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1978

A History of the Washington State Labor Movement,

1885 - 1935

by

Jonathan Dembo

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Washington

1978

Approved by Robert E. Burns  
(Chairperson of Supervisory Committee)

Program Authorized  
to Offer Degree History

Date 27 November 1978

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UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

Date: November 27, 1978

We have carefully read the dissertation entitled A History of the Washington State Labor Movement, 1885-1935

Jonathan Dembo submitted by  
Jonathan Dembo in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
and recommend its acceptance. In support of this recommendation we present the following  
joint statement of evaluation to be filed with the dissertation.

Jonathan Dembo has written a massive dissertation, "A History of the Washington State Labor Movement, 1885-1935." It is a work of original research, based upon several manuscript and archival collections as well as published materials, and at the same time, a synthesis of existing scholarship. He has incorporated in his work the findings of dozens of authors of books and articles--and no less than 47 theses and dissertations (34 of them done at the University of Washington).

Dembo approached this task cautiously and soberly, stimulated by his own earlier studies in non-American history and economics. He was convinced that the story of the labor movement in this state had been seriously distorted by our preoccupation with Radicalism (especially the Industrial Workers of the World, the Seattle General Strike, and the Communist Party). His research in the archives of the Washington State Labor Council and the King County Labor Council (both now in the University of Washington Library Manuscripts Division), and in the labor press provided him with proof of his general thesis. His study then broadened and deepened, with the result that he has now written.

We recommend acceptance of this dissertation as an important addition to our social, economic and political history.

DISSERTATION READING COMMITTEE:

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University of Washington

Abstract

A HISTORY OF THE WASHINGTON STATE LABOR MOVEMENT,  
1885-1935

By Jonathan Dembo

Chairman of the Supervisory Committee: Professor Robert E. Burke  
Department of History

Over the years, historians have produced a number of fine works on various aspects of the Washington State labor movement. Unfortunately, they have tended to concentrate their attentions on a few incidents, organizations, and issues. In particular, they have examined and re-examined the Industrial Workers of the World, the Seattle general strike, and the prevalence of political radicalism in the labor movement. The purpose of this paper is to add continuity and perspective to these scattered efforts and, with original research, to fill in the interstices in our knowledge of the early history of the Washington State labor movement.

As understood in this paper, the labor movement is not limited to organized trade unions. In its earliest period, the trade unions were not the most important elements of the labor movement. The labor movement consisted of numerous, diverse, mutually exclusive groups and only gradually did the trade unions come to dominate. Even then, the labor movement remained divided. The trade unions were split by bitter conflicts. Indeed, conflict for supremacy within the labor movement

prevailed from the very beginning. This paper attempts to identify and define these various labor groups, to trace their political alliances, and to explore and explain the causes of their behavior.

This paper examines the labor movement from four basic perspectives: chronological, economic, political, and ethno-cultural. Chronologically, it divides the early history of the labor movement into four periods. In the first period, 1885-1918, the diverse elements of the labor movement came into being; the trade unions rose to dominance and split over the issues of craft versus industrial unionism, non-partisan versus third party political action, and over affiliation with the American Federation of Labor. In the second period, 1919-1925, the conservative craft unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor won the battle for dominance of the labor movement, ousted the radical third partyists, and unsuccessfully sought to create a progressive, non-partisan political coalition. In the third period, 1926-1931, conservative Republican domination of state government prevented the passage of reform legislation. The craft unionists failed to take advantage of their supremacy to organize the unorganized and the labor movement became mired in apathy. It was the onset of the Depression which, by discrediting business leadership, led to renewed interest in reform. The failure of the craft unionists to respond to the demands of industrial workers for organization, however, set the stage for the break-up of the unity of the labor movement after 1935.

In each of these periods, moreover, the attempt is made to relate changing economic, political, and ethno-cultural patterns to the numerical and structural growth of the labor movement. The rise of the national market-place, the conflict between conservatives,



reformers, and radicals, and the antagonisms within the labor movement, between the old, already-established immigrant groups, and the newer, ethno-culturally distinct, immigrant groups, are the inter-related dynamic elements of this evolution.

Throughout this entire period, the struggle to attain and protect the unity of the labor movement had produced conflict not peace, weakness not strength. Ironically, the ultimate dissolution of labor's unity, after 1935, strengthened and invigorated the labor movement. As a result of the competition between craft and industrial unions, aggregate trade union membership and influence grew dramatically. Even as multi-state and regional forces came to dominate the Washington State labor movement, especially after 1935, the average worker gained much-improved economic, political, and legal benefits.

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## PREFACE

This is the story of the origin and growth of the Washington State labor movement. It traces the evolution of the labor movement from its earliest manifestations in the anti-Chinese crisis of the 1880's to the passage of the Wagner Labor Relations Act of 1935. As defined in this dissertation the labor movement refers to a diverse pattern of groups. It focusses on the trade unions but it also encompasses numerous socialistic, religious, agricultural, and industrial groups and communities which had in common only a belief in the injustice of the existing form of society and a need to cooperate to secure relief. Only gradually did the trade unions emerge as dominant organizations within the labor movement. Even then they were faced with serious internal conflicts over their appropriate role in the labor movement and over the proper forms and methods of organization needed to achieve their goals.

It is the thesis of this dissertation that the labor movement is and has been, despite its internal conflicts and often-voiced alienation from the status quo, in basic harmony with the rest of society and that, for the most part, labor did not object to the fundamental nature of that society. Despite the presence of numerous radical, socialist, and revolutionary elements, the Washington State labor movement never defined itself purely in terms of class interests. For this reason the attempt has been made to define the labor movement in other than merely economic terms.

At each stage in its history the Washington State labor movement has had close ties and relationships with other economic and political organizations. The wage-earners, themselves, have also been active in numerous religious, civic, fraternal, political, as well as economic organizations. An effort to study the labor movement solely from the economic perspective is bound to miss much of this richness.

Thus, the attempt has been made here to examine the labor movement from three different, but inter-related, perspectives: the political and ethno-cultural as well as the economic. Each of these perspectives reveals different aspects of labor's history.

The economic data show how, in the period 1885-1919, rapid but normal economic growth inhibited the development of trade unionism while conditions of economic stagnation, depression, and war spurred unionism. The data show also how the sharp post-war depression in the period 1919-1925 led to the elimination of many of the gains made during the war, particularly those by the industrial unionists, and how, in the period 1926-1930, the return of economic prosperity failed to bestow its benefits on the labor movement. It was only during the depression of the 1930's that labor began to grow again and that a strong industrial union movement took root.

The parallel political evidence shows how in the early years of the labor movement, 1885-1919, the conflict developed between the relatively conservative craft union forces and the relatively radical industrial union forces over control of the American Federation of Labor, over structural and jurisdictional reform of the AFL, and over political policies. The craft unionists supported non-partisan

policies while the industrial unionists tended to follow Left-wing or third party policies. In the period 1919-1925 failure to agree on a political policy led to destruction of the more radical third party elements and the isolation of the most conservative non-partisan forces. This split led, in the period 1926-1930, to a near-complete collapse of labor's political influence. It was only when the depression destroyed public confidence in Republican policies and the New Deal arose to champion the rights of labor to organize and bargain collectively that labor began to unite politically and grow in influence.

In each of these periods it is the ethno-cultural evidence which explains and enlivens the other data. Primarily, it was the conflict between established "old" immigrant and native-born groups which derived from Protestant northwest Europe and the unskilled, poverty-stricken "new" immigrant groups which stemmed from non-Protestant eastern and southern Europe that divided the labor movement. The old immigrants dominated the skilled, better-paying jobs in the craft unions; the new immigrants mainly worked in the unorganized mass production industries. The old immigrants supported conservative, non-partisan political policies; the new immigrants supported Left-wing socialistic and third party political policies. The old immigrants endorsed the organization of the AFL along craft union lines; the new immigrants demanded reform along industrial union lines. In the period 1885-1919 as waves of new immigrants poured into the nation and state, their influence in the labor movement, both organizationally and politically, increased rapidly. It reached a peak during and shortly after World War I as a result of wartime recognition of

industrial unions in government-supported industries and as a result of the Russian Revolution. For a while it seemed that they might take over the labor movement. In the post-war period, 1919-1925, however, internal divisions, opposition from entrenched old immigrant and craft union forces, and economic depression under-cut the industrial unionists and led to a purge of both radical and industrial union forces from the labor movement. In the period 1926-1930 the AFL made only weak and uncoordinated effort to organize the new immigrants in the mass production industries. Again, it was not until the depression of the 1930's that the new immigrants, aided by the New Deal and led by their own militant rank and file leaders, were able to organize strong industrial unions. Thus, the story of the labor movement in Washington State in the period 1885-1935 largely revolves around the efforts of the new immigrants to organize and win a place for themselves in the economy.

In line with the chronological divisions already noted, this history of the Washington State labor movement to 1935 is divided into four parts: 1885-1919, 1920-1925, 1926-1930 and 1931-1935. Each part is further chronologically subdivided into chapters. In each chapter the attempt is made to define and account for the impact of changing economic and political conditions on the labor movement and on the trade unions in particular. Further, each chapter seeks to account for the evolution of labor's political and organizational policies and the controversies which surrounded them. Where possible each chapter focusses on developments in the Seattle Central Labor Council, the largest and most important in the state, and on the



Washington State Federation of Labor, the central political and organizational authority for the state labor movement.

Part One, *The Early Years*, traces the evolution of the Washington State labor movement from the mid-1880's to the conclusion of World War I. Its major themes include the conflicts between the trade unionists over organizational policy, political affiliation, and ideological alignment. It also deals with the rise of the populist and progressive movements, the increasing radicalization of the socialist parties, and the rise of radical industrial unions. Chapter 1, *The Formative Years*, traces the relationships between the trade unions and the alternative agricultural, political, and ideological organizations up to the formation of the Socialist Party of Washington in 1901. Subsidiary themes relate the ideological controversies between these groups to the ethnic and cultural differences between them.

Chapter 2, *Labor Reorganizes: The Choice Between Socialism and Progressivism*, deals with the reaction of the trade unions to the formation of the Socialist Party of Washington. It begins with the organization of the Washington State Federation of Labor in 1902, and its affiliation with the American Federation of Labor. It examines the disaffection between the pro-socialist industrial unionists and the pro-AFL craft unionists in the WSFL. While the pro-AFL craft unionists sought to avoid becoming tied to a political party and sought to win political advantages from both major political parties, the pro-socialists were divided. Some wanted the WSFL to endorse the SPW. Others wanted the WSFL to endorse the Socialist Labor Party.

Others believed that labor should abstain from all politics and concentrate on improving its economic strength. Chapter Two concludes, in 1908, with the end of Washington's long-term pattern of rapid economic growth and with the rise to power of a pro-AFL faction in the SPW.

Chapter 3, The Radical Challenge: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Coalition, traces the growing dominance of the pro-AFL, non-partisan craft unionists over the WSFL and the impact of their political alliance with the various middle class reform groups--the Progressive Movement--between 1909 and American entry into World War I. During this period the labor movement achieved some of its most notable successes including the nation's first state-run compulsory workmen's compensation system. This chapter also deals with the rise of the Industrial Workers of the World and the growth of foreign-born "new immigrant" elements within both the SPA and WSFL. It also deals with the divisive impact of World War I on the socialist and labor movements.

Chapter 4, Discontent: Labor and the War Years, examines the traumatic political, social, and economic impact of World War I on the labor movement. It focusses on the relations between the trade unions, the socialists, and the progressives. By creating thousands of new jobs in industries dominated by pro-socialist industrial unions, the war enhanced the influence of the new immigrant radicals within the WSFL and weakened the non-partisan pro-AFL craft unionists. The political radicals encouraged by their new strength pushed for endorsement of a third party and for reform of the AFL along industrial

union lines. Even as political and organizational differences split the trade unions the issue of the war came between them. The WSFL supported the AFL's pro-war policies; the pro-socialist radicals, who dominated the Puget Sound central labor councils, opposed the war. Wartime repression of political dissent and strikes led many middle class reformers to abandon their alliance with the trade unions. The Russian revolution excited the state of public opinion against labor radicals to hysterical levels. While business and conservative political leaders effectively turned fears of espionage and revolution against trade unions in general the WSFL leadership found itself in a nearly impossible position. The more the leadership attempted to straddle the issue, the greater grew the power of the pro-soviet extremists in the socialist movement. Part One concludes with the radicals planning a coup against the pro-AFL leadership of the Seattle Central Labor Council.

Part Two, Labor and Politics: The Struggle Over a Labor Party, focusses on the immediate post-war period from 1919 to 1925 during which the pro-third partyists in the Puget Sound central labor councils and their political allies attempted first to take over their councils and then, when that failed, to take over the WSFL. Chapter Five, The Clash of Ideologies: The Year of the Left-wing, is subdivided into four sections. Section One, The Seattle General Strike, January-March 1919, relates the efforts of the radicals in the Puget Sound central labor councils to turn a strike of metal trades workers into a general strike. This, they hoped, would precipitate a revolutionary situation and the overthrow of capitalism.

Section Two, The Open Shop Movement, Spring 1919, deals with the employers' reaction to the rise of labor radicalism and their preparations to destroy the labor movement. In doing so they applied all the lessons learned during the wartime repression of dissidents and trade unionists. Section Three, The One Big Union Movement, Spring-Summer 1919, deals with the efforts of pro-industrial unionists to drive a wedge between the WSFL and the AFL by securing the adoption of an industrial union reform plan. They nearly succeeded. Only the loyalty of the trade union leaders in Seattle saved the WSFL for the AFL. Section Three, The Centralia Massacre, Fall-Winter 1919-1920, explores the impact of this outrage on the statewide labor movement. Section Four, The Open Shop Offensive, October 1919-September 1920, describes the course of the employers' open shop drive under the banner of the "American Plan" of company unionism and welfare capitalism.

Chapter Six, The Conservatives Lose Control: The Rise of the Farmer-Labor Party, traces the unsuccessful efforts of the WSFL's non-partisan leadership to maintain control of these violent tides within the rank and file. Their efforts to recreate the progressive coalition in 1920 were stymied by the third partyists when radicals convinced the rank and file to endorse the new Farmer-Labor Party. This placed the WSFL's leadership in another nearly impossible position. It destroyed the non-partisan progressive coalition so laboriously established between the WSFL, the Grange, and other reform groups, who refused to join the WSFL in the Farmer-Labor Party. The division within progressive ranks led to a clear victory for the conservative Republicans and the virtual destruction of the Democratic

Party. The FLP succeeded in becoming the major opposition party in the state but the leadership of the WSFL continued to work against it, spurred on by the AFL. The failure of the FLP to win political power was made all the more poignant by the onset of the postwar depression in the second half of 1920.

Chapter Seven, The Radical Coup d'Etat: The Labor Capitalism Controversy, 1921, relates how the radicals sought, once again, to take control of the Seattle labor movement by discrediting its conservative AFL-loyalist leadership. But, with the help of the WSFL and the AFL, the leadership decisively defeated these efforts. This was the last time the radicals threatened the control of the pro-AFL forces in Seattle. They persisted longer in the other Puget Sound councils but the backbone of their movement had been broken. Economic depression, which nearly destroyed the radical industrial unions, and internal splits which did destroy the socialist movement, paved the way for a conservative resurgence.

Chapter Eight, The Conservatives Regain Control: Back to Progressivism, 1922, primarily concerns the renewed efforts of the WSFL to conduct a non-partisan progressive campaign to elect candidates in the 1922 congressional and state elections. Due to continued third party opposition and the political intransigence of the non-partisan leadership the WSFL's efforts to secure a progressive nominee in the Republican senatorial primary collapsed. The personal conflicts between the non-partisan leaders threatened to destroy the whole progressive coalition. For a change, however, fortune favored the labor movement. The Democrats nominated an acceptable progressive candidate,

C.C. Dill, who went on to defeat the conservative Republican incumbent, Miles Poindexter. In addition large numbers of progressives won local and state elections and labor helped defeat conservative efforts to limit development of public power.

In 1923 and 1924 the economy began to recover from the post-war depression. The labor conservatives with the support of the AFL and the international unions took the opportunity to go on the offensive against the dissidents in the Washington State labor movement. Labor leaders received unexpected support from Republican Governor Louis Hart, who appointed pro-labor officials to the Department of Labor and Industries and supported ratification of the Child Labor Amendment to the Constitution.

Chapter Nine, The Conservatives Counterattack: Bringing the "Reds" to Heel, focusses primarily on the successful efforts of the WSFL leadership to drive the radicals out of the labor movement during 1923. Chapter Ten, Disillusion: The End of Ideology, concerns the efforts of the WSFL leadership to rebuild the progressive coalition in time for the presidential election campaign. Due to internal division, organizational weakness, the gradual return of economic prosperity, and the reemergence of third party forces, however, their effort foundered and fell apart. Conservative Republicans swept to victory.

Part Two concludes in Chapter Eleven, New Directions: Labor and the Rise of Dave Beck, and focusses on the final purge of radicals and communists from the Seattle Central Labor Council and the accompanying rise of the non-partisan craft union leaders to undisputed control

of the labor movement. These leaders, typified by Dave Beck of the Teamsters, had made their peace with capitalism. They sought only to "sell" their members' labor for the highest price in the marketplace and to obtain constant price increases for that labor. Having triumphed over all opponents within the trade unions they turned their attention to the business of trade unionism. For the most part they failed. Except for Dave Beck's Teamsters the labor movement stagnated and declined. The administration of conservative Republican Governor Roland H. Hartley peremptorily rejected all appeals for labor legislation and worked assiduously to undercut existing legislation. Limited by their own ideology from proposing radical alternatives, interested primarily in gaining acceptance from the Establishment, the labor leaders were nearly powerless to effect changes.

Part Three, Under the Old Regime, traces the evolution of the labor movement in the later 1920's under the guidance of the conservative, non-partisan, pro-AFL craft unionists. Chapter Twelve, The Search for a New Identity: The Hartley Recall and Shingle Tariff Campaigns, focusses on labor's efforts to build a new political coalition. It also deals with labor's efforts to secure relief from unemployment in the shingle industry by joining the business leaders to secure a higher tariff. Neither of these campaigns solved labor's problems. Their organizational campaigns suffered from mis-direction, inefficiency, jurisdictional jealousies, and rank and file apathy. The unwillingness of the leadership to attempt to organize the unorganized hurt morale badly. Bitterly, the labor movement fell back

on anti-immigrant, anti-oriental nostrums.

By 1927 time had run out on the leaders who had defeated the radicals. WSFL President William Short (1918-1927), who had led the fight for the non-partisans, resigned to become an officer in a labor-owned bank. His temporary successor, Harry Call, lacked a power base within the WSFL and was too weak to assert leadership over the powerful local leaders. Chapter Thirteen, Changing the Guard: The Regency of Harry Call, focusses on the bitter struggle for supremacy which Short's resignation unleashed.

Chapter Fourteen, Labor and Government: The Yellow Dog Contract Fight and the Election Campaign, focusses on labor's inability to deal with the conservative-dominated local and state governments. Neither administrative nor judicial branches were willing to tolerate trade unionism. The chapter deals with the unsuccessful efforts of Seattle Teachers Union Local No. 200 to win recognition from the Seattle School Board, the board's retaliatory issuance of a Yellow Dog contract, and the local's unsuccessful court battles to over-turn the contract restrictions against union membership.

These failures led to increased frustration. The fabled prosperity of the 1920's had not benefited labor very much. Politically and economically labor was ever on the defensive. Chapter Fifteen, On the Brink of the Precipice: The Anti-Filipino Campaign, relates how as the economic future became bleaker, the labor movement lashed out in its futility against immigrants perceived as taking away jobs from union members. Still the leadership clung to its conservative craft union principles and political non-partisanship.



Part Three concludes in 1930 as the Wall Street crisis expanded into a global economic depression spreading waves of unemployment and economic despair in its wake. Chapter Sixteen, Labor and the Economic Crisis: Unemployment and Public Power, discusses labor's first reactions to the depression. These consisted mainly of efforts to get local, state and federal governments to provide unemployment relief through expanded public works. Labor turned to the initiative to avoid the roadblocks in the Republican legislature and was remarkably successful through a renewed alliance with the Grange. Labor's success in helping to achieve passage of the Grange public power bill and the legislative reapportionment bill in the 1930 elections did much to break the power of the conservatives entrenched in the legislature. Labor still lacked the strength or will to organize effectively, however, and spent the bulk of its efforts attempting to use the Filipino "menace" to prop up employment of its membership.

Part Four, The Depression, traces the response of the labor movement to the economic collapse of 1931-1935. Chapter Seventeen, The Great Depression: Unemployment and the Search for Relief, deals with the efforts of the labor movement to seek a cure for massive unemployment, politically and organizationally. Again, both efforts failed. Due to political opposition from conservatives at all levels of government efforts to secure relief all failed. The legislature even attempted to over-turn the reapportionment bill. Instead, local self-help efforts, such as the Seattle Unemployed Citizens League, arose to fill the gap, and for a while wielded considerable political and economic power. And, although the economic crisis led to

increased cooperation between the WSFL and the Seattle Central Labor Council, it weakened the ties between the WSFL and the Grange. Lack of organizational progress did produce, at the 1931 AFL convention, the first signs of the reemerging crisis over industrial versus craft unionism. Although the AFL leadership managed to paper over their differences, labor's splits over organizational structure continued to grow wider.

Chapter Eighteen, The Democratic Alternative: Labor and the Roosevelt Coalition, examines the plight of labor as the depression continued to grow worse. As political pressures grew to force governmental action, however, the Republican conservatives resisted even harder. Still the labor leaders did not want to abandon their Republican ties and non-partisanship. They were encouraged when both major party gubernatorial candidates appealed for their support and Governor Hartley was defeated by a pro-labor candidate in the primary. Thus, while the WSFL strongly supported Roosevelt and the national ticket, it also endorsed many progressive Republicans for local, state, and congressional offices. When the Democrats went on to win by a landslide, however, this left the WSFL in an ambiguous position. Meanwhile the organizational crisis within the AFL touched the WSFL for the first time. Although the AFL's craft unionist majority conceded to the industrial unionists on the principles of a compulsory state-run unemployment compensation program, they refused to allow the reorganization of the Federal Employees Union along industrial lines. As a result the Federal Employees Union, including its three small Washington State affiliates, seceded from the AFL and

set up a dual organization.

Chapter Nineteen, Unemployment, Relief, Recovery, and Organization: Labor and the New Deal, discusses labor's frustrations and successes under the early New Deal. While economic recovery did begin and the actions of Roosevelt's First Hundred Days echoed many of labor's deepest sentiments, in practice they did little to improve industrial conditions. To a significant degree the early New Deal actually complicated labor's problems by providing support for organized employers and the rights of company unions. On the state level labor was more successful. Despite having remained neutral in the 1932 gubernatorial election, labor benefited from Democratic Governor Martin's administration and won passage of much of its legislative program. Labor also benefited directly from strict, equitable enforcement of existing state and federal labor laws. On the other hand, the jurisdictional and organizational controversies within the AFL undermined the unity of the state labor movement. Upon repeal of prohibition the industrially organized Brewery Workers Union claimed jurisdiction over all workers in the new breweries. The Teamsters, however, refused to give up their claim to jurisdiction over the beer truck drivers and won AFL approval for their stand. This led to a bitter jurisdictional controversy between the two organizations which was not settled until the 1950's.

Chapter Twenty, Revival: The Longshore Strike and the Rise of Industrial Unionism, discusses the conflicts within the labor movement attendant upon economic recovery. It focusses on the efforts of longshore and lumber workers to establish industrial unions, and on

the struggles between local and international union officials for control of the unions. As a result of the longshore strike of 1934 new, radical industrial-minded leaders won control of the Pacific Coast Longshoremen's Union district and imposition of a coastwide contract. More and more, Washington State labor relations came to depend on individuals and events outside the state. At the 1934 AFL convention relations between the industrial and craft unions reached a new low point. A final rupture was only averted when the craft unionists made general but insincere promises to satisfy the minority demands. The chapter concludes with the passage of the Wagner Labor Relations Act in mid-1935 and the creation of the Committee of Industrial Organizations by the pro-industrial forces within the AFL's executive council.

Chapter Twenty-one, Aftermath, summarizes the course of post-Wagner Act history in Washington State up to 1940. Again it focusses on the lumber and longshore workers' efforts to establish industrial unions and their conflicts with the AFL unions which resisted their efforts. To a degree unprecedented in the history of the Washington State labor movement these events were governed by forces beyond the reach of state and local labor leaders. Just as economic recovery was beyond the ability of state and local governments to resolve, so too were the organizational and ideological conflicts in the lumber and longshore industries beyond the abilities of state and local labor leaders to resolve.

Chapter Twenty-two, Conclusion, consists primarily of an effort to draw together the various themes presented in the dissertation

and to restate as concisely as possible the major findings of my research.

I would like to thank all those who helped me in the course of my research and in the writing of this dissertation. I would like to thank especially my advisor Dr. Robert E. Burke, for his invaluable aid in the research, writing, and careful editing of the manuscript. I would also like to thank the other members of the reading committee for their advice and comments, Dr. Richard R. Johnson and Dr. Lewis O. Saum. Thanks also are due for the services rendered to me by the librarians and archivists at the University of Washington library. Last, but not least, I would like to thank my wife, Fran, and my parents for their constant support and consideration over the years. Without their help I could never have finished this dissertation and I am truly grateful. Any errors which have found their way into this dissertation are, of course, my own responsibility.

**PART ONE:**

**The Early Years, 1885-1918**

## Chapter 1:

### The Formative Years, 1885-1901

The decade 1880-1890 revolutionized Washington Territory. In it Washington evolved from a basically rural to an urban-dominated area. The rise of the urban population reflected the growth of Washington's manufacturing industries. Between 1880 and 1890 the number of persons employed in manufacturing increased from 1,147 to 20,366, a rate of increase many times greater than the national average. It was this urban-industrial shift which set the stage for the rise of the labor movement.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps the most important reason for this growth was the construction of the transcontinental railroads. These massive projects attracted a steady stream of low cost immigrant labor from all parts of the United States, Europe, and Asia. They offered high wages and steady

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<sup>1</sup>Prior to 1880, most immigrants to the United States were of northern and western European origin (chiefly from Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, Denmark, Northern Ireland, Irish Free State, Canada (French), England, France, Canada (Other Than French), Netherlands, and Scotland. After 1880, the sources of immigration changed. Increasingly, the "new" immigrants came from eastern and southern Europe (especially Austria, Finland, Russia, Poland, Lithuania, Italy, Hungary, Rumania, Yugoslavia, and Greece). Thus, in addition to the traditional conflicts between earlier and later immigrants, and between Protestant and Catholic immigrants, there arose a whole series of ethnic, or cultural conflicts.

Dorothy O. Johansen, Empire of the Columbia A History of the Pacific Northwest, (New York: Harper & Row, 1967 (2d ed.)), pp. 278, 316, 329, 331; Robert D. Saltvig, "The Progressive Movement in Washington" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Washington, 1966), pp. 1-2; Oscar Handlin, ed., Immigration As A Factor in American History, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1959), pp. 1-42; Maldwyn A. Jones, American Immigration, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), pp. 177-246.

work. Other immigrants found jobs in the coal mines, lumber camps, and mills which relied on the railroads to export or purchase their products. This wave of immigration led to the rise of an industrial working class, which, by the early 1880's had begun to organize unions in the urban areas and in both the lumber and mining industries.<sup>2</sup>

Following the completion of the Northern Pacific Railroad on 8 September 1883, however, a severe depression ravaged the Pacific Northwest. Several thousand laid-off railroad workers flocked into Seattle and Tacoma looking for work. Their presence transformed the Pacific Northwest from a labor deficit to a labor surplus region. This inspired employers to cut wages and conditions of employment. Meanwhile some employers continued to hire Chinese immigrants. They worked longer hours for lower wages than European or native-born workers. They did not complain so much about poor living and working conditions. Many native-born workers reasoned that the way to prevent deterioration of their economic conditions was to resist further Chinese immigration and to expel those already here. In 1882 Burnett G. Haskell organized the International Workingmen's Association in San Francisco, the first organization to oppose Chinese immigration.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>In addition, urban workers organized a number of trade unions. Most were employed in the construction or building trades. Some affiliated with international or national labor unions, like the International Typographical and International Molders unions, but most remained independent until after 1900.

Johansen, p. 348; Saltvig, pp. 1-2; Harry W. Stone, "The Beginnings of the Labor Movement in the Pacific Northwest," Oregon Historical Quarterly 47 (June 1946), p. 159.

<sup>3</sup>The IWA should not be confused with the International Working People's Association, organized in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (c. 1883-1885). The IWA rejected the IWPA's emphasis on propaganda of the dead and violence. For more on the IWA, see: Johansen, pp. 311,348; Saltvig, pp. 1-5.



These growing racial tensions also interested the organizers of the Knights of Labor, a rapidly growing national labor federation. The K of L divided the world into "Producers" and "Non-producers" and accepted employers, small businessmen and farmers, as well as wage earners, in their membership. Their object was to create a farmer-worker "producers" alliance. However, they were opposed to pure trade unionism because the trade unions were organized to protect the selfish interests of the workers not to promote the common good. The K of L believed that "when bad men combine, the good must associate, else they will fall, one by one, an unpitied sacrifice in contemptible struggle." The K of L, who were particularly influential in small towns and among part-time farmers, initially proved more successful than the trade unions which remained for several years on the outskirts of the labor movement.<sup>4</sup>

Like the IWA, the K of L blamed white unemployment on the over-supply of cheap Chinese labor. They reasoned that to increase "White" employment and raise wages, the supply of labor had to be reduced. Despite the opposition of business, civic, and political leaders, the K of L helped organize a "Chinese Must Go" movement in the Seattle-Tacoma area. Between the fall of 1885 and the spring of 1886 their actions inspired the unemployed workers to burst forth in violence in an effort to expel the Chinese workers.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Johansen, p. 346; Saltvig, p. 17.

<sup>5</sup>For more on growth of anti-Chinese movement and martial law, see: Johansen, pp. 348-349; Saltvig, pp. 1-2; Robert E. Wynne, "Reaction to the Chinese in the Pacific Northwest and British Columbia: 1850 to 1910," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Washington, 1964), pp. 173-283; Murray Morgan, Skid Road: Seattle, Her First Hundred Years, (New York: Ballantine Books, 1971), pp. 79-97; Roger Sale, Seattle--Past to Present (Seattle:

Although many civic leaders opposed the anti-Chinese movement, the leaders of the new working class favored it. In the wake of the anti-Chinese riots Jacob Weisback, a labor leader, was elected mayor of Tacoma on an anti-Chinese ticket. Later, in the Spring of 1886, the Seattle K of L chapter began to organize a "peoples party" to elect a labor-sympathizer, W.H. Shandy, as mayor. The Peoples Party represented the first significant political reform movement in the Territory. It was a coalition which included trade unions, middle and lower middle class elements, as well as anti-Chinese elements. It disavowed socialism and anarchism, but attacked machine politics and monopoly control. It claimed to represent all members of the "producing population" and invited all "producers" to join. Thus, the Peoples Party organ, the Seattle Daily Press, tried to avoid the sinophobe extremist label and warned party organizers that, "no party can long last which is based upon the spirit of caste and class distinctions, for the inevitable result will be if pursued (sic) in, either anarchy or despotism."<sup>6</sup>

In response, Seattle business, civic and professional men organized their own political organization, the Loyal League, to uphold "law and order." They insisted that the main issue was loyalty to the Constitution, though they were probably more interested in propping up the labor supply and keeping down wages. The Loyal League tried to brand the Peoples Party as radical.

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University of Washington Press, 1976), pp. 37-49.

For more on business-civic opposition to the anti-Chinese movement, see:

Saltvig, pp. 3-6; Seattle Times 5,7,10,12 May 1886; Seattle Post-Intelligencer 6 June 1886; Seattle Daily Press 9 June, 25 Sept. 1886.

<sup>6</sup>Saltvig, pp. 1,3,7-8; Johansen, p. 348; DP 26,30 June 1886; See also Wynne, op. cit.

The triumph of this ticket placed before you by the so-called 'People's Party' means nothing less--mark these words--nothing less than the triumph of an organized conspiracy against our system of self-government. It means that the white card members of the IWA in America will...take charge and govern the city of Seattle.<sup>7</sup>

The People's Party responded vehemently to this attack and, in return, described the Loyal League as a "concubinage of caballers and virtuous dupes." The Party declared that the real question in the mayoral campaign was "shall the people rule or shall the politicians, lawyers, and other adherents rule by dividing the people on false issues?"<sup>8</sup>

However, the K of L organ, The Cooperator, which endorsed the People's Party, made it hard to dispose of the radicalism and sino-phobic issues when it endorsed the Haymarket Square bombing in Chicago. "The dynamite bomb has entered American politics and the more injustice, the more frequently it will appear."<sup>9</sup>

Nevertheless, the People's Party proved to be an immediate success. In the 1886 Seattle municipal elections, the Party's mayoral candidate, W.H. Shandy, defeated the Loyal League's candidate, A.A. Denny, the Seattle pioneer. Soon after, the Party set out to attain Territory-wide influence. In the fall, the Party endorsed Charles Vorhees, the Democratic candidate for governor. Vorhees went on to victory in the November elections. In King County ten of the seventeen People's Party candidates won seats.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Saltvig, pp. 6-7; P-I 30 June 1886.

<sup>8</sup>Saltvig, p. 7; DP 30 June, 15 July 1886.

<sup>9</sup>Saltvig, p. 8; P-I 11,12 July 1886.

<sup>10</sup>Saltvig, pp. 8,14-15; DP 29 July 1886; P-I 2 Oct. 1886.

In 1887 however, a split developed in the labor ranks which led to defeat for the People's Party and which colored the entire political history of the Washington labor movement. Some trade unionists opposed cooperation with all "producers", feeling that non-labor groups would sell labor out in a crisis. In Seattle and Tacoma a labor faction broke away from the People's Party and formed the United Labor Party, based on Henry George's National Union Labor Party. Refusing to compromise with non-labor groups, the ULP demanded government ownership of railroads, more paper money, free coinage of silver, abolition of contract labor on public projects, abolition of child labor, and a graduated income tax. The lack of unity spelled disaster for the reformers. The Republicans swept the elections. Following the elections, the Seattle trade unionists vowed never again to organize an independent political party. The national election results had a similar impact on the leadership of the new-born American Federation of Labor, particularly on its president, Samuel Gompers. For the rest of his life, Gompers campaigned against creation of labor parties, arguing that they only served to divide the workers. Instead, he endorsed a non-partisan policy, a policy of endorsing pro-labor candidates in the major parties, which he described as "rewarding your friends, punishing your enemies."<sup>11</sup>

Chastened by their defeat at the polls the two labor factions--the K of L and the trade unions--turned their attentions to their economic organization. In April 1888 they joined together with the Cascade coal mining unions to form the first central labor body in the

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<sup>11</sup>Saltvig, p. 15; Irving Bernstein, The Lean Years, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960), pp. 90-94.

Territory, the Western Central Labor Union of Seattle and vicinity. The trade unions represented in the WCLU included the Cigar Makers, Printers, and Iron Molders unions. The two main organizers of the WCLU were two young civil engineers: Otto F. Wegener and C.O. Young, both of whom had been prominent in the anti-Chinese movement. Wegener, an ex-socialist, who served as the first president of the WCLU, had joined labor's cause after coming under attack from Seattle's civic leadership for his role in the disturbances. Young had arrived in Seattle in December 1883 and found it impossible to secure work because of the presence of the Chinese. As a result he joined the K of L and played a large part in the expulsion of the Chinese from Seattle. Though Wegener soon dropped out of the labor movement, Young remained in it for the rest of his life. After the formation of the WCLU he joined the Tacoma Steam Engineers Union and served as its legislative agent. He later played an important role in the creation of the Washington State Federation of Labor and served as AFL organizer for the Pacific Northwest from 1904 to 1944.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>The trade unions paid a high price for labor unity. By this time they had a larger collective membership than the K of L, or the mining unions, but they were still under-represented in the WCLU because of the unit rule. Each trade union, or K of L assembly, was granted three delegates in the WCLU, regardless of membership.

Carlos A. Schwantes, "Left-wing Unionism in the Pacific Northwest: a Comparative History of Organized Labor and Socialistic Politics in Washington and British Columbia, 1885-1917," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Michigan, 1976); Carlos A. Schwantes, "Leftward Tilt on the Pacific Slope: The Struggle of A.F.L. Hegemony in the State of Washington," (Unpub. article in the author's possession, 1976), p. 6; Melvin G. DeShazo, "Radical Tendencies in the Seattle Labor Movement as Reflected in the Proceedings of its Central Body," (M.A. Thesis, University of Washington, 1925), pp. 4-7; William J. Dickson, "Labor in Municipal Politics: A Study of Labor's Political Policies and Activities in Seattle," (M.A. Thesis, University of Washington, 1928), p. 13; Mary Joan O'Connell, "The Seattle Union Record, 1918-1928: A Pioneer Labor Daily," (M.A. Thesis, University of Washington, 1964),

Similarly, in other regions of the territory, the labor force reorganized. Late in 1888 William Galvani, a K of L organizer and also a civil engineer, organized the first central labor body in Spokane. Here, again, the K of L predominated. The trade union locals were a small minority at first. Until 1893 few AFL building trades locals affiliated. The K of L retained its control of the organization until after the turn of the century, long after the AFL trade unions had won effective control in Seattle.<sup>13</sup>

Thus reorganized the labor movement reentered politics, but, in both Seattle and Tacoma, lost to Loyal League candidates. In the King County elections Republican candidates won.<sup>14</sup>

One of the primary reasons for this failure was the renewal of strife between the K of L and the trade unions. In January 1888 prior to the formation of the WCLU, a feud developed between the K of L and members of the Miners Union at the Newcastle Mine on the eastern shore of Lake Washington. Approximately 50 or 60 "discordant" K of L members struck the mine, but 150 or 200 Mine Union members refused to join the walkout. This led to a confrontation between the two sides which left one dead and as many as nine wounded. The other companies

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p. 1; Paul B. Bushue, "Dr. Herman F. Titus and Socialism in Washington State, 1900-1909," (M.A. Thesis, University of Washington, 1967), p. 39; Harry W. Call, comp., History of Washington State Federation of Labor, 1902-1954: Fifty-two Years of Legislative, Organizational and Educational Effort and Achievement on Behalf of the Wage Earners, (Seattle: Washington State Federation of Labor, 1954), p. 56; Year-book of Organized Labor of the State of Washington, 1927, (Seattle: Washington State Labor News, 1927), pp. 11,27.

