwest historian, plucked this 1923 gem from the "Job News" section of the Industrial Worker:

"Aberdeen, Wash.

— Coates-Fordney Camp

— High-Head layout; two sides, rig-up crew and steel gang. Wages: gandy dancers, \$3.75; rigging, \$4.25 to \$6.50. Garbage, \$1.45 per day. Mattress furnished, but carry your own balloon. Slaves dissatisfied with conditions, but talk nothing but dehorn and world's series.

"Two of us Fellow Workers just started to line up a few of the boys when the push hit us on the behind with paychecks. He has the Wobbly horrors bad. Fellow Workers coming this way should lay off the bull-bucker here. He is a fink. Pretends to favor the One Big Union but when you ask him to stamp-up, he turns you in."

Holbrook concludes admiringly, "That would be good clear reporting on any man's newspaper."

That's \$3.75 per day, by the way, and "garbage" was grub. "Dehorn" is Wobblyese "for anything that interfered with the more important business of making life miserable for the boss," according to "Woods Words" by Walter F. McCulloch.

A "balloon" was a blanket roll, a "bull-bucker," the boss of a timber-cutting crew. "Gandy dancers" were workers on the company's railroad operations.

WHAT IS THE IWW?

Foes of the Industrial Workers of the World translated IWW to "I Won't Work," "I Want Whiskey," "International Wonder Workers," "Irresponsible Wholesale Wreckers," and during the first World War, when IWW strikes were branded treasonous, "Imperial Wilhelm's Warriors."

Historian Patrick Renshaw notes that the most common error among writers and historians is to refer to the IWW as the International Workers of the World rather than Industrial.

Another error is to assume that the IWW is dead. As the twenty-first century dawned, latter-day Wobbly stalwarts were still striving to fan the flames of discontent and mobilize the working class. There were even "Webblies."

The San Francisco Bay Area IWW hosted an IWW home page on the World Wide Web at www.iww.org, with the preamble to the IWW Constitution available in eight languages.

As of 2001, the IWW General Headquarters in the U.S. was at P.O. Box 13476, Philadelphia, PA., 19101.

rested and hustled off to jail within less than two minutes after he had shouted "Fellow Workers."

No sooner had he been taken thru the crowd toward the jail by two members of the Citizens' Club, than another man stepped out from the crowd and began "Fellow Workers!" This man's voice had the twang of the Down East Yankee, and his bearing was that of a descendant of the Pilgrims of the Mayflower.

Following him came a short, swarthy German, evidently from the Schwarzwald. "Mein Fellow Vorkers! Schust you listen by me while I tells you sometings!" But what that "something" was he could not tell before he was seized and hustled in the wake of the other two.

After the German came a large, raw-boned Irishman with the brogue of the ould sod thick on his tongue. "Fellow Workers! Oi'm not much of a spaker, but Oi don't suppose Oi'll be allowed to talk long, anyhow." That was all the speech he was allowed to make before he too was led away.

Next in line was an Italian who shouted the regular greeting of "Fellow Workers," spoke a few rapid fire words and was taken towards the jail. From another part of the crowd a five-foot man with the unmistakable rolling gait of a sailor sprang to center of the cleared street, shouted "Fellow Workers," and had time enough to make perhaps the longest "speech" of the evening. "I have been run out of this town five times by the Citizens' Club, and every time I have found my way back. This proves conclusively that the world is round."

But when he had gone thus far with his remarks he was seized and half carried toward the jail. Behind the sailor came a lumberjack, no talker, but a power in the woods where men hold their place by strength and nerve. "Fellow Workers! There is one of the Citizens' Club fellows over there. He is going to arrest some one." The man pointed out at once made a run for the lumber worker, and he too was taken to jail.

Thus came one after another, made the common salutation of "Fellow Workers," started to talk and generally managed to say but a few words, when he too was hustled to the jail. The entire demonstration was over in less than half an hour and the crowd began to disperse.

It was while leaving the scene of the demonstration that I was approached from behind by two



An IWW demonstration for "fellow worker" William J. McKay, 40, who was shot and killed by a security guard while picketing the Bay City Mill in South Aberdeen during a strike in 1923. (Daily World Archives)

men who came on either side of me, and with the remark, "Oh, say! The chief wants to see you," they led me to the jail.