<sup>13</sup>Schwantes, "Leftward Tilt...", p. 78; Spokane Review 2 Nov. 1888, 6,13,15 Feb. 1892; James L. Hunt, "A History of the Central Labor Council of Spokane, Washington," (M.A. Thesis, State College of Washington, 1940), pp. 3-4.

<sup>14</sup>Saltvig, pp. 15-17; DP 3,7 July, 2 Oct., 9 Nov., 1888.

took advantage of this union dispute to bring in Black strikebreakers and other non-union conditions.<sup>15</sup>

Following the outbursts in the mines relations between the K of L and the trade unions in the WCLU deteriorated further. The trade unions were growing in numerical strength, while the K of L was in decline. Yet the K of L retained its over-representation in the WCLU. The failure of the K of L mine strike and the subsequent employer assault on the Miners Union exacerbated the tensions. Nationally, too, the K of L was in decline. After the failure of several K of L-endorsed railroad strikes its "One Big Union" philosophy became less attractive to the trade unions. A growing minority of them preferred, instead, to affiliate with Samuel Gompers' AFL, which did not include employers and professional men in its ranks. Thus, when the K of L recommended that the WCLU organize an independent labor party to unite farmers, workers, and small businessmen, the trade unions objected. Having foresworn the independent political route, they wanted to concentrate on economic organization. They were engaged in a difficult struggle just to maintain wage levels and conditions while remaining on good terms with employers and the political Establishment.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Johansen, pp. 349-350; "Trouble in the Coal Mines, 1889: Documents of an Incident at Newcastle, W.T." *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* (July 1946); Alan A. Hynding, "The Coal Mines of Washington Territory: Labor Trouble in 1888-1889," *Arizona and the West*, XII (3) (1970): 211-236; Harry W. Stone, "The Beginnings of the Labor Movement in the Pacific Northwest," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, XLVII (June 1946): 155-164; Alan A. Hynding, "The Public Life of Eugen Semple: A Study of the Promoter--Politician on the Pacific Northwest Frontier," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Washington, 1966), Chapters on the Coal strike controversy.

<sup>16</sup>Saltvig, p. 18; Dickson, pp. 13,16; Schwantes, "Leftward Tilt...", p. 6.

This split intensified during the building boom which followed the great Seattle fire of 1889. The hectic pace of reconstruction especially favored the building trades unions over the K of L. Union memberships grew rapidly. In addition, with the demand for Washington coal increasing, employers grew less hostile to union labor. These factors worked against the K of L. By 1890 the trade unions were numerically superior to the K of L. Finally, between the latter part of 1890 and the spring of 1891, in a series of purges, the building trades locals expelled the K of L assemblies from the WCLU. This left the K of L free to follow its own political predilections and the trade unions in unquestioned control of the WCLU. The last important cooperative effort between the two organizations occurred in April 1890 when they joined to organize the Tacoma Central Labor Council.<sup>17</sup>

The Seattle and Tacoma trade unions were organized along craft lines. Like the AFL's craft unionism this was largely a response to the tendency of various immigrant groups to dominate particular economic niches. In each town the immigrants from a particular European country, of a particular region thereof, or of a particular religion congregated together, forming their own neighborhoods, belonging to their own religious, cultural, and fraternal organizations. As a result

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<sup>17</sup>Dickson, p. 13; Schwantes, "Leftward Tilt...", pp. 6-7; DeShazo, pp. 4-6; WCLU Minutes, 11 July 1894, Box 8, King County Central Labor Council Records, University of Washington Library; James A. Halseth, "Social Disorganization and Discontent in Late Nineteenth Century Washington," (Ph.D. Dissertation: Texas Technical University, 1974), pp. 133-139, passim; Thomas R. Brooks, Toil and Trouble, (New York: Delacost Press (2d ed.), 1971), pp. 52, 75-77, 104-105; John Higham, Strangers in the Land Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1955), pp. 50, 71-72, 112, 163, 183, 189, 305-306, 313, 316, 321.



local unions tended to represent specific ethnic groups. In the late nineteenth century the Irish, generally, dominated the transport unions; Jews the needle trades; while Italians the construction trades. In New York City, for example, stone masons were mainly Italian-born; bricklayers, carpenters, and plumbers were mainly English- or Irish-Americans; heavy beamsetting was done by German-Americans; and the delicate, artistic work belonged to French- and German-American artisans.

Both employers and the AFL used these divisions for their own purposes. Employers used them to try to inhibit trade unionism. This worked especially well in the South, but also throughout the nation. It worked well among unskilled poorly-paid industrial workers, generally. On the other hand, Gompers proved that it could also be an effective organizational device among the better-paid skilled workers. It gave union members a common bond beyond their union membership. Gompers also found that the ethnic and religious feelings of the immigrant groups were useful in fending off socialists and their efforts to reform the AFL along industrial lines. Professor Marc Karson points out in his study of the Roman Catholic Church's influence on the AFL, Labor Unions and Politics, that

...the weakness of socialism in the AFL...was, in part, a testimonial to the Catholic Church's opposition to this doctrine.

Aided by the predominantly Catholic officers of the international unions and by the large Catholic rank and file in the AFL responsive to the Church's view on socialism, Catholicism helped to account for the moderate political philosophy and policies of the AFL, for socialism's weakness in the AFL, and, therefore, for the absence of a labor party in the United States.<sup>18</sup>

In the Pacific Northwest, however, there was a general lack of enthusiasm for the AFL. Not until after the turn of the century did

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

the AFL begin to penetrate, deeply, the regional labor movement. The lack of enthusiasm for the AFL in the Pacific Northwest can be explained in three ways. First, most workers were employed in unskilled industrial jobs and were not good AFL material. Second, the vast majority of workers in the region were older-immigrants from Protestant northwest Europe. On the one hand, they tended to see the more recent Catholic eastern and southern European immigrants, so well represented in the AFL, as dangerous aliens and Un-American. On the other hand, they did not have the strong force of the Church deflecting them from socialism and other radical political organizations. Thirdly, there was far less diversity in the Pacific Northwest's labor force than in the older cities of the East. The advantages of ethnicity in organizing local labor movements derive from a proliferation of such groups. In the relative absence of these divisions industrial unionism and socialism seemed more palatable and less artificial. AFL sentiment tended to be confined to urban craft workers.<sup>19</sup>

Among farmers in the Pacific Northwest, similar conflicts raged. Washington's farmers had suffered severely from falling prices for their products and rising prices for their costs. In the 1880's many of them, like the workers, joined organizations which promised relief. Among these organizations were the Patrons of Husbandry, also known as the Grange (1866). The oldest of the farm organizations, it supported a non-partisan political policy and adopted a structure based on the Masons. It also performed many social and fraternal functions. Also

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

popular among Washington farmers were the National Farmers, or Northwestern Alliance (1880) and the Farmers and Laborers Union, or Southern Alliance (1884). In Washington these organizations grew rapidly and began to develop common political programs. But, like labor, they found this difficult because of the contradictions between them. The only thing which united these organizations was the presence of a common enemy: the railroads.

The power of trusts and corporations has become an intolerable tyranny, the encroachments of the land grabbers have almost exhausted the public domain, and the corruption of the ballot has rendered our elections little less than a disgraceful farce.<sup>20</sup>

The farmers' antagonism to the railroads and political corruption suggested basis for political cooperation. In March 1891 the Alliances and the Grange founded a new political party and held a convention which approved a legislative program similar to that of the People's Party (1886) with the addition of a free silver coinage plank (to cause inflation) and a plank to create a State Railroad Commission. The Farmers attempted to interest the trade unions in their Party but the unions refused to endorse another independent political adventure. Instead, the Farmers turned to the K of L, seeking to repair their damaged fortunes, the K of L accepted with alacrity. Their leader, Robert Bridges, chaired the unity convention.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Johansen, pp. 346-347; Fred Yoder, "Farmers' Alliances in Washington--Prelude to Populism," in State College of Washington Research Studies (Spokane, Sept.-Oct. 1948); Gordon B. Ridgeway, "Populism in Washington," Pacific Northwest Quarterly, (Oct. 1948), passim.

<sup>21</sup>Saltvig, pp. 18-19; DeShazo, pp. 4-7; Philip Foner, The History of the Labor Movement in the United States, Vol. I, (New York, 1947), pp. 303-306; Johansen, p. 357.

Meanwhile, the national leaders of these organizations also decided to go ahead with a third party. In 1892 they convened in Omaha and founded the People's (or Populist) Party and drew up an extensive list of grievances which formed their platform. The new party attracted a large following in the Pacific Northwest among the farmers already committed to the third party on the State level. Many social reformers also welcomed the Populists as did those who favored political action in the labor movement. In the 1892 elections a number of Populist candidates rode this wave of reform sentiment to victory. They won eight seats in the legislature and almost caused the defeat of the Republican presidential nominee, Benjamin Harrison. Yet the Populists remained in third place, behind the Democrats. One of the main reasons for this was the division within the ranks of labor. While the recently-formed Tacoma CLC endorsed the Populists the WCLU remained neutral.<sup>22</sup>

In the midst of this ferment the depression of 1893-1894 seriously hurt the state's economy. Many thousands of families, who had gambled everything they had on lots or small businesses in such boom towns as Everett, lost their possessions. In Seattle unemployment became a serious problem once again. In the winter of 1893, sixteen hundred men were out of work. The WCLU barely survived. Only the Bricklayers and Stone Cutters unions maintained strong organizations. The Street Carmen's Association, which had organized about

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<sup>22</sup>Saltvig, pp. 18-19; P-I 21-25 Feb., 8-9 March 1892; Johansen, pp. 358-359; See also: Minutes, 23 Dec. 1891, 17 Aug. 1892, Box 8, KCCLC Records.

twenty per cent of their jurisdiction, struck against wage reductions, but this had little effect. The union died when the company declared bankruptcy.<sup>23</sup>

The depression which decimated the WCLU also reawakened its interest in politics. Rather than cooperate with other reform organizations, however, the WCLU continued along an independent and non-partisan path. In February 1893 it sent delegates to a Washington State Labor Congress which petitioned the legislature for enactment of reform. The delegates--mostly trade unionists--asked for a mine ventilation bill, appointment of mine inspectors, a prohibition of sub-contracting on public works, the eight hour day for all state, county, and municipal employees, a prohibition on alien seamen handling cargo, an employers liability bill, free public school textbooks, and a direct legislation bill establishing the initiative, referendum, and recall. Although none of these proposals would have redressed labor's immediate economic grievances, they would have justified labor's non-partisan political policy and made it seem more palatable to the unemployed. The legislature, however, failed to move on any of labor's proposals.<sup>24</sup>

At the same time, the depression did inspire the WCLU to look for common ground with other Pacific coast labor organizations. In the early 1890's it had sent delegates to the first convention of the Pacific Coast Council of Trades and Labor Federations, in San Francisco and contributed significantly to developing coast-wide union

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<sup>23</sup>Johansen, p. 361; Dickson, pp. 14-16; Denzel C. Cline, "The Street Car Men of Seattle," (M.A. Thesis: University of Washington, 1926), pp. 27-38.

<sup>24</sup>Saltvig, p. 19; State Labor Congress Committee, Address of the State Labor Congress Delivered in Committee of the Whole House in the Hall of Representatives, February 9, 1893, (n.p., n.d.).

contacts. The WCLU remained affiliated with the Council until its demise sometime after 1894.<sup>25</sup> As an alternative the WCLU was forced to reconsider the offer of a farmer-labor alliance. However, these plans fell through. While the WCLU managed to reach agreement with the Farmers Alliances pledging mutual aid they failed to agree on the basis of a joint political party.<sup>26</sup> The WCLU also began to think again of a legislative alliance. In October 1893 it set up a special legislative committee including delegates from the surviving locals and even including Robert Bridges of the K of L to consider how to get better leverage in the legislature.<sup>27</sup>

Despite these hesitant steps, however, the WCLU remained committed to a non-partisan political policy. This led to disagreements in the trade union ranks. Not all Seattle workers understood the WCLU's diffidence, especially in view of the active steps the farmers and the K of L were taking. Many of the unemployed workers demanded political action. When the WCLU failed to respond they flocked to join the new American Industrial Brotherhood, an organization of "bona fides workingmen," which advocated political involvement. The AIB was a local Seattle movement, quite apart from the WCLU, which charged nominal dues and behaved like a propaganda club, leaning towards the Democrats and Populists. It required prospective members to swear allegiance to the working class and be

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<sup>25</sup>Schwantes, pp. 8-9.

<sup>26</sup>Saltvig, p. 19; P-I 11 Dec. 1893; Ira Cross, History of the Labor Movement in California, (Berkeley, 1935), p. 206.

<sup>27</sup>Saltvig, p. 19; P-I 23 Oct. 1893.

nominated by a member in good standing.<sup>28</sup>

Other Seattle workers could not understand the WCLU's bias in favor of craft unionism and against independent political action at a time when industrial combinations were creating industry-wide monopolies. Banks were failing, railroads were going into receivership, factories, mines, and businesses were shutting down, while giant corporations were taking shape. To them craft unionism made no sense. Craft unions could not compete against industrial giants. In April 1894 over 1,000 of these unemployed workers in the Puget Sound region joined Coxe's Industrial Army, formed a year earlier by Jacob Coxe in Masillon, Ohio. They had neither practical program, nor policy, only the feeling that the government should do something in the crisis. They vowed to march on Washington to put pressure on the government to act. But when they commandeered several boxcars for the trip they were arrested.<sup>29</sup>

At the same time, some trade unionists felt that by organizing industry-wide unions they could achieve success where the craft unionists could not. The strongest such effort was Eugene Debs' effort to establish the American Railway Union, an industry-wide organization. They failed to achieve success among Seattle trade unionists for two reasons. They cut across craft

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<sup>28</sup>The AIB was an ineffective response to the Depression, though as late as 1897 it still had 700 members. After the discovery of gold in Alaska and the return of prosperity, it withered away.

Dickson, pp. 15-16; DeShazo, p. 10; O'Connell, p. 2; Seattle Star 28 Feb. 1928; Interview with Don Stetson; Bushue, p. 39.

<sup>29</sup>Johansen, pp. 360-365; Saltvig, p. 20; Charles Hoffman, "The Depression of the 'Nineties,'" Journal of Economic History XVI (June 1956), 137-164; Morgan, p. 155.

jurisdictions and they endorsed the Populists.<sup>30</sup>

The trade unionists' opposition to political action was strengthened when, in the summer of 1894, the K of L's mine workers organization struck the Oregon Improvement Company's mines in response to wage cuts. The Company again hired strike breakers and armed guards to protect the mines and strikebreakers. The strike aroused great sympathy for the miners among Seattle workers. In July a crowd of over 1,000 persons attended a rally to protest the use of the guards. A King County grand jury censured the company for using the guards and asked the legislature to ban their use. By October 1894, however, the company had won the strike. The K of L had suffered yet another sharp setback, one from which it never recovered.<sup>31</sup>

The failure of the K of L's mine strike finally galvanized the WCLU into action. Perhaps the destruction of its most serious rival gave the trade unionists more confidence. In the fall of 1894, in time for the elections, Gordon Rice began publishing Seattle's first labor weekly, The Labor Gazette. Although the Gazette was not WCLU-owned, it was closely attuned to the WCLU's policies. At the same time, the WCLU finally endorsed the Populist Party. The results were quite successful. The Populists won twenty-three seats in the legislature (1894). Nevertheless they continued to run behind the major parties. Again the legislative results were meager. It appeared

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<sup>30</sup>For more on the ARU, see: Schwantes, "Leftward Tilt...", pp. 11-12.

<sup>31</sup>Saltvig, p. 21; Herbert Hunt, Washington West of the Cascades, (Chicago, 1917), pp. 345-347; Clarence Bagley, History of King County, (Chicago, 1929), Vol. I, pp. 426-428; P-I 4 July 1894.



that, if pro-labor reforms were to be enacted the Populists would have to make much bigger gains, alone, or settle on an alliance or "Fusion" with the Democrats. This produced an epochal split in the reformers ranks. Equally it divided the labor movement. The "True" or Middle-of-the-Road Populists believed that the party was the only road to economic and political salvation for the farmers and the workers. They opposed any compromises with reform Democrats or Republicans. They hoped ultimately to convert dissidents in both the major parties to their side and were not willing to abandon their hopes in order to win elections. The "Fusionists", on the other hand, felt that a little reform was better than no reform. They would make bargains to achieve some of their goals now and hope for more in the future. They hoped to join with inflation-minded Democrats and Republicans, and with moral reformers in both parties, to win votes.<sup>32</sup>

Though a minority defended the ideologically "True" Populists, most of the WCLU's trade unionists supported the more practical-minded Fusionists. Through their efforts the WCLU endorsed the Populist Party, again, in 1896. However, this proved to be another poor bargain for labor. At the party's state convention, it was the farmers who controlled the proceedings. The delegates voted to "fuse" with the Democrats and "Free Silver" Republicans and managed to produce a reform platform, but could not agree on candidates. The WCLU and Spokane-area delegates favored Mayor H.N. Belt of Spokane as the

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<sup>32</sup>Saltvig, pp. 19-20; Labor Gazette 19 Jan. 1895, Robert Bridges Scrapbook, University of Washington Library; Johansen, pp. 359-360.

gubernatorial candidate. But since Belt was not a farmer the agricultural counties swung their support to John R. Rogers of Tacoma, who got the nomination. In the elections the Fusion ticket swept to victory. William Jennings Bryan, the Fusionist's presidential candidate who was running as a Democrat carried Washington easily. The Populists won control of both houses of the legislature. Although it seemed that labor had finally found a successful political formula, in fact the results merely justified the fears of the "True" Populists.<sup>33</sup>

The Fusion alliance, although successful at the polls, proved unworkable in the legislature. Rogers failed as a fusionist leader because he was too closely tied to big agricultural interests. He failed in his bid to establish a State Railroad Commission which was the keystone of the Fusion platform. Some Populist farmers joined the Republicans to vote against the proposal out of fear that the railroads would manage to get control of the proposed commission. In all fewer than six Populist measures passed which the Republicans did not also support.<sup>34</sup>

Meanwhile, another source of competition arose to challenge the trade unionists. With the failure of the K of L many nonferrous metal miners in the Pacific Northwest and the Rocky Mountain regions began to move into the Western Federation of Miners. The WFM was a radical industrial union. Like the ARU, it endorsed the idea of

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<sup>33</sup>Saltvig, pp. 23-24; Johansen, pp. 365-366.

<sup>34</sup>The discovery of gold in Alaska and the return of prosperity also helped to weaken the reform impulse.  
Saltvig, pp. 27-29; Johansen, pp. 366-368.

socialism and rejected the AFL's pro-craft union policies. In the early 1890's the WFM achieved some remarkable successes among the native-born miners, in the Idaho panhandle, and among the smeltermen, at Northport and Tacoma in Washington. In 1896 they even joined the AFL becoming one of its few industrial unions. Soon, however, the WFM quarrelled with the AFL's conservative leadership. The AFL refused to extend financial aid to the miners in the Leadville, Colorado strike and in December 1897 the WFM withdrew from the AFL. Then, in 1898, the WFM created a subordinate body, the Western Labor Union, to conduct organizational campaigns among western workers. This established them as the AFL's main trade union competition. At first the AFL easily repulsed the challenge and bested the WFM in several cases. This did not daunt the radical miners who reorganized the WLU, renaming it the American Labor Union, and extended its jurisdiction over the whole of North America. In other words the WFM intended to become a rival, or dual, labor federation to the AFL. The ALU, like the WFM and the WLU, endorsed industrial unionism and, after 1902, the political policies of the Socialist Party of America.<sup>35</sup>

Again competition inspired the WCLU to take action. In 1898 it joined several other central labor councils and local unions, to organize the Washington State Labor Congress, the first statewide labor organization in Washington's history. Its primary purpose was to lobby the legislature and so encourage enactment of the Populist Party's platform. Equally, the WCLU's craft unionists hoped that such successes

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<sup>35</sup>Schwantes, "Leftward Tilt...", pp. 12-13.

would blunt the industrial union proposals. The failure of the 1897 legislature to enact the Populist Party's program convinced trade union leaders in many parts of the state that they could not expect substantial labor legislation without the presence of a full-time labor lobby during the legislative sessions. They were convinced that the politicians would continue to regard labor as a "side show" and would not respond unless pressed.<sup>36</sup>

In 1898 the Populists again sought a Fusion ticket. This time, however, they could not even agree on the platform. With the return of prosperity the Populist coalition began to fall apart. The King, Pierce, and Spokane county "single tax" factions demanded a plank exempting personal property and improvements on land from taxation. Orthodox Populists, Democrats, and "Silver" Republicans opposed this idea. Although they finally accepted it, reluctantly, in order to produce a platform they remained dissatisfied. The election results dismayed the Populists even more. The Republicans carried both houses of the legislature again by wide margins.<sup>37</sup>

Despite this the formation of the WSLC allowed the labor movement, organized on the state level for the first time, to engage in vigorous lobbying efforts at the legislature. At the opening of the 1899 legislature the WSLC introduced its own legislative program, including the direct election of United States senators and passage of

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<sup>36</sup>Joseph F. Tripp, "Progressive Labor Laws in Washington State, 1900-1925," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Washington, 1973), p. 14; Call, p. 11.

<sup>37</sup>Saltvig, pp. 29-30; P-I 2, 8 Sept. 1898; Winston B. Thorson, "Washington State Nominating Conventions," Pacific Northwest Quarterly XXV (April 1944), 106-107; Johansen, pp. 367-368.

a women's suffrage amendment to the Constitution. The WSLC also came out against annexation of lands conquered in the Spanish-American war and opposed the federal government's practice of sub-contracting its projects to non-union firms. Labor, however, had to be content with the establishment of a State Labor Bureau and an unsatisfactory labor lien law.<sup>38</sup>

Also in 1899 several important developments occurred on the local labor level. The Tacoma CLC was reorganized and granted an AFL charter under the leadership of W.G. Armstrong and C.O. Young. It was the first central labor council in Washington to affiliate with the AFL. Then, on 20 December 1899, John T. Oldham announced his intention to begin a privately-owned labor newspaper to succeed the Seattle Labor Gazette which was in financial difficulty. The WCLU gave the project its endorsement. Thus began the journal which eventually became known as the Seattle Union Record. Gordon Rice, who had edited the Labor Gazette, became the UR's first editor.

These activities undoubtedly alarmed Seattle's business community, which responded by forming the Seattle Metal Trades Association, the first employer's association in Seattle's history. The MTA then affiliated with the National Metal Trades Association. In the years that followed many other Seattle businessmen formed industry-wide trade associations. Although they had other purposes, one of their chief functions was to unite employers against the threat of unionization.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Call, pp. 12,20.

<sup>39</sup>Schwantes, "Leftward Tilt...", pp. 8-9; O'Connell, pp. 2,5.

Thus, at the end of the nineteenth century, the labor movement was beginning to organize on a statewide level. It achieved a modicum of political success and became more vigorous on the local level. It also faced challenges on all sides. On the one hand, it was torn between competing national, or "International", labor federations--the K of L, the AFL, and the ALU--which represented contradictory economic and political philosophies. On the other hand, Washington State labor needed outside help to offset the rise of anti-labor employers associations. What made these challenges so serious was the craft unionists' failure to organize the state's dominant lumber and mining industries. The craft unionists considered poorly-paid, foreign-born industrial workers too difficult to organize. This opened the craft unionists up to increasing criticism from industrial unionists. In these and other un-organized industries the workers grew increasingly frustrated. It was in this area that the ALU found most of its converts. At the same time it increased the frustration of those who disagreed with the WSLC's moderate, "Fusion" political program and led many "True" Populists to join the various utopian socialistic colonial experiments which dotted the Puget Sound region.<sup>40</sup>

These communitarian, millenarian, settlements proved especially attractive in the Pacific Northwest. One reason was the unpopularity of Daniel DeLeon's Socialist Labor Party, which dominated national

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<sup>40</sup>James Weinstein, The Decline of American Socialism, 1912-1925, (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1967), p. 1; Bushue, p. 38; Ira Kipnis, The American Socialist Movement, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952), pp. 19-20.

socialist politics and provided the major alternative to Fusion. Founded in 1877 the SLP followed a static, ideologically rigid, Marxist policy. DeLeon kept the SLP firmly under his personal control and repeatedly "purged" those who strayed from his teachings. Because ninety-nine per cent of its membership was foreign-born and could speak little or no English the SLP never became popular in the Pacific Northwest. In 1891 only two members of the SLP's National Executive Committee could speak English. Also, most of the SLP's members were immigrant German and Russian Jews, while most immigrants to the Pacific Northwest came from northwest Europe and Scandinavia. Except for the Finns they did not find a congenial home in the SLP.<sup>41</sup>

Instead, the socialists in the Pacific Northwest looked elsewhere for their inspiration. They found it in the millenarianist works of Edward Bellamy and the utopian communal settlements. In May 1887, following the failure of the anti-Chinese movement to evolve into a true working class political movement, one of its leaders, George Venable Smith, founded the Puget Sound Cooperative Colony. Smith had been inspired by the need to rid the West of unemployment caused by cheap Chinese labor. He found a practical model in a pamphlet describing the Topolabampo Colony in Mexico. The colonists bought land near the present site of Port Angeles which they proposed to share in common. They began to publish a daily newspaper, The New Light. Soon, however, dissension over property wracked the

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

colony. This led to reincorporation as a simple joint stock company, but soon this too fell into debt and disintegrated.<sup>42</sup> The effort to create a socialist utopia, however, did not die with the colony.

In 1896, when the Populist Party's National convention endorsed a ticket headed by Democrat William Jennings Bryan, some "True" Populists bolted the Party rather than work for Bryan. They had been totally disgusted by the Fusionist's ideological compromises. Instead, they resolved to organize a national body to coordinate the formation of cooperative colonies akin to Smith's project at Port Angeles. To do so the True Populists called a national convention of secessionists which met at Ruskin Colony, Tennessee in 1897. There they agreed to form a national organization "eschewing politics, but to make practical application of the theories of socialism." The new organization, to be called the Brotherhood of the Cooperative Commonwealth, then chose national officers, including Eugene Debs. The BCC's chief significance for Washington was its vow "to establish cooperative colonies and industries, and so far as possible, concentrate these colonies and industries in one state until said state is socialized." Since Washington already had a number of such utopian experiments the BCC resolved to "carry the State of

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<sup>42</sup>Bushue, pp. 8-9,27; George Venable Smith, Puget Sound Cooperative Colony: A Model Cooperative Commonwealth, (n.p., n.d.), p.3; George Venable Smith, A Cooperative Plan for Securing Homes and Occupations at Port Angeles, Washington, (Port Angeles, 1893); Harvey O'Connor, Revolution in Seattle, A Memoir, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1964), p. 11.



Washington for Socialism."<sup>43</sup>

Of all BCC's colonial settlements, its most successful became Equality Colony, near Edison in Skagit County, Washington. The colonists derived the name, Equality, from the sequel to Edward Bellamy's novel, Looking Backward, the seminal Nationalist reform treatise. Equality Colony attracted between 120 and 150 actual settlers but membership may have peaked at 300. Shortly, however, with the discovery of gold in Alaska and the return of prosperity, the attractiveness of a refuge from unemployment faded. The Spanish-American war made Equality seem a poor backwater. As a result its membership began to decline. The circulation of the colony's newspaper, Industrial Freedom, which had risen rapidly, dropped off to "several thousand" and the dream of socializing Washington evaporated almost as rapidly as it had materialized. New colonists stopped arriving and internal doctrinal schisms turned colonist against colonist. In 1906 the colony was dissolved and the next year sold to private owners.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>The BCC also chose Washington State because of the availability of cheap, fertile land; the small population, which, they hoped, would permit rapid socialization; and the strong "progressive" elements already in the population which, they hoped, would create a favorable climate for their efforts.

Bushue, pp. 1-3; Howard Quint, The Forging of American Socialism, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1953), pp. 234-246, 282-285; See also BCC Constitution, 1897, Box 5-19, Ault Papers, University of Washington Library; and Industrial Freedom 18 July 1898.

<sup>44</sup>Two other utopian socialistic colonies became prominent in Washington at about this time. In September 1898 BCC established a colony at Burley, near Gig Harbor. Its purpose, like Equality, was to do away with the wage system. The organizers of the new socialist coalition, the Social Democratic Party supported Burley, but it never got off to a good start. Later, the SDP abandoned it. In 1903 the colony had 275 members, but by 1908, only 18 remained.

Another prominent colony was founded in 1896. It differed

The failure of the communal settlements provided impetus for a more active socialist political program. The Seattle Daily Call, originally a K of L organ, had supported the communes. After its demise, the Puget Sound Cooperator, a weekly, had taken up the cause. Still later, the Voice of the People, another daily, spoke for them. All these papers hoped that the communes would become refuges for the unemployed. After the appeal of the communes declined they provided a focus for the rest of the socialist movement in Washington and set the stage for a new worker-oriented political party. Beginning in 1897 a number of socialist leaders began to try to bring the various worker-oriented organizations under the wing of a single political party which they proposed to call the Social Democratic Party. By 1900 the SDP included members of DeLeon's SLP, the People's Anti-Chinese and Labor Party (which consisted primarily of K of L members), the WCLU, the AIB, and Equality Colony. It also included a number of social reformers who had been alienated by the

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from the BCC's experiments in proclaiming an anarchistic philosophy. Founded by the remnants of a previous colonial experiment the Home Colony was located on the Kitsap Peninsula, south of Bremerton. They refused to adopt either rules or regulations. They published two newspapers, The Agitator and Discontent (Mother of Progress). The latter was more concerned with "Free Love" than economic or political doctrine. After an anarchist assassinated President McKinley a mob nearly invaded Home and the Post Master banned Discontent from the mails.

For more information on these and other utopian socialistic experiments see: Charles P. LeWarne, Utopias on Puget Sound, 1885-1915, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1975). See also his articles: "Equality Colony: the Plan to Socialize Washington," Pacific Northwest Quarterly LVIX (1968), 137-146; and "The Anarchist Colony at Home, Washington, 1901-1902," Arizona and the West XIV (2) (1972), 1-5-168. See also: Bushue, pp. 4-13, 38-40; O'Connell, pp. 15-16; The Socialist 12 Aug. 1900; Melvy Dubofsky, The Agitator, Home, Washington, 1910-1912; The Syndicalist, Lakebaym Washington, 1913, in Joseph R. Conlin, ed., The American Radical Press, 1880-1960, 2 vols. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1974).

the capitalist reformers. Chief among these was Dr. Herman Titus. Dr. Titus, a physician and social gospel minister living in Seattle, left George F. Cotterill's Citizen's Non-Partisan League to join the SDP. Titus, who had converted to socialism after reading Marx in the original German, became state organizer for the SDP. The main weakness of the SDP was its lack of appeal to trade unionists, especially the WCLU's craft unionists. Although a few of them joined most still refused to endorse a political party. Despite this, by 1900 the SDP was able to field a "rather full" slate of candidates for state offices.<sup>45</sup>

Economic conditions in 1900 favored creation of a new Party. Although less severe than 1893-1897, unemployment still affected 12,700, or 5.66 per cent of the state's 224,000 man labor force. Even the overall prosperity could not prevent many workers from severe hardship. (Table No. 1) This, in turn, encouraged pro-SDP trade unionists and when the Populists endorsed a Fusion ticket with Cotterill's Citizens Non-Partisan League in the Seattle municipal elections more and more trade unionists became disenchanted with them. When Cotterill then accepted the nomination of the Democratic Party as well it was simply too much for many of them.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>Titus' political philosophy was akin to DeLeon's. Both believed the Party should serve, primarily, to educate the masses to socialism through revolutionary agitation and propaganda. But while DeLeon advocated dual unionism, Titus rejected dual unionism and hoped to work within the AFL. Even so, he denounced the AFL's craft union policies and non-partisan political line.

Bushue, pp. 23-24, 38-40; O'Connor, pp. 8-11, 13; Saltvig, p. 100; The Socialist 12 Aug. 1900; U.R. 28 July 1900.

<sup>46</sup>Saltvig, pp. 40-43.

The Democratic-Populist-CN-PL fusion ticket suffered in the campaign from lack of labor support. Cotterill's well-known prohibitionism and his support from the Seattle Ministerial Association, a social gospel ministry, attracted more attention than his pro-labor policies and drove many of them to support the SDP or not vote. Also, Cotterill's intention to fire Police Chief Tom Hines for his "wide open policy" on liquor and morality issues distracted public attention from the economic reform issues. The Republicans adopted a platform favoring a city-owned light system for streets and public buildings and swept to an easy victory. Although the SDP candidate for mayor received only 96 votes, labor's disappointment with the fusionists caused membership in the new party to grow rapidly.<sup>47</sup>

Other signs of vigor were also apparent. In August the SDP began publishing its own weekly journal, The Socialist, and by October it had a circulation of 1,500. Under the editorial direction of Dr. Titus TS soon distinguished itself by the novel use of cartoons "to illustrate the class struggle and the conditions of the workingman." In January 1901 TS merged with The New Light and absorbed it.<sup>48</sup>

Fusionism and Cotterill's sense of morality also alienated many other workers who, nevertheless, did not go so far as to join the SDP. Many immigrant workers, especially the Catholics, hated his prohibitionism but could not bring themselves to associate with

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid., pp. 43-44; P-I 1 March 1900; Bushue, p. 55.

<sup>48</sup>Bushue, pp. 25-27; O'Connor, p. 11; TS 23 Dec. 1900.

DeLeon and his Marxist followers. They and the craft unionists retreated to the confines of the WCLU from which vantage they heaped criticism on both Cotterill's forces and the SDP through the UR. This outraged the SDP which considered it a betrayal of the working class.<sup>49</sup>

Thus, from the very beginning, tensions existed between the WCLU and the socialists. These had a serious impact on the SDP's political fortunes in the fall elections of 1900. Even though the UR endorsed the SDP's platform and strongly supported Eugene Debs' presidential campaign, the WCLU maintained a certain distance. The SDP complained that this was not enough and wanted a complete endorsement from the WCLU. W.C.B. Randolph, a socialist and secretary of the Carpenters Union, urged the UR to endorse Debs' running mate, Job Harriman, as well, but the UR refused. Editor Gordon Rice insisted that "the Union Record is a trade and labor union paper only--not a socialist organ. Not even our esteem for Mr. Randolph can force us into a doubtful position in regards to politics. This paper is no more socialist (than) a republican or democratic organ--it is not political, in any sense of the word, as far as editorial policy is concerned." Rice felt that the WCLU unions wanted a paper free from political ties and the UR should respect their wishes.<sup>50</sup>

The election results revealed the distance the SDP had yet to travel to capture the workers' minds much less make a dent in the

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<sup>49</sup>For more on the ideological-propaganda conflict between the two papers and its consequences for the labor movement, see: Bushue, pp. 44-46; TS 30 Aug., 7 Oct., 30 Dec. 1900; UR 13,16 Oct., 17 Nov. 1900.

<sup>50</sup>Bushue, pp. 43-44; UR 27 March, 24 July, 29 Aug. 1900.

major parties' support. While Governor Rogers won reelection as a Democrat the Republicans retained control of the legislature with a somewhat reduced majority. Overall the SDP and SLP forces (which ran separate tickets) won just three percent of the presidential vote (2,872). An SDP candidate was elected justice of the peace and constable of Whiteside (Burley Colony). SDP candidates for mayor lost narrowly in Whatcom and Fairhaven, but Dr. Titus, running for Congress on the SDP ticket, got only 263 votes. Similarly, SDP candidates for Supreme Court and the King County Council fared poorly.<sup>51</sup>

As a result of the 1901 legislature the splits between the socialist factions and between the socialists and the trade unionists grew wider. The Republican leadership, which retained control of the legislature, played an important role in this. The Democratic-Populist successes in November 1900 alarmed the Republican leadership. In seeking ways to limit the future growth of new parties they proposed a bill which would have abolished party primaries, caucusses, and nominating conventions.<sup>52</sup>

The SDP and the SLP objected strongly to the bill which was transparently designed to hurt their interests. Dr. Titus, however, took a position which made future SDP-SLP cooperation all but

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<sup>51</sup>The SDP won 2,006 votes (1.9 per cent); the SLP won 866 votes (.8 per cent). John R. Rogers defeated his Republican rival by a vote of 51,944 to 49,860.

Bushue, pp. 29,40,66-67; TS 25 Nov., 9 Dec. 1900, 9,16,25 Nov. 1902; The Socialist Congressional Campaign Book, (Chicago: Carl D. Thompson, 1914), p. 19; Johansen, pp. 368,474,614.

<sup>52</sup>Bushue, pp. 41-42; TS 9 Dec. 1900, 7 Jan. 1901; Seattle Times 22 Jan. 1901; P-I 18 Jan. 1901.

impossible. He suggested that the number of signatures required for party recognition be reduced from five per cent to three per cent. This would have secured the SDP but ruled out the SLP. Although Titus estimated the bill would cost the SDP between \$280-\$420 in Seattle alone, it would have left the SDP as the dominant socialist party. In exchange for this Titus threw away the chance for socialist unity. The bill failed narrowly, but it served its purpose by driving a deep wedge between the SDP and the SLP. Neither ever trusted the other again.<sup>53</sup>

The WSLC also fared poorly in the 1901 legislature. Of all the legislative proposals introduced by the labor lobby only two passed: a barbers' sanitary law and a "Horseshoers Bill." The legislature seemed to ignore the pleas of the workers to redress their grievances. In fact, however, the economic hardships of the few were masked by the overwhelming prosperity of the many. In 1901 the state's labor force increased sharply by 13.83 per cent to 255,000 and total employment increased by 13.20 per cent to 240,000. Although this caused unemployment to increase by 14.96 per cent to 14,600, or 5.77 per cent of the labor force, and although the unemployed suffered severely, it was not sufficient to move the legislators. (Table 1)<sup>54</sup>

In July 1901, at the SDP's first annual convention, the delegates recognized that they had failed to win over the trade unionists. Their chief concern was to find ways to obtain outside support to

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<sup>53</sup>Bushue, pp. 42-43; TS 27 Jan, 10, 17 Feb., 10 March 1901.

<sup>54</sup>Call, p. 20.

compensate for the lack of local support. Thus they voted to send E. Lux, the unsuccessful candidate for mayor of Whatcom to a proposed National Unity Convention of socialists scheduled for 29 July 1901 in Indianapolis, Indiana. Dr. Titus, who had been active in the organization of this convention, led the supporters of the proposal. The SDP's convention also adopted a number of resolutions; calling for the new party to be named the Socialist Party of America; denouncing the public ownership of public utilities programs which the reformers in the major capitalistic parties had adopted instead a complete workers' take-over; demanding that the proposed national party also be committed to a non-compromising socialist program; and calling upon the national party to endorse TS as a party organ.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>The National Unity Convention met as planned. The delegates succeeded in welding together a broad, loose alliance of the major socialist and radical movements in the United States. It was far from homogeneous. It contained such diverse elements as the native-born, Protestant, farmers and sharecroppers, who formerly supported the Populists, in Texas, Oklahoma, Alabama, Louisiana, Missouri, New Mexico, Arkansas, Kansas, and North Dakota. On most issues the farmers supported the most radical elements of the Party. However, they differed from the left in their insistence on tenant farmers' property rights and in their desire to reconcile socialism with Christianity.

The new Party also contained a small, but significant, Christian socialist, non-marxist, non-class conscious element, represented by a number of ministers and social gospel reformers. They were most influential in Illinois, Iowa, Northern California, and upstate New York.

In addition, the new Party contained a Syndicalist element. These were especially strong among the Timber Workers and migrant farm workers in the Pacific Northwest and the Upper Great Plains. They were also strong among the Timber Workers and WFM iron and copper miners in Upper Michigan, Minnesota, and from Arizona to Butte, Montana and Northport, Washington. Many of these workers were recent Scandinavian and eastern European immigrants. They tended to believe that only unskilled, or migratory workers were true proletarians. On most issues the Syndicalists supported the Party's Left-wing elements. They supported the idea of dual unionism.

Eugene Debs and William "Big Bill" Haywood, secretary of the WFM, were among the leaders of the Left-wing of the Party. They



The new party, named the Socialist Party of America, did not attract many new members in Washington. Few trade unions endorsed it. At the same time many former SDP members were not enthusiastic. The new party had all the liabilities of the SDP and few advantages. They were also disappointed that the SPA continued to support the AFL and press for moderate, step by step reforms as the route to socialism. With the formation of the SPA, the SDP renamed itself the Socialist Party of Washington, but otherwise remained unchanged.<sup>56</sup>

On the other hand the SPW's initial political ventures proved much more encouraging. In the 1901 King County elections Dr. Titus and John T. Oldham, the original publisher of the UR, ran for positions on the School Board on a platform advocating kindergartens

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objected to cooperation with the AFL on the grounds that the AFL would never abandon craft unionism, or endorse socialism. They looked with sympathy on the Syndicalists.

The new party, however, was dominated by its Center-Right elements, the so-called constructive socialists, like Victor Berger and Morris Hillquit. These men dominated the socialist movement by virtue of the fact that they controlled, or had influence with, the AFL's industrial union minority. They were powerfully entrenched in New York, Philadelphia, Milwaukee, Los Angeles, Boston, and Chicago. They emphasized the importance of organized industrial workers to the socialist movement, especially those in the United Mine Workers, International Association of Machinists, United Brewery Workers, WFM and the Railroad Brotherhood Unions. They differed most strongly from the Left in their willingness to cooperate with the AFL. They felt that the AFL could still be reformed from within. They also disagreed with the Left in that they wanted to achieve a socialist revolution slowly, step by step, through peaceful reform. They argued that by making a series of rational, "immediate demands" they had a better chance of winning the support of reform-minded, non-labor groups.

Also see Bushue, pp. 28,47-48; TS 7 July, 25 Aug. 1901; Weinstein, pp. 2-20,24-26; David A. Shannon, The Socialist Party of America, (New York, 1955), *passim*.

<sup>56</sup>The Seattle Iron Workers Union was one of the few trade unions to endorse the SPW, although many individual trade unionists joined the reorganized party in hopes that its new national ties would bring it more success.

Ibid.

for all, more and better-paid teachers, a teachers' tenure law, and the hiring of more union workers. They won twenty-five per cent of the vote, a big increase over the SDP's vote in 1900 and, as a result, Titus and the socialists felt they "were on the crest of a new tide."<sup>57</sup>

For a time, therefore, it seemed that the WCLU faced another new and more dangerous competitor. Very quickly, however, the SPW split internally along ideological lines. The conflict arose over whether to compromise party ideology to win elections. It was, in essence, an updated version of the split in the Populist Party between the "Pure" and "Fusionist" forces. This split, in one form or another, crippled the SPW's political efforts for more than a decade and may have allowed the trade unionists the time they needed to consolidate their non-partisan policy.<sup>58</sup>

The event which touched off the schism was E. Lux's second unsuccessful attempt to win election as mayor of Whatcom. In 1900, as SDP candidate for mayor, Lux won 444 out of 1,000 votes. In his second effort, however, he won a mere six per cent of the vote. Dr. Titus, whose vote had improved, accused Lux of being too moderate and of not being socialistic enough. He said that Lux should have run on a "Square-toed revolutionary platform." George Boomer, another of Lux's critics, analyzed the results in this way. The

...effort to get votes is disasterous in the end, unless those votes are won by clear, class-conscious propaganda. Votes won

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<sup>57</sup>Titus got 689 votes; Oldham got 729 votes. The two Republicans got 2,108 and 2,190 votes, respectively.

Bushue, pp. 29-30; TS 27 Oct., 11 Nov. 1901; Seattle Star 4 Nov. 1901.

<sup>58</sup>Bushue, pp. 40,46,49-50; TS 15 Dec. 1901, 5 Jan. 1902.

because of personality or candidates, or because of sentiment or a compromise of principles, will always be a shifting and deadly quicksand.

The Right-wing members of the Party defended Lux. Ira D. Fertig, a "common-sense socialist", argued that the SPW should "administer the public trust for the commonwealth..." even if it should mean delaying the Revolution. He criticized Titus and the Left-wing on the grounds that their impracticality would destroy the party.

We have listened to your academic preachments of ultimate Socialism with what patience we could command; we have agreed with you when we could and have tried to extend charitable tolerance where we could not; but, if, as your comments last week appear to suggest, excommunication and ostracism is to be the punishment for the first recognition of practical common justice in the Socialist Party, and if the National Sub-Committee on Municipalities shall decree that the Luxes shall be seated far back and low down while the dreamer and his grafter shall be placed in control of municipal social polity, then I predict that the Socialist Party will very soon take its place beside the vanishing S.L.P. of Boss Danny (DeLeon), and we, who believe in Socialism in the present tense, shall rejoice heartily that it died aborning and continue to hope and pray and work for something better to take its place.

Lux participated in his own defense and explained the genesis of his mayoral campaign. He stated that the SPW's Whatcom local had drafted its platform hastily,

...on the evening of the convention, and I had no time to prefix and affix the usual stereotyped phrases to it. We did appeal to the workers from the platform, and in print, but we omitted obstructive, obsolete phraseology. We appealed to common sense in preference to class dogmas which have become a millstone hung to the neck of the party. To affirm allegiance to this or that principle is implied in our party name, and we thus see no use-value in following traditions. Let action tell our allegiance, where we omit words.<sup>59</sup>

The split is confusing because, whereas the Center-Right elements dominated the national SPA, in Washington they were a minority

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

and the Left-wing elements predominated. Only a minority of conservative SPW members wanted "to turn the party into a middle-class reform group" by appealing "to all who would vote the socialist ticket, or sign application blanks, without a firm foundation of Marxist or Titus' teachings." This minority sided with Lux in the controversy over the Whatcom party local's platform. They were also closely aligned with the reformist, Center-Right "social democrat" leaders of the SPA like Victor Berger, Morris Hillquit, John Work, and Walter Thomas Mills. They supported industrial unionism, but opposed the dual unionism of the ALU because they hoped to work within the AFL. They stood for what they termed labor's "immediate demands", which they defined as the immediate relief of workers' conditions, hours, and wages. They aimed to bring about socialism without necessarily demanding a socialist revolution "right now." In the context of the SPW they are often referred to as the Right-wing, the Conservatives, the "commonsense socialists", or, more typically, the "Yellows".<sup>60</sup>

At the SPW's left-wing extreme stood those socialists who rejected out-right the call for "immediate demands". This faction was by far the largest in the SPW. They endorsed industrial unionism and supported the demands of radical farmers. They denounced the AFL and most agreed with the need to replace it with an industrial union federation like the ALU. They opposed the efforts of the Center-Right

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<sup>60</sup>Bushue, pp. 26-27; TS 26 June 1904; Barbara Winslow, "The Decline of Socialism in Washington: 1910-1925," (M.A. Thesis, University of Washington, 1969), p. 4; Shannon, pp. 13-28; Weinstein, pp. 4-15.

to work within the capitalist system for evolutionary change "because no immediate relief was possible for the working class under capitalism." They argued that no compromise should be made with capitalistic parties or groups even if they promised to enact reforms or help the socialists win elections. They were closely aligned with the radical, Marxist, Left-wing of the SPA and its leaders, Eugene Debs and "Big Bill" Haywood. In the context of the SPW they are often referred to as the Left-wing, the Radicals, the Marxists, the "principled socialists", or, more commonly, the "Reds". The Reds derogatorily referred to the Yellows as "opportunists" for their willingness to compromise in exchange for practical results. For their part the Yellows denigrated the Reds, referring to them as "impossibilists," "revolutionists," or "destructionists" for their refusal to make reasonable concessions to political necessity."<sup>61</sup>

The outcome of the Lux affair demonstrated that the Reds controlled the SPW. After the 1901 election the SPW created an investigating committee to look into the affair. Their report, which stated that the Whatcomlocal's "platform erred in not offering allegiance to the national platform...and that the spirit of the platform is Capitalistic rather than Socialistic...", confirmed that the

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<sup>61</sup>The SPW's Red faction also contained a sub-faction. These consisted primarily of industrial unionists, especially those affiliated with the WFM and, later, with the Industrial Workers of the World. Increasingly, they rejected all forms of political action either within the capitalist system, or against it. They held that the only way to accomplish a socialist revolution was for the workers to rely solely on building up their economic power until the day came when they could simply take power from the capitalists.

The SPW's Yellows were led by another doctor, R.J. "Doc" Brown, an "advertising dentist." Brown claimed that the party should not be limited to working people, but should reach out to all people interested in social change. He believed that fusion and political compromises were necessary to win elections and argued that one need not believe in socialist principles to be a party member.<sup>64</sup> The Yellows also differed from the Reds in their complete rejection of Marxist philosophy. Their socialism was of an earlier kind, tinged with Christian principles and rooted in Populism. While they agreed with many of the Marxists' goals, they could not condone the concept of class war and violent revolution.<sup>65</sup>

With the creation of the SPW and the rise of conflict within the labor movement, ended the formative era of the Washington State labor movement. Despite its divisions, however, the SPW and the trade unionists were united on a number of issues. For example, they agreed in opposing oriental immigration and civil rights. This policy may be traced to their common origins in the anti-Chinese movement of the 1880's. Similarly, although they generally supported women's rights and sought their membership, they made few serious efforts to organize Blacks and racial minorities, including Japanese, Chinese, and later Chicanos and Filipinos. The social discontent and anxiety which produced these ethnic-cultural divisions within the potential membership of the labor movement nearly spelled disaster in the years ahead.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>Winslow, p. 21.

<sup>65</sup>Weinstein, p. 4.

<sup>66</sup>Winslow, pp. 29-30; Weinstein, p. 66; Johansen, p. 608.

Reds' influence was paramount.<sup>62</sup>

From 1901 to 1909 Dr. Titus dominated the SPW's Red faction. Together with his allies, Hulet Wells, Alfred Wagenecht, E.B. "Harry" Ault, Sam Sadler and his common-law wife, Kate, Titus tried to keep the SPW on a radical, class conscious, Marxist, revolutionary course. They believed that proletarians should control the party and that the party should support only working class candidates. As publisher Titus raised TS to become the most important SPA organ in the West and significantly influenced both the SPA and the SPW by this means. From this pulpit he carried on an aggressive fight against the principal Center-Right SPA paper, J.A. Wayland's Kansas-based Appeal to Reason, which was the most popular and successful of the SPA's English language publications. Titus claimed that Wayland's "Public Ownership of Monopolies" platform was not socialism, that it was merely an effort to win over or placate middle class support for labor's immediate demands, and it was a rejection of the class struggle.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>The committee's decision was not unanimous. At least two members disagreed with parts of it. One, Charles S. Wallace, refused to go along with the report, believing the committee had no right to act at all. Some SPW members resigned rather than go along, but most Yellows stayed in the Party and fought the Reds every step of the way for as long as they remained.

Bushue, p. 51; TS 15 Dec. 1901, 5 Jan. 1902.

<sup>63</sup>Titus differed from his Red followers in only one major respect. He opposed dual unionism and supported the unity of the labor movement. This was a great source of weakness in the Red faction. While it did not deflect the criticisms of the Yellows, it caused many of the Reds to distrust him.

Bushue, pp. 26-27, 30, 39-40; Winslow, pp. 20-21; Kipnis, p. 291; UR 28 July 1900; TS 23 Dec. 1900, 27 April 1902; For more of Wayland, see: Quint, Chapter IV and Shannon, pp. 28-30, 33-39.

## Chapter 2:

### Labor Reorganizes: The Choice Between Socialism and Progressivism, 1902 - 1908

In the decade 1890 to 1900 Washington continued to grow rapidly. The population increased from 349,390 to 518,103, a rate of growth more than twice the national average. The percentage of the population engaged in manufacturing industries also increased. By the turn of the century more than 30,000 out of a labor force of about 224,000 workers worked in manufacturing industries. During the 1800's general industrial prosperity had tended to prevent the rise of labor discontent. Only during periods of economic depression, as in 1883-1885 and 1893-94, had labor strife surfaced. The dominant industries in the state, in terms of the value added by manufacturing, remained lumber and agriculture.<sup>1</sup>

In the decade 1900-1910 the state's population more than doubled to 1,141,990. The percentage urbanized also increased rapidly until, by 1910, more than half the population lived in urban areas. The state's labor force increased 232 per cent to 520,000 and the number of workers engaged in manufacturing increased to 70,000. Meanwhile the basic composition of the state's industries remained as before.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Johansen, pp. 607,611,621,627-628.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



Continued rapid growth--the trends toward urbanization and industrialization--greatly increased potential trade union membership. Yet the movement grew very slowly. Although in 1902 the WSLC claimed 15,000 members, organized in 160 locals and five central labor councils, it actually had only about 5,700 paid-up members. In other words the WSLC represented only 2.01 per cent of the state's labor force. (Table No. 2) Many of these workers were members of the various international unions which had affiliated with the AFL, but many others were affiliated with the independent Railroad Brotherhoods and a few remnant assemblies of the Knights of Labor. In addition the WSLC represented several hundred radical industrial workers organized by the WFM. Probably most of the WSLC's members were not affiliated with any international union or labor federation. The major problem was labor's inability to organize the state's dominant industries due to employer opposition, lack of imagination, and labor apathy.<sup>3</sup>

Another major problem which limited trade union growth was recurring unemployment. As the state's industries became more integrated into the national and international market, old family and community relief and charity resources became inadequate. The depression of 1893-1894 had proved this. After the turn of the century unemployment fluctuated considerably because, although the state's economy continued to grow rapidly, it could not keep up with the growth of the

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<sup>3</sup>Call, pp. 11-12,14; Schwantes, "Left-ward Tilt...", pp. 12-13, 16; Margaret Jane Thompson, "Development and Comparison of Industrial Relationships in Seattle," (M.B.A. Thesis, University of Washington, 1929), p. 23.

labor force. In a good year like 1901-1902 the state's labor force increased by 12.15 per cent to 286,000, employment increased by 17.08 per cent to 281,000 and unemployment decreased by 68.49 per cent to 4,600 or 1.06 per cent of the labor force. (Table No. 1) In the boom year of 1906 unemployment virtually disappeared. More often, however, unemployment averaged over five per cent of the labor force. In 1903 and 1904 unemployment reached 15,100 and 14,900, respectively, and in the terrible year of 1908 reached 29,600, or 6.27 per cent of the labor force. The constant presence of unemployed workers ready to take any job weakened the bargaining power of the trade unions.

Thus, dissatisfaction with the existing structure of organized labor grew. The Populists had failed to enact pro-labor reforms. Fusion, too, had failed. The WSLC had not had any great impact on the legislature and had failed to take any actions to help organize the unorganized. The K of L had nearly disintegrated. The international unions were divided among themselves over both economic and political policy. Those organized along craft lines did not wish to disperse their slender resources in attempting to organize poorly-paid, industrial workers, many of whom were recent immigrants. Neither did they wish to repeat the errors of the past and endorse a single political party. Those organized along industrial lines, like the WFM, saw this as selfishness on the part of better-paid workers. They were supported by the recently-organized Socialist Party of Washington, which hoped to gain the support of the labor movement. Neither were the central labor councils united. Yet on one point most trade unionists and their political allies could come together:

the need to affiliate with an international labor federation which would help the state labor movement organize unorganized workers and to make it more effective in politics. The main question which remained was whether the WSLC should affiliate with the AFL, the ALU, or the K of L.<sup>4</sup>

In January 1902 these questions came to a head at the WSLC's fifth annual convention in Tacoma. It was attended by 120 delegates representing 114 locals and the five central labor councils. The chief instigator of the reorganization effort was C.O. Young, who had helped organize the WSLC. He, William Blackman, and Whitney Stacy, the WSLC's president and secretary-treasurer, respectively, led the difficult fight to affiliate with the AFL. At first, representatives from non-AFL, pro-industrial unions, who opposed ties to the AFL, outnumbered them. Although the convention agreed to change the name of the WSLC to the Washington State Federation of Labor the delegates refused to affiliate with the AFL. After three days of debate the supporters of AFL affiliation managed to divide their opponents by winning passage of a plan to submit the issue of AFL affiliation to a membership referendum. The anti-AFL forces could not appear to oppose the right of the rank and file to vote on the issue.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Schwantes, "Leftward Tilt...", p. 16; UR 10 Nov. 1900, 7 Dec. 1901.

<sup>5</sup>The convention also nominated Stacy to be the state organizer and elected Blackman as the WSFL's first president. The chief function of the WSFL was that, in addition to legislative lobbying, it engaged in educational and organizational campaigns in behalf of local unions throughout the state. The success of these goals depended upon active support from the AFL, or whichever international federation the WSFL joined. Soon after the state Supreme Court startled the labor movement

The struggle to obtain ratification of the AFL-affiliation referendum had mixed results. By March 1902 the WCLU had approved it, although its industrial unionists and socialists remained opposed. Others, who cherished the WCLU's independence, or who preferred the ALU, or the K of L, continued to voice their opposition. The Union Record criticized AFL President Samuel Gompers while praising the leadership of the ALU. Gompers, who sought "industrial peace and prosperity" rather than class war, had joined the National Civic Federation, a business-civic-labor organization, as a symbol of his support for industrial capitalism. The socialists, for example, looked upon this as treason to the working class.<sup>6</sup>

In Spokane the opposition to the AFL was even stronger. By 1903 only fourteen out of forty-seven locals in the central labor council had affiliated with the WSFL. Many workers there favored affiliating with the K of L which had dominated the council since its formation. Many others favored affiliating with the WFM, which greatly appealed to the unemployed, unorganized, and low-paid seasonal and migratory workers in the forests, mines, and fields of eastern Washington and Idaho's northern Panhandle. In addition the WFM's anti-AFL and pro-SPW policies appealed to these groups. By 1904, as a result, the ALU's Federal Union Local No. 222 was the largest local

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by up-holding the ten hour day for women workers.

Call, pp. 11-13,56; Schwantes, "Leftward Tilt...", pp. 16-17; UR 29 June 1901, 11,18,25 Jan. 1902, 25 Oct., 29 Nov. 1902; San Francisco Labor Clarion 28 Feb. 1902; Thompson, pp. 23,28; Saltvig, p. 18; DeShazo, pp. 4-7; Yearbook of Organized Labor of the State of Washington, 1927, (Seattle: Washington State Labor News, 1927), pp. 11, 27; Tripp, pp. 12-13.

<sup>6</sup>Schwantes, pp. 16-19; UR 22 Feb., 1 March, 1 April, 1,29 Nov. 1902; Weinstein, pp. 29-31.

in Spokane. As a result, too, Spokane did not affiliate with the WSFL en bloc until 1905.<sup>7</sup>

The struggle for AFL affiliation might have been even more difficult had the SPW not been preoccupied with its Red-Yellow power struggle. The issue again was "fusion". The minority Yellows wanted to make local alliances with businessmen, reformers, and civic organizations to help win elections; the dominant Reds refused to allow such tampering with socialist principles.<sup>8</sup>

The Red-Yellow conflict took precedence over all other issues in the SPW. At the party's 1902 convention it was the main issue. When the Yellows showed signs of political life Titus complained:

The opportunists are moving heaven and earth throughout the state to secure proxies and capture the state convention, and all true Socialists need to wake up.

But he need not have worried. The Reds won a significant victory showing them to be in firm control of the party. The convention re-endorsed the SPW's 1901 platform which opposed all immediate demands and other Yellow policies. The Seattle Times, looking upon the proceedings with a jaundiced eye, commented:

In many respects the gathering resembled in its deliberations and physical characteristics the early meetings of the People's

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<sup>7</sup>For more information on the WFM in Idaho, see: Johansen, p. 350; Schwantes, pp. 7-8, 12-13, 17-18; Freeman's Labor Journal 20 Feb. 1902; UR 23 Jan. 1903; Spokane Record 26 Feb. 1904.

For more information regarding the struggle to establish the WSFL in Spokane, see: Freeman's Labor Journal 18 Jan. 1901, 16 Jan., 16 Feb. 1903; Spokane Record 22, 29 Jan., 26 Feb. 1904; and James L. Hunt, "The History of the Spokane Central Labor Council...", passim.

<sup>8</sup>Bushue, pp. 55-56, 60; TS 16, 30 March, 14 Sept. 1902.

For more on the struggle, see: Bushue, pp. 31, 54-55, 64; Appeal to Reason 16 Feb., 9 March, 12, 19 April 1902, quoted in TS 27 April 1902; see also: TS 15 Dec. 1901.

Party in 1892 and 1893, when small bands of men gathered in various cities and towns of the State, and believing themselves commissioned to reform the world, set about to reverse all the laws of economics as well as most of those on the statute books.

To which Titus retorted:

It was not long before those "small bands" of the People's Party became big enough to down the Republican army in this state. And the only reason they did not remain big was their ignorance of "economic laws," the very thing we socialists are strong on.<sup>9</sup>

Even after the convention the intra-party contest continued on a ferocious level. Thus it is extremely surprising that, despite these schisms, the SPW continued to grow. Party membership increased to approximately 1,000 and the number of affiliated locals increased to forty-five. Party member George W. Ficks was elected president of Seattle Typographical Union Local No. 202. And TS's circulation grew rapidly, reaching 2,500 in April 1902.<sup>10</sup>

In the 1902 fall elections both major parties adopted platforms endorsing the WSFL's legislative agenda: an appointed State Railroad Commission, direct election of senators, direct legislation (i.e., initiative, referendum, and recall), and oriental exclusion. This helped the non-socialist, anti-industrial union men, and prompted the WSFL to continue its independent, non-partisan political policies. As long as there was hope for reform within the major parties and as long as the SPW was internally chaotic the trade unionists could maintain their independence.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Bushue, pp. 56-58; TS 1 June, 6 July 1902; Seattle Times 30 June 1902.

<sup>10</sup>Bushue, pp. 30,56,58-60; TS 13 April, 6,27 July, 24,25,31, Aug., 2 Nov. 1902.

<sup>11</sup>Saltvig, pp. 73-74; Call, p. 43; Bushue, pp. 63,66-67; TS 2,9,16,23 Nov. 1902, 17 May 1903; Tripp, 8,14-15.

Partly as a result the Republicans won an easy victory in 1902. Following the election Governor McBride appointed WSFL President William Blackman as the second commissioner of the Labor Bureau in an effort to gain labor's support. Blackman held the post until 1908, but the WSFL refused the bait and remained non-partisan. The SPW received almost 6,000 votes statewide, or approximately seven per cent of the total. Only the Massachusetts Socialist Party won a higher percentage. But the eastern Washington locals, angered over Titus' exclusivity, did not contribute a single dollar to the campaign. The SPW got only 230 votes in Spokane, while in King County it won 930 votes.<sup>12</sup> Meanwhile the WSFL continued to expand its operations slowly. The number of affiliated locals increased from 132 to 143 and the number of cities with at least one WSFL local increased from eleven to fourteen. (Tables No. 1 and 2)<sup>13</sup>

In 1903 the relatively favorable economic conditions of 1902 changed for the worse. While the labor force continued to grow rapidly the number of new jobs failed to keep pace. The labor force increased by 10.48 per cent to 316,000, but employment grew by only 6.64 per cent to 301,000. Thus, unemployment increased by 228.26 per cent to 15,100, or 4.77 per cent of the labor force. As a result membership in the fledgling WSFL declined marginally. The percentage of the labor force it represented also declined from 2.01 per cent to 1.81 per cent.

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Washington State Federation of Labor, Proceedings of the Annual Convention, 1907-1951, (Olympia, 1907-1951), Vol. 1919.

In view of the WSFL's weakness it is surprising that the 1903 legislature proved to be the most receptive to labor's demands. The legislators approved an arbitration law, a bake shop inspection law, a barbers Sunday closing law, a child labor law, and an eight hour day for employees on public projects law. Most importantly, however, the lawmakers approved a factory inspection law, which provided that all dangerous industrial places be properly safeguarded and which empowered the Labor Bureau to inspect the sites and recommend safety measures. The legislature also passed a bill, long favored by labor, introduced by Senator Warren Tolman of the Direct Legislation League, allowing first class cities to amend their charters by the initiative. None of these laws, in and of themselves, greatly helped labor, but taken as a whole they provided significant encouragement to the conservative, non-partisan wing of the labor movement. These groups now had evidence to show that reform was possible within the capitalist system and without class war. Although labor was a significant beneficiary of these new laws main responsibility for their passage rested upon other groups. Women's clubs, farmers, intellectuals, liberal politicians, and many employers supported the reform program. In addition, some social gospel clergymen worked with the WSFL and the reform lobby. Their success confirmed the WSFL's hostility to the SPW and inspired it to co-sponsor a resolution at the AFL convention asking the AFL to become more vigorously involved in politics. The convention proceeded to adopt the resolution, but did nothing further about it until the 1906 congressional elections when Gompers enunciated his famous "Reward our Friends, Punish our Enemies" policy. The WSFL's



early legislative experience may well have played a part in the evolution of the AFL's national political program.<sup>14</sup>

The WSFL's success and the schisms within the SPW also encouraged the WCLU to take more direct control over its affiliated weekly newspaper, the UR. In March 1903 the WCLU purchased the UR from its publisher, John Oldham, for \$350. The UR, thereafter, became the WCLU's official organ. The WCLU elected a six-man board of control and hired Gordon Rice as editor. Frank Rust, a conservative AFL unionist noted for his business acumen, became general manager.<sup>15</sup>

Labor's success at the legislature, however, also led anti-labor businessmen to reorganize. In November 1903 Seattle employers formed the Citizens Alliance to oppose the spread of the union shop, boycotts, and picketing. They sent letters to local businessmen urging them not to advertize in the UR. In Spokane employers established a local branch of the American League of Independent Workmen, a company-sponsored company union, designed to inhibit organization of genuine trade unions and promote the open shop.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Saltvig, p. 103; Call, p. 20; Tripp, pp. 3-4,6,8,10-11,14-15, 35; Northwest Church Life II (Aug. 1912), p. 127; III (Sept. 1913), p. 383; Puget Sound Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church Journal (1909), pp. 72-74; (1910), p. 67; UR 13 April 1900. For labor's view of the social gospel, see: UR 8 April 1905, 9 Feb. 1907, 7 Jan., 13 May 1911, 3 Feb. 1912; Seattle Times 16 Oct. 1910.

<sup>15</sup>This action outraged Socialists in the WCLU. They claimed it was in fact an effort to draw readership away from TS. Several SPW-dominated locals withdrew from the WCLU rather than contribute to the per capita tax assessment needed to pay for maintaining the UR.

O'Connell, pp. 2-3,25; Dickson, p. 25; DeShazo, p. 35; Minutes, 18 March 1903, Box 8, King County Central Labor Council Records, University of Washington Library.

<sup>16</sup>In a "union shop" the employer agrees to employ only union members; in an "open shop," the employer reserves the right to hire

Meanwhile the SPW proved to be no real threat to labor's non-partisan political policy. The party continued to waste its energies in factional disputes. The fusion issue, which divided the opportunists from the impossibilists, ruined Titus and TS and continued to wreak havoc on the SPW's political fortunes.<sup>17</sup>

The disputes within the SPW might not have disrupted the affairs of the labor movement, had not the WCLU become a bone of contention within the party. Since the WCLU affiliated with the AFL, socialists in the WCLU had been fighting a guerilla war against the pro-WSFL and pro-AFL leaders in the WCLU. The fact that neither the WSFL nor the AFL conducted significant organizing activities in the Puget Sound region played into the socialists' hands and was an especially effective argument against the AFL among the unemployed and unorganized. A good example occurred when the Seattle Street Carmen's Union Local struck the Seattle Electric Company. The SEC had recently been purchased by the giant Stone & Webster holding company. When the new management unilaterally cut wages, the men

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anyone he chooses, union or nonunion.

DeShazo, p. 35; Dickson, pp. 26-27; O'Connell, p. 25; Saltvig, pp. 120,412; Spokane SR 13,16,19 April 1903; Seattle Star 24 Sept., 3 Oct. 1904.

<sup>17</sup>Bushue, pp. 60-63,66; TS 4,18 Jan., 1,22 Feb., 12 April, 17,24 May 1903.

In 1904 even the out-of-state SPW organizations withdrew their support for TS when Titus launched an attack on the "impossibilists", his own base of support, for not being radical enough. Titus then established a new newspaper, Next, with the assistance of E.B. Ault as business manager. Ault had formerly edited Equality Colony's weekly journal, Industrial Freedom, and had briefly worked with Titus on TS in 1900. Next lasted only a short while. Titus then attempted to revive TS. In 1906 he moved it to Toledo, Ohio, where he formed a partnership with William Mailley, an old SDP ally. For more on the impact of the struggle of the TS, see: Bushue, p. 33; TS 24 May, 19 July 1903, 26

had reorganized their union. Ninety-six per cent of the 500 motormen and conductors then walked out in protest of the wage reduction. But, despite support from the Teamsters, the strike ended after eight days when the company granted the men a two cent per hour wage increase. Shortly after the men returned to work, however, the company again reduced wages.<sup>18</sup>

Dr. Titus, who vigorously supported the strikers, blamed the loss of the strike on the company's use of non-union workers and on the refusal of the WCLU's leadership to endorse his call for a general sympathy strike of all workers to support the Street Carmen. Indeed, the WCLU had shown a certain amount of reticence. In view of subsequent developments it might have been wiser to support the strikers. After the men returned to work, the company bought off the union's officers and convinced the union's secretary to send the local's charter back to the national union with a statement saying that the men had decided to withdraw from the union. This led to dissension and lack of trust within the local and resulted in its collapse. On the other hand, what the WCLU might have done to help the strikers is not easy to perceive. The SEC was a huge, powerful, influential organization. To have committed the WCLU's slender resources to the struggle might have led to its destruction as well. Still, the strike was not a total failure. After it, the company never again tried to

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June 1904.

For Titus' role at the SPW's 1903 convention, where the Reds triumphed, see: Bushue, pp. 68-70; TS 12 July 1903.

For more on the unsuccessful Yellow counterattack, see: Bushue, pp. 70-74; TS 19 July, 23 Aug., 20 Sept. 1903.

<sup>18</sup>Saltvig, pp. 412-413; Cline, pp. 31-33; Seattle Star 24 Sept., 3 Oct. 1904; Bushue, p. 68; TS 5 April 1903; Seattle Times 26 March 1903.

cut wages unilaterally. Instead, it instituted a sliding scale of wages which guaranteed each worker a two to three cent hourly wage increase every few years on the job. At the same time, however, SEC President Jacob Furth, as head of the Seattle Citizen's Alliance, took the lead in campaigning for the open shop and against union recognition. The Alliance brought pressure on employers not to deal with organized labor. This episode helps explain the labor movement's vigorous support for public ownership of public utilities, including transit systems.<sup>19</sup>

In 1904 the economic slump continued but some improvement occurred. Although the labor force grew less rapidly, increasing by 7.91 per cent to 341,000, employment grew by 8.30 per cent to 326,000. As a result unemployment declined by 1.32 per cent to 14,900 or 4.36 per cent of the labor force. (Table No. 1) The WSFL now began to show signs of real growth. Membership increased by more than forty percent to 8,025 and, while the number of affiliated locals declined from 143 to 106, the WSFL extended its operations to eight new cities. It now represented 2.35 per cent of the state's labor force. (Table No. 2) Despite this moderate recovery the state's growth rate sagged. Prices for Washington's exports sagged. The decline in the growth rate greatly affected businessmen and farmers who had come to expect rapid growth. Allied with anti-reform forces, they struck back against labor's gains in the political arena. The 1904 Republican state convention, under orders from James J. Hill, the

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

railroad magnate, refused to endorse the railroad commission bill and refused to renominate Senator Henry J. McBride, who had endorsed it. This led to a split within the Republican Party. On one side stood those who favored continuation of the party's traditional high tariff, pro-industry, anti-reform policies: the conservative, party-loyalist, or "Old Guard" wing, which controlled most of the party's machinery. On the other side stood those who favored Theodore Roosevelt's tentative, exploratory reform efforts: the insurgent, or "progressive" wing. Some of them had previously been associated with the Populist Party. In Washington they may have constituted a party majority, but they were divided amongst themselves. Some were attuned to agricultural and rural needs; others more attuned to urban and labor needs. Still others were primarily concerned with so-called moral issues: women's suffrage, prohibition, clean and efficient government. Thus the progressive movement was firm in some things--notably their opposition to the large corporate interests--but tended to split apart on priorities. As a result the Old Guard retained a firm grip on the party.<sup>20</sup>

Such demonstrations of raw power by giant corporations and their political allies raised to the fore the progressive issues of corporate regulation, direct election of senators, direct legislation, and civic virtue. They led to the creation of a number of new reform organizations and to active cooperation between the several existing reform groups. The most important of the alliances was that between

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<sup>20</sup>Johansen, pp. 447-450, 465.

the WSFL and the Grange. Since the turn of the century world-wide over-production of grains had produced a sharp decline in prices. This was accompanied by a sharp drop in Washington wheat production and exports. By 1904 farmers had begun once again to seek legislative remedies. The Republican conservatives and the railroad interests, however, stood in their way. To evade this legislative obstruction the 1904 Grange convention endorsed the idea of direct legislation and direct election of senators. Retiring Grange Master J.O. Wing called for cooperation between the Grange and other agricultural organizations to secure these reforms. The convention also endorsed a resolution, introduced by its President-elect C.B. Kegley, which went even further. Kegley recommended that the Grange become more active politically and cooperate with all organizations working for direct legislation. This opened the way for cooperation with the WSFL.<sup>21</sup>

Meanwhile, the Democratic Party sought to appeal to these discontents by endorsing an appointive railroad commission with powers to set railroad rates, assess the value of and set the tax rates for all public service corporations. It also endorsed all of the WSFL's legislative proposals: an employers' disability bill, congressional redistricting, nonpartisan judiciary and direct primary laws.<sup>22</sup>

Nevertheless, the conservative Republicans triumphed in

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<sup>21</sup>Saltvig, pp. 83,103,117-119; J. Allen Smith, "Civic Organizations and Municipal Parties," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences XXVII (1906), pp. 399-400; Washington State Grange, Journal of Proceedings, (1904), p. 70; (1905), p. 15; (1906), pp. 60,98; Seattle Times 3 Aug. 1904; Johansen, pp. 374-383, 626.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

November 1904. Their gubernatorial candidate won by a vote of 75,278 to 59,119. On the other hand, the progressive Republican presidential candidate, Theodore Roosevelt, carried the state with over seventy per cent of the vote. Eugene Debs, the SPA's presidential candidate, received 10,023 votes, or 6.9 per cent of the total, while the SLP's candidate received only 1,152 votes, or 1.1 per cent of the total. The Democrats received under twenty per cent of the vote.<sup>23</sup>

Following the election Titus abandoned Seattle in despair. Taking TS and E.B. Ault, his young assistant, with him he vowed to continue his "uncompromising revolutionary socialism from Toledo." In Toledo financial troubles continued to plague the paper, however. After about a year Titus moved the paper to Boise, Idaho, so he could attend the trial of the WFM leaders accused of murdering Governor Steunenberg but after six months in Boise, Titus moved TS back to Seattle.<sup>24</sup>

In 1905, after two years of high unemployment, the economic picture brightened. The labor force grew more rapidly, rising by 9.97 per cent to 375,000, but employment increased even faster, rising 12.88 per cent to 368,000. Consequently unemployment fell by 53.69 per cent to 6,900 or 1.84 per cent of the labor force. (Table No. 1) As in 1902, however, the return to prosperity did not necessarily benefit organized labor. Membership in WSFL-

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<sup>23</sup>The SPW's national candidates ran much better than in 1900, but in local races the Party was disappointed. Johansen, pp. 474,614,623; Bushue, pp. 76,83; TS 13 March 1904.