My arrest was the last one of the night. After being searched and questioned by the police, I was put in the "tank" with the rest of the "free speech fighters." My reception was the heartiest demonstration of welcome I have ever received. Their joy seemed to be combined with an appreciation of the joke on me, but it was none the less hearty.

After the greetings had been made, and things became comparatively quiet, I was able to look about me and see at close range the manner of men they were. Outwardly, they were of the careless, happy-go-lucky sort to whom *dolce far niente* (blissful idleness) appeared to be a more appropriate motto than any other that could be selected.

Not one had any ties of kindred, job or financial interest in the town. Most of them had never been in the place before. Perhaps a majority never would have been there had not some member of the IWW flashed the word over the country that he and others were denied the rights they claimed. Many of them would never be there again.

Here they were, eighteen men in the vigor of life, most of whom came long distances thru snow and hostile towns by beating their way, penniless and hungry, into a place where a jail sentence was the gentlest treatment that could be expected, and where many had already been driven into the swamps and beaten nearly to death by members



Fed up with the lousy food and bug-infested bunkhouses, a group of itinerant loggers — "bindlestiffs" — went on strike at a Grays Harbor logging camp in 1901. (Jones Historical Collection)

of the Citizens' Club for the same offense that they had committed so joyously tonight.

All had walked the three miles from Hoquiam in a rain to take part in the demonstration that all confidently felt would mean that they would be sent to jail until midnight, and then be driven into the swamps with clubs and guns, and that perhaps some of them would be killed, as had nearly been the case with others before them. Yet here they were, laughing in boyish glee at tragic things that to them were jokes.

One man said, "This is cold after the orange groves of California." The man he spoke to replied, "It is not as cold as the Canadian railways." One man remarked, "The snow in the Rockies is a fright," to which another replied, "It don't be worse than the Siskyouss."

A ponderous German recited the Marxian battle cry. Two men compared notes on their arrests, and laughed gleefully at some joke on a policeman. One boy who had taken a "vacation" from college to attend the Free Speech fight had composed a "yell," and this was frequently shouted with all their power. "Who are we? IWW, don't you see! First in war, first in peace, first in the hands of the Aberdeen police. Rah! Rah!! Rah!!! IWW."

As the city council had been called into extra session to consider the situation, and their meeting hall was just above the tank where we were locked in, there was always extra emphasis put on the "IWW" for their benefit.

But what was the motive behind the actions of these men? Clearly, they would take no part in the social, political or economic life of the town, after the fight was over. No place in the country could treat them worse than Aberdeen was trying to treat them. Why were they here?

Is the call of Brotherhood in the human race greater than any fear or discomfort, despite the efforts of the masters of life for six thousand years to root out that call of Brotherhood from our minds? Is there a joy in martyrdom that the human race must sense at times to make its life complete? Must humanity ever depend on the most despised of its members for its most spiritual gifts? Is it among the working class that we may see the fulfillment of the prediction that there shall be no Greek or Barbarian, no Scythian or Parthian, no circumcision or uncircumcision, but all one?

These things have I often pondered as the result of the twenty-two hours in the Aberdeen jail.

WHAT TO READ

The Wobblies have inspired countless scholarly works, nostalgic memoirs, anthologies and novels. Most of their major battles have been detailed, and the Aberdeen Free Speech fight is no exception. Some key sources:

"The Aberdeen Free Speech Fight of 1911-12," by Charles Pierce LeWame, *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, Vol. 66, No. 1, January 1975. This is the best-detailed piece on the fight, drawn from first-hand accounts and newspaper articles of the day.

"Wobblies," No. 71 of the "Hometown Scrapbook" series, by Ben K. Weatherwax. Broadcast in the 1950s on Aberdeen's KBKW, this account of the "Wobbly invasion" of 1911 is even-handed—and actually a bit radical for its time. Like all of the "Hometown Scrapbook" pieces, it is also tightly written and brimming with detail. The script is available at the Aberdeen Timberland Library.