<sup>24</sup>Bushue, p. 34; Kipnis, pp. 176-177,292.

affiliated organizations fell by nearly ten per cent. (Table No. 2) Although the number of WSFL affiliates increased from 106 to 162, many of the new organizations were weak and ill-prepared to survive the employers' hostility.<sup>25</sup>

The return of prosperity, the Republicans' success at the polls in 1904, and strong anti-labor sentiment among employers encouraged the 1905 legislature to resist labor's requests. The labor lobby was also weakened and divided by disputes over organizational policy. The growing Left-wing element, influenced by the SPW's Red faction particularly well-represented in the WCLU, wanted the WSFL to place more emphasis on organizing the unorganized majority of workers and less emphasis on labor and reform legislation. A number of conservative craft unionists, who feared that continued political involvement might lead the WSFL to endorse the SPW and break with the AFL, also encouraged the WSFL to limit its political activities. As a result, none of labor's own proposals passed. However, due to a revolt of Republican reformers against their conservative leaders, and to the Grange-WSFL alliance, the railroad commission bill did pass. At the same time, a number of other bills supported by labor also passed.<sup>26</sup>

In March, following the legislative session, the reformist sentiment, which had led trade unionists to form the WSFL, also produced a drive to reorganize the WCLU. The reformers renamed the WCLU the Central Labor Council of Seattle and Vicinity (SCLC) and adopted

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<sup>25</sup>WSFL Procs., (1919)

<sup>26</sup>Johansen, pp. 465,470; Call, p. 20.



a new constitution more in tune with the precepts of the non-AFL trade unionists and the SPW Yellows. The new constitution very carefully tread the line of craft unionism. It permitted locals complete autonomy in matters that did not produce jurisdictional conflicts with other locals or central labor councils but it also provided for the creation of seven industrially organized trade section committees. (Table No. 3) These semi-autonomous bodies coordinated the educational and organizational activities of the separate locals in their respective industries. In many ways they acted like industrial unions but they were severely limited by the jurisdictional jealousies of their international unions and were often prevented from taking vigorous independent actions. They had to be careful lest the internationals come to believe that the trade sections constituted embryonic dual industrial unions. Indeed, the internationals had some justification for such fears. Over the years many members of organized labor in Seattle developed more loyalty for their trade sections and the SCLC than for the WSFL, the AFL, or for the internationals. Thus, the trade sections may have promoted that regional parochialism which had its roots in the independent formation of the Seattle labor movement and which persisted until after World War I. It may also have contributed to that crisis which later nearly destroyed the Seattle labor movement.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>The Trades Sections included: Building Trades, Metal Trades, Maritime Trades, Printing Trades, Amusement Trades, Miscellaneous Trades, and Brewery Trades (later replaced by the Provision Trades Section during Prohibition).

It was following the formation of the SCLC along basically craft union lines that a group of disgruntled SPW industrial unionists

At first the SCLC continued to present a low political profile. This disgusted the labor backers of the SPW's Reds. These "labor reds" agitated for labor to endorse the SPW. Some of them also called on the SCLC to break its ties with the AFL and affiliate with the newly formed Industrial Workers of the World. Instead the SCLC continued to work within the major parties on a non-partisan basis and with the numerous rapidly growing reform groups. In 1905, for example, the SCLC agreed to exchange delegates with the Seattle Ministerial Association and the UR even suggested formation of a "unity club" to support pro-labor candidates regardless of party.<sup>28</sup>

Nonetheless, the SCLC was dissatisfied with the trend in city politics. The labor leaders objected to the Municipal Ownership League's cautious reform program to create a publicly-owned street car system to compete with the Seattle Electric Company's system. They needed to demonstrate that their non-partisan political policy was a success in order to counter the charges emanating from the Left that they were playing into the hands of the capitalists. At the same time they needed to show that the IWW's rejection of all

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succeeded and joined the newly-formed Industrial Workers of the World, which had been founded in Chicago.

SCLC Minutes, 17 May, 26 July 1905, Ault Collections, University of Washington Library; Philip Taft, Organized Labor in American History, (New York, 1964), p. 290; Industrial Workers of the World, Proceedings of the Founding Convention of the Industrial Workers of the World, (New York: Merit Publishers, 1969), passim; Schwantes, "Leftward Tilt...", p. 19; Dickson, p. 25.

<sup>28</sup>The SCLC's early conservative bias also reflects the dominance of the Building, Printing, Brewery and Miscellaneous Trades Sections which consisted primarily of craft unions. See Table No. 3.

O'Connell, p. 4; Dickson, pp. 23,35-36; Saltvig, pp. 120,407; UR 11,18 Nov. 1905.

political action of any kind was equally unwise. In particular, they feared Titus' campaign to get the SCLC to endorse the IWW. As a result, in October 1905 the SCLC began to organize a Municipal Ownership Party to mobilize support for a public ownership initiative. At a MOL meeting the next month, SCLC leaders S.W. Harmon and Gordon Rice came out strongly for an immediate city take-over of the Seattle Electric Company, by a negotiated sale, if possible, but by condemnation, if necessary. Pressure from non-partisan AFL unionists, however, forced the organizers to declare that labor would merely sponsor the new party.<sup>29</sup>

Similar issues concerned Spokane labor leaders. There the Democratic Party's candidate for mayor, Floyd Daggett, had strongly endorsed municipal ownership of utilities while his Republican rival tried to make the open shop the main issue. Labor supported Daggett who went on to victory.<sup>30</sup>

In 1906 Washington's economy entered a genuine boom phase. Although the labor force increased by 8.53 per cent employment levels more than kept pace growing by 10.02 per cent to 409,000. So many new jobs were created and so many new workers entered the labor market, in fact, that unemployment declined by 124.63 per cent to a negative unemployment rate of -1,700 or -0.41 per cent of the labor force. (Table No. 1) Membership in the WSFL began to increase again and nearly returned to the 1904 level. However, many of the locals formed

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<sup>29</sup>O'Connell, p. 3; Saltvig, p. 93; Seattle Star 11 Oct., 27 Nov., 14 Dec. 1905.

<sup>30</sup>Saltvig, p. 206; Spokane SR 20,21,23 April 1905.

in 1905 disintegrated. Labor demand was so strong that many workers felt they could dispense with the trade union protection. Due to the increase in the labor force the WSFL did not materially increase its share of the labor force. (Table No. 2)<sup>31</sup>

Despite the economic improvement labor did not benefit politically. In January 1906 the SCLC-sponsored Seattle Workingman's League for Municipal Ownership, led by Frank W. Cotterill, called again for a non-partisan Municipal Ownership Party. Frank Cotterill was a leader of the SCLC's Building Trades Section and served as the SCLC's business agent. Although the labor leaders had disavowed any intention of controlling the proposed MOP, nonetheless they sponsored Matthew Dow as its mayoral candidate, instead of liberal Democrat William H. Moore. Dow, however, could not unite the progressive forces. On 21 January, at a joint MOP-WLMO committee meeting, he agreed to withdraw in favor of Moore. In addition the delegates voted to endorse a Democrat for corporation counsel. In return for their continued support labor men won endorsements for city council and other posts but they were junior partners in the coalition. All swore to support a strong municipal ownership platform.<sup>32</sup>

The opposition to the MOP was fierce. The labor position was attacked from both Left and Right. Dr. Titus strongly opposed the idea. It reminded him of George F. Cotterill's previously unsuccessful

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<sup>31</sup>WSFL Procs., (1919)

<sup>32</sup>Frank W. Cotterill was the brother of prohibitionist reformer George F. Cotterill, leader of the Citizens Non-Partisan League.

Moore won the election with a 15 vote margin over city comptroller, John Riplinger, the Republican candidate.

Saltvig, pp. 93-95, 99-100, 404; Seattle Argus 10 March 1906; Seattle Star 3, 18 Jan., 2, 16, 22 Feb., 7 March 1906; Seattle P-I 16, 21 Jan. 1906.

non-partisan efforts. Titus believed that municipal ownership of street cars was not a real or fundamental solution and urged workers to oppose municipal ownership. He argued that it would merely transfer ownership from the trusts to middle class capitalists and proposed, instead, that Stone & Webster be allowed to accumulate control over all the street car systems in America. This, he believed, would facilitate their take-over when the workers abolished capitalism. The Seattle Times encouraged this idea since it coincided with the employers' immediate objectives and even offered space to socialist publicist Vincent Harper to argue against municipal ownership. The Seattle Economic League, headed by Judge Thomas Burke and former Governor John H. McGraw, opposed municipal ownership on the grounds that the bonds needed to finance the purchase the system would beggar the city. The SEL's argument convinced some former supporters of municipal ownership, like Rev. M.A. Matthews, a prominent Methodist minister. In addition, some supporters of other progressive solutions, like Reuben Jones, who was a leading supporter of the direct primary, joined the SEL.<sup>33</sup>

In the summer of 1906 the NOP began a drive to pass the bond issues to finance municipal ownership of the street car system. Their basic support came from the Moore-for-Mayor forces. Despite their efforts, however, the bonds lost by a large margin and with them the municipal ownership proposals.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Saltvig, pp. 101-102; Dr. Titus to G.F. Cotterill, 24 Feb. 1906, Cotterill Papers, University of Washington Library; Seattle Times 1-8, 13 Sept. 1906.

<sup>34</sup>Saltvig, pp. 100, 102; Seattle Star 14 Aug., 13 Sept. 1906; UR 18 Aug. 1906; P-I 2, 6, 9, 10 Sept. 1906; Times 2, 6 Sept. 1906.

Meanwhile, the campaign to secure direct legislation amendments to the state constitution grew more active. In July delegates from direct primary clubs from all over the state met in Seattle. Representatives from twenty-seven counties, the King County Republican Party (progressive), the Seattle Civic Union, the WSFL, and the Grange also attended. They agreed to form a Direct Primary League and to oppose legislative candidates who failed to support direct legislation. Chris Horr of the Seattle Civic Union was elected President. For the first time the labor movement abandoned its traditional but unofficial alliance with the Democratic Party in favor of one with the progressive Republicans.<sup>35</sup>

In the fall the voters approved the amendment. Of all the organizations involved with the DPL the WSFL, inspired by the recently activated AFL "campaign program" to reward labor's friends and punish its enemies at the polls, was the most enthusiastic. At its 1906 convention the WSFL offered to work not only for labor legislation, such as the eight hour day for miners and prohibition of false labor advertizements, but also offered to work for the DPL's proposals and for the Grange's direct legislation efforts. This represented a great achievement on the policy level, but it still left the WSFL with practical problems concerning congressional candidates. The next year the WSFL leadership reflected that:

...the federation faced the problem of either silently consenting to the reelection of congressmen who had never exerted themselves on our behalf, or of endorsing the nominees of a minority party

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<sup>35</sup>Saltvig, pp. 103,119-120; Seattle Times 21 July 1906; P-I 22 July 1906.

who, though they were known to be the true friends of the working people, stood little chance at the polls.

The WSFL solved this problem by leaving the matter of congressional nominations to its local labor organizations.<sup>36</sup>

Following the WSFL's convention the SCLC also organized a new political organization, the Workingman's League for Clean Politics, designed to elect pro-labor candidates. The WCLP confirmed the SCLC's new policy by maintaining the break with the Populist-Democratic reform forces in favor of the pro-labor Republican progressives. Said the WCLP's leaders:

The Workingman's League used every honorable effort to have workingmen placed in nomination on the Republican ticket...

The Republican leaders, however, rebuffed these advances. This forced the WCLP to attack the Republicans and formulate plans for another non-partisan slate which they then presented to the King County Democratic convention. The WCLP emphasized, however, that this was to be no repetition of fusion. Labor hoped to preserve its independence while maintaining Democratic support. The Democrats, aware of the attraction progressivism presented to labor, endorsed both the WSFL and Grange platforms. They also nominated former WSFL President William Blackman and Patrick Byrne of the Spokane labor movement for Congress.<sup>37</sup>

In the elections labor lost the battle but won the war. The Republicans won all the congressional elections and a legislative

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<sup>36</sup>Saltvig, pp. 120-122,403; Seattle Times 23 July 1906; WSFL Procs., (1907), p. 16.

<sup>37</sup>Saltvig, pp. 122-123,125; UR 8 Sept., 3 Nov. 1906; P-I 14-15 Sept. 1906; Star 14 Sept. 1906; Times 14,26 Sept. 1906.

majority but they could not prevent the election of many candidates pledged to direct legislation. Among those elected to the legislature was John E. "Dynamite Jack" Campbell, secretary-treasurer of the International Shingle Weavers of America. He thereby became the first trade union leader to win election to the legislature. Earlier in the year Campbell had lost a foot while leading the ill-fated but heroic Ballard shingle weavers strike.<sup>38</sup>

One of the most significant developments for the labor movement in 1906 was the emergence of the IWW as an organizational threat to the AFL. Although of little immediate consequence the IWW soon proved its ability to annoy both labor and business leaders. Their first appearance in Washington, during the shingle weavers strike, set a pattern. Following the creation of the WSFL in 1903 a group of lumber union workers had met in Everett and had decided to establish the International Shingle Weavers Union. They had applied for and received an AFL charter to organize the skilled and relatively well-paid shingle and lumber mill workers. These were conservative, married, church-going, home-owning men with a stake in their communities. The

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<sup>38</sup>In King County only two of the Labor-Democratic legislative candidates won seats, L.E. Kirkpatrick and George F. Cotterill. They were helped more by the Anti-Saloon League than labor. In Spokane, labor's efforts to establish a deal with the progressive Republicans also failed and labor was forced to turn to the Democrats once again. In Tacoma an effort to organize a Workingman's League never got off the ground due to the anti-labor efforts of the Citizens Alliance. The SPW meanwhile had another disappointing year. The only bright spots were the election of two fusionist candidates in Northport and Bellingham.

Saltvig, pp. 123-127; WSFL Procs., (1907), pp. 20,30; Seattle Times 13 Sept., 7 Nov. 1907; Bushue, p. 84; TS (Toledo) 27 Jan. 1906; Call, pp. 47-48.



ISWU ignored the relatively-poorly-paid migratory workers who labored in the forests and lumber camps. These men had little stake in society. Largely foreign-born, unmarried, and radical-leaning, they had little in common with the organized shingle weavers. It was among these workers that the IWW had won most of its early converts. Had the lumber mill owners been more enlightened, or less aggressive, there is little doubt that the IWW would never have made inroads among the shingle weavers. When the ISWU sought union recognition, however, the employers had refused to negotiate and had claimed that poor economic conditions had prevented them from granting concessions. Even after conditions improved, however, the employers had remained obdurate. Finally, early in 1906 the ISWU struck a number of mills in Ballard demanding recognition and higher wages. Still the employers refused to negotiate. The strike was crushed when 365 West Coast lumber mill operators joined forces to resist the workers' demands. The failure of the strike revealed to the mill workers how much they had in common with the IWW radicals. Following the strike IWW sympathizers began to infiltrate the union in order to wean it away from the AFL.<sup>39</sup>

In 1907 the economic recovery slowed. The labor force, however, continued to grow, rising by 7.86 per cent to 439,000. Once again the number of new jobs could not keep pace. Although employment increased by 5.13 per cent to 430,000, unemployment became a problem. In 1907 unemployment increased by 118.27 per cent to 9,300 or 2.11 per cent

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<sup>39</sup>For more on the structural philosophy and tactics of the IWW, see: Albert F. Gunns, "Roland Hill Hartley and the Politics of Washington State," (M.A. Thesis: University of Washington, 1963), pp. 31-32; Clark, pp. 90-93; Johansen, p. 480.

of the labor force. The declining rate of economic growth was one of the primary reasons for union growth. As optimism about the future diminished workers lost confidence in the free labor market and sought to protect their jobs and incomes collectively. In good times each worker had sought to maximize his own independence and freedom to work for the highest wages. As economic conditions deteriorated that same worker now sought to limit his economic liability by extending the risk of wage cuts and unemployment to other workers. As a result membership in WSFL-affiliates increased at twice the rate of 1906 and rose by 22.51 per cent to 9,778. Never before had the WSFL represented so high a percentage of the state's labor force. (Table No. 2) For the first time statistics concerning membership in the SCLC are also available. These statistics reveal that the SCLC was nearly as large as the WSFL with 7,261 paid-up members. By far the largest trade section was the Building Trades Section, followed by the Brewery/Provision Trades Section. Most of the other sections had only a few hundred paid-up members. (Table No. 3)<sup>40</sup>

Despite the lagging economy and the unsuccessful shingle weavers strike, the WSFL could reflect, with increasing satisfaction, upon its own economic policies. Despite its poor showing in the 1906 elections the WSFL could also look with increasing satisfaction on its political policies, for its work on behalf of progressive candidates soon bore fruit. Following the election of 1906 William H. Paulhamus,

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<sup>40</sup>The statistics given exaggerate the size of the SCLC. Many of the SCLC's members were also members of WSFL unions and thus appear in both sets of statistics. Most of the Building Trades Section members, for example, were affiliated with both organizations.

a southwest Washington Democrat, had organized a non-partisan reform coalition at the legislature. Independently, the Grange and the WSFL had also reorganized and grown even closer with the appointment of a five-man joint legislative committee. This coalition eventually made the 1907 session of the legislature the most successful in history for labor. The legislature passed a direct primary act applicable to state and county offices and approved an advisory primary for the United States Senate. The legislature also passed labor-endorsed bills including an amendment to the child labor act. It passed legislation making Labor Day and Memorial Day school holidays, enacting a sixteen hour day for railroad workers, regulating purchase of uniforms, establishing an educational test for railroad flagmen and a pure food law. At the WSFL's 1907 convention, President Charles A. Case argued that labor's support for the Moore campaign had contributed to this success and had led to increased economic prosperity. In addition, labor's support for non-labor reform issues had given labor respectability and had helped labor fight the Citizens Alliance.

The cause has had a glimpse of what may be attained through united political action in behalf of fellow unionists or those who have proven their friendship.

Nevertheless, despite labor's strong efforts, the legislature postponed the chief elements of the reform program, the statewide initiative and referendum bills.<sup>41</sup>

Following their defeat in the 1906 Seattle elections the NOP

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<sup>41</sup>Johansen, pp. 465-470; Call, pp. 20-21; Tripp, p. 16; Saltvig, pp. 121,125-127,129,405-406; WSFL Procs., (1907), p. 8; House Journal (1907), pp. 110,280,534; Senate Journal (1907), pp. 62, 457,529,665,682,801-802. See also: Seattle Argus 9 March 1907 and UR 12 Jan., 13 April 1907.

had also revised its program and changed its name to the City Party. Without abandoning municipal ownership the party moved away from the labor program and laid increased emphasis on non-partisanship, morality in and the democratization of city government. Still its efforts languished due to public apathy and fraternal disagreements. While the party succeeded in passing charter amendments establishing the initiative, referendum, and submission of franchise extensions to the voters, its mayoral candidate again lost to the Republican in the 1907 city elections. Following the elections the City Party disintegrated ending yet another labor effort to improve its political situation.<sup>42</sup>

The SPW, too, suffered in the elections. The passage of the Direct Primary Act (1907) made it harder for the party to get on the ballot. In the absence of Dr. Titus, in Toledo, the SPW's Yellow faction had grown stronger. At the 1908 SPW convention it wrote the party platform which called for legislation to abolish labor injunctions and to restrict child labor and residence requirements for voting. It also called for establishment of the eight hour day, the forty-four hour week, freedom of speech and of the press, the initiative and referendum, and equal suffrage for women. In the eyes of the Reds, the party had simply endorsed the demands of the progressive reformers and lost its unique sense of class consciousness. They refused to support the platform. The continuing decline of the

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<sup>42</sup>Saltvig, pp. 102-107; Seattle City Party pamphlet, The City For the People (Seattle, 27 Oct. 1907); Seattle Star 7 Jan., 5 Feb. 1908; Joe Smith to L.E. Kirkpatrick, 29 March, and Joe Smith to M.E. Pew, 5 May 1908, Joe Smith Papers, University of Washington Library.

economy made its economic solutions seem meaningless. By election time, although 10-15,000 remained unemployed in Seattle alone, the SPW won a mere 2.7 per cent of the vote.<sup>43</sup>

The demise of the City Party left the Direct Legislation League still in operation and eager to move on to a state-wide initiative and referendum campaign. It also led the WSFL to re-emphasize its ties with the Grange and to endorse the Grange's direct legislation campaign. Addressing the Grange's 1908 convention, newly elected WSFL President Frank Cotterill emphasized the common interest farmers and workers had in improving social and moral conditions. The Grange, in return, re-endorsed the WSFL's legislative demands, including the employers' liability bill, and the eight hour day for women and minors bill, but only as social reform not class legislation. The Grange also passed a resolution favoring the purchase of union-made agricultural equipment. The threat of labor radicalism, unemployment, and the growth of an open shop campaign, however, continued to weaken labor's coalition.<sup>44</sup>

In 1908 the economic slow-down became even more serious. While the labor force grew at its slowest rate yet, increasing by only 7.06 per cent to 470,000, very few new jobs were created. Employment grew by only 2.32 per cent to 440,000. As a result unemployment shot up by 217.20 per cent to 29,500 or 6.27 per cent of the

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<sup>43</sup>Bushue, pp. 111-112; Winslow, p. 21; Johansen, p. 473; Seattle Times 2,5 March 1908.

<sup>44</sup>Saltvig, pp. 124-403,406,413; TS 2 Jan. 1909; Washington State Grange, Proceedings of the Annual Convention (1908), pp. 82-83, 94-95; E.M. Weston to the SCLC, 7 Feb. 1934, Box 9-21, WSFL Records, University of Washington Library.

labor force. (Table No. 1) Membership in the WSFL continued to grow and reached 10,846, an increase of 10.92 per cent. For the second year in a row the number of WSFL affiliates and the number of cities with affiliates showed sizeable increases. (Table No. 2) As economic hardship spread, workers saw more benefits in trade unions. On the other hand the SCLC suffered considerably from the down-turn because most of Washington's unemployed lived in Seattle. Membership fell by more than ten per cent. Especially hard hit were the smaller and weaker trade sections. By contrast, the Building Trades Section actually grew by about 400 members. (Table No. 3)

Efforts to deal with the unemployment were weak. On a national level the incumbent Republicans refused to endorse labor's proposals, but when AFL President Gompers tried to interest the Democrats in these proposals, they showed no more interest. In Seattle, where the state's unemployment was most severe, protest marches and demonstrations occurred for the first time since the depression of 1893-1894. These too were unsuccessful. They only succeeded in dividing the SCLC. While the leadership opposed the protest marches and demonstrations and were more concerned by the anti-labor policies of the Master Builders Association, which represented seventy-five per cent of Seattle's open shop employers, many Seattle trade unionists showed less patience. Twenty-seven hard-hit SCLC locals broke ranks and endorsed the marchers.<sup>45</sup>

The unemployment marches also produced a great deal of disorder

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<sup>45</sup>Even with the growing radicalization of the SCLC, a large number of progressive reformists won legislative seats in the fall elections. Ibid.

and alarm. The police arrested some of the marchers. More importantly they provided a perfect opportunity for the radicals on both sides to polarize the community. The demonstrations helped promote the IMA and they also provided the IWW with a tailor-made issue. For the first time IWW organizers appeared in Seattle in large numbers. They conducted what later became known as a "Free Speech Fight" on behalf of the arrested marchers. Another consequence was the formation of the Seattle Metal Trades Council, an organization of locals employed by Metal Trades Association members. Constructive, at first, by 1917 it became a radical stronghold.<sup>46</sup>

With the apparent end of prosperity labor's dream of peaceful reform faded. It seemed that the dire predictions of the radicals would come true. As economic dangers increased labor devoted itself more firmly to its internal organization and to driving a harder bargain with its progressive allies. It is with the end of rapid economic growth, too, that the first part of the progressive era came to a bitter conclusion.

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

## Chapter 3:

### The Radical Challenge:

#### The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Coalition,

1909 - 1917

The history of the Progressive era falls, naturally, into two parts. In the first part, which lasted from 1902 to 1908, Washington State's economy prospered and rapid economic growth continued. Unemployment, although occasionally severe, never persisted for long. At no time did employment actually decline. The major problem was that, despite its rapid growth, the economy failed to absorb all of the unemployed. During most of the second part, which lasted from 1909 to 1917, Washington's economy stagnated. The rate of economic growth declined dramatically. Although the labor force grew at a much slower rate than before unemployment became an ever more serious problem. At times it seemed that large scale unemployment had become a permanent feature of the society.<sup>1</sup>

Between 1915 and 1917 the state's economy revived. Although the labor force remained nearly stable employment increased rapidly and by 1917 more jobs were available than workers (Table No. 1). Wages and profits climbed commensurably and with them rose the spectre

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<sup>1</sup>Johansen, pp. 440-441, 607, 611, 621, 626-628. See also: Table No. 1; Roger Sale, Seattle Past To Present (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976), pp. 104-105.



of inflation. This revival, however, was illusory. The effects of World War I masked the underlying crisis in the economy. As first European and then American war orders began to pour in production increased bolstering depressed industries and creating new ones. In the long run, however, the war merely delayed the day of reckoning.<sup>2</sup>

In 1909 the economy appeared to recover vigorously from its 1907-1908 decline. Although the labor grew at the lowest rate yet recorded, rising only 5.95 per cent to 498,000, employment increased sharply, growing by 11.13 per cent to 489,000. As a result unemployment fell sharply, by 67.45 per cent, to 9,600 or 1.92 per cent of the labor force. (Table No. 1) The presence of nearly 10,000 unemployed workers concentrated in the urban areas, however, continued to place strong and dangerous strains on social and political relationships.

The 1907-1908 recession had also hurt the WSFL. In 1908 its growth rate had fallen by more than half. In 1909, however, the WSFL began to grow again. Membership increased by thirteen per cent to 12,257, the highest level yet reached. On the other hand, the WSFL's percentage of the labor force did not increase. The WSFL redirected its efforts into increasing the number of its affiliates and spreading into new areas throughout the state. (Table No. 2)

The 1908 recession struck the SCLC much harder than the WSFL. In 1908 the Council's paid-up membership declined by more than ten per cent. Recovery also came more slowly to the SCLC than to the WSFL. In 1909 membership increased by only 8.56 per cent to 7,084. The Building Trades Section suffered most in the recession and lost nearly

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid; WSFL Procs., (1919), p. 53.

1,000 members. Meanwhile the Maritime, Miscellaneous, Printing, and Amusement Trades sections grew significantly. (Table No. 3)

The onset of economic stagnation had few immediate negative political consequences. Although it ceased to grow rapidly the state's economy continued at a relatively high plateau. Labor and its progressive allies, with the support of Marion Hay, the newly elected mildly progressive Republican governor, had never been better organized. When the legislature met in January 1909, labor was well-situated to press its demands. As a result the lawmakers passed a long series of pro-labor bills. Again, while none of their bills ushered in the millennium, collectively they tended to justify the faith of non-partisan trade unionists. The most important new law was the Employers Liability Act which made employers liable for injuries their employees suffered while on the job. In addition the legislature approved an eight hour day for miners bill, a new mine inspection bill, an electric headlight bill, a loan shark bill, a firemen's and policemen's pension relief bill, and a bill regulating examination and registration of nurses.<sup>3</sup>

The most important new force behind the WSFL's lobby at the legislature were the mine workers. Unlike the industrial workers in the lumber industry the miners had profitted greatly from WSFL affiliation. Membership in United Mine Workers of America District No. 10 had increased from less than 300 in 1903 to more than 3,000 in 1908. By 1909 most of the larger mine operators had agreed to end

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<sup>3</sup>Call, pp. 15,21; O'Connell, p. 4; DeShazo, pp. 24-25; UR 20 Feb. 1909.

the open shop and accept the union shop. With the passage of the new hours, inspection, and employers' liability laws conditions in the mines improved visibly. Dangerous and unsanitary conditions began to be corrected. Workers could sue their employers for injuries suffered on the job. And, for the first time, the mine workers signed joint agreements with a number of employers.<sup>4</sup>

Their new strength made District No. 10 into one of the strongest and most loyal segments of the WSFL. Yet their industrial unionism remained a source of conflict. For example, District No. 10's 1909 convention adopted a resolution endorsing "the necessity of public ownership and democratic management of all the means of production and exchange that are collectively used..." The miners' policy thus conflicted with the WSFL's capitalistic and reformist strategy.<sup>5</sup>

The continuing strife in the SPW also contributed to the WSFL's growing prestige. Since his return to Seattle in 1907, Dr. Titus had been trying to regain control over the party. In his absence, however, the Yellow faction led by E.J. "Doc" Brown had grown increasingly powerful. The Yellows owed much of their strength to the fact that a majority of the SPA's National Executive Committee sympathized with their "opportunistic" policies. Indeed, on 20 December 1908 the NEC had endorsed Brown's faction in its struggle with Titus' Reds. Finally, at the 1909 SPW convention, the Yellows took over control of the party. As a result, a large fraction of Reds, led by Dr. Titus, walked out of the party and attempted to set itself up as a

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

rival organization. Within months the secessionists quarrelled and split among themselves.<sup>6</sup>

While the SPW seemed to be dissolving as a result of its own internal contradictions a different kind of threat arose to confront the WSFL. Since 1908 the Spokane Central Labor Council had been trying to get the city government to regulate "job sharks" (unscrupulous private employment agents who, for a fee, promised to find jobs for workers but who, in collusion with job bosses and foremen, conspired to over-subscribe jobs). Their activities led to constant labor turn-over with the agent and foremen sharing in the fees paid by the workers. Workers also disliked the system because it weakened their ability to improve working conditions. Neither city ordinances, nor a free city employment agency, had solved the problem.

In November, 1909 the IWW took up the fight on behalf of the workers using much the same technique they had used earlier in the Seattle unemployment demonstrations. Later, strengthened by defections from the SPW, the IWW's took to the streets to denounce the "job sharks". Rather than dealing with the workers' complaints, however, the Spokane City Council responded by passing an ordinance

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<sup>6</sup>For more on the conflict in the SPW leading up to the 1909 convention, see: Bushue, pp. 130-132,134,136,138; TS 13 Feb., 6,27 March, 19 June, 10,17 July 1909; P-I 1,23,25 March 1909; William Z. Foster, From Bryan To Stalin, (New York: International Publishers, 1937), p. 32; Kipnis, p. 373; Johansen, p. 473.

For more on the defeat of Titus and the Reds at the convention and their subsequent walkout and expulsion, see: Winslow, pp. 23-24; Foster, pp. 32-33; Bushue, pp. 138,140-142; Kipnis, p. 373; O'Connor, p. 15.

For the subsequent efforts of Titus and his allies to recapture control of the socialist movement, see: Bushue, pp. 35-36; O'Connor, p. 15.

For more on the behavior of the secessionist Reds, see:

banning all street speaking, except by the Salvation Army.

Rebelling against this ordinance IWW agitators continued to speak publicly. This led to mass arrests of IWW's. The IWW's responded to the challenge vigorously, with a startling innovation. Demanding the right of "Free Speech" they eagerly courted arrest. Thus was born one of the IWW's most colorful propagandistic techniques, the "Free Speech Fight". When the wobblies were arrested they sent out calls for reinforcements to take their places. As rapidly as they were jailed new speakers arrived to continue the campaign. The city jails soon filled to over-flowing. This placed unbearably heavy burdens on the city budget. The jailed IWW's suffered, too, from over-crowding, poor food, lack of sanitary facilities, and brutal guards, but they kept their spirits up by singing songs and conducting hunger strikes. From their confinement they also waged a very effective propaganda campaign which greatly embarrassed city officials and outraged many middle class citizens. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn's reports on jail conditions, in particular, proved shocking. Her reports on sexual misconduct between jailers and female prisoners led to an investigation, the hiring of jail matrons, and other improvements. By March 1910 the city had had enough. The council restored free speech and released the IWW's. The IWW's

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Winslow, pp. 24-25; William Z. Foster, The History of the Communist Party in the United States, (New York, 1955), pp. 32,122; Bushue, p. 142.

For more on national impact of the SPW split and the resulting court cases, see: Bushue, pp. 144-146; Kipnis, p. 374; Foster, From Bryan to Stalin, p. 33; TS 21 Aug., 6, 11 Sept. 1909.

For the reflections of Titus upon his defeat, see: Bushue, p. 146; TS 18 Sept. 1909.

claimed this as a great victory, but, in point of fact, it was not. The private employment agents continued to operate freely.<sup>7</sup>

By the end of 1909 a crisis was approaching. The lack of vigorous economic expansion strengthened the appeal of the trade unions, but made employers less likely to make concessions. If growth did not resume, an expulsion seemed likely.

In 1910 the recovery continued, but at an even slower pace, as the economy reached the limits of growth. The labor force increased, but only by 4.41 per cent to 520,000. Employment also grew, but only by 4.90 per cent to 513,000. Unemployment fell by 21.87 per cent to 1.44 per cent of the labor force, but this left 7,500 still out of work. (Table No. 1) This encouraged the WSFL to reorganize to fight for its demands on both economic and political levels.

One result of the WSFL's intensified economic and political efforts was a sharp increase in its growth rate. Membership increased by nearly twenty-six per cent to 15,420, a new peak. By 1910 the WSFL represented more than three per cent of the state's labor force for the first time in history. At the same time the WSFL continued to expand the number of its affiliates and to move into new towns and

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<sup>7</sup>Spokane SR 18 Jan. 1910; Robert Charles Eckberg, "The Free Speech Fight of the Industrial Workers of the World: 1909-1910," (M.A. Thesis: Washington State University, 1967); Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, "The Free Speech Fight at Spokane," International Socialist Review, (Dec. 1909), p. 487; Flynn, I Speak My Own Piece: Autobiography of the Rebel Girl, (New York: Masses and Mainstream, 1955); Flynn, "The Latest News from Spokane," International Socialist Review, (Jan. 1910), p. 613; Benjamin H. Kizer, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Pacific Northwest Quarterly 57, (Summer 1966), 110-112; "Barbarous Spokane," Independent 68 (10 Feb. 1910), 330-331, 711; Saltvig, p. 214; Hunt, pp. 39-49; Nelson W. Durham, History of the City of Spokane, (Chicago: S.J. Clarke Co, 1912, pp. 543-547.

cities. By 1910 the WSFL had 232 local affiliates in thirty-six towns and cities. (Table No. 2)

The SCLC, on the other hand, suffered a relapse. Membership fell by 5.68 per cent to 6,681, lower than it had been in 1907. Only the Maritime and Metal Trades sections increased in membership. Since these sections contained many of the SCLC's more radical members this helped push the Council toward more direct involvement in politics. (Table No. 3) In large measure this explains the intense interest in politics in the Seattle labor movement.

Since 1906 the Workingman's League for Clean Politics had been supporting pro-labor major party candidates in Seattle elections. Labor's efforts to organize its own political party had consistently run up against the opposition of those who favored one of the existing parties, or who opposed any sort of involvement in politics. Such opposition had crippled the MOP (1906). In 1910, again, the WLCP became alarmed by the potential threat from Dr. Titus' new party to its own political party, the United Labor Party. They hoped to use the ULP to elect their mayoral nominee, Charles H. Miller, a workingman who had been running as a Democrat. Again, however, the SCLC refused to endorse the ULP. Probably as a result, the ULP proved a dismal failure. The "wet" Republican candidate, Hiram Gill, defeated the "dry" Democrat, William H. Moore, by a handsome majority, 18,012 to 14,703. Miller received only 1,494 votes on the ULP ticket, while Hulet Wells, running on the SPW ticket received a mere 393 votes.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Soon a reaction to Gill set in. In 1911 he was recalled. In 1912 he failed to regain his seat.

Saltvig, pp. 404-405; P-I 9,23,28 Feb., 10 March 1910; UR 29 Jan., 5,12,19,26 Feb., 12 March 1910; O'Connell, p. 4; Morgan, pp. 166-167; Sale, p. 107.

Despite their defeat the ULP forces reorganized themselves for the fall campaign to nominate candidates for city, county, and state offices. Meanwhile, the WSFL and the Grange began to organize a wider campaign on the state level. Ernest H. Smith, a Grange lecturer, issued a call for all "progressive elements" to meet to discuss the possibilities. He invited the WSFL, the Grange, and supporters of the Miles Poindexter-for-Senate campaign to help organize a "Progressive Political Alliance". The invitation met with a favorable response and on 12 February the delegates met in Seattle. The progressives could not agree on a unified program, but did agree to establish two new organizations: a Direct Legislation League, based on the Seattle model, and a Progressive Political Alliance. The DLL was the lineal descendant of the Direct Primary League. Its supporters consisted of those, like Chris Horr and George F. Cotterill, who wished to support progressive issues without abandoning their major party affiliations. It contained representatives of the major parties as well as the Grange, the WSFL, and civic reform organizations. The PPA, on the other hand, consisted of individuals who had the wider objective of electing progressive candidates regardless of party. Lacking strong bi-partisan support, however, the PPA soon disintegrated. The DLL, meanwhile, benefited from bi-partisan support and prospered and became the most comprehensive progressive organization in the state, a clearing house for progressive ideas and sentiment. The labor Reds, however, rejected such reform efforts.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Saltvig, pp. 151-152,170; WSFL Procs., (1911), p. 25.



As a result the labor forces were deeply divided in the fall elections. In Seattle forty Left-wing locals sent delegates to the ULP convention. They nominated a ticket consisting of union men and drew up a platform which emphasized the primacy of the class struggle. They won significant support from SCLC unions. On 13 July the SCLC went so far as to endorse the ULP's platform. This produced a secondary split in the labor movement. Many of the SCLC's conservative craft unions, who favored a non-partisan line, refused to go along with this departure from traditional WSFL-SCLC policies. While the pro-ULP forces lobbied for support within the labor movement, the non-partisan forces lobbied against them. At first the pro-ULP forces achieved some surprising successes. Under their influence, the WSFL, itself, toyed with the idea of endorsing the ULP. At its state convention, the WSFL approved a resolution to consider a state labor party but a general lack of labor interest outside of Seattle and the absence of public support led the WSFL to abandon the project after a short while. Instead the WSFL allied with the SCLC's labor conservatives and opted for continuing their non-partisan alliance with progressives in both major parties. The WSFL joined the Grange in endorsing Poindexter in the advisory primary campaign. And later, in July, both the Bellingham and Seattle central labor councils fell back into line and endorsed Poindexter. In September Samuel Gompers endorsed this policy. The WSFL also endorsed Stanton Warburton, a Poindexter supporter running for Congress as a progressive Republican.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>O'Connell, p. 4; Saltvig, pp. 154,157,165-166,404-405; WSFL Procs., (1911), pp. 11,23; SR 24,28 July, 3 Sept. 1910; UR 13,30 Aug., 17 Sept. 1910; P-I 14 Sept. 1910; Howard W. Allen, "Miles Poindexter:

The results of the 1910 election greatly encouraged the WSFL. Poindexter won the Republican primary and was elected to the Senate by the legislature. Warburton, too, won a seat in Congress. The election of many more legislative candidates pledged to reform than in 1908 led the WSFL to hope for even greater success in 1912. WSFL President Charles R. Case, reflecting on the growth of progressive sentiment in both major parties, said:

Likewise in national politics we insurged together, and to that fact more than any other is due the changes in our Congressional delegation.

The WSFL urged its members to:

...encourage wherever possible the formation of independent political movements, and that we direct the officers of this organization to lend all possible assistance to the end that we may have a truly united working class, conscious of both its industrial and political power.<sup>11</sup>

The election results, however, did little to encourage the ULP supporters in the SCLC. Without united labor backing in either the SCLC or the WSFL, the ULP's candidates for local offices all ran third, behind the Republicans and the Democrats, who finished first and second, respectively. The election results did lead the SCLC to re-consider the subject of political organization. After years of political failure, brought on by its lack of political discipline, this was a pressing need. As a result, in December 1910, the SCLC created a new legislative committee, the Political Welfare Committee. The eleven-man PWC consisted of delegates from each of the Trade Sections, chosen by the president, whose purpose was to regularize labor's lobbying and

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A Political Biography," (Ph.D. Dissertation: University of Washington, 1959), pp. 93-94.

<sup>11</sup>Saltvig, pp. 407-408; WSFL Procs., (1911), pp. 23,86-87.

other political activities. Previously, the SCLC's political decisions had been made in special session, by a committee of the whole house. This had proved a cumbersome procedure. The conservatives disliked this method because it gave the advantage to demagogues who could sway large crowds. They suffered from the fact that the pro-SPW and pro-ULP forces had most of the good orators. It was this fact which had inspired the SCLC's third party proclivities. Also, since the SCLC made its political decisions by majority vote, this had usually produced a disgruntled minority which could be counted on to obstruct whatever policy the SCLC had approved. It was this fact which had destroyed the SCLC's pro-ULP policy.<sup>12</sup>

The PWC was a great improvement over the old system. It operated year round and not just at election time. Although its activities reached a peak just before elections it provided a desperately needed continuity to labor's policy-making mechanism. Since it held discussions in private, it was harder to sway with emotional arguments. It prepared, sent out, and reviewed political questionnaires distributed to the various candidates who requested SCLC endorsement and then interviewed the most favorable candidates. Thus it gained a more reliable understanding of them and made them more accountable. Finally, it made its recommendations to the SCLC. These recommendations then became official SCLC policy. Apparently none was ever overturned.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Saltvig, pp. 404-405; UR 17 Sept., 31 Dec. 1910; P-I 10 Nov. 1910; Dickson, pp. 35-36.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

In Spokane, where labor was more successful, no reorganization took place. There the basic election issue was the report of the City Charter Revision Committee and the commission form of government. The CRC had had active labor support. Labor had also supported the commission form of government and there were five labor representatives on the freeholders slate. The pro-commission freeholders swept the election. The struggle then became one to obtain ratification. Among the labor leaders elected to the CRC were D.C. Coates, the SPW Yellow who edited the Spokane Labor World, and Business Agent W.A. Clift of the Left-wing Federal Union. In December the Central Labor Council unanimously endorsed the proposed charter, which was also supported by the Women's Non-Partisan League and many bankers, lawyers, and merchants. At the 1911 city elections the voters adopted the new charter but only after a court over-ruled a taxpayers suit which had held it up.<sup>14</sup>

In 1911 the recovery stopped. Washington's labor force grew by only 1.53 per cent to 528,000, the lowest rate yet recorded. For the first time total employment actually declined, falling 1.16 per cent to 507,000. As a result unemployment increased by 186.66 per cent to 21,500 or 4.07 per cent of the labor force. (Table No. 1)

The failure of the economy to provide jobs for all helped to inspire the WSFL's continuing efforts to organize the workers. It cast doubt upon the employers' claims about the benefits of capitalism and encouraged workers who had jobs to protect themselves from those

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<sup>14</sup>Coates was later elected as a city commissioner on a fusion ticket which the SPW refused to endorse. Following the 1911 elections the SPW expelled Coates and the whole Spokane party organization from the SPW.

Saltvig, pp. 210-217; SR 7,10,13,16 Sept., 8 Nov., 20,26,27 Dec. 1910; 3 March 1911; Winslow, pp. 45-46.

who had not by joining unions. As a result membership in the WSFL increased by 14.21 per cent to 17,612 or 3.33 per cent of the labor force. Meanwhile the WSFL continued to expand the number of its affiliates and to spread into new locations. By 1911 it had doubled the number of its original affiliates. (Table No. 2)

The SCLC, too, began to grow again. Perhaps its efforts at re-organization were beginning to pay off. Membership increased by 7.66 per cent to 7,193, which, although not yet up to the 1907 level, represented a decided improvement over 1908-1910. Not all the trades sections benefited equally. The Maritime, Metal, Miscellaneous, and Amusement Trades lost members, while the Brewery, Provisions, Building, and Printing Trades grew in memberships. (Table No. 3)

Following the 1910 elections the WSFL, like the SCLC, decided to reorganize its political decision-making process. Just before the 1911 legislative session opened representatives from the WSFL, the Grange, the Farmers Unions, and the DLL met to consider ways to solidify their progressive legislative alliance. The result was the formation of the Joint Legislative Committee. The keystone of the JLC was the four-year-old WSFL-Grange alliance which now became a formal agreement. The JLC's primary purpose was to lobby the legislature on behalf of direct legislation reforms, but it also worked for labor legislation and other reforms.<sup>15</sup>

Aside from direct legislation, the main item on the WSFL's agenda before the 1911 legislative session was passage of a compulsory

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<sup>15</sup>Saltvig, pp. 175-176,405.

workmen's compensation bill. Following passage of the Employers' Liability Act (1909) progressive Republican Governor Marion Hay had appointed a three-man Employers' Liability Commission to consider reforming the law, which had made employers liable for their employees' job-related injuries. The commission found that the basic problem with the law was that it required an injured worker to establish that the employer was at fault before he could collect damages for his lost wages. This provision had caused numerous suits, expensive to both parties. The commission recommended that the state establish a series of accident funds to which all employers would have to contribute. Each fund would cover a particular industry and would be administered by a state industrial insurance commission, which would have equal employer and employee representation. The central recommendation was that the IIC make its awards regardless of who was legally at fault in the accident. In addition, since workers had complained bitterly about the existing private, employer-controlled, medical insurance schemes in which fifty-seven per cent of the state's workers were enrolled, the commission recommended that the IIC establish another set of "First Aid" or "Medical Aid" funds to pay for the medical costs incurred by the injured or deceased workers. In doing so the Commission had supported the arguments of many workers who had complained that the doctors hired by their employers were incompetent, their fees too expensive, and their hospitals too far away. They had demanded that the state establish a system to remedy these faults as well. The WSFL quickly endorsed both proposals as part of a single

package.<sup>16</sup>

In addition to the workmen's compensation bill and its associated medical aid bill, there was a third major piece of labor legislation on the WSFL's agenda. This measure provided for the establishment of the eight hour day for women and minors. It had strong support from many employers, especially those who employed few women and minors, and from the labor lobby and its allies. The fact that relatively few women and minors were employed outside the home in Washington made it easier to support such protective legislation.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>For the best history of the Workmen's Compensation Act (1911), see: Tripp, pp. 17,31-32,34-48,128-129,175-177,179.

For a discussion of the Employers' Liability Act (1909) and the Employers' Liability Commission (1909-1911), see: Tripp, pp. 42-43,129. See also: Report of the Commission Appointed by Governor M.E. Hay to Investigate the Problems of Industrial Accidents and to Draft a Bill on the Subject of Employees' Compensation to be Submitted to the 1911 Session of the Washington State Legislature, (Olympia: E.L. Boardman, Public Printer, 1910).

<sup>17</sup>The percentage of female participation in the Washington state labor force was lower than the national average. Between 1899 and 1909 it was never a large percentage of manufacturing employment. Less than four per cent of Washington women worked in manufacturing jobs, twenty per cent of the national average. As late as 1930, women constituted a mere six per cent of the industrial workforce in Washington, less than half the national average. Indeed, in 1900 only thirteen per cent of Washington's women had any gainful employment at all. By 1910 this had increased to 17.4 per cent, versus a national average of 23.4 per cent. As a result employers in the state's largest industries were completely unaffected by laws regulating women workers. This fact explains how it was possible for the WSFL, together with clergymen, reform groups and women's clubs, to propose such legislation without arousing a great deal of employer opposition.

For a more detailed discussion of women in the workforce, see: Tripp, pp. 5-6,81. See also: United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, "Population - Occupations, By States," 15th Census of the United States (1930), Vol. IV, pp. 6,17,169.

As a result of the JLC's efforts and because of improved coordination with the progressives in the legislature all of the WSFL's bills passed in one form or another. When the House Committee on Constitutional Revision was slow to report out the direct primary bill the JLC collected petition signatures from a majority of members demanding that the committee report out the bill and accept only JLC-approved amendments. Never before had labor had so direct an impact on pending legislation. The bill passed both houses and was approved for presentation to the voters at the 1912 general election. In addition, the legislature restored the nomination of Supreme Court judges to the primary election voters, passed a pure food and drug act, and ratified the federal income tax amendment to the Constitution. All these actions satisfied elements of the progressive coalition. What pleased the WSFL the most, however, was passage of the nation's first compulsory workmen's compensation act and the nation's fourth eight hour day for women and minors act.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>The Eight Hour Day for Women and Minors Act never amounted to much. In order to obtain its passage, labor had to exempt pickers, canners, packers, and processors in the fruit and fish industries from the provisions of the bill. Even though lumbermen refused to oppose the bill so long as it was not extended to men, labor could not strengthen its provisions further.

The Act placed enforcement in the hands of Charles Hubbard, the Labor Commissioner, but he did little to enforce the provisions (1911-1914).

In 1914 Edward Olsen replaced Hubbard and enforcement stiffened. As a result laundry owners began an extensive but ineffective repeal campaign.

In 1916, and after, evasions of the law increased again. Especially during World War I when many women took jobs in the lumber and shingle mills and in the sash and door and furniture and box factories, it became hard to enforce the law. The labor shortage was such that many women worked longer than eight hours per day. This also applied to many women who took jobs as taxi drivers, truckers, ushers, messengers,



The workmen's compensation act established a state-run, compulsory system of accident insurance as recommended by the governor's commission. Unlike the existing private insurance schemes employees were not required to make contributions to the accident funds. The act also established an Industrial Insurance Commission to administer accident funds for each of forty-seven industries. The employer's contribution rate depended upon the estimated hazard of working in that industry. The rate varied from 1.5 per cent of the payroll in the printing industry, to ten per cent of the payroll in the dynamite manufacturing industry. Should an individual employer have a better safety record than others in his industry, the act provided for rebates. The rate of compensation, on the other hand, varied only with the type and severity of the injury and the number of dependents or survivors. In permanent total disability cases, the injured man, or his widow and dependents, received from \$20.00 to \$35.00 per month for life. In order to achieve this, however, the JLC was forced by the employers to accept deletion of the medical aid provision. Thus the WSFL paid a high price for its success.<sup>19</sup>

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mail carriers, and gas station attendants.

In State v. Somerville 67 Wash. 638 (1912) the State Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the Act.

Saltvig, pp. 175-178; Tripp, pp. 81-85; Call, p. 21; Claudius O. Johnson, "The Adoption of the Initiative and Referendum in Washington," Pacific Northwest Quarterly XXXV (Oct. 1944), pp. 300-301.

<sup>19</sup>For more on the provisions of the Act and the subsequent difficulties the IIC faced in enforcing the law, see: Davis-Smith Company v. State ex rel Clausen 65 Wash. 156 (1911) in which the State Supreme Court upheld the Act as a valid exercise of the police power.

The court also upheld the Act in: State v. Mountain Timber Company 75 Wash. 581 (1913), which was later upheld by the United States Supreme Court in Mountain Timber Company v. Washington 243 U.S. 219

The reorganization of the SCLC also had a salutary impact on the Council's political fortunes. The increased effectiveness of the WSFL in the legislature and the rise of the Yellows to control of the SPW removed some of the divisive pressures within the SCLC. The need for an independent labor party seemed less evident. At the same time the divisions within the SPW allowed the SCLC's non-partisan craft unionists more leeway in organizing their trade union jurisdictions. Although the SPW Yellows favored industrial unionism, they were even more committed to solidarity with the AFL. Suddenly, the candidates labor endorsed in municipal elections began to win their contests. In March 1911 Robert Hesketh, a member of the SCLC's politically non-partisan Provisions Trades Section, won election to the Seattle City Council. Hesketh, a Scottish immigrant, had had a long career as an AFL loyalist. Significantly, he had the support of the major daily papers in Seattle. Press support, indicative of close ties to middle class business and civic leaders, was a near-essential ingredient in every successful political campaign labor engaged in following Hesketh's

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(1917).

Still later the court upheld the Act a third time in: Stertz v. Industrial Insurance Commission 91 Wash. 588 (1916).

Saltvig, pp. 386-388; Tripp, pp. 31-32, 34-41, 44-48, 175-177, 179-180, 189, 199, 207, 209-211; Seattle Star 15 Aug. 1914; Final Report and Testimony Submitted to Congress by the Commission on Industrial Relations, (Washington, D.C., 1916), Vol. V, pp. 4358-4365; Lister to Daggett, 5 Feb. 1914; Daggett and Ernst to Lister, 9 Feb. 1914, Lister Papers, University of Washington Library; E.C. Griggs, President of St. Paul and Tacoma Lumber Co., to Lister, 19, 20 Feb. 1914, Lister Papers, Washington State Library; Seattle Times 22 Nov. 1915; Seattle P-I 22 Nov. 1915, 6, 9, 10, 11 May 1916; Washington State Weekly 17, 31 Dec. 1915. See also: Decisions and Opinions Bearing on the Workmen's Compensation Act of Washington (Ch. 74, Laws of 1911) Issued by the Industrial Insurance Commission, June 1913... (Olympia, F.H. Lamborn, Public Printer, 1913).

break-through.<sup>20</sup>

Their success at the legislature and the necessity of winning the approval of the voters at the 1912 elections, coupled with their recent successes in local elections, encouraged the direct legislation reformers to establish even more permanent ties. In the fall of 1911, supporters of the various reform proposals on the ballot, claiming to represent more than 100,000 voters, met at Yakima at a Direct Legislation Conference. Sixty-five delegates from the WSFL, Grange, Farmers Unions and the DLL attended. Their main achievement was to establish the JLC on a permanent basis. In addition they outlined a new legislative program for the future. This included: judicial recall, direct election of senators, and ratification of the direct election amendments passed by the legislature.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>At the same time Hiram Gill was recalled and George Cotterill, a progressive Democrat, was elected in his place.

In 1912, after the Reds regained control of the SPW, the SCLC endorsed three Left-leaning city council candidates in the primaries. None received press support. All three lost. Elsewhere on the ballot, the same story applied. Between 1913 and 1920 labor won few victories on its own.

The weakness of the SPW's Reds in the period 1911-1912 is partially explained by the fact that the SCLC's industrial unions lost membership, while the WSFL grew only a little less rapidly than before. Thus, the Reds lost influence in the SCLC.

At the same time, more ominous developments occurred. Representatives from employers' associations in all major Pacific Coast cities met in Tacoma and formed the Federation of Employers' Associations of the Pacific Coast. They elected W.B. Rust, of Tacoma, as their president.

A few months later the Washington-Oregon-British Columbia lumber manufacturers met and organized the West Coast Lumber Manufacturers' Association.

Both these organizations were dedicated to the maintenance of the open shop and the elimination of competition within their industries.

Dickson, pp. 38-40, 136, 138-139, 141; Call, p. 47; Yearbook (1927), p. 17; Saltvig, pp. 413-414; P-I 10 June, 17 Sept. 1911; Sale, p. 107.

<sup>21</sup>Saltvig, pp. 178-179; P-I 27 Sept. 1911; Seattle Star 26 Sept. 1911.

In addition one of the JLC's main goals was to secure passage of the first aid bill which had failed to pass during the 1911 session. Soon after the workmen's compensation act went into effect Governor Hay, too, recognized the need for such a bill. Many accident victims had been forced to spend their compensation awards on doctors' and hospitals' bills. This had left them little for food, clothing, and shelter. IIC Commissioner Higday took the lead in pressing the governor to act. He called the workmen's compensation act a "one-legged law" without it. Early in 1912 Higday, together with a number of sympathetic lumbermen and supporters in the JLC, called on Hay to support a medical aid bill. Higday argued that, in addition to being an humanitarian gesture, a medical aid program would be politically good, popular, and progressive campaign "dope". Agreeing, Hay attached medical aid to his reelection platform and promised to appoint a commission to draft a bill if reelected.<sup>22</sup> Had economic conditions improved 1912 might have seen the realization of this dream. Instead, continued demands for expensive progressive reforms split the Republican Party and led to the disappointment of labor's hopes.

In 1912, the economy continued to stagnate. The labor force grew at its slowest rate yet, rising only 1.32 per cent to 541,000, and, although employment increased by 2.95 per cent to 522,000, it did not grow fast enough to absorb the labor force. Unemployment fell by 41.39 per cent but this left 12,600 or 2.35 per cent of the labor force still unemployed. (Table No. 1) Still, the WSFL's organizational

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<sup>22</sup>Tripp, pp. 129-130; Hamilton Higday, "State Insurance and First Aid: An Address Before the Twenty-fifth Annual Convention of the Washington State Bar Association, Seattle, August 28, 1913," (Olympia: The Washington Standard, 1913).

efforts bore fruit. Membership increased by 6.21 per cent to 18,706, or 3.49 per cent of the labor force, yet another peak. Perhaps the WSFL's legislative successes continued to encourage new members. More likely workers, who were alarmed at the growing economic stagnation, sought to protect their jobs and conditions through organization.

The SCLC, however, suffered yet another relapse. Membership fell by 10.21 per cent to 6,458, the lowest level yet recorded. Only the Maritime, Miscellaneous, and Amusement Trades sections increased in membership. The Building Trades suffered horribly, losing nearly 1,000 members. One cause of this decline was the continued ideological struggle within the SPW and between pro- and anti-SPW forces in the SCLC but the major cause was economic stagnation. (Table No. 3)

While the employers and the progressives organized anew, the SPW entered a short-lived golden era on both national and local levels. In the wake of the secession of the Reds from the SPW in 1909, the party prospered as never before. Whereas in 1908 the SPW had had about 2,000 members and 58 locals, by 1912 it represented an estimated 4,160 members. Under the Yellows, the SPW had become less disruptive and ever more influential in the SCLC, but even after the Reds regained control of the SPW in 1912 the party's influence in the SCLC continued to grow. Between 1912 and 1917 many socialist Reds rose to power in the SCLC and its constituent locals. In 1912, for example, E.B. Ault became editor of the UR and Sam Sadler was elected president of the Seattle Tailors Union local.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Shannon, pp. 43-45; Weinstein, pp. 36-37, 102, 116-118, 182-183; Winslow, pp. 25, 28-29, 37-38, 43-46, 48; Bushue, p. 118; Frans Bostrum, "Washington State (Socialist Party) Convention," International Socialist Review (1912?), p. 813; Cline, pp. 37-38; TS 8 Aug. 1908.

By the same token the SPA reached the peak of its influence in the AFL and the WSFL in 1912. Most of its support in the AFL came from industrial unions such as the IAM, the Brewery Workers, and the UMW, which were new-immigrant socialist strongholds. The SPA failed to oust Gompers and his allies, however, because they failed to make significant in-roads among the native-born craft unionists.<sup>24</sup>

Also, in 1912, the SPA and SPW reached the peak of their political power. The SPW succeeded in electing mayors and other city officials in a number of cities. It was strongest in Seattle and Tacoma, where the new immigrant population was largest, but also drew well in Snohomish and Thurston counties, where there were large numbers of the new immigrants. The party was weakest in the agricultural areas of the state which were dominated by the older immigrant groups. One sign of this growing strength was the number of new journals the party began to publish. Most of these, especially those inaugurated after 1912, followed the Red line.<sup>25</sup>

The resurrection of the Reds, after their near-extinction in 1909, is related to the acculturation of the new immigrants into American society through the SPW. Prior to 1909 the SPW had been dominated by native-born Reds, typified by Titus. Better educated than

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid. When the migrating workers took control of the IWW, the WFM left and returned to the AFL in a much-weakened condition.

<sup>25</sup>The party elected mayors in Edmonds/Tukwila (1911), Burlington/Hillyard (1913), and Camas (1917). Among the new party journals initiated in this period were: The Everett Northwest Worker (1911), the Kelso Socialist News (1911), the Centralia Levis County Clarion (1912), the Seattle Herald (1912), the Tacoma Truth (1912), the Aberdeen New Era (1913), the Seattle World (1916), and the Seattle Call (1917), which joined the North Yakima Northwest Forum, founded in 1905.

most party members, they ruled paternalistically but demanded complete loyalty to the party line. By 1912, however, the new immigrants had developed their own leaders and institutions and were no longer willing to tolerate outside leadership. Gradually, between 1909 and 1912, they had begun to create their own faction within the SPA, alienated from the party's English-speaking majority. Their growing influence was concealed, at first, by their tendency to support the Left-wing. In fact, however, they had as little in common with the Reds as with the Yellows. Thus it was Seattle's Finnish-speaking local which had swung the balance of forces in the SPW against the Reds at the party's 1909 convention. They were motivated, primarily, by ethnic solidarity, rather than ideological considerations.

The growing influence of the new immigrants greatly complicated the traditional controversies within the SPA. They demanded the right to organize their own locals and publish their own journals, independently of the party's central organs, which were dominated by the English-speaking majority. This set the stage for a great intra-party struggle in which the ostensible issue was centralization of authority in the party. What was really at stake, however, was whether the party would continue to be a unified, hierarchical, mass party, on the European model, in which the NEC could regulate the party "line" on behalf of its English-speaking majority, or whether the party would become a coalition of independent groups, each representing and espousing its own interests and viewpoints, on the model of the major American parties. In the final analysis neither side won a clear-cut victory and this so frustrated the ambitions of each side that neither saw

much future in the party. The inability to resolve this dispute within the party helps explain the destruction of the SPA following World War I.

The SPA, however, did go part-way in an effort to satisfy the new immigrants. In 1909 the NEC had authorized formation of foreign language federations within the SPA. These quasi-independent bodies were still subjected to NEC control, but, because only they could edit and publish their journals, they amassed a significant amount of real power. After 1910 the language federations constituted the fastest growing segment of the SPA. By World War I some of the SPA's state parties, including the SPW, were nearly completely dominated by the language federations.

The foreign language federations' membership closely paralleled the ethnic structure of the new immigration. Mostly they consisted of recent immigrants from eastern or southern Europe. Their other common element was their inability to speak conversational English. In Europe they had participated in revolutionary political movements, and been persecuted unmercifully for it. Often they represented religious, cultural, or national minorities. The Finns' homeland, for instance, had long been a duchy belonging to and ruled over by Imperial Russia. Political revolution had been, for them, only a means to achieve ethnic, cultural, or religious freedom.

In the United States, the new immigrants found themselves in what at first glance appeared to be a similar situation. Unable to read English, they could not vote. Lacking useful skills, they were confined to the worst kinds of sweatshop work in garrets, mines, mills,



and industrial camps. Even those who had skills often found it impossible to join trade unions because the older immigrant groups, which dominated these trades, jealously protected their exclusive preserves. It is hardly any wonder that the new immigrants sometimes found it hard to distinguish between Czarist Imperialism and American Capitalism.

The new immigrants' perceptions of America were further colored, or biased, by their isolation. In the church, in the school, in the home, in the neighborhood, in the place of work, the immigrants tended not to mix or associate with other immigrant, or native-born, groups. Thus they had little knowledge about native-born American workers, or conditions outside their immediate view. Above all, they lacked an historical perspective concerning their plight. They often did not know that their story had been told many times before by other immigrant groups. Thus the road out of the slums and poverty seemed blocked on all sides. As a result, they easily rejected the evolutionary brand of socialistic political actions--the immediate demands--of the Yellows. Equally, they rejected the AFL's craft union policies. The SPA's continuing ambition to work with the AFL made the party even more suspect in their eyes. The new immigrants saw more future in industrial unionism and saw total revolution in the United States as the appropriate political solution for their economic grievances.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>After 1909 the language federations formed a large and growing element within the SPW. By 1912 they may have constituted a majority. In the face of continued moderation on the part of the SPA and the continued unwillingness of the AFL to countenance reform, many of the language federations looked with favor upon the IWW. In 1912, when the SPA expelled IWW president Big Bill Haywood, the SPW protested vigorously. The foreign language federations identified strongly with the

As the new immigrants rose to power in the SPW, the party's conflicts with the labor movement diminished. It was, so to speak, distracted by internal matters. Between 1909 and 1912, while the Yellows dominated the SPW, the party's relations with the SCLC, in particular, improved. The SCLC's trade unions were insulated from the SPW's party struggles by the fact that they contained relatively few of the new immigrants. The WSFL as a whole contained even fewer of them. And, even in Seattle, where the level of Eastern and Southern European membership in trade unions was growing most rapidly, local union leadership still tended to be native-born. Non-SCLC locals in the WSFL had practically no Eastern or Southern European leaders. Lacking these groups, the SCLC and WSFL tended to be immune from revolutionary influences. (Table No. 4)

The primary reason for this, as noted earlier, was the fact that most of the new immigrants did not work in industries organized by the WSFL or the SCLC. Statewide, the vast majority worked in the unorganized lumber industry and, in Seattle, most worked in the relatively insignificant Maritime and Metal Trades industries. The new immigrants, when they joined unions, tended to feel more at home in the IWW because the IWW was organized industrially and had little sympathy for craft unionism or political action. (Table No. 5)

It is hard to over-estimate the significance of this dichotomy for the state labor movement. In 1924, a Department of Labor and Industries report estimated that, in 1914, more than half of the

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IWW primarily because so many of the wobblies were, themselves, foreign born.

workers in the state's dangerous, mass-production industries--those industries covered by the workmen's compensation act--were foreign-born. The report showed that most of the immigrants receiving compensation came from Finland, Russia, Germany, Austria, Italy, Greece, and Japan. The report also revealed that World War I and the post-war depression interrupted the traditional flow of immigrants and, by 1923, a majority of the workers receiving compensation were native-born. Yet, while the statistics do not reveal it, one may logically surmise that the vast majority of workers receiving compensation in 1923 were the sons, grandsons, or close relatives of such immigrants. Unorganized and alienated from the social and political system around them, these new immigrants threatened the craft union structures of the WSFL and the SCLC. The WSFL saw them all as potential IWW's or political radicals. It was to relieve their condition, and thus to forestall the IWW and the SPW, that the WSFL used all its efforts to enact the workmen's compensation act. Unable to organize in the woods, directly, labor sought to achieve its ends politically.<sup>27</sup>

The SPW's increasing political influence and its somewhat improved relations with the labor movement, did not at the same time produce internal peace and harmony. Rather, the Red-Yellow turmoil continued. The main issue was the means of attracting and keeping the radical new immigrants as party members, without disrupting the party's internal hierarchy, or altering its basic character, and without becoming so reformist that the new immigrants would abandon it for the

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<sup>27</sup>"Nativity of (injured) Workmen in the Industries of this State, July 1, 1923-December 31, 1923," Department of Labor and Industries Bulletin No. 24 (May 1924), p. 2.

IWW. The Reds argued that by adopting radical industrial unionist and revolutionary political policies, the party would win the most new members. The Yellows argued that, if the party did so, it would mean a decisive split with the AFL and possible destruction for the labor movement. The Yellows did not want this on their record.<sup>28</sup>

In 1912 this struggle came to an end when the Reds finally won control of the SPW. When the Yellows lost control of the SPW's State Central Committee at the 1912 convention, their leaders, including Dr. Brown, walked out of the party. The Yellows, however, retained their power in several locals--in Spokane and Bellingham--and continued to obstruct the Reds from within the SPW. When the SPW endorsed industrial unionism, the Yellows conducted a divisive campaign against the SPW's state leadership. The Yellows denounced those who favored the Reds as "free lovers" and "anarchists". This led to a further series of purges (1912-1913) during which the remaining Yellows were expelled from the party. Like the Yellows, the Reds did not tolerate minority points of view once they were in power.<sup>29</sup>

Once again secure in power, the Reds began a vigorous new campaign to appeal to the new immigrants. After 1912 the SPW's policy placed more and more emphasis on industrial trade unionism and less and less on political issues. This opened up a new breach with the SPA which continued under Yellow (i.e., social democratic) control. In 1912 the NEC expelled William "Big Bill" Haywood, president of the IWW, from the SPA for his dual union and class war ideas. This

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<sup>28</sup>Winslow, pp. 28-29, 43-47; Johansen, p. 479.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

angered many members of the SPW who continued to sympathize with the IWW. Although the SPW agreed to repudiate the IWW's class war ideas, many SPW members continued to hold dual membership in the IWW. Thus, by 1912, it had become clear that the SPW's new, radical policy was to direct its appeal at the new immigrants, regardless of the cost to its AFL and SPA ties, or to intra-party peace.<sup>30</sup>

In power the Reds also proved to be far more vigorous trade unionists than the Yellows. In April 1912 the Seattle Street Carmen's Union local reorganized. Then, shortly after the giant Peabody-Houghtaling holding company purchased the Rainier Valley line, the local began an organizing drive. The members elected a socialist as president and within a short while organized all eighty men employed by the company. As soon as they were organized the local struck the company for recognition and higher wages and, after a short strike, won union recognition. Meanwhile, the conservative industrial unions floundered. Although the Renton Mine Workers Union local finally signed union contracts with most of their employers, the miners who worked for the Puget Sound Traction and Light Company had less luck. In June, after they organized a union, the company locked the men out until they agreed to work on the company's terms.<sup>31</sup>

This combination of success and failure proved a heady mixture. The taste of triumph contrasted with that of defeat. It both

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Saltvig, pp. 186-187, 417; Times 2 May 1912; Cline, pp. 37-38; Hulet M. Wells, The Colonel and His Friends; A Suppressed Play, A Comedy In Three Acts... (Seattle, 1913?); Sale, pp. 87-92, 95, 100, 105-112, 118, 121, 130, 215.

encouraged and outraged the labor movement. At the same time, it aroused latent fears of radicalism and unionism among employers. The confluence of these factors may have elicited the response which met the IWW-SPW May Day parade in 1912. The May Day parade was both a socialist and a trade union tradition. It was for this latter reason that George Cotterill, Seattle's progressive reform mayor, granted the SPW official permission to hold their parade and march beneath the revolutionary red banner as well as the stars and stripes. Cotterill, a civil engineer and strong prohibitionist, had formerly leaned toward the Republicans, but had been converted by Bryan to the Democrats. In the spring of 1912, with the support of progressive Republicans, he defeated the "wet" "open town" forces of Hiram Gill, to become mayor. To many of the regular "wet" Republicans it seemed that the progressives were planning to sell them out to the radicals and prohibitionists. "Colonel" Alden J. Blethen, publisher of the Seattle Times and a regular Republican leader, was in the forefront of the attacks on Cotterill, the IWW, and the SPW. The stage, set so lavishly for violence, was ready. Suddenly, in the midst of the parade, a group of spectators rushed in to seize the red flag. In the ensuing melee the stars and stripes fell to the ground and were trampled. The Seattle Times seized upon the event to justify its ever-harsher attacks on the IWW, the SPW, and on Cotterill. In particular, the Times argued that Cotterill was encouraging anarchy and socialism with his reforms. In fact, Blethen had just fired the first shots in the 1912 political campaign.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

At the same time the WSFL and its allies began to develop their own programs and policies for the 1912 elections and for the 1913 legislative session. Following the passage of the eight hour day law for women and minors and the workmen's compensation act, the main issue became a medical aid bill and a minimum wage for women and minors bill. Since the progressives expected Governor Hay to endorse medical aid if he was reelected, they opted to stress the minimum wage bill. The reformers, including the WSFL lobby, mounted a large media campaign to show how women's low wages encouraged vice and prostitution. The campaign received important support from such organizations as the National Consumers League, the American Association for Labor Legislation, and the National Women's Trade Union League, and serves as a near-perfect illustration of the way in which progressive reformers appealed for support. The central feature of the campaign was the reformers' concept of the "living wage". They argued that, by guaranteeing women and minors a living wage, the act would uplift their morals, reduce crime and disease, and would also lead to upward pressure on the wages of all workers, which would raise business profits and general living standards. In this manner the reformers appealed to women's groups, social gospel clergymen, "uplift progressives", and labor. The alliance was expanded still further by those proponents who argued that higher wages for women and minors would under-cut the appeal of socialism.<sup>33</sup>

In addition the JLC questioned prospective candidates concerning their positions on a number of other progressive reform

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<sup>33</sup>Tripp, pp. 97-98.

proposals and vowed to conduct vigorous campaigns for any candidates who endorsed these programs.<sup>34</sup>

It was just as well that the WSFL emphasized a non-partisan approach. Most of the progressive candidates labor favored were in the Republican party. Yet the party was deeply divided. At its national convention the conservative "Old Guard" of the party, which supported the renomination of President Taft, steam-rolled the pro-Roosevelt progressive faction. To have endorsed the Republicans would have forced labor to support an anti-labor national ticket and split the progressive coalition.<sup>35</sup>

The alternatives were also divisive. Following their defeat the progressive Republicans bolted the party, held their own convention, and nominated Roosevelt on an independent, "Bull Moose" ticket. To have supported the progressive secessionists would have forced labor to cut its important and growing ties with and ruined the careers of many pro-labor Republican politicians who remained in the party. At the same time, many JLC members, especially farmers, fundamentalist Protestant groups, and reformers, favored the Democrats, who had nominated a transplanted southerner, Woodrow Wilson, for president. The northeast urban bosses, southern and western agricultural interests, and prohibition forces, a significant proportion of whom were anathema to labor, endorsed Wilson. To have supported either of the Republican

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<sup>34</sup>The JLC was as good as its word. For example, it distributed over 100,000 copies of its Tabulated Legislative Review, which traced each legislator's voting record on progressive issues in the previous session.

For more on the JLC program, see: Saltvig, pp. 311-312, 348, 408-409; WSFL Procs., (1912), (1913), p. 37; UR 8 March 1913.

<sup>35</sup>Johansen, pp. 472-473; Saltvig, p. 250.



splinters, or the Democrats, might have split the reform coalition into three or more segments.<sup>36</sup>

The reform coalition faced similar problems on the state level. Most of the progressives had bolted the Republican party, but their titular leader, Governor Hay, had refused to do so. Hoping to run for reelection on the Republican ticket, he refused to lead any secessions. With the support of conservative party leaders, Hay proceeded to win the nomination. This led the progressives to doubt Hay's reform promises. On the other hand, his nomination disappointed the conservatives, who felt that he had promised far too much already. They especially disliked his position in favor of an expensive medical aid bill.<sup>37</sup>

These splits injured the Republican party far more than the Democrats and led to the election of Democrats on both national and state levels. In Washington, Roosevelt was the winner with thirty-five per cent of the vote. Wilson won twenty-seven per cent and Taft twenty-two per cent of the vote. Both major parties lost support to the "Bull Moose" progressives.<sup>38</sup>

In the congressional elections labor and the JLC did much better than the Republican progressives. All four candidates endorsed

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Roosevelt was strong in both urban and rural areas, while Wilson carried only the rural areas of eastern Washington and Taft won only the most conservative, traditionally anti-reform areas of the southwest Washington. Debs' 40,134 votes, 12.4 per cent of the vote, was the highest SPA total in history and has never since been matched. Undoubtedly the disarray of the major parties contributed to his support. The converse is also true: Debs' support multiplied the difficulties facing the major parties.

Johansen, pp. 472-475, 614, 622-623; Saltvig, p. 291; Allen, pp. 191-194.

by the WSFL, on a non-partisan basis, won. Albert Johnson and William L. LaFollette won seats as Regular Republicans. Johnson defeated Stanton Warburton, the progressive candidate who had been hurt badly by an IWW-supported strike which had shut down the mills in his district. A member of the WSFL's Typographical Union, Johnson took advantage of the local anti-IWW sentiment by becoming the first candidate in the state's history to base his campaign on the issue of "Americanism," a code word for anti-immigrant, anti-IWW, anti-SPW positions. At the same time the JLC's two progressive, congressman-at-large candidates, Bryan and Falconer, also won their contests. The non-partisans won the best of both worlds.<sup>39</sup>

In the governor's race the JLC had less luck. They endorsed Governor Hay, running on the regular Republican ticket, in gratitude for his services during the 1911 legislative session. The Democrats nominated Ernest Lister, an English immigrant and a former Populist member of the Tacoma City Council, who had been instrumental in securing the gubernatorial nomination for John R. Rogers in 1896 and 1900. Lister based his campaign on his reputation for efficiency and economy gained as commissioner of Public Institutions and chairman of the Board of Audit and Control in the Rogers administrations (1896-1901). He had also endorsed a number of progressive issues, including the minimum wage bill, but down-played his progressive policies in order to maximize the difficulties of the Republican party and to attract

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<sup>39</sup> Saltvig, pp. 291-295, 346, 409; Washington State, Secretary of State, Abstract of the Votes, General Election, 1912, (Olympia, 1913); Seattle P-I 1 Feb., 4 April, 4 June 1912. See also: Cloice R. Howd, Industrial Relations in the West Coast Lumber Industry, (Washington, D.C., 1924), pp. 56-67; Spokane SR 7 June 1912; WSFL Procs., (1913), pp. 37-38.

conservative support. This policy worked very well. Although his base of power was the Democratic Party establishment, where he had amassed great influence as a distributor of patronage, he won support from disenchanted Republican regulars. In the election Lister won a narrow plurality over Hay of 622 votes, 97,125 to 96,629. An independent Bull Moose candidate, who received 77,792 votes, probably cost Hay the election.<sup>40</sup>

In the legislative contests, on the other hand, the Bull Moose ticket helped elect a progressive majority pledged to support the JLC program. They won thirty-eight seats, outright, and caused the defeat of many conservatives. Most importantly for the reformers, however, the direct legislation amendment to the Constitution passed by a substantial majority. The WSFL and the JLC looked forward optimistically to passage of their program in the 1913 legislature.<sup>41</sup>

Despite the defeat of the conservative Republicans, the election ruined the reformers' best hopes by exposing it to political partisanship. After the elections Republican, Democratic, and Bull Moose progressives each competed for leadership and control of the progressive ranks. Meanwhile, their defeat hardened the resistance of the Republican Old Guard. The decline of the economy and the rise of unionization led them to unite against reform. This

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<sup>40</sup>Saltvig, pp. 291,298-301,616.