"Rebel Voices, An IWW Anthology," edited by Joyce L. Kornbluh, Charles J. Kerr Publishing Company; new and expanded edition, 1998. The definitive source on the IWW by the definitive publisher of pro-labor material in America, this book features many first-hand accounts of the Wobblies. "Stumpy" Payne's account of the Aberdeen free-speech fight is included under the title "The Mainspring of Action."

The Washington State History Museum, 1911 Pacific Avenue, Tacoma, 98402 (1-888-238-4373) has a fine collection of Wobblyana, including song sheets and posters.

NEWS OF THE DAY

"National guardsmen took control of the industrial sections of Grays Harbor today, while an estimated 6,000 strikers and sympathizers marched through the downtown streets of Aberdeen in a huge and dramatic protest against calling state troops here for duty in the lumber strike, now in its ninth week."

"The demonstration, which was good natured, was the largest of its kind in the history of Grays Harbor. The parade was continued in Hoquiam this afternoon, but with a lesser number."

"With the state troops in charge at the operating plywood plants and mills, the strikers gathered at the corner of Wishkah and I streets here shortly after 10 o'clock and made an informal organization for their march."

"The parade, when it started, was headed by two American flags, one carried by a girl, and proceeded down Wishkah street to K, marched up K to Market, then east on Market, passed the police station, where some 'boos' were heard, and up H street to the armory."

"From the armory it proceeded down I street to Wishkah and thence west on Wishkah to Hoquiam."

"The marchers sang 'Hail, hail, the gang's all here,' and cheered and 'booed' as they walked."

"There was no disturbance of any kind, and city police, state patrolmen and the national guard troops made no attempt to interfere."

"The scene near the armory site, where the marchers paused to 'boo' the troops who made no reply, was spectacular."

"The marchers kept to one side of the streets and did not block traffic. They laughed and joked among themselves."

"Two women wheeled baby carriages."

— "Troops here: Strike parade held," *Aberdeen Daily World*, July 8, 1935



National Guardsmen, called in by Gov. Clarence Martin, arrive to disperse a crowd listening to a strike captain on a ladder at Heron and G streets in Aberdeen on July 8, 1935. (Jones Historical Collection)

the communists in the union were as bureaucratic as the AFL!)

Harry Bridges' longshoremen stood shoulder to shoulder with the woodworkers.

The employers were livid. Violence broke out in Humboldt County, California, as mill owners hired a militia of goons. Three unarmed pickets — all Finns — were killed; dozens more were wounded, clubbed or gassed. The Harbor's large Finnish population, including many longshoremen and mill workers, was incensed.

Now it was war.

On June 26, Gov. Clarence Martin — only the second Democratic governor in state history, but no liberal — promised mill owners that they would have State Patrol or National Guard protection if they wanted to reopen their mills.

On July 1, 1935 the largest picket line ever formed on the West Coast — 2,000 workers — was set up at Harbor Plywood Corp. at the foot of Myrtle Street. Arnold Polson's Bay City Lumber Co. mill in South Aberdeen was also picketed by several hundred union members and sympathizers. Strike breakers were protected by city police and twenty-five State Patrol troopers.

"No violence marked the picketing," the *Aberdeen Daily World* reported, "clapping of hands

being the only method by which the pickets attempted to halt the men and women going into the plywood plant. At the Bay City mill, the strikers did not even resort to this, and in only one or two instances was a voice raised to address those going through the lines."

July 2 was Aberdeen founder Sam Benn's 103rd birthday, but the headlines were not felicitous:

"GAS BARRAGES MELT PICKET LINES; TACK STREWN ROAD STIRS STATE POLICE; PICKETS DENY DEED"

"Striking sawmill workers, sympathizers and spectators were driven from the main entrance of the Bay City mill today by a barrage of tear gas laid down by state police. Some 400 men and women were dispersed," the *World* reported.

Wives, mothers and female workers were "out in force" along the picket lines, and there were hundreds of spectators.

Nikolina Lonac, a stalwart Croatian immigrant whose husband Charles and son Tony were among the Bay City strikers, was injured when attempting to run from the gas on the South Side. She tripped and fell, cutting a deep gash in her right knee.

("It never did heal. It gave her trouble until the day she died in 1940, just barely 50," her son, Tony