<sup>41</sup>In addition, W.H. Kingery, the SPW candidate for the House, from Mason County, won a seat. He was the first socialist to win a legislative seat in the state's history. He became one of only twenty socialist legislators in the nation.

Saltvig, pp. 178,348,350; Johnson, p. 303; Seattle Star 27 Oct. 1914.

combination of factors played havoc with the reformers' plans.

In 1913, the economy continued to decline, but at a slower rate. The labor force grew by only 1.12 per cent to 541,000, the lowest rate yet recorded. Employment levels increased by 0.95 per cent to 527,000, but this was not enough to reduce unemployment, which increased by 10.31 per cent to 13,900, or 2.56 per cent of the labor force. (Table No. 1)

At the same time, the continued unemployment and economic stagnation began to take its toll on the WSFL. Membership increased by only 3.12 per cent to 18,122, or 3.34 per cent of the labor force. At this rate the WSFL could not maintain its percentage of the labor force. In large part the WSFL's problems stemmed from the inability of the progressive factions to maintain their unity. (Table No. 2)

The SCLC, on the other hand, began to grow rapidly. The expulsion of the Yellows from the SPW reduced the divisive issues before the Council. As a result membership in the SCLC increased by 21.75 per cent to 7,863, the highest level yet recorded. Every trade section benefited although the Miscellaneous and Building Trades sections benefited most. (Table No. 3)

When the legislature convened in January 1913 it disappointed the JLC bitterly. The progressives had hoped to challenge the Republicans for control of the House and expected support from progressives in both the Democratic and Republican parties for this effort. But despite the formation of a Democratic-Republican-Progressive coalition, the Republicans retained their control in both houses.

Sixteen progressive Republicans broke their pledges of support in a key vote to curb the power of the House Rules Committee. Ten progressives broke their pledges to support constitutional amendments by the initiative. E.P. Marsh, the newly-elected president of the WSFL, blamed citizen apathy for the failure:

Our system of delegated authority hasn't worked because to my mind, we have shifted the responsibility that should be our own onto the shoulders of our lawmakers.

He also complained that fully one-third of the freshmen progressive legislators had gone over to the Republicans after being promised "pork barrel" government spending in their districts. Failure followed upon failure. The progressives defeated the Republican "Blue Sky Bill", but they failed to get their own out of committee. The JLC's employment agency bills never came to a vote. Ironically, they were rejected on the grounds that they were too expensive.<sup>42</sup>

Nonetheless, important labor and progressive legislation did pass during the session. The most important of these bills was the minimum wage for women and minors bill, which was also supported by many businessmen and clubwomen. In addition the WSFL, the JLC, and Governor Lister, supported it although they preferred a different, stronger proposal. They agreed to support the final measure only after it was amended in line with several of their suggestions. The most important provision in the bill was that creating an Industrial Welfare Commission to investigate, industry by industry, the wages and conditions

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<sup>42</sup>Saltvig, pp. 304-305, 312-313, 348-349; House Journal (1913), pp. 6-7, 1043, 467, 362; Senate Journal (1913), pp. 556, 602; WSFL Procs., (1913), pp. 37-38; (1914), p. 121; UR 15, 22, 29 March, 25 Oct. 1913; Star 11 Jan. 1913.

of working women and minors, and then, after holding hearings, to establish minimum wages in each industry.<sup>43</sup>

The legislature's failure to enact more progressive legislation greatly frustrated the labor movement. It revived the appeal of industrial unionism, the IWW, and socialism and paved the way for intensified labor-management conflict.

In 1914 economic conditions remained virtually unchanged. The outbreak of war in Europe did not have a marked effect on the state's economy, except that wheat prices rose sharply. The labor force grew by only 0.73 per cent to 545,000 and employment actually declined for the second time in history, falling by 2.27 per cent to 515,000. As a result unemployment rose by 118.70 per cent, reaching 30,000, or 5.57 per cent of the labor force. It seemed that the better the WSFL organized, the worse the economy behaved. The

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<sup>43</sup>The legislature also passed a mothers pension bill, an initiative, referendum, and recall bill, an establishment of co-operatives bill, an electric linesman's safeguarding bill, an establishment of tuberculosis hospitals bill, and a vocational education bill, which was later vetoed.

For more details concerning the minimum wage bill and the IWC, see: Call, p. 21; Tripp, pp. 85-86, 89-100, 110, 128-130; Saltvig, pp. 310-311, 321-324; Senate Journal (1913), p. 613; House Journal (1913), pp. 917, 1062-1063; Theresa Schmid McMahon, "My Story," (Seattle, 1959), mimeo, University of Washington Manuscript Collection, p. 30; Seattle Sun 7 Nov. 1913, 1 Jan. 1914. See also: McMahon's testimony before the United States Industrial Relations Commission, which held hearings in Seattle, August 1914, in its Final Report... (Washington, D.C., 1916), Vol. V, pp. 4163-4185; and also see: First Biennial Report of the Industrial Welfare Commission, (Olympia, 1915), pp. 9-15; and A.W. Taylor, "Operation of the Minimum Wage Law in the State of Washington," American Economic Review V (June 1915), pp. 398-405.

Later, in Larsen v. Rice 100 Wash. 642 (1918), the State Supreme Court upheld the law as a valid application of the state's police powers. It did so again in Spokane Hotel Company v. Younger 113 Wash. 359 (1920).

continued anti-labor efforts of employers also had a marked negative effect on labor organization although labor continued to make gains. (Table No. 1)

Despite the poor economy and the toll taken by the organized employers, the WSFL's organizational struggles continued to be successful. Membership in its affiliated locals increased by 9.88 per cent to 19,914, or 3.65 per cent of the labor force, yet another peak. The WSFL's efforts to create new affiliates and to expand into new areas, however, were not so successful. All the growth occurred in already-established organizations. (Table No. 2)

In Seattle the trade union movement also prospered. Despite mounting attacks from employers and its continuing internal divisions the SCLC continued to grow. Their mutual opposition to the war drew the SCLC and the political Left ever closer together. Membership in SCLC unions increased by 33.10 per cent to 10,859. Virtually every trade section benefited. The Building Trades section grew from 1,974 to 3,558. Only the Printing Trades Section lost members. (Table No. 3)

The failure of the legislature to act more decisively on labor and reform issues, however, exacerbated the already-deteriorating labor-management relations. The lack of real economic growth, since 1909, created a sense of frustration on the part of workers, who saw increased unemployment in the future. At the same time declining demand for lumber and lumber products led to price cuts and stiffened the resistance of the employers against concessions. Meanwhile the IWW and the increasingly radical SPW agitated for revolutionary actions

in their intense competition for the new immigrants' allegiance. One result was the frequent repetition of the violence which had occurred in Seattle on May Day 1912. Another result was an unprecedented wave of strike actions throughout the state such as that which had tilted the 1912 election campaign to Representative Johnson. In turn this produced a strong anti-labor backlash among employers and in the courts which culminated in a renewed open shop campaign. The employers' campaign was so strong that it persisted long after prosperity returned, burned fiercely throughout the war, and reached a new peak of intensity in the immediate post-war period.<sup>44</sup>

The most important of the strikes was that of the Seattle General Teamsters Union Local No. 174 which lasted from May 1913 to

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<sup>44</sup>For more on pre-war economic conditions, see: Johansen, pp. 438,440-441,476,489; Saltvig, pp. 331-332,414,420-422; Dickson, pp. 38-39,127; Arthur S. Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, (New York, 1954), p. 79; Seattle Star 9,24 Dec. 1913; Sun 18 Dec. 1913, 19 Dec. 1914; Municipal News 14 Feb., 22 Aug., 5 Dec. 1914; United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Report, (Washington, D.C., 1914), pp. 13-17.

For more on IWW strikes, see: Saltvig, pp. 415-416; Seattle Star 25,28 Feb. 1913; Sun 28 April, 15,16,19 May, 17 July 1913; Ninth Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics and Factory Inspection, (Olympia, 1914), p. 124.

For more on the level of violence and, in particular, on the anti-SPW, IWW Pioneer Days riot in Seattle, July 1913, see: Representative J.W. Bryan, "Raid on IWW and Socialist Party Halls in Seattle, 18 July 1913," in Congressional Record, 63d Cong., 1st Sess. (1913), L. Pt. 3, pp. 2900-2905; Pt. 6, pp. 5980-5983, (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1913); Saltvig, pp. 187-188; Robert K. Murray, Red Scare, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1955), pp. 196-200; Harvey O'Connor, Revolution in Seattle: A Memoir, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1964), pp. 21-26; Murray Morgan, Skid Road, (n.p.: Viking Press, 1962), pp. 183-190; Sale, pp. 109-112.

For more on the role of the employer associations at this time and the development of the open shop campaign, see: Saltvig, pp. 418-419,422-424; Bureau of Labor, Report, (1914), pp. 119,121,140; (1916), pp. 227-241,245-250; Seattle P-I 6,9,10,11 Aug., 5 Oct., 15 Nov. 1916; Star 20 Dec. 1913, 10 Aug., 15 Nov. 1916.



May 1914 and ended by arbitration with neither side having gained a decided advantage. The union, however, survived. Many others did not. The strike was particularly significant because of the aid both sides received from out-of-state sources. The International Brotherhood of Teamsters, in one of its rare efforts of this kind, contributed both financially and morally to the struggle. Other Pacific Coast locals, particularly those in the San Francisco district headed by Michael "Bloody Mike" Casey, contributed even more. The Washington State Employers Association, inspired by the Los Angeles Merchants and Manufacturers Association, led the fight for the employers, propping up those employers who weakened, boycotting and ruining those who broke ranks. The strike produced a great deal of violence. Two were killed and many other seriously hurt in the disturbances.<sup>45</sup>

It was in this tense atmosphere that the 1914 Seattle municipal election was fought. Rising unemployment inspired labor militancy. Declining profits contributed to employer resistance. Yet, in 1913-1914, the SCLC's membership increased by nearly sixty per cent. (Tables No. 2 and 3) Both Left-wing and Right-wing trade

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<sup>45</sup>Donald Garnel, "Teamsters and Highway Truckers in the West: The Evolution of Multiemployer Bargaining in the Western Trucking Industry," (Ph.D. Dissertation: University of California, Berkeley, 1967), 2 Vols., Vol. 1, pp. 117-118. See also: Garnel, The Rise of Teamster Power in the West, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1972), based on his dissertation. See also: International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Stablemen, and Helpers of America, Proceedings of the Ninth Convention (1915), Second Day, pp. 11-18; Officers Reports, pp. 40, 116-117; Western Conference of Teamsters, Report of the Proceedings of the First Meeting, p. 2; Third Meeting, pp. 48-49. See also: O'Connell, p. 5; Saltvig, pp. 416, 418-420; Carl G. Westine, "The Seattle Teamsters..." (M.A. Thesis, University of Washington, 1937), p. 12; Seattle Sun 23 Dec. 1913, 9, 17 Jan. 1914; Town Crier 17 Jan. 1914; Star 12, 13 Jan. 1914; United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, Report, (1914), p. 128.

sections benefited from the increased militancy. Strengthened, the SCLC took an active part in the primary campaign, endorsing three pro-labor city council candidates and opposing two anti-labor candidates. Despite the hostile environment, labor's campaign was partially successful. Councilman Robert Hesketh, one of labor's three candidates won renomination. In the general election, Hesketh went on to win reelection while the two anti-labor candidates were defeated. Labor also helped to defeat the anti-labor mayoralty candidate and pass two ballot propositions. The results confirmed, once again, the importance of a non-partisan campaign to labor's political fortunes. Hesketh had the support of much of the commercial press while the two labor candidates who failed had no such support.<sup>46</sup>

In June of 1914 the Seattle Charter Revision Committee (Freeholders) issued their plan to reorganize the city government by adopting a city manager form of government, providing for a thirty-man city council, rather than a commission form favored by the reformers. The proposed charter also weakened popular control of the government. The most criticized feature of the plan, however, allowed district, rather than at-large elections. Since the labor vote was dispersed throughout the city, the district system tended to minimize labor's political power. J.Y.C. Kellogg, a prominent progressive Republican, C.W. Boyle, the SCLC's business agent, and T.H. Bolton, representative of the Provision Trades Section, together with other

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<sup>46</sup>Dickson, pp. 40,136,138,141; UR 7,21 Feb. 1914; Former Mayor Hiram Gill won reelection by reversing most of his old policies and promising to introduce reform. Sale, pp. 107-108,118-119; Morgan, pp. 190-193.

labor representatives on the committee, led the opposition. The SCLC even appointed a special committee to oppose the freeholders' plan. Partly as a result of their united efforts the plan was defeated resoundingly.<sup>47</sup>

The less-militant WSFL was less successful. After the JLC's disappointments at the 1913 legislature it adopted new tactics. Rather than merely relying on the candidates' promises of support, the JLC decided to employ the new initiative, referendum, and recall act to amend the Constitution and the labor laws by direct legislation. As a result, early in 1914 the JLC began to circulate initiative petitions on behalf of a series of initiatives which, collectively, became known as the "seven sisters". Despite long legal battles over the validity of the petition signatures, five of the seven initiatives qualified for the 1914 general election ballot.<sup>48</sup>

This new policy proved a great failure. In November 1914 the regular Republicans won a sweeping victory, largely due to a reconciliation between the old guard and the progressives. The voters defeated all of the initiatives except the employment agency bill and an initiative to establish statewide prohibition. Perhaps it was this frustration which led the 1914 WSFL convention to approve a resolution supporting "the collective ownership and democratic management of all

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<sup>47</sup>Saltvig, pp. 196-198; Seattle Sun 2 May, 22, 26 June, 1 July 1914; UR 6 June 1914.

<sup>48</sup>The initiative program included: a blue sky bill, a bureau of inspection abolition bill, an employment agency for prohibition bill, a medical aid amendment to the workmen's compensation act and a convict labor bill.

For more on the initiative, see: Saltvig, pp. 349-351; UR 11 Oct. 1913, 9 May 1914; Crawford, pp. 174-178; Johnson, pp. 29-63; Seattle Sun 16 April, 6 May 1914; Star 4 June 1914; Times 5 Jan. 1917.

means of production." At the very least it indicated labor's growing uncertainty that reform, within the capitalistic system, was still possible. Economic hardship and employer resistance were driving labor and the political Left closer together.<sup>49</sup>

The outbreak of World War I in July 1914, however, prevented the leftward movement of most trade unionists. At the same time, it split the political Left, exacerbated labor-management tensions, and strengthened the position of the WSFL's conservatives. The explanation for this lies, again, in the ethnic make-up of the rank and file of the various organizations. Prior to 1880 eighty-five per cent of immigrants to the United States came from Northwest Europe: from Ireland, Germany, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Scandinavia. By 1910-1920 these ethnic groups constituted only twenty per cent of immigrants. The "new" immigration came primarily from Eastern and Southern Europe: from Russia, Austria-Hungary, and Italy.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>The medical aid initiative failed largely due to the opposition of Governor Lister. He criticized it as too vague, because it would put the whole burden on employers, and because it failed to define the precise procedures or specify the total costs of the program. However, Lister did promise that, if the initiative was defeated, he would appoint a commission to study medical aid and propose a bill acceptable to both employers and employees. Businessmen, the Employers Association and the lumbermen all promised to cooperate.

The state Supreme Court upheld the employment agency initiative bill in Huntsworth v. Tanner 87 Wash. 670 (1914). The United States District Court agreed and the United States Supreme Court confirmed their decisions in Adams v. Tanner 244 U.S. 570 (1917).

The 1915 legislature contained seventy-seven Republicans, thirteen Democrats, and seven Progressives; the Senate contained thirty-two Republicans, six Democrats, and four Progressives.

Johansen, pp. 473-475; Saltvig, pp. 351-352, 354; Crawford, pp. 178-180. See also: Tripp, pp. 115-123; WSFL Procs., (1914), p. 42. See also: Sale, p. 107-108.

<sup>50</sup>These "new" immigrants were unlike their predecessors in language, religion, and culture. Furthermore, unlike the old immigrants,

By 1910 this process had produced startling results. In that year more than twenty-five per cent of Seattle's population of just under 250,000, or approximately 62,000, were foreign-born. In the same year just over twenty per cent of Spokane's population, of just over 100,000, was foreign-born. Many thousands more were second-generation immigrants. Although Seattle's immigrant population still consisted, primarily, of "old" immigrants the percentage of radical "new" immigrants was growing very rapidly.<sup>51</sup>

By 1914 many of the old immigrants had joined the trade unions. The new immigrants, however, were usually employed in the unorganized mass production industries. They received less pay. They worked under worse conditions and resented the unwillingness of the WSFL to help them organize. The make-up of the WSFL and the SCLC reflected this situation. Both were dominated by the old immigrants and the native-born. They had few "new" immigrant members and even fewer of them in leadership positions. (Table No. 4) Meanwhile, both the IWW and the SPW vigorously recruited new immigrant members.<sup>52</sup>

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they did not settle on the land, but in the great industrial cities and in the lumber and mining camps, where they formed the industrial work-force. While the older immigrants predominated in agriculture and in the trade unions, the new immigrants predominated in the SPW, and the IWW, and in the unorganized industries. In the West, the percentage of foreign-born in the population increased rapidly from one per cent in 1850 to 4.5 per cent in 1870 to 7.3 per cent in 1890 to 9.8 per cent in 1910.

David Ward, Cities and Immigrants, A Geography of Change in Nineteenth Century America, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 52-57,60. For more on the impact of World War I on Seattle, see: Sale, pp. 116-126. For more on social conditions of immigrants, see: Sale, pp. 113-115.

<sup>51</sup>Ward, pp. 77,80-81.

<sup>52</sup>Johansen, pp. 404-405; Weinstein, pp. 182-183.

When World War I broke out, the WSFL, the SCLC, the SPW, and the IWW all split along ethnic lines. The problems were most severe for the SPW, the SPA, and the SCLC "labor Reds". It was especially difficult for them to uphold their pacifistic, anti-patriotic, and revolutionary doctrines because all the European socialist parties had voted to support their own nation's war policies. It became obvious that the real question was whether the United States should interfere militarily to support the Western Allies. Since there was never any chance that the United States would support the Central Powers, it is in this light that the response of the SPA to the war must be seen.<sup>53</sup>

The Socialist Party of America's response to the war mirrored that of the major parties in every way. Anglo-American socialists, proportionately weaker than in the nation as a whole, were nevertheless highly influential in the party, as journalists, financial backers, and policy-makers. They urged the party to endorse American aid for the Allies. Minority groups from the Austro-Hungarian empire supported them, seeing American support for the Allies as a way to liberate their homelands from the imperial power. However, refugees from the Russian empire, the Finns, Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians, Poles, and other Northern Slavs, were more numerous in the party and would not countenance such a move for it would involve support for the oppressors of their homelands. Had the SPA endorsed American entry into the war on either side it would have faced the same problem Wilson faced from anti-war Irish and German Americans in the Democratic party.

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<sup>53</sup>For more on the socialist response to the war, see: Weinstein, pp. 119-121.

The party would have split along ethnic lines and gained the enmity of the dominant Anglo-American community. Therefore, after a brief period of uncertainty, the SPA decided to support continued American neutrality.<sup>54</sup>

The SPW responded similarly but for different reasons. By 1914 the party was solidly under the control of the foreign language groups who opposed the Allies. Realizing that the only possible active American role in the war was support for the Allies, including Russia (and, after 1915, Italy), the party decided to oppose American entry into the war.<sup>55</sup>

The SCLC was torn by similar considerations and endorsed an SPW-suggested anti-war resolution introduced by Hulet Wells. In addition to its growing numbers of Eastern Europeans the SCLC also contained a large number of Irish Catholics, Scandinavians, and German-Americans, who also opposed American support for the Allies. (Table No. 4) Together, these groups had a decisive influence on the SCLC.<sup>56</sup>

The war also changed the over-all direction of labor's political evolution. It drove a wedge between labor and the progressives and it split the labor movement. While some elements of labor moved closer to the Left, others became more conservative. Soon after the war broke out, for example, the SCLC endorsed an SPW plan to reorganize the AFL along industrial lines. The plan envisioned carving up the jurisdictions of the AFL's international unions into industrial departments. When the SCLC delegation presented these suggestions to

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid.; This led to an exodus of Anglo-American socialists from the SPA. Party membership, however, continued to grow due to an influx of new immigrant and pacifist groups.

<sup>55</sup>Winslow, pp. 54-55.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

the AFL convention, however, Gompers and the international's leadership were outraged. They mounted a strong effort to convince the SCLC to abandon its reform efforts. Although they succeeded in defeating the plan, they failed to dissuade the SCLC reformers. Between 1914 and 1925 the SCLC's delegations to AFL conventions re-introduced the resolutions time and again. This merely increased the furor of the AFL. The AFL leadership, led by Gompers, then sought to exploit divisions within the SCLC to prevent a further drift to the Left. Gompers worked closely with the leaders of conservative unions in Seattle, particularly those in the building and teaming trades, to battle those sympathetic to the socialists. Thereafter, these old immigrant-dominated trades formed the backbone of the conservative forces in the labor movement.<sup>57</sup>

While the IWW joined the SPA and SCLC in their opposition to the war, the AFL and WSFL leaned more toward intervention. The AFL represented many more Anglo-American, native-born, and older immigrant groups than the SPA, IWW, or SCLC did. (Table No. 4) Increasingly, they supported American entry into the war on behalf of the Allies and, not wanting to break with pro-war progressives, attempted to dissociate themselves from the anti-war groups. By 1916 they had become very active in President Wilson's "Preparedness" campaign. Only the fact that both the AFL and WSFL contained many new immigrant members prevented them from taking stronger pro-war stands.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup>Winslow, pp. 4-5, 28-29, 37-38, 43-47, 54-55, 75; Weinstein, pp. 29-31, 116-118; UR 18 July 1918.

<sup>58</sup>In the face of continued Republican propaganda to join the Allied war effort, Wilson agreed to support a program of arms purchases and military "preparedness" as a hedge against the day when they might be necessary.



In 1915 the economic impact of the war began to be felt in the Pacific Northwest for the first time. The efforts of employers to monopolize the profits for themselves, however, reached a peak at the same time. They had been greatly hurt in the preceeding years by declining prices and production and hoped to recoup their losses. This effort had the effect of dampening down economic growth and limiting the benefits for labor. The labor force grew by only 0.91 per cent to 550,000 and employment increased by only 0.58 per cent to 518,000. As a result, unemployment actually increased by 6.25 per cent to 518,000. As a result, unemployment actually increased by 6.25 per cent to 32,300, or 5.87 per cent of the labor force. (Table No. 1) The growing splits in the labor movement made it harder for labor to resist the employers' open shop campaign.

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In 1915 the continued stagnation in the state's economy and the resistance of employers finally began to have a serious impact on the WSFL's organizational efforts. After ten years of uninterrupted growth the WSFL suffered a sharp set-back in paid-up membership in 1915. Membership fell by 18.99 per cent to 16,131. Workers could no longer live only on hope. The percentage of the state's labor force, organized by the WSFL, fell below three per cent for the first time since 1909. (Table No. 2)

In view of the difficulties faced by the WSFL it is hardly very surprising to note that the SCLC also experienced great difficulties in 1915. In the peak year of the employers' offensive, membership in SCLC locals fell by 20.13 per cent to 8,673. The Building Trades, which had benefited the most in 1914, suffered the most in 1915. In addition, the Metal, Brewery/Provision, Miscellaneous, and

Amusement Trades sections lost membership. Only the Maritime and Printing Trades sections gained members. (Table No. 3)

The AFL and WSFL were increasingly hampered in their organizational efforts by the employers' attempts to link them to anti-war forces. This inhibited organized labor's desire to curry favor with the Anglo-American establishment--those White Anglo Saxon Protestant leaders who dominated both the business community and the Republican party--and encouraged the AFL and WSFL to support "Preparedness". This desire became ever more acute as the open shop campaign gathered steam. With the revival of conservative Republican fortunes in the 1914 legislative elections, the possibility that labor's previous gains might be eliminated became very real. Indeed, a strong movement to roll back labor's gains and to at least modify the progressive reforms of 1911-1913 did get under way at the 1915 legislative session. The anti-reform forces were encouraged by the defeat of most of the "seven sisters" initiatives. The decimation of the progressives in 1914 left little to oppose them. Thus, the legislature voted to repeal the eight hour day on public works act. Representative C.E. Lum, who led the fight for repeal, said of the effort, "It is time we got away from some of these freak laws." The legislature also passed an anti-labor medical aid bill after first rejecting the proposal Governor Lister's First Aid Commission had recommended. In addition, the anti-labor forces succeeded in passing several bills repealing labor reform and direct legislation acts. The anti-labor forces might easily have achieved even more but they were prevented by the prompt vetoes of Governor Lister. Lister unexpectedly and courageously vetoed both

the eight hour day repeal and the anti-labor medical aid bills. The legislature tried, but failed, to override him. Lister was particularly outraged that the employers, who had promised to support his First Aid Commission's recommendations in return for his support against the JLC's medical aid initiative (1914).

The most important of the anti-labor bills, passed by the 1915 legislature, was an anti-picketing bill, which prohibited picketing within 500 feet of establishments involved in labor disputes. Despite pleas from Labor Commissioner Edward Olsen and labor representatives, urging a veto, Lister signed the bill.<sup>60</sup>

The behavior of the legislature presented the JLC with its first full-blown crisis. It responded with a campaign to defeat the un-vetoed anti-labor and anti-reform bills by the referendum. In Western Washington the JLC organized a State Referendum League to lead the campaign. The JLC organized a similar body in Eastern Washington. The SRL emphasized its efforts to oppose restrictions in the direct legislation laws, but also announced it intended to fight for repeal of some of the most anti-reform achievements of the legislature. Senator Poindexter, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and the Grange all endorsed the campaign and by June 1915 the SRL had collected enough signatures to place all the referenda on the fall 1916 ballot.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>Saltvig, p. 321; WSFL Procs., (1916), p. 101.

In addition the legislature passed a number of bills restricting the expansion of publically owned utilities, amending the state's political convention and primary laws, restricting usage of the initiative and referendum petition laws, and increasing the size of port commissions, all of which were opposed by the labor lobby.

<sup>61</sup>At the same time (June 1915), the JLC adopted a Grange proposal calling for formation of a Non-Partisan Election Law League, designed to

The progressive cause, although battered by the employers' offensive and by events in the legislature, had not yet died. In 1915 a second labor-endorsed candidate, T.H. Bolton, won election to the Seattle City Council. Again, however, although Bolton had intimate ties to the labor movement, he ran as a non-partisan and did not rely on labor support alone. Bolton, like Hesketh, was a member of the craft unionist Provision Trades Section. He, too, received support from the commercial press. Thus, despite the fact that the SCLC continued its drift to the Left, elected Hulet Wells as its president, and contained a growing number of pro-SPW leaders, it also continued to reject Left-wing political policies. How much longer this could continued, however, must have worried the Council's conservative and non-partisan leaders.<sup>62</sup>

In 1916, for the first time, the economic benefits of the war in Europe began to trickle down to the workers in Washington State. While the labor force grew by only 0.54 per cent to 553,000, employment increased by 6.37 per cent to 551,000 and unemployment fell by 91.95 per cent to 2,600 or 0.47 per cent of the labor force. This was the most dramatic economic turn-around ever recorded in Washington State's history. Only in the boom year of 1906 had unemployment been lower.

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secure passage of legislation to weaken the role of political parties. The JLC hoped that such legislation would force candidates to campaign on specific issues rather than party platforms, thus eliminating the need for costly direct legislation campaigns in the future. It was not until seven months later, however, that the League was actually established.

Saltvig, pp. 375-379; Crawford, pp. 183-184; Murray, pp. 237-238; Seattle Sun 26 April, 12, 22 May, 9 June 1915; Star 20 March 1915; Times 18 March 1915.

<sup>62</sup>Call, p. 48; Dickson, pp. 41-43, 45, 130, 136, 138-139, 141; Seattle UR 7, 13, 14 Feb. 1915.

(Table No. 1)

Despite the economic turn-around, however, the WSFL was in a poor position to reap the benefits. It had not yet truly recovered from the damage done during the employers' offensive of the preceding years and with economic improvement many workers saw less need to organize. More-over the issue of the war and American entry into it had proved very divisive within the labor movement. As a result, membership in the WSFL fell by a further 6.43 per cent in 1916 to 15,093. It now represented only 2.72 per cent of the state's labor force.

(Table No. 2)

The SCLC, on the other hand, recovered smartly from its setback the previous year. The Seattle economy began to benefit much more directly from the war than the state as a whole and membership in the SCLC increased by 15.71 per cent to 10,036. Only the Brewery/Provision Trades Section, hurt by the advent of prohibition, lost membership. The Metal Trades Section more than doubled its membership and was the fastest growing of the trade sections. (Table No. 4)

In 1916, however, the political influence of the WSFL and the SCLC grew weaker. The anti-labor, anti-reform sentiment, which had hampered the JLC in the legislature, became more intense and the sporadic violence in labor-management relations persisted. The issue of American participation in World War I continued to divide both the labor and the socialist movements as well as the nation at large. As German provocations against American trade continued, the solution which had prevailed since 1914--neutrality--became less and less tenable. As losses mounted on both sides without a decision being reached, the

pressure on the United States to prepare for war grew stronger. As war seemed ever more likely, the radical elements in the labor movement--the new immigrants, the socialists, the industrial unionists--supported the SPA-SPW anti-war stand more strongly. By the same token, the AFL-WSFL-SCLC conservatives--the craft unionists, the old immigrants, the native-born--moved more and more towards support of the Wilson administration's stand on preparedness. The labor progressives had to do this or break with the non-labor progressives who still followed their beloved leader, Theodore Roosevelt, who was leading the fight for intervention. This issue took on national and international significance as a result of the Preparedness Day Parade bombing in San Francisco, 22 July 1916. The arrest and highly publicized trials and convictions of Tom Mooney, Warren K. Billings, and three other IWW sympathizers connected with the San Francisco Central Labor Council and its member unions helped divide the labor movement still further and helped isolate it from majority opinion. (Mooney received a death sentence and the others long prison terms.) The convictions, in the absence of firm evidence of guilt, convinced many in the labor movement that the Establishment was out to force American entry into the war to promote capitalism and that it would stop at nothing, least of all crushing the labor movement, which stood in its way. On the other hand, support for the defendants convinced many progressives that labor was indeed out to sabotage American security.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup>The bomb, planted in a suitcase along the line of march, exploded leaving nine marchers and spectators dead. Eleven months later Mooney was sentenced to death for the crime and Billings to life imprisonment. Anti-war and pro-IWW and pro-SPA forces in the labor movement and civil libertarians condemned the trials and sentences. They charged

In Washington Republican gubernatorial candidate Roland H. Hartley, a mill-owner and former mayor of Everett, contributed to this climate by whipping up sentiment against labor leaders of all persuasions. His main campaign issue was the open shop. All the while he professed his sympathy for the working man suffering under the tyranny of corrupt labor leaders. Several bitterly fought and violent strikes also added to the tension. In June a misconceived coast-wide maritime strike began. The strikers demanded higher wages and an employment

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that employers were trying to frame Mooney because of his radical industrial union activities and pointed out that he had been so harassed in the past. The California State Federation of Labor and the San Francisco Central Labor Council were caught in the middle. Their leaders had only reluctantly supported Mooney's organizing activities, hated his radical ideas, and regarded him as an incompetent. They described his tactics in a recent Street Carmen's strike as "Mooney's Morbid Move". They could not afford, however, to let the violations of Mooney's civil liberties go unchallenged and agreed to support various appeal efforts on his behalf. Mooney's IWW and radical associates thereupon seized upon these efforts to organize a nation-wide campaign to free Mooney, hoping to use the furor for their own political purposes. They called for a general strike to force a new trial. This outraged the AFL and State Federation leadership, which were still trying to maintain friendly relations with the Wilson Administration, and they threatened to abandon Mooney if he and his followers persisted. At this Mooney agreed to call off the general strike for the duration of the war, which the United States had just entered. Finally, in 1919, Mooney's sentence was commuted to life in prison. Nowhere was Mooney's support greater than in the SCLC. Efforts to organize a general strike on his behalf were well-advanced by January 1919 and added to the support for the Seattle general strike, which occurred in February 1919 in support of the Seattle metal trades union, when the Mooney strike was cancelled.

Philip Taft, Organized Labor in American History, pp. 327-334; Taft, Labor Politics American Style: the California State Federation of Labor, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968); San Francisco Labor Chronicle 28 July 1916, 23 Feb., 21 July 1917; Report on the Mooney Dynamite Case in San Francisco Submitted by President Wilson's Mediation Commission, Official Bulletin 28 Jan. 1918; The Mooney-Billings Report: Suppressed By The Wickersham Committee, (New York: Gotham House, 1932), pp. 37-41.

system which would end the necessity of waiting on the docks all day and night in hopes of work. The Waterfront Employers Association, however, refused to negotiate in good faith and imported Black strike-breakers. The WEA even induced seventy-five University of Washington students to work as "scabs". By negotiating separately with each union the WEA managed to split the longshoremen from the other maritime unions. As a result the strike collapsed after a month and a half. In mid-July the men returned to work on their employers' conditions. At the same time, a strike by the Everett Shingle-weavers Union, in protest against the employers' refusal to raise wages as provided in their contract, attracted widespread sympathy. Due to the war, lumber prices were up and the employers could have afforded to grant the increases but were determined not to give in to union demands. The IWW, then conducting an organizing campaign, then offered their unsolicited assistance to the AFL workers. The IWW's poured in to Everett and attempted to employ their free speech tactics on behalf of the strikers. In contrast to their experience in Spokane, they were met by iron resistance from the employers, who hired local vigilantes and employed violence and terror to counter the IWW's free speech tactics. Expelled from town on several occasions, the IWW's returned each time, only to be evicted again by increasingly violent methods. The violence reached a peak in the so-called "Everett Massacre". On 5 November 1916 about 250 IWW's arrived in Everett by boat. They had come to protest the particularly vicious treatment meted out to an earlier group of demonstrators. They were met at the dock by the sheriff and his deputies who ordered them to return to



Seattle. Suddenly shots rang out from both sides. When it was over five IWW's and two sheriff's deputies lay dead.<sup>64</sup>

In the face of this anti-labor furor, the progressives re-organized. In February 1916 a group of Seattle labor leaders, progressive reformers, and Grange officials met and formed the Washington State Non-Partisan League. The NPL, unrelated to the North Dakota agrarian movement bearing the same name, proposed to fight for an initiative to abolish party designations in all state, county, and municipal elections. The NPL rapidly gained support. In March the Seattle Herald, an ex-socialist paper, became the NPL's official journal. The WSFL endorsed it. California's progressive Republican Governor, Hiram Johnson, promised to tour the state on behalf of its proposals. Governor Lister endorsed it. By the end of March branches of the NPL had been established in Bellingham, Everett, and Tacoma.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> For more on the Hartley campaign see: Saltvig, p. 389; Seattle Sun 26 Aug. 1915; Star 1 Sept. 1916; Gunns, pp. 38-43. See also: Everett Herald 29 April 1916; Seattle Town Crier 6 May 1916; Argus 3 April 1916, 3 April 1920.

For more on the longshore strike, see: Roger Buchanan, Dock Strike (Everett: The Working Press, 1975), pp. 16-19; Dickson, p. 43; United Dock Worker 3 June 1916; Pacific Coast Longshoreman 22 July 1916.

For more on the Everett Massacre, see: Clark, pp. 173-214, passim; Gunns, pp. 29, 31-32, 34-36.

Following the massacre the IWW's returned to Seattle where they, but none of the vigilantes and deputies, were charged with murder and sent back to Everett for trial. Eventually, due to lack of evidence, they were acquitted.

<sup>65</sup> The leadership of the NPL included such progressives as Thomas Murphine and Mrs. Frances Axtell, Democrats Robert Bridges and Oliver Erickson, Socialists Homer Bone and Glen Hoover, Grange official Fred Chamberlain, and labor leaders James A. Duncan and Otto Case. J. Allen Smith, the University of Washington history professor, also was a member.

As of 2 June the Herald ceased to be an NPL organ. It resumed publication as an SPW paper, edited by Dr. Brown. It was increasingly devoted to anti-militarism. For a while it was succeeded

The NPL also proposed to work for initiatives to obtain a medical aid amendment to the workmen's compensation act, to place a royalty tax on commercial fishermen, and to enact a home rule bill authorizing first class cities to regulate public utilities. A key feature of this campaign was the close cooperation between the NPL and the JLC. The NPL agreed to support the JLC's referenda. In return the JLC agreed to endorse the NPL's four initiatives.<sup>66</sup>

The progressives' plans soon came apart. George Cotterill and C.J. France, the progressive Democrats who had drafted the non-partisan election law initiative, favored a comprehensive bill providing for a presidential preferential primary and regulations to end corrupt practices in addition to non-partisan elections. O.T. Erickson, James W. Bryan, and Charles A. Reynolds--progressive Republicans--thought the proposed initiatives too long (it contained 13,000 words) and too broad. Erickson favored limiting the initiative to non-partisan elections. Despite a last, desperate effort, none of the four initiatives received enough signatures to go on the ballot. Bitterly, the WSFL and the Grange blamed the new voter registration law (1915) for the failure but, in fact, it failed primarily due to lack of unity. In the wake of this debacle the NPL disintegrated.<sup>67</sup>

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by the Non-Partisan, which, in turn, was succeeded by the Commonwealth. Saltvig, pp. 379-380, 382; Hamilton Cravens, "A History of the Washington Farmer-Labor Party, 1918-1924," (M.A. Thesis: University of Washington, 1963), pp. 63-64; Seattle Star 31 March, 7, 8, 12 April 1916; Seattle Herald 10, 24 March, 7, 21 April 1916; P-I 27 Feb. 1916; Tripp, p. 140.

<sup>66</sup>Saltvig, pp. 379-380.

<sup>67</sup>Saltvig, pp. 380-382; Crawford, pp. 187, 213-214; WSFL Procs., (1917), pp. 5-6; Tripp, p. 140; Seattle UR 15 July 1916; P-I 27 Oct.

The JLC's referenda campaign fared much better. The JLC received vital support from Governor Lister. Lister was in a tough re-election campaign against moderate Republican nominee Henry McBride, the "wet" who had defeated Hartley in the primary. His problem was that he had angered many conservatives and businessmen with his vetoes of anti-labor legislation without gaining significantly among progressives. He had only a single issue--prohibition--with which to attack McBride and gain progressive support. Then, in mid-October, Lister got the break he needed. Lister's King County committee met with C.J. France, Lucy Case, and James Duncan, presenting the JLC's progressives. They offered to swing their support to Lister if he would support their fight on the referenda. Duncan warned that, as far as labor was concerned, Lister's refusal to veto the anti-picketing bill had completely off-set his previous pro-labor achievements. If he did not change his stance quickly, labor would endorse the Progressive Party's candidate, James Bradford. Heeding Duncan's advice Lister changed his position and advocated defeat of all the anti-labor bills on the ballot.

I am urging the people to vote against all the referendums even if I did sign several of them.

He credited the federal Clayton Anti-Trust Act (1914) with changing his mind.

I give the Clayton Bill, passed by Congress, my unqualified approval and believe that it will aid greatly in allaying frictions between capital and labor and for that reason I am urging that referendum measure No. 6 be defeated in spite of the fact that I signed it when it was presented to me.

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1916; Star 24 April 1916.

In the fall, only two of the initiatives were on the ballot. Both sought changes in the prohibition laws and failed by wide margins.

For the rest of the campaign Lister devoted his main energies for the anti-referenda campaign and against the anti-prohibition initiatives. The Democrats picked up progressive support when the Wilson administration appointed Louis Brandeis to the Supreme Court and endorsed federal rural credits, workmen's compensation, and child labor bills.<sup>68</sup>

As a result all of the referred bills went down to defeat by large margins. The anti-picketing bill was defeated by the narrowest margin--97,370 votes. The progressive-Democrat coalition also swept to victory. Wilson won reelection by a narrow margin over Charles E. Hughes, his Republican rival. Wilson carried Washington State by a vote of 183,338 to 167,208. Lister, too, won reelection although he trailed his party's leader. The SPA's vote dropped fifty per cent from 1912 with most of the former socialist vote going to Wilson and Lister. The Progressive Party suffered the most. The Republicans benefited somewhat as a result. In the congressional elections Senator Poindexter won reelection over his Democratic rival and the Republicans won four out of five House seats. The lone exception was C.C. Dill, the Democrat in Spokane's Fifth District.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup>Saltvig, pp. 392-393,395; Seattle Times 22 Oct. 1916; Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, (New York, 1954), pp. 223-229; Link, Campaign for Progressivism and Peace, (Princeton, 1965), pp. 41-61.

For more on the Federal Clayton Act, see: Jerold A. Auerbach, American Labor in the Twentieth Century, (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1969), pp. 123-124; Irving Bernstein, The Lean Years, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1971), pp. 207-209; United States Statutes At Large XXXVIII (15 Oct. 1914), pp. 731,738.

<sup>69</sup>The failure of the anti-picketing bill may have discouraged the anti-labor employers and conservatives, but it did not defeat them. They soon found new, equally effective remedies for labor disputes. Chief among these was the anti-picketing court injunction.

Call, p. 28; Saltvig, pp. 399-401; Johansen, pp. 474,614;

The election of 1916 spelled the end of the Progressive Party. Progressivism itself lingered, although weakened, until the post-war era, but it had spent itself in the referenda campaign. Only one great achievement lay before it. By 1917 most of the WSFL's original legislative program, outlined in 1902, had been enacted and successfully defended. The only gap in this record was the absence of a medical aid bill. This lack was remedied in 1917.

When the 1917 legislative session convened, the reform forces faced intense pressures. The events of 1916, especially the "Everett Massacre", had etched themselves deeply into the memories of the legislators. Employers and conservatives from both major parties demanded protection against provocations by IWW's and other labor radicals. They urged passage of a so-called "Criminal Syndicalism Bill." At first it seemed likely that they would succeed. A Senate bill, making it a felony to advocate "criminal syndicalism" (in which criminal syndicalism was defined as advocating crime, sabotage, or other unlawful methods of terrorism as a means for accomplishing industrial or political reform) easily passed with only five negative votes. The bill left it to the discretion of the local police to decide when the law had been violated and authorized them to disperse any illegal assembly. The only serious objection arose in the House, where one legislator criticized it as a provocative "class" legislation and another pointed out that it violated constitutional liberties of speech

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Washington State Secretary of State, Abstract of the Votes, 1916 General Election, (Olympia, 1916); Gunns, p. 42. See also: St. Germaine v. Bakery and Confectionery Workers Union 97 Wash. 282 (1917), in which the state Supreme Court upheld an injunction against "peaceful picketing" which labor believed the Federal Clayton Act was meant to protect.

and assembly. Nonetheless, the House, too, passed the bill with only twelve negative votes.<sup>70</sup>

The passage of the bill outraged the labor movement, which considered it an ill-concealed attempt to stifle the trade unions under the guise of attacking the IWW. Opponents of the bill flooded Governor Lister's office with their complaints. One critic wrote:

I believe now as I did when this measure was under consideration, that the chief object...of the bill was to provide the big business interests of the state with an effective weapon against the legitimate labor unions of the state, rather than to furnish the state with an effective weapon against the I.W.W. and other lawless organizations.

Perhaps respecting his debt to the progressives, Lister agreed and vetoed the bill. In his veto message he expressed concern for the bill's effect on loyal dissenters and said that he could only support a bill that would ensure their safety. He said that violations of civil liberties under the bill would only give agitators further ammunition:

I feel that these agitators would secure a respectful hearing from many good citizens if the citizens should feel that their inherent right of free speech was being curtailed.

This mollified the WSFL and the progressives somewhat. Anna Louise Strong, a socialist and pacifistic journalist with close ties to the Seattle labor movement, congratulated Lister on his veto:

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<sup>70</sup>Patrick Renshaw, "The IWW and the Red Scare, 1917-1924," Journal of Contemporary History III (1968), pp. 63-72; Dorothy N. Schmidt, "Sedition and Criminal Syndicalism in the State of Washington, 1917-1919," (M.A. Thesis: University of Washington, 1940), passim; Albert F. Gunns, "Civil Liberties and Crisis: The Status of Civil Liberties in the Pacific Northwest, 1917-1940," (Ph.D. Dissertation: University of Washington, 1971), passim; Saltvig, pp. 432-434; Senate Journal, (1919), p. 15; Seattle Times 24,27 Feb., 17 March 1917; Incoming Correspondence, March 1917, Lister Papers, University of Washington Library.

You have kept Robert Bridges, C.J. France, James Duncan, myself, and a lot of others from breaking into jail via the free speech route, in order to test the constitutionality of the law.<sup>71</sup>

Also, the anti-labor campaign alarmed many of the state's more enlightened employers and led to the passage of labor's long-sought medical aid bill. The employers did not support trade unions, much less the IWW, but they feared that failure to deal with the workers legitimate grievances would radicalize the workers and lead to ever-more-violent repetitions of the Everett Massacre. Chief among these leaders was Representative Mark Reed, Republican floor leader in the House. Reed, although a mill-owner and no friend of labor, recognized that something had to be done to ease the plight of injured workers beyond what had already been accomplished. Furthermore, the growing influx of war orders had led to a continuing improvement in lumber prices and profits and had increased the employers' ability to pay for reform, while decreasing their antipathy to change. These developments led Reed to introduce his own medical aid bill. Reed's proposal was similar to that proposed by Lister's First Aid Commission (1915) which had been rejected by the conservatives. Reed's bill passed both houses by large majorities and represented a major legislative accomplishment. Neither the employers nor the WSFL nor the Lister administration preferred Reed's bill to their own proposals but it was the best compromise possible. While it satisfied neither

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<sup>71</sup>Saltvig, pp. 432-434; Herman A. Sleizer, "Governor Lister: Chapters of a Political Life," (M.A. Thesis: University of Washington, 1941), passim; Senate Journal, (1919), pp. 14-15; Anna Louise Strong, I Change Worlds, (New York, 1937), pp. 25-60; J.W. Faulkner to Lister, 9 July 1918, Lister Papers; A.L. Strong to Lister, 21 March 1917, Lister Papers; Seattle Times 8 March 1917.

side completely, most observers believed that it would contribute to improved labor-management relations and would help a great many injured workers. The bill provided that in each industry both employers and employees would contribute to a first aid fund. It also provided that the employer's contribution would depend upon the accident rate in the industry.<sup>72</sup>

With that the legislature adjourned. It had not lived up to labor's darkest fears. Neither had it accomplished most of labor's goals. In this it typified the accomplishments of the Progressive Era as a whole. By 1917, in fact, progressivism had nearly run its course. It had lost its enthusiasm. Within weeks the whole agenda of progressive reform was pushed aside by the requirements of war.

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<sup>72</sup>For more on the passage, provisions, and administration of the medical aid act, see: Tripp, pp. 141-142; Saltvig, pp. 428,431-432; Spokane SR 17,22 Feb. 1917; Seattle Times 1 March 1917; Call, p. 21.



## Chapter 4:

### Discontent:

#### Labor and the War Years,

1917 - 1918

World War I undermined the moral basis of progressiveness, that optimistic willingness of workers and employers, politicians, and reformers, to work together to ameliorate the evils of industrial capitalism. In peacetime criticism of the status quo had legitimacy. In wartime demand for social change could be equated with treason. Fearful of such charges the middle class progressive politicians and reformers in the major parties sought shelter in party loyalty while Bull Moose progressives flooded back into the Republican party, leaving independent progressivism to die. This instinct for self-preservation on the part of the centrists benefited the ideological extremists. Both those who wished to prevent all change and those who wished to destroy all vestiges of the existing society gained from polarization.

Labor, which was caught in the middle, split asunder. The largest, conservative, old immigrant segments of the labor movement endorsed the war. For the duration they rested their hopes of immediate benefits in the Wilson Administration. Another smaller group, consisting of the new immigrant, Left-wing unionists opted for revolution. They joined the IWW in opposition to the war.

The SPA and SPW were also casualties of the war and the revolution it spawned in Russia. They, too, split apart. When reform faded and the soviets came to power the radicals broke with the moderates and the conservatives abandoned compromise. This spelled the beginning of the end of the SPA, gave birth to the Communist Party, and greatly complicated the political problems of the labor movement.

Economic changes, as much as political events, contributed to the labor turmoil of this period. In 1917 the economic rebound, which had started so vigorously in 1916, continued at a feverish pace. Although the labor force grew by 1.26 per cent to 560,000, most of the economic growth came as a result of increased production. Employment rose by 6.53 per cent to 587,000 and unemployment declined by 1,123.07 per cent. This produced a negative unemployment rate of -4.75 per cent of the labor force. In other words, so many new jobs opened up that the economy could have absorbed 26,000 new workers. (Table No. 1)

The WSFL's statistics for this period are somewhat confused because in 1917 the WSFL convention had voted to change its convention from January to July, beginning in 1918. Thus the 1917 statistics cover an eighteen month period. Nevertheless they do reveal significant data. From January 1917 to July 1918 membership in WSFL affiliates increased by 54.66 per cent, to 23,343, or 4.13 per cent of the labor force. Never before had the WSFL represented so many workers, nor so large a percentage of the state's labor force. (Table No. 2)

The SCLC's statistics underwent no comparable shake-up. Nevertheless they, too, tell a tale of unprecedented growth. Membership in SCLC locals increased by 55.13 per cent, to 15,569. Nearly every trade section benefited, some greatly. Only the Amusement Trades

Section lost members. It was, indeed, a banner year for the labor movement. (Table No. 3)

Labor's story of the war begins, late in 1916, when President Wilson and his advisors, Herbert Hoover and Ralph M. Easley, approached AFL President Gompers with a proposition to insure a loyal, non-striking, non-disruptive labor force in the event of war. In exchange for his support for their so-called "Preparedness" campaign the Administration was prepared to offer labor better treatment, including government recognition of trade unions and the eight hour day. In return they asked that Gompers use his influence to assure united labor backing for American war policy. It is not an exaggeration to say that Gompers leaped at the proposal. It had long been his object to promote labor-government cooperation just as he had long advocated labor-management cooperation. Thus he sponsored a loyalty pledge and circulated it among the AFL's affiliates. By March 1917 most AFL international unions had endorsed it. Only about a dozen internationals balked at signing the pledge and had not done so by the time war was declared.<sup>1</sup>

Also in March 1917, with American entry into the war imminent, the SPA's National Executive Council called an emergency convention to formulate their own program in the event of war. The SPA did not want to be caught napping by the outbreak of war as their European brethren had been in 1914. They were not a moment too soon for, on 2 April,

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<sup>1</sup>Most of the anti-pledge unions were socialist-leaning new immigrant-dominated industrial unions. They included the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, the Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers Union (formerly the WFM), the International Typographical Union, the Cloth, Hat, and Cap Makers, and the Railway Carmen's Union.

Weinstein, pp. 45-46.

President Wilson delivered his war message to Congress. By the time the nearly 200 SPA delegates convened in St. Louis the United States were already at war with the Central Powers.<sup>2</sup>

The SPA's emergency convention, which met on 7 April, voted overwhelmingly to oppose the declaration of war, to oppose introduction of conscription, and to oppose restrictions on free speech and on the right to strike, which the AFL had accepted. Only a few Right-wing members opposed the party's stand and, when they were defeated, they showed their displeasure by walking out of the party. Mostly native-born, Anglo-American, middle class intellectuals, they then began to attack the SPA as pro-German and alien-dominated. This merely confirmed the growing influence of the new immigrants over party policy.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Very few congressmen opposed the declaration of war. Of those few who did, two came from Washington: Democrat C.C. Dill and progressive Republican William LaFollette. Dill did so, he said, because he regarded as a "legal fiction" the idea that Germany had caused the war. As soon as the war resolution passed, Dill's opposition to the war ceased.

Weinstein, pp. 127-128,135; Congressional Record 65th Cong., First Session, April 4, 1917, pp. 212,214,234; Saltvig, p. 445; Spokane SR 6 April 1917.

<sup>3</sup>The walk-out did not significantly effect the SPA's membership, which continued to grow rapidly. The Anglo-American intellectuals did not constitute a significant proportion of the membership. Among those pro-war socialists who walked out, however, were many leading journalists, publicists, fund-raisers, and trade unionists. Although numerically weak, they had a significant influence outside the party. The SPA felt their loss deeply. They included: J.C. Phelps Stokes, William English Walling, W.J. Ghent, A.M. Simmons, Charles Edward Russell, Winfield Gaylord, John Sparco, and Upton Sinclair.

Following the emergency convention the SPA's rank and file ratified the anti-war stand by a vote of 21,639 to 2,752.

As a result of this vote large numbers of pacifists and new immigrants joined the party. Most of the anti-war socialists were members of groups closely associated with the industrial unions and new immigrants, whom the party organized in the foreign language federations. Their influence was rapidly over-shadowing that of the native-born groups. By 1917 the foreign language federations constituted 35 per cent of the

The SPA, however, failed significantly in its effort to gain support for its stand among the AFL's industrial unions. Not a single AFL international union, not even those which had refused to endorse Gompers' deal with the Administration, supported the SPA's stand. In a time of crisis, they instinctively chose loyalty to the state over ideological solidarity. At the same time their leaders did not want to split the labor movement.<sup>4</sup>

In Washington the war also upset old ties and forged new ones. The WSFL, like the AFL, endorsed the war. WSFL leaders, including President E.P. Marsh and his successor William M. Short, accepted presidential appointments to various war labor boards and conducted active campaigns to encourage bond purchases and labor support for the war.<sup>5</sup>

However, unlike the AFL's international unions, the WSFL's local affiliates and central labor councils did not all support the official pro-war position. For example, on 4 April 1917, the SCLC voted unanimously (250-0) to oppose American entry into the war.

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SPA's total membership. By 1919, they constituted fifty-three per cent of the membership (57,000 members).

Weinstein, pp. 45-47, 119-121, 127-130, 182-185; Shannon, pp. 37, 43-47, 83-85, 94-98; Nathan Glazer, The Social Basis of the American Communist Party, (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World, 1961), pp. 12-9.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

For the impact of the refusal of the AFL to oppose the war on the SPA, see: Weinstein, pp. 177-178.

<sup>5</sup>E.P. Marsh had succeeded Charles R. Case as president of the WSFL in 1913. A member of both the Everett Shingle Weavers and Typographical Union locals, he was also part-owner and editor of the Everett Labor Journal. Marsh, of English ancestry, was both deeply religious and politically moderate. The Scottish-born Short was state secretary of Mine Workers District No. 10 and a WSFL vice-president. He succeeded to the presidency in 1918 upon Marsh's resignation. An effective debater and "brilliant orator" he was closely allied

Later, in May, the Council voted, again unanimously, to support Hulet Wells' resolution condemning conscription. And, on 2 June, the SCLC called on Congress to repeal the Conscription Act. All three resolutions were in line with the policies of the SPW and IWW and antithetical to those of the WSFL and AFL.

Despite this trend away from progressivism, two more SCLC-endorsed candidates won seats on the Seattle City Council and Councilman Hesketh won reelection. As a result, four of the eleven Council members were committed to labor positions. Again, both of the new councilmen had significant non-labor support. However, unlike Hesketh and Bolton, neither of them were actual union members. Rather, they were major party progressives with reform tendencies. W.D. Lane was a liberal Democrat. Oliver T. Erickson was a progressive Republican. In view of the anti-labor opposition, these results cannot be considered small achievements. They also show that, until well into the war, labor's ties with the middle class remained strong.<sup>7</sup>

As many of its old progressive partners began to fall away, however, the WSFL began to cast about urgently for new allies. David C. Coates, the Spokane labor leader and ex-socialist, for example, began to promote a new Non-Partisan League to be affiliated with the North

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with Samuel Gompers and the AFL conservatives. Clark, pp. 93-98; Saltvig, p. 410; WSFL Procs., (1918), p. 11; William Short to Gompers, 3 July 1918, Box 35, WSFL Records; Ca 1, pp. 9,44-45; Yearbook (1927), p. 23.

<sup>6</sup>Congress responded, however, by passing the Espionage Act (15 June), which President Wilson promoted as a security measure, but which had the effect of curtailing dissent. Only a vigorous press reaction prevented passage of an outright censorship provision. Nonetheless, the act achieved the same purpose by allowing the Post Office Department to ban treasonous material from the mails.

O'Connell, p. 7; Winslow, pp. 5-6,57-58; Weinstein, pp. 143-

Dakota organization of the same name. Coates was a member of the NPL's National Executive Committee. The new NPL would appeal directly for farm support. The WSFL had worked closely with the Grange now for over ten years but closer ties had not developed due to internal divisions between farm groups. The NPL fell victim to the same divisions. Some farmers, especially the small farmers in the Puget Sound region, vigorously supported labor legislation and identified, ideologically, with the working class as "producers." Many were also socialists. These were the descendants of the "True" Populists. Some large scale farmers, however, opposed any deal with organized labor. This group, strongest in eastern Washington in the Yakima Valley, supported the open shop and saw the closed, or union ship as a threat to their own use of cheap migrant labor. They noted, for example, that A.C. Townley, president of the North Dakota NPL, had recently begun talks with IWW agricultural union leaders on wages, hours, and working conditions. These talks broke down but the larger farmers were greatly alarmed by this sign of the NPL's proclivities. It was this group which held most strongly to non-partisan principles and despite their differences with the labor movement worked closely with the WSFL leadership.

For a time, in 1917, determined leadership eroded the barriers to WSFL-Grange cooperation. Reliance on the property tax had, over the years, borne increasingly heavily on the state's farmers. They also felt oppressed by unfair railroad rates, and inaccessibility of electric power, and the inadequacy of irrigation water. Although wheat production and exports were finally beginning to recover from a devastating decline in prices (1913-1915), farm conditions remained poor. Even the

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144; UR 26 May, 2 June 1917.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid; Dickson, pp. 44,136,138,141.

and hoped to cooperate with labor. Thus Coates was able to work out a quid pro quo with Grangemaster C.B. Kegley. Together they agreed on the details of a legislative program in which the WSFL promised to support the Grange's tax limitation, public power, irrigation, and railroad regulatory measures while the Grange endorsed the WSFL's stand on labor legislation. The 1917 Grange convention ratified this program.<sup>8</sup>

While the WSFL sought to rebuild its alliance structure and to convince people of its loyalty it was attacked, simultaneously, from two directions. While pacifists, anti-war radicals, and their labor allies accused the WSFL of betraying the working class by its pro-war stand, open shop employers and conservative politicians seized upon the WSFL's defense of civil rights for radicals and its alliance with the NPL to accuse it of subversion and radicalism. Although directed, primarily, against the SPW, IWW, and the SCLC, the WSFL found, as in the Mooney case, that it could not escape obloquy. As the attacks against the dissenters intensified the WSFL felt honor-bound to protest and, as a result, was tarred with the same brush.<sup>9</sup>

The campaign of repression in Washington, against the SPW and its anti-war labor allies in the IWW and the SCLC, got under way soon

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<sup>8</sup>Not much came of this alliance right away because farm prices began to rise dramatically as soon as war was declared. Also, when Kegley died suddenly in 1917 the Grange leadership fell to men not personally committed to working with the labor movement. Similarly, some labor leaders criticized the alliance with the Grange. Charles P. Taylor, the WSFL's secretary-treasurer and the highest ranking Red in the labor movement, argued that labor was bound to bear the major political burdens while the Grange would get most of the benefits. He pointed out that the Grange had never paid its full one-third share of the JLC's budget.

Call, p. 21; Crawford, *passim*; Cravens, pp. 63-64; Saltvig, pp. 382, 456-457; Robert L. Morlan, Political Prairie Fire: the Non-Partisan League, 1915-1922, (Minneapolis, 1953), pp. 134-135, 152-153; Johansen, pp. 374-383, 626; Tripp, p. 141.

<sup>9</sup>Saltvig, pp. 443-451; Winslow, pp. 61-63.



after the outbreak of war. In March, former SCLC President Hulet Wells had published an anti-conscription pamphlet. In May, a month before passage of the Espionage Act, he and three others were arrested for distributing it. Also in May, Kate Sadler was jailed for calling Wilson a traitor. Over the next few months the campaign grew wider. Bruce Rogers, the Spokane labor leader who had helped found the IWW, received a 150 day sentence for his anti-war remarks. Emil Herman, state secretary of the SPW and Paul Haffer, a party member, were convicted and sentenced to ten years for possession of "disloyal" books and materials. H.W. Watts, the socialist editor of the Everett Northwest Worker was deported to his native Canada for sedition.<sup>10</sup>

The attacks on anti-war radicals and pacifists, however, did not succeed in frightening all the progressives. In July the Seattle Municipal League's War Committee urged Governor Lister to call a special session of the legislature to deal with the possibility that radicals and enemy sympathizers might try to sabotage industrial and agricultural production and called for legislation which would authorize the governor to declare martial law, if needed, and to set up internment camps for enemy aliens and their sympathizers.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Anna Louise Strong was another casualty of this campaign. In 1916 she had helped organize a pacifistic group called the American Union Against Militarism. The AUAM had attracted considerable attention and support from some NPL progressives, socialists, and labor leaders. With the declaration of war, the WSFL labor leaders and middle class liberals dropped out and the organization changed its name to the No-Conscription League, becoming increasingly radical.

Saltvig, pp. 443-451; O'Connor, 83-84, 105, 115-118; Robert Friedheim, The Seattle General Strike, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1964), pp. 10-11; Weinstein, p. 161.

<sup>11</sup>Saltvig, pp. 443-444; Seattle Municipal News 7 July 1917.

Labor and its remaining progressive allies responded vigorously to this challenge. In May the SCLC had voted to withdraw from the Seattle Chamber of Commerce which, since its amalgamation with the Commercial Club, had become an open shop organization. Now central labor councils from all over the state joined the SCLC in condemning the employers' suggestions. They flooded Governor Lister's office with letters and telegrams opposing the Municipal League's suggestions. The central point they made was that the proposals were a cover for the open shop forces. One woman wrote:

The big interests are very anxious to take advantage of the IWW trouble to call the legislature together to get all the laws women have worked for rescinded--the eight hour day--child labor--prohibition, etc.

As a result, although the propaganda that labor was disloyal and should be repressed circulated widely, Lister refused to call a special session.<sup>12</sup>

Despite growing opposition anti-war groups proliferated. In August, a Seattle branch of the People's Council of America for Peace and Democracy was formed. The PCAPD was dominated by new immigrants, anti-war socialists, and trade unionists who endorsed the demands of European socialists for a peace without annexations or indemnities. To demonstrate the presence of significant anti-war sentiment they held a rally which was attended by over 4,000 people.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>O'Connell, p. 8; Minutes, 1 May 1917, Box 8, KCCLC Records; Letters and Telegrams from Spokane, Willapa Harbor, Hoquiam, Olympia, Everett, Tacoma, and Seattle to Lister, 10-12 July 1917, Lister Papers, Washington State Archives; Saltvig, p. 444; P-I 15 Dec. 1917.

<sup>13</sup>Saltvig, p. 445; H.C. Petersen and Gilbert Fite, Opponents of War, 1917-1918, (Madison, 1973), pp. 74-76; UR 18 Aug. 1917; Winslow,

In September Hulet Wells' case came to trial. The federal prosecutor charged that Wells was involved in the No-Conscription League which, he charged, was receiving German financing. The SCLC and James A. Duncan, its secretary, defended Wells with some success. The jury could not reach a verdict and Wells and his three co-defendants went free. But not for long. The federal authorities quickly re-indicted them for conspiracy. This time they were convicted (February 1918). Wells was sentenced to two years in federal prison.<sup>14</sup>

In addition to the onus of radicalism and disloyalty, thrust upon the labor movement as a result of its support for anti-war dissenters, labor faced new problems in dealing with employers which derived from the sudden renewal of prosperity. After lagging for years employment in Seattle's manufacturing industries started to rise rapidly under the impact of war orders. During the war employment in these industries increased from 11,000 to 40,000. At the same time the amount of capital invested in Seattle's manufacturing industries doubled. Seattle's rank among industrial cities rose from sixty-second to twenty-eighth place. This rapid growth took place primarily in three industries: food, lumber, and ship-building. The ship-building industry, which had scarcely existed prior to the war, absorbed the greater number of war workers in Seattle and Washington's other port cities. The employers, basking in prosperity for the first time in many

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p. 59. For the national impact on the SPA of its anti-war stand, see: Weinstein, pp. 139-140, 182; Charles C. Bush, "The Green Corn Rebellion," (M.A. Thesis: University of Oklahoma, 1932), pp. 1, 6, 9, 11, 17, 26.

<sup>14</sup>O'Connor, pp. 85-89, 95-117; William Preston, Jr., Aliens and Dissenters, Federal Suppression of Radicals, 1903-1933, (Cambridge, 1963), pp. 62-63.

years, hoped to reap most of the profits.<sup>15</sup>

One of the consequences of this extraordinarily rapid growth was a severe labor shortage. This led to rapid wage increases as employers bid for the available workers. Another consequence was an increase in labor's militancy. For the first time the new immigrant industrial workers won real power. Due to the high level of economic activity these workers wielded new leverage. They began to demand more in the way of concessions from their employers. Still another consequence was a new set of grievances for labor: inflation, overcrowding, and economic dislocations. The rapid growth of old industries and the burgeoning of new ones over-burdened existing city services. The influx of new workers swamped transportation systems, caused rents to rise rapidly and also produced a housing shortage. In view of these developments it is not surprising that the rapidly growing trade unions sought improvements in wages and conditions. As a result, in industry after industry, strikes and disorder broke out.<sup>16</sup>

Some businessmen sought to deal with the situation positively, but most felt that the best way to alleviate their labor problems was to increase the labor supply. Some businessmen even called for the importation of oriental labor to restore the labor surplus. The Municipal League, however, spoke for most when it rejected this solution because it:

...alarms wage earners unnecessarily, threatens the standards of living that make our civilization possible, and tends to divide the people when they should be united.

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<sup>15</sup>Johansen, pp. 476-477.

<sup>16</sup>Saltvig, pp. 441-442; P-I 18, 20 July 1917; Municipal News 2 June 1917.

A few businessmen also suggested compulsory arbitration of strikes as a solution. William Paulhamus, a progressive with ties to the Democrats, said: "Neither capital nor labor should take advantage of existing conditions to drive a close bargain." Most business solutions, however, relied completely on unilateral actions.<sup>17</sup>

When businessmen rejected such cooperative approaches to labor problems and precipitated labor turmoil, it led to government intervention. The railroad situation provides a good example. On 11 April 1917 national railroad executives pledged voluntarily to coordinate and increase line efficiency of the entire continental railroad system to further the war effort. This effort proved ineffective in large part because the railroads' management kept trying to prevent extension of the railroad shop craft unions--the Railroad Brotherhoods--even though the government had promised to recognize the unions. In the winter of 1917-1918 the nation's rail system became so congested and disorganized that it interfered with transshipment of war material. At the same time the shop craft unions began a campaign to strengthen their positions. They demanded a national contract on wages and conditions, by 1 January 1918, or they threatened to strike. Rather than grant concessions, however, the railroads appealed to President Wilson for protection. Instead of granting their request, the federal government took over the nation's entire railroad network in December 1917, promising to return it intact after the war. The Labor Department received authority to operate the railroads and to settle all labor disputes in the interim. This was a great victory for the

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

Railroad Brotherhoods for, under federal management, the unions won the eight hour day and union recognition.<sup>18</sup>

As we shall see the government also played a crucial role in labor relations in other industries. In some cases, however, they did not need to do so. One such case was the infant motor transport industry. World War I was the single greatest stimulus to the creation of Washington State's motor carrier industry. It was also of vital significance to the Teamsters Union. Due to the burdens on the railroads and their growing congestion, the nation's transportation system became increasingly congested. This crisis led to a number of innovations of future importance. One such innovation occurred in the Pacific Northwest.

When all the trouble on the railroads made it increasingly difficult to ship the industrial gas containers from the Linde Air Reduction Company in Seattle to the Portland shipbuilding yards, Linde hired the Herd Transfer Company, a local Seattle drayage firm, to haul filled gas tanks to Portland and return with the empties by truck. This was not only the first known over-the-road (long distance) motor highway trucking operation in history, it was also the earliest under a union contract for, in 1916, the Herd Company had become the first Seattle drayage firm to sign a union contract with Teamsters Local No. 174. Not only did this lead to a large increase in the local's membership, it also greatly benefited other segments of the Teamsters

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<sup>18</sup>In 1918 the nation's railroads, under government pressure, granted full recognition to the shop crafts and the government ordered improved wages and conditions. This preserved peace in the industry until 1919.

Taft, Organized Labor in American History, pp. 314-315.

jurisdiction. As a result of their new prosperity the Teamsters became much more vigorous. In 1917 Seattle Laundry and Dye Drivers Local No. 566 won recognition and a union contract after a strike. Without the strength of Local No. 174 they might not have won.<sup>19</sup>

By August 1917 the favorable economic impact of the war was undeniable. Virtually every segment of the labor movement benefited by the rise in employment. But, even as the war exacerbated tensions between labor and management and between socialists, pacifists, and capitalists, it also increased tensions within the labor movement between the new immigrant labor Reds and the old immigrant conservatives, who competed furiously for support among the centrist majority of workers who were primarily concerned with economic conditions, not ideology. This group, a decided majority of the labor movement, was particularly important in the SCLC because of the influence of the Reds. Outside Seattle and, to a certain extent, the other Puget Sound central labor councils, the Reds were much weaker and the conservatives could rule without any trouble. In Seattle the contest

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<sup>19</sup>For some of the negative results of local union vigor vis-a-vis their international, see: Garnel, v. I, pp. 23-26, 118-119, 128-129; v. II, pp. 517-518.

For the role of the SCD trade unions in the Seattle-Tacoma Street Carmen's strike, see: Cline, pp. 41-43; Saltvig, pp. 442-443; Thomas Burke to A.B. Wyckoff, 26 June 1917, Burke Papers, University of Washington Library.

For the role of the employers association and the SCLC in the strike, see: Saltvig, p. 443; P-I 28 July 1917, paid ad.

For the settlement of the strike, see: Saltvig, p. 443; Harold M. Hyman, Soldiers and Spruce: Origins of the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen, (Institute of Industrial Relations: Los Angeles: University of California, 1963), pp. 54, 67; Seattle Star 1 Aug. 1917; Cline, pp. 41-43; United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Report (1918), p. 65.

focussed largely on the issue of a daily Union Record. Harry Ault, the socialist Red who had edited the paper since 1912, had succeeded in dramatically increasing the UR's weekly circulation. Circulation had climbed from 3,000 in 1912 to 21,000 in 1917, a 600 per cent increase. In the same period, membership in the SCLC had only doubled. (Table No. 3) Despite this the UR remained in financial trouble. Ault kept the UR going through voluntary contributions. In August 1917 Ault decided to begin his own campaign to make the UR a daily. He was encouraged by the rapid rise in SCLC membership caused by the war and by the support of the SCLC's radical unionists, especially those in the fastest-growing unions in the Maritime and Metal Trades sections. Conservative unionists, led by Frank Rust, who had been managing editor under the editorship of Gordon Rice and who was now secretary-treasurer of the Seattle Labor Temple Association and the UR's financial overseer, doubted that the SCLC had the resources to sustain a daily operation. Ault, however, stressed the negative effects that resulted from business control of the daily, commercial press. He continued to campaign vigorously for his proposal, sometimes speaking to three locals per night. By this effort he succeeded in winning over Duncan and the centrists and in undermining the doubts of the conservatives. Finally, on 15 August, the SCLC agreed to sanction Ault's fund-raising efforts. Thus, even as the war brought prosperity, jobs, and, in a few cases, union recognition, it also contributed to the rise of the radicals in the SCLC and gave a powerful propaganda weapon, unmatched anywhere in the labor movement. Importantly, it also tended



to isolate the conservatives.<sup>20</sup>

These internal disputes, serious though they were, paled to insignificance beside the growing conflicts in the lumber and shipbuilding industries. The lumber industry dispute, in particular, vitally concerned the labor movement. Although this industry had long dominated the state's economy, it was practically unorganized. On the other hand, the rapidly growing shipbuilding industry, which had scarcely existed before the war, was among the most heavily unionized industries in the state. Despite their differing circumstances however, both industries faced similar labor problems which found their roots in the history of the Washington State labor movement. Both industries employed the same type of workers: the new immigrants.

Unions had always found it difficult to organize the lumber workers. This was true for many of the same reasons which bedeviled organizers in other industries. The chief problem here, as elsewhere, was ethnicity. The lumber workers were by no means homogeneous. A majority were transients and drifters, who lacked families or other stable, permanent roots or ties. These men came primarily from the new immigrant groups and predominated in the poorest-paid, most dangerous, most isolated types of work. On the other hand, in a few areas such as in the Willamette Valley and near Centralia, Washington, as

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<sup>20</sup>Ault's fund drive succeeded. On 24 April 1918 the UR published its first daily edition. The daily UR was incorporated as a stock company, with the SCLC retaining fifty-one per cent of the stock in exchange for good will and the capital assets of the weekly. It also retained ultimate editorial control, which eventually proved the undoing of the paper.

Sister Maria Veronica (Mary Joan O'Connell), "The Seattle Union Record," (Seattle: University of Washington School of Communications Research Report, 1963), pp. 2-4,6; O'Connell, pp. 25-31; Minutes, 1,15 Aug. 1917, Box 8, KCCLC Records.

many as seventy-five per cent of the loggers were part-time farmers. Native-born, from older immigrant groups, they differed in most respects from the transients. In one respect, however, they were nearly identical. Both types of lumber workers were difficult to organize and lacked job consciousness. The transients were too mobile to organize in regular trade unions and, like part-time farmers, they tended not to regard themselves as lumber workers at all, but as sojourners, on their way to better things. Both groups could afford to ignore the miserable camp and labor conditions as temporary hardships. When they organized at all, the drifters tended to join the non-AFL, radical unions like the IWW. The part-timers practically never joined trade unions.<sup>21</sup>

These two groups, the drifters and the part-timers, constituted a majority of lumber workers in the Pacific Northwest. Only a minority of lumber workers were really AFL trade union material, ready to make real, long-term sacrifices in order to organize their industry and improve their own working conditions and wages. Primarily, these consisted of men who had followed the industry as it moved from coast to coast. They came largely from older immigrant stock. Mostly they were native-born, of French-Canadian, Yankee, or Scandinavian descent. They accepted the migratory lifestyle but only as a temporary expedient and looked forward to a settled family and social life. To a much greater extent than the other groups they were concentrated in the mills and factories as opposed to the forests and lumber camps. They took pride in their skills and were concerned with the future of the

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<sup>21</sup>Johansen, pp. 404-405.

industry. They formed the backbone of the AFL unions in the lumber industry.<sup>22</sup>

In 1917 there were two very weak AFL unions in the lumber industry. The first to organize was the Shingle Weavers Union (1890). The Shingle Weavers worked in the saw mills making cedar roofing, doors, and furniture. They constituted only a small percentage of the industry's workers, but they were its most strongly motivated and cohesive group. The piecework system under which they work set a premium on speed and skill. Although it put the workers under great strain and led to numerous injuries, these conditions helped to build up group esprit and pride. Alone, however, they could not support an industry-wide organization, nor could they force union recognition from the employers.<sup>23</sup>

In 1903, following organization of the WSFL, twenty-four separately chartered AFL Shingle Weavers Union locals, with a combined membership of 1,300, formed the West Coast Shingle Weavers Union, coordinated by a "Grand Council". In the next few years the union achieved some successes. As a result of a strike, they won a wage increase. But they remained weak and loosely organized. Two years later, in 1905, the AFL granted the Shingle Weavers their own international union, the International Brotherhood of Woodmen and Sawmill Workers. It, too, lacked vitality. After a year it still had only 1,250 members. The failure of its recognition strike in Ballard (1906) doomed it. In 1911 the AFL suspended it for failure to pay its per

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 405.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., pp. 403, 479-481; Saltvig, p. 438; Clark, pp. 90-93, 112, 117, 173-223.

capita taxes. The following year the AFL tried again. It chartered a new union, the International Union of Shingle Weavers, Sawmill Workers, and Woodsmen, to take over the IBWSW's charter. Although both these unions' jurisdictions covered the loggers as well as the mill workers, nearly all of their members were mill workers.<sup>24</sup>

The AFL's new international met the same fate as its predecessor. In 1913-1914 the IUSWSW struck for the eight hour day in the woods and mills. The West Coast Lumbermen's Association (1911), however, fought back effectively and converted the strike into a lock-out. Ultimately, they defeated the union and forced the men back to work on their own terms: the ten hour day and the open shop. By 1915 membership in the IUSWSW had fallen to 118.<sup>25</sup>

The AFL had also chartered a union for loggers, the International Union of Timber Workers, but it remained a mere shadow organization. In 1917, after recovering somewhat, total membership in all the AFL lumber unions amounted to no more than 2,500 men. Meanwhile, membership in the radical IWW's Lumber Workers International Union may have exceeded 3,000.<sup>26</sup>

In fact the IWW's lumber workers organization was much more vigorous than the AFL's. The IWW was at its greatest strength, having had great success early in 1917 in organizing migratory farm workers in the northern Plains states. In March 1917 the IWW's Spokane Agricultural Workers Organization sponsored the formation of a rival Lumber

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

Workers International Union in the white pine region of eastern Washington. The approach of war had led to increased demand for lumber products and prices had risen, giving employers more reason to make concessions. The key element of their appeal was action. They promised that they would initiate an industry-wide strike by 1 July 1917 unless the employers met their demands for the eight hour day, better wages, and improved conditions. The IWW's, however, could not restrain their members. By April the radical new immigrants had begun the strike spontaneously, first in Idaho, then in Montana, and then into Washington and Oregon.<sup>27</sup>

The IWW strike alarmed the WSFL which feared that, if it succeeded, their two organizations would be left out in the cold. Thus, the Shingle Weavers and the Timber Workers sought to echo the IWW's demands. They called upon the employers to grant the eight or nine hour day, higher wages, and improved camp conditions. To give the employers more time to respond and themselves more time to organize they set their strike date for 15 July. They did not demand union recognition but, even so, the employers refused to negotiate. Instead,

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., pp. 477; Cloice R. Howd, Industrial Relations in the West Coast Lumber Industry, (Washington, D.C., 1924), pp. 70-71; Saltvig, p. 436; Selig Perlman and Philip Taft, Labor Movements, Vol. IV of History of Labor in the United States, 1896-1932, by John R. Commons, et al., (New York, 1918-1935), pp. 393-394.

For more on conditions in the lumber industry, see: Hyman, pp. 109-110, 112; United States Corporations Bureau, Special Report on Present and Past Conditions in the Lumber and Shingle Industries, (Washington, D.C., 1914), passim; Louise Tanner, "Industrial Relations in the Logging Camps of the Northwest from 1900 to 1932," (B.A. Thesis: Reed College, Portland, Oregon, 1938), passim.

For the role of the IWW in the lumber industry, see: James Rowan, The IWW in the Lumber Industry, (Seattle: Lumber Workers Industrial Union, No. 500, 1919), passim; Industrial Workers of the World, The Lumber Industry and Its Workers, (Chicago, 1919), passim; Patrick Renshaw, "The IWW and the Red Scare, 1917-1924," Journal of Contemporary History III (1968), pp. 63-72.

they reorganized to resist the joint demands of the IWW and the AFL.<sup>28</sup>

In order to resist the workers' demands the employers organized the Lumbermen's Protective Association and collected a large war chest from its members. The LPA agreed to fine any member \$500.00 per day who operated less than ten hours per shift. They claimed that this was justified on national defense grounds in order to maintain maximum production.<sup>29</sup>

Governor Lister also became concerned about the IWW threat. He wrote to Secretary of War Newton D. Baker that state and local authorities could not cope with the IWW threat and asked that federal protection being sent for railroad bridges, power houses and shipyards be extended to cover irrigation systems and crops. Agreeing, Baker ordered detachments of federal troops to be stationed in eastern Washington. Lister, however, still felt insecure. After the National Guard was called up he authorized formation of a Washington State Guard, as a branch of the militia, to help in emergencies. Meanwhile, however, he delegated authority for the lumber situation to others.<sup>30</sup>

At the same time the federal government had established several bodies to coordinate the war efforts, notably the Council of National Defense. The CND, in turn, had set up subsidiary boards to assure local cooperation and to deal with particular production bottlenecks. Thus, the CND had the responsibility of acquiring a sufficient supply

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<sup>29</sup>Gunns, pp. 44-45; Hyman, p. 51.

<sup>30</sup>Saltvig, pp. 436-437; Lister to Baker, 3 July; Lister to Maurice Thompson, 9 July; Charles Hubbard to Lister, 7 July 1917, Lister Papers; Hyman, p. 59.

of lumber for war production. To implement part of this assignment the CND established an Aircraft Production Board to assure a constant supply of light-weight spruce from the Pacific Northwest to make airplane fusilages. Immediately, the APB confronted the fact that, due to the lumber strike, spruce production was falling rather than increasing. Furthermore labor relations were deteriorating and not improving. When the LPA refused to negotiate with the AFL unions, they joined the IWW strike (16 July). The work stoppage thus became much wider, with between 40,000 and 50,000 men refusing to work. By 1 August no more than fifteen per cent of Pacific Coast lumber mills were operating and seventy-five per cent of Washington's lumber production was shut down.<sup>31</sup>

This alarmed both federal and state officials. At President Wilson's request Governor Lister appointed a State Council of Defense to assist the CND in its efforts to coordinate the war effort. In compliance, Lister appointed Henry Suzzallo, president of the University of Washington, and Dr. Carlton Parker, a professor of economics at the University who was also an expert on labor relations and the IWW, to head the SCD. Despite their best efforts, however, they failed to get the operators to negotiate with the unions.<sup>32</sup>

In frustration the Spokane IWW threatened to call a general strike, by 20 August, if their demands were not met. Suzzallo responded by urging the local county defense councils, state college

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<sup>31</sup>Johansen, pp. 477-478, 492; Saltvig, p. 438; Clark, pp. 224-227.

<sup>32</sup>For more on the formation of the SCD and on the philosophies of Suzzallo and Parker, see: Saltvig, p. 439; Hyman, pp. 54-223; Carleton H. Parker, The Casual Laborer and Other Essays, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1972 ed.), passim; Gunns, p. 45.

officials, and state agricultural agents to appeal to the men to return to work. Some local officials, however, panicked and responded by jailing suspected wobblies and other anti-war dissenters en masse. The Walla Walla branch of the SCD, inspired by the local Chamber of Commerce, drove the IWW's out of town, and even sacked the local Grange headquarters. The WSFL investigated and tried to mediate these outrages, through its connections in the SCD and state government, but to no avail. The local officials were quite beyond control. In most cases the perpetrators were never prosecuted.<sup>33</sup>

By September 1917 the AFL lumber strike was failing and the mills were reopening. The Shingle Weavers and Timber Workers unions were in ruins. On the other hand, despite the persecutions and arrests, the IWW was stronger than ever before in the woods. Later, a federal commission reported that seventy-five per cent of the workers in the industry had joined the IWW. Nevertheless, its strike funds were nearing exhaustion and morale was getting low. Rather than end the strike on the employers' terms, however, the IWW employed another brilliant innovation. In place of the traditional strike, they "carried the strike to the job." This was a sophisticated form of the old IWW doctrine of "sabotage," or the "conscious withdrawal of efficiency." While continuing to "work" the workers slowed down,

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<sup>33</sup>Similar outrages occurred all over the West. Minor local officials of the CND even disrupted meetings of AFL unions. They found it hard to distinguish between "good" (i.e., loyal, pro-war) and "bad" (i.e., disloyal, anti-war) unions. Many of them hated all unions and were intent on using the war as a cover for their efforts to destroy them. Many others had never dealt with unions and simply could not tell them apart.

Hyman, p. 51; WSFL Procs., (1919), pp. 6-7; Saltvig, p. 440. For more on anti-IWW outrages in Washington, see: Saltvig, pp. 440-441; Suzzallo to J.G. Kelly, 16 Aug. 1917, Lister Papers; UR 1 Sept. 1917.



"played dumb," and broke or lost tools. They interfered with production in every possible way, while continuing to draw paychecks. If they were fired, they moved on to another job and repeated the tactic. These methods proved very successful in the short run. Production, especially production of airplane spruce, continued to decline, while the drain on the IWW's strike funds slowed.<sup>34</sup>

As the production difficulties increased so too did President Wilson's alarm. In the fall he appointed a commission, with Felix Frankfurter as secretary, to investigate and mediate the dispute. He also appointed WSFL President E.P. Marsh to the body, which became known as the President's Mediation Commission. In October the PMC arrived in the Pacific Northwest and investigated at first hand. It suggested a number of remedies, but this did not produce a settlement either because the government still had too little leverage with the employers to force them to make concessions. The PMC, however, did publish a report highly critical of the employers. Meanwhile, despite all efforts to the contrary, production did not increase.<sup>35</sup>

By now the crisis threatened to disrupt the entire war effort. In Seattle the shipyard workers struck in sympathy with the lumber workers' demands. Engineered by the pro-IWW radicals in the SCLC, such a strike would have jeopardized the government's entire ship-building program. In the War Department some officers feared that

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<sup>34</sup>Saltvig, pp. 438-439; Perlman and Taft, pp. 394-395; Howd, pp. 70-75; UR 25 Aug. 1917; Clark, pp. 227-228.

<sup>35</sup>"Report of the President's Mediation Commission to the President of the United States, 9 January 1918," in N.W. Chamberlain, Sourcebook on Labor, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1958), pp. 15-18; Saltvig, p. 410; Gunns, pp. 45-46; WSFL Procs., (1918), p. 11; Hyman, pp. 161-162.

the Army would have to garrison the Pacific Northwest with federal troops to maintain production. This would have prevented American aid from arriving in time to stave off Allied defeat in Europe. Already the Russian war effort was in total disarray and near collapse. In this dangerous situation the War Department sent Colonel Brice P. Disque to the Pacific Coast to investigate and settle the problem. When war broke out, the Army had assigned Disque to study the labor problem in the Pacific Northwest lumber industry. All during the gathering crisis Disque had studied the issues, working closely with Gompers and other AFL leaders. In the course of their meetings Disque and Gompers had developed a high regard for one another. Disque had also worked closely with the lumbermen and had come to respect them as well. On the other hand, he had refused to have anything to do with the IWW. In October, therefore, when Disque arrived on the Pacific Coast, he was well-acquainted with the issues involved and predisposed to the AFL and lumbermen.<sup>36</sup>

After consulting with Suzzallo and Parker, Colonel Disque proposed a novel solution for the labor problem in the woods. The solution owed as much to Disque's pre-war experience as an administrator

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<sup>36</sup>Although Disque came to admire the men he worked with he also learned to distrust their motives. He knew that both the AFL and the LPA wished to use the federal government to further their own interests and were less concerned with the war effort. Luckily, Disque found the leaders of the Washington SCD more amenable to the national interest, although he found Parker to be too sympathetic to the IWW and not friendly enough to the AFL for his taste. Thus Disque kept his own counsel and his distance from all factions.

Hyman, pp. 76, 86-89, 101-104; Vernon H. Jensen, Lumber and Labor, (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1945), pp. 129-130; Gunns, pp. 46-47; Alexander Bing, War Time Strikes and Their Adjustment, (New York, 1921), passim; Brice P. Disque, "How We Found a Cure for Strikes in the Lumber Industry of the Pacific Northwest," System XXXVI (Sept. 1919), pp. 379-384.

of soldiers and as a prison warden as to his recent researches and to the academic views of Suzzallo and Parker. Together, they proposed that the APB set up a military unit to assist in the production of spruce. Within a short while they convinced the APB of the need for such an organization. In compliance, the APB created the United States Spruce Production Corporation and authorized it to cut through military red tape, make contracts, purchase property, build and operate lumber mills, roads, and railroads. In effect, the SPC, under Colonel Disque's command, asserted federal war powers over both employers and employees in the interests of expediting spruce production. The most crucial element of Disque's scheme, however, still lay ahead. He still needed to get the compliance of the lumbermen and the unions to make his plan work.<sup>37</sup>

Using the SPC's authority, Disque first organized the United States Spruce Production Division, which consisted of loggers and lumbermen, who had enlisted or been drafted into the Army. Under Disque's authority, the men were pressed into service again as lumber workers. If private enterprise and free labor would not produce spruce, the SPD could. The Army paid the men civilian wages, minus their Army pay, and charged them civilian mess rates set by the SPC.<sup>38</sup>

Through the SPD, Disque thus obtained the leverage he needed over both employers and workers to ensure production. Yet, he still

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<sup>37</sup>Johansen, pp. 478-479; Hyman, pp. 50-67.

<sup>38</sup>The SPC also set maximum wage rates to stop competitive bidding for civilian labor and as a quid pro quo to win employers' concessions on hours, working conditions, and living conditions for non-SPC workers.

By spring 1918, 27,000 soldiers were working in the camps and mills of the Pacific Northwest.

Johansen, pp. 478,482; Hyman, pp. 109-112.

needed to gain their approval in order to achieve peak efficiency. Neither side trusted the other's intentions, with good reason. To resolve this dilemma Disque convinced the SPC to allow him to take a further novel step. He had developed the idea of forming a patriotic organization composed of the three separate elements already in place: management, labor, and the Army, to govern all aspects of production in the lumber industry for the duration of the war. He hoped that the presence of the Army, serving as the balance of power, would give each side the confidence they needed to work together effectively. Disque's solution worked. It pleased no one completely but for most it was better than the status quo. Only the IWW gained nothing from the new organization, which became known as the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen, or the "Four L's". While Disque organized the Four L's, the government, with the cooperation of local authorities, began a largely successful program of arresting every IWW they could find.<sup>39</sup>

Success was assured when, on 25 October 1917, Disque won the employers' consent to establish the Four L's. Later President Gompers added his approval. In addition Suzzallo and Parker endorsed the idea. The essential element of the Four L's was its unique tripartite governing body. Employers and employees had equal representation and contributed equally to the finances of the Four L's. In this it resembled a coalition of company unions. Ordinarily labor was strongly opposed to company unions on the grounds that employers tended to dominate them. Indeed, the AFL continued to criticize the employers' role in

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<sup>39</sup>Hyman, pp. 76-79, 86-89, 101-102, 112-118, 124-126, 130-131, 136; Jensen, pp. 129-130; Johansen, pp. 482-483; Gunns, pp. 46-47; Saltvig, pp. 439-440; Bing, *passim*; Suzzallo to J.G. Kelly, 16 Aug. 1917, Lister Papers.

the Four L's, especially the fact that many of the so-called employees on the governing body were foremen and other employer representatives. In the case of the Four L's, however, Disque won labor's consent by giving the SPD's officers on the governing body the balance of power. By this means the Army, under Disque's control, maintained industrial production in the lumber industry.<sup>40</sup>

The Four L's undoubtedly helped the lumber workers by improving general living and working conditions. Like most workers, in any age or industry, they were more concerned with winning improved conditions than with union recognition, or ideological purity. Thus it was more important to them that, using the SPD's leverage, Disque, Parker, and Suzzallo succeeded in persuading the leading lumbermen in the Four L's --especially Mark Reed, Alex Polson, and the officers of the Weyerhaeuser Timber Company--to make further concessions on living and working conditions. By February 1918 most of the large operators had even accepted the eight hour day for all their workers and, on 1 March 1918,

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid. By July 1918 the IWW no longer threatened lumber production. The AFL unions also suffered, but to a lesser degree. On 1 March 1918 they abandoned their craft union principles and merged to form a single industry-wide organization, which became known as the International Union of Timberworkers. Despite this, they had little noticeable success. The workers preferred to remain in the Four L's, which had given them tangible benefits. The AFL effort was too little, too late. Despite the AFL's agreement with the Wilson Administration, the SPD officers, working as Four L's organizers broke up IUT meetings and "advised" prospective members not to join.

Samuel H. Clay, "The Man Who Heads The 'Spruce Drive,'" Review of Reviews LVII (June 1918), pp. 633-635; Major Cuthbert Stearns, et al., History of the Spruce Production Division, United States Army and United States Spruce Production Corporation, (Portland: SPD, 1920), p. 25; Anonymous, "The Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen," (n.p., n.d.), Box 55-16, Speeches and Writings, WSFL Records; Hyman, pp. 131-134, 136-167, 186-189, 223-227, 236, 308-310;

the Four L's was able to institute the eight hour day, with time-and-a-half for overtime, throughout the Pacific Northwest lumber industry. These were better conditions than those enjoyed by many AFL unions.<sup>41</sup>

With the formation of the Four L's the IWW recognized defeat in the woods. Many of the IWW activists then abandoned the industry altogether and migrated to the cities. There, many of them went to work in the rapidly-growing shipbuilding industry, where they attempted to exploit the chaos which attended explosive growth in that industry. The roots of this chaos originated prior to American entry into the war. On 7 September 1916, after a long and acrimonious political struggle, President Wilson signed the Shipping Act of 1916, which created the United States Shipping Board and authorized it to spend up to \$50 million for the "purchase, construction, equipment, lease, charter, maintenance, and operation of merchant vessels in the commerce of the United States." The object of the act was to resurrect the American merchant marine, which had been in decline since the days of the clipper ships.<sup>42</sup>

The Shipping Board, in turn, created the United States Emergency Fleet Corporation to take charge of the United States' wartime shipbuilding program. Although American shipbuilding output had

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid.; Hyman, pp. 186-225.

<sup>42</sup>Bill Williams, "Shipbuilding in America Prior to 1914," (M.A. Thesis: University of Washington, 1978), pp. 22-26; Arthur S. Link, Woodrow Wilson: Confusion and Crisis, 1915-1916, Vol. II, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 15-18; Darrell H. Smith and Paul V. Betters, The United States Shipping Board: Its History, Activities, and Organization, (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institute, 1931), p. 5; Paul M. Zeis, American Shipping Policy, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1938), p. 90; Allan Nevins, Sail On, (United States Lines Company, 1966), p. 65. See also: Johansen, pp. 483-485, for Pacific Northwest implications.

been growing rapidly since 1915, the EFC still faced enormous difficulties in gearing up for full wartime production. It faced particularly difficult labor problems attendant on the overnight creation of a massive new industry which was expanding so rapidly that many of its facilities could not handle the load. The construction yards were overcrowded, unsanitary, and incomplete. By October 1917 there were 90,000 workers in the industry, nationally, up from only 50,000 the previous year. By the end of 1917, the industry had expanded to 150,000 workers nationally. Proper first aid equipment was often lacking. Untrained, unskilled, and inexperienced workers suffered higher than usual accident rates. Workers lacked proper eating facilities as well. In addition, the workers were unknown to each other. Ethnic differences, misunderstandings, and prejudices, compounded the difficulties. On the East Coast more than half of the workers were foreign-born and could speak little English. Many native-born workers distrusted them and suspected them of spying and disloyalty. The officers of the EFC shared these doubts. Similar problems prevailed in the Pacific Northwest.<sup>43</sup>

One of the industry's most vexing problems was competitive bidding for labor. The demand for shipping was so intense and the skilled labor needed to produce it so scarce that shipbuilding companies engaged in ruthless competition to attract a sufficient labor supply.

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<sup>43</sup>P.H. Douglas and F.E. Wolfe, "Labor Administration in the Shipbuilding Industry During War Time," The Journal of Political Economy XXVII (May 1919), p. 372; Nevins, p. 65; New York Times 17 Oct., 11 Nov. 1917, 7 Feb. 1918; Roy W. Kelly and Frederick J. Allen, The Shipbuilding Industry, (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1918), pp. 11, 231-233; Bing, p. 21.

They bid feverishly against one another. As they did so workers moved from job to job following the best wages. The rapid influx of workers into the industry, combined with this uncontrolled shifting back and forth, led to severe local housing shortages and overburdened transportation facilities. As a direct result production of shipping was delayed and inefficient. The internal administrative difficulties of the Shipping Board and the EFC, complicated by personality clashes among its leadership, did not help matters.<sup>44</sup>

The problems which beset the EFC, nationally, also hindered the production of shipping in the Pacific Northwest and Seattle in particular. In the spring and summer of 1917 labor difficulties mounted. In July and August a number of strikes occurred on the East Coast and shipbuilding workers in Seattle and Portland began to consider similar actions. In response the Shipping Board and the Navy Department developed serious concerns about their ability to meet production schedules. Their problems were averted, temporarily, when the EFC convinced Samuel Gompers and the leaders of the five international unions in the AFL's Metal Trades Department to enter into an agreement with the federal government to settle these labor disputes without strikes. In line with this agreement the EFC set up a joint labor-management-government body, the Shipbuilding Labor Adjustment Board, to settle all wartime labor disputes in the privately-owned shipyards. The SLAB was also empowered to review its wage, hours, and conditions decisions every six months, if the workers requested it. The

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid.



three sides then chose V. Everett Macy, department store owner and president of the National Civic Federation, to head the body. As a result the SLAB soon became known as the "Macy Board."<sup>45</sup>

Troubles in the shipbuilding program multiplied immediately. The main problems were over wages. The Macy Board wanted to establish a uniform, national, wage scale to stop the competition for workers. The trouble was that, in the rush to establish the Macy Board, the parties had not agreed on who was to pay for any wage increases the Macy Board granted. East Coast operators refused to pay any part of a wage increase for which they were not compensated and their employees refused to work until someone paid for a new more lucrative contract. When Macy and the public representatives on the Board agreed with the labor representatives that the government would bear the costs, however, the Board's parent body, the EFC, objected. The EFC was worried that the wage increases would be more than their budget could stand. They demanded that the employers pay part of any increases and that they be empowered to veto any Macy Board wage decision they disapproved. When the employers still refused, the EFC representatives resigned from the Board.<sup>46</sup>

At the same time, Western shipbuilding workers started to complain more vociferously. Western workers traditionally earned higher

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<sup>45</sup>Douglas and Wolfe, pp. 149-151; Bing, p. 295; New York Times 1-3,12,16-17 July, 1,17,19,21-23,26 Aug. 1917, 16,18 Feb. 1918; Willard E. Hotchkiss and Henry R. Seager, History of the Shipbuilding Labor Adjustment Board, 1917-1919, (Bulletin of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, No. 283) (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1921), pp. 7-9,11.

<sup>46</sup>Hotchkiss and Seager, pp. 11-12.

wages than Eastern workers because the cost of living was higher in the West. A national wage standard would benefit Eastern workers and leave Western workers relatively disadvantaged. In response to a Macy Board invitation, however, representatives from the protesting Seattle and Portland workers agreed to travel to Washington, D.C. for talks on the issue. But, when they got there, they found the Macy Board locked in its power struggle with the EFC and unable, or unwilling, to resolve the issues in their case.<sup>47</sup>

This bureaucratic inactivity outraged the workers on the Pacific Coast. On 15 September 1917 they struck the wooden shipyard in Portland for higher wages and the closed shop. On the same day labor-management negotiations in San Francisco collapsed. On 17 September the 25,000 shipbuilding workers in the Bay area struck for higher wages. In Seattle, meanwhile, both steel and wood shipyard workers struck in sympathy with the lumber workers' demands for the eight hour day. Altogether, an estimated 50,000 workers were on strike against the Pacific Coast shipbuilding industry. This shut down almost twelve per cent of the nation's shipbuilding capacity.<sup>48</sup>

Over the next few days several independent efforts to settle the strikes failed. At this point President Wilson intervened. His representatives met with Macy and Gompers and upheld the powers of the Macy Board to make wage settlements. They agreed that the EFC

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<sup>47</sup>Friedheim, p. 63; Hotchkiss and Seager, pp. 11-12,15,20-21; Bing, p. 22; New York Times 31 Aug., 3,16-18 Sept. 1917; Johansen, pp. 484-485.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

should not be able to veto the Board's wage settlements and that the government would bear all the costs which resulted. Following this the Administration issued a patriotic appeal to the leaders of the striking unions and asked the rank and file to accept temporary wage settlements. In exchange, the Administration promised that the Macy Board would start work on a satisfactory permanent settlement. Although the promise satisfied the Bay area workers, those in Portland and Seattle refused to return to work. They were still angry that the Macy Board had failed to act already.<sup>49</sup> Also the radical rank and file workers were angry that their international leaders had never asked them to ratify their agreements with the Administration. It took a visit to Seattle by the Macy Board and the leaders of the five international unions involved to get the men back to work.<sup>50</sup>

A permanent settlement, however, still eluded the Board. At first it planned to make separate settlements for each Pacific Coast city. But, after visiting Seattle, the Board changed its plans and decided to make a uniform settlement for the whole Pacific Coast. This, they hoped, would at least reduce the workers' tendency to move from place to place seeking better wages. The Board then travelled to Portland and San Francisco, investigating conditions in each place. Finally, on 4 November, the Board announced its long-awaited settlement, making it retroactive to 1 August for the Puget Sound district.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>New York Times 17-20,22,24-26 Sept. 1917; Hotchkiss and Seager, pp. 12,15,24.

<sup>50</sup>Friedheim, p. 64; Hotchkiss and Seager, pp. 15,18,24.

<sup>51</sup>The Board's new wage settlement was based on a cost-of-living survey conducted by its statistician, W. Jett Lauck, in cooperation with

As far as the Seattle workers were concerned this "settlement" was no settlement at all. The problem was that on 1 August, prior to the creation of the Macy Board, the Skinner & Eddy Corporation, one of the largest Seattle shipbuilders, had signed an agreement with their basic crafts workers granting them more than the Macy Board's award for an eight hour day. For at least 6,000 workers in Seattle there would be no pay raise at all. Despite their dissatisfaction, however, the men stayed on the job. Instead, they demanded that the Macy Board review its award as provided in its charter by 1 February 1918.<sup>52</sup>

It was evident to the Administration that, unless the Macy Board did something further to satisfy the demands of the workers, a new strike could not be long-delayed. This was the last thing the EFC or the Navy needed, so they set about to reorganize the Board. On 8 December the EFC reorganized the Macy Board, reducing the number of members, streamlining its procedures, and creating a board of review and appeals to respond to reactions against the Board's settlements. It also granted the Pacific Coast shipbuilding workers a ten per cent "war bonus". Supposedly, the bonus was to be paid only to those workers who worked a full six-day, forty-eight hour week. In practice,

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with Carleton Parker and another University of Washington professor, W.F. Ogburn. The new settlement fixed the wages of so-called basic crafts in steel shipyards at \$5.25 per eight hour day. The wages of the more specialized crafts were to be determined later by special examiners. The new settlement did not affect men already receiving higher wages.

Hotchkiss and Seager, pp. 15,18-23; Bing, pp. 23-24; Douglas and Wolfe, pp. 156-157.

<sup>52</sup>Marine Review, (Dec. 1917), p. 430; Hotchkiss and Seager, pp. 21-22; Douglas and Wolfe, pp. 156-157; New York Times 5 Nov. 1917.

however, this rule was not enforced. Workers received the bonus no matter how long they worked and they came to regard it as part of their regular pay. And later, on 1 February 1918, the Board officially abandoned the six-day rule.<sup>53</sup>

At the end of 1917 a temporary calm then prevailed in Washington State's labor relations. An uneasy balance of forces had emerged. But it was soon in turmoil again. As 1918 opened, the economic factors which had governed 1917 grew stronger. Again, the labor force grew slowly as increasing numbers of men entered the military. The labor force increased by 0.89 per cent to 565,000. Meanwhile employment increased by 3.57 per cent to 608,000. As a result the negative unemployment rate grew to -7.53 per cent of the labor force. There were 42,600 more jobs than workers in the over-heated economy. (Table No. 1)

As noted previously, the WSFL benefited tremendously from this growth. By July 1918 its membership had increased 54.66 per cent over December 1916 and now represented 4.13 per cent of the state's labor force. In the latter half of 1918 the WSFL grew even faster. (Table No. 2)

In 1918, the SCLC also benefited enormously from the war. Total membership increased by 37.72 per cent to 21,443, more than double its membership only two years previously. Only the Brewery/

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<sup>53</sup>The 1 February 1918 award did not please the Seattle workers either. By eliminating the six-day rule the Macy Board intended to give the workers a ten per cent raise. Since most of the Seattle workers were already getting the bonus whether they worked six days or not, they did not actually get any more money. Though the men stayed on the job, they served notice that, when the award came due for revision again on 1 August 1918, they would demand a "real" wage increase.

Hotchkiss and Seager, pp. 13-14, 22, 98-99.

Provision Trades and Amusement Trades sections lost membership. The Miscellaneous Trades Section, including the Teamsters, gained nearly 3,000 members. The Maritime and Metal Trade sections each added about 1,000 members and became forces to be reckoned with in the SCLC.

(Table No. 3) These new workers, however, soon became a source of profound unrest within the labor movement.

The labor movement was also burdened, in 1918, by the spectre of Bolshevism. In March 1917, just prior to American entry into the war, a revolution had toppled the Czar in Russia. At first this had gone largely unnoticed in the United States. The uproar over American entry into the war distracted public attention and the new government of Alexander Kerensky assured the Allies that Russia would continue to maintain its Eastern Front. Similarly, the SPA continued to work against the war. Most of the new immigrants regarded the new Russian government as no improvement over the Czar. The AFL and WSFL, on the other hand, found the democratic trend encouraging and intensified their efforts on behalf of the war effort. They were relieved that they no longer were fighting to preserve autocracy though they still had the burden of British-French imperialism to bear. But, as new immigrant membership increased in the SCLC, its conservative leadership became less and less able to control their own rank and file.<sup>54</sup>

Then, on the day after the November 1917 elections, came word from Russia that Lenin and the Bolsheviks had taken power in Russia, with slogans calling for "Bread and Peace". In short order they took Russia out of the war with Germany, sued for peace, and turned their

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<sup>54</sup>Winslow, pp. 61-63; O'Connell, pp. 7-8.

attention to consolidating their control of the country. The news of this electrified the world. To some it seemed that the lost hope of socialism, dead since 1914, might yet be realized. To others it represented a threat to all that was holy. The 1917 Allied offensive, the greatest ever on the Western Front had, after a promising beginning, bogged down in the rain and mud. Bled white by years of terrible losses the Allies now feared that the fall of Russia would permit the Germans to send decisive reinforcements from East to West before they, themselves, could receive American reinforcements. With the German unrestricted submarine warfare campaign at its most effective defeat seemed a real possibility. With so much riding on the capacity of the United States to send men and supplies to the Western Front quickly and efficiently, labor's obstructionism or parochial concerns seemed treasonous to many. The commercial press further inflamed these suspicions when it printed reports that the Bolshevik Revolution was really a German plot. The press noted that the Germans had permitted Lenin to cross German-held territory in a "sealed" train, from his Swiss exile, for the specific purpose of disrupting the Russian war effort. A Seattle Times editorial, entitled "HAD RADICALS RULE RUSSIA" described Lenin as a "notorious German agent and traitor to the Russian people...." It was not too great a leap to suspect that the anti-war radicals in the SCLC and IWW were also German agents, or that the WSFL, in its concern for civil liberties, had been duped by the dissidents, or that those who struck for higher wages and better conditions were trying to undermine the war effort.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>Winslow, pp. 78-79; Weinstein, p. 162; Seattle Times 8 Nov. 1917. See also: John Lewis Gaddis, Russia, The Soviet Union, and the United States: An Interpretive History (New York, 1978), pp. 57-87.

On the other hand, the new immigrant Reds, who now controlled the SPW and who were an ever increasing minority in the SCLC, were over-joyed. Unaware as yet of the true implications of Leninism, they saw in the revolution both an end to Czarist oppression of their homelands and justice for the working class. The SPW greeted the revolution with this statement:

We acclaim joyously the proletarian revolutions of Russia and Germany and approve wholeheartedly of the principles of the dictatorship to the proletariat. We further hold that the organization of the Russian and German workers in the soviets is the truest and most direct form of working class organization, and that it shines forth a beacon to the workers of the world demonstrating the truest form of democracy and the most effective form of workers state.

Shortly afterwards the SCLC, through the UR and the Daily Call, also endorsed the Soviet Revolution. The WSFL and the conservatives looked on in horror.<sup>56</sup>

The response of the Left and its allies in the labor movement played into the hands of those businessmen on the anti-labor Right, who sought to use the fear of radicalism to destroy the labor movement, alarmed the Wilson Administration, which was having great difficulties keeping its war production schedules on time, and it greatly complicated the problems of the labor conservatives and the leadership of the SCLC who were trying to keep control of a greatly expanded labor movement. At the same time, the Administration's response to the Revolution tended to split the labor movement and the political Left even further apart. Part of this was intentional; part accidental. In large measure

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<sup>56</sup>Weinstein, p. 162; Winslow, pp. 78-79,81; Shannon, p. 119; Anna Louise Strong, I Change Worlds, (New York: Garden City Publishing Company, 1937), pp. 60,67, passim; Seattle Times 8 Nov. 1917; Seattle UR 30 Dec. 1917; 26 Jan., 12 Nov. 1918.



it proved counterproductive as well.

On the one hand, the danger of military collapse caused President Wilson to cooperate with desperate French and British efforts to revive the Eastern Front, using a fortuitously placed Czechoslovakian army corps, which had defected from the Austro-Hungarian army earlier in the war and which was in complete control of the Trans-Siberian Railroad. Wilson also agreed to send American troops to help prevent Allied stores and munitions from falling into Bolshevik, or German, hands and he agreed to help the Czechs defend the railroad by funnelling arms to them through Vladivostock. Because arms and supplies would have to flow through Seattle and other ports on the Pacific Coast to reach the Czechs, they gave added confidence to radical claims that Allied war policy was essentially anti-progressive and greatly embarrassed the pro-war forces in the labor movement.<sup>57</sup>

At the same time the Administration was forced to respond to domestic fears that American radicals and revolutionaries might spark a rebellion. For example, the prominent Seattle Methodist minister, Reverend Mark Matthews, had written to Attorney General Gregory claiming that the overthrow of Kerensky had actually been planned in Seattle and that the whole of the city was in the hands of "vice agents," IWW's, and pro-German radical elements. In response Wilson sent his good friend and confidante, Hugh Wallace, a wealthy and conservative

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<sup>57</sup>Winston Churchill, who coordinated the Allied efforts to recreate the Eastern Front, described these events very fully in his account of World War I, The World Crisis, (London, 1929), passim.

Tacoma merchant, to investigate. After surveying the situation, Wallace reported that Seattle was, indeed, rife with seditious elements which called for a repressive response. With such reports flooding in the Wilson Administration resolved to crush all remaining socialist and Left-wing opposition to the war before it got out of hand. These repressive efforts, too, tended to build up radical support in the trade unions.<sup>58</sup>

Had the Wilson Administration confined itself to repressive actions it might have succeeded in forging new even closer bonds between the Left and the labor movement and destroying the influence of the labor conservatives. Instead, Wilson took a manifold approach and made significant gestures to Left-wing opinion. On 8 December 1917 he delivered his famous "Fourteen Points Speech," in which he outlined American war aims and peace terms. The Fourteen Points were designed to disarm his anti-war critics and to rally support behind his policy. To a large extent he succeeded. In particular the main principle in his speech--self-determination of all nations--appealed to his strongest critics on the Left: the new immigrants who had opposed the war for ethnic, or religious reasons and who hoped it might lead to the break-up of the pre-war empires. Many of the new immigrants began to see important benefits in the war and to edge away from those who still opposed the war for ideological or other reasons. This split in the Left-wing was ultimately responsible for their failure to capture control of the labor and socialist movements.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>Saltvig, p. 451; Weinstein, p. 162; Preston, pp. 155, 158-159.

<sup>59</sup>Weinstein, pp. 162-165; Shannon, pp. 119-121; Maldwyn A. Jones, American Immigration, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), pp. 238-246.

Within days of Wilson's speech the trend among the immigrants toward support of the war became clear. On 15 December the Appeal to Reason endorsed Wilson's position. At the same time the New York SPA local voted not to support an anti-war rally. The socialist aldermen of New York City, elected just weeks before on an anti-war platform, abruptly decided to support the third Liberty Loan Drive. Adolph Germer, executive secretary of the SPA, reported that ninety-five per cent of the Russian Jewish socialists in New York now wanted to amend the party's St. Louis platform. Some heavily Jewish socialist unions, such as the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, also endorsed the war for the first time. Ironically, the Germans, themselves, helped the pro-war forces in the SPA and the labor movement. Instead of transferring their troops to the West, immediately, they continued their attacks on the Soviets in order to force them to accept even more draconian peace terms. These continued attacks convinced some socialists to support the war which could now be seen as an effort to defend the revolution from continued German aggression. This was particularly effective among the new immigrants in the language federations.<sup>60</sup>

Coupled with a renewed campaign of repression Wilson's new policies had a devastating impact on the radicals in the SPW and the SCLC. In January 1918 the Justice Department sent Clarence L. Reamus to Seattle to handle all new prosecutions under the Espionage Act and to establish order out of the chaos created by over-lapping federal, state, local, and vigilante actions directed against dissenters

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

suspected of enemy sympathies. Reamus centralized all these anti-radical activities in his own office and reduced the number of hazardous arrests without warrants. He also called a meeting of all local and federal officials concerned in the campaign, at which it was decided to deport all IWW aliens. In fact, he organized a widespread roundup of IWW's and held many of them for a whole year. Reamus, however, was not totally successful in stopping vigilantism and may actually have encouraged it. Early in January 1918 a mob, consisting of two civilians and about twenty sailors, wrecked the H.C. Piggott Printing Company, which published both the IWW's Industrial Worker and the SPW's Daily Call. The mob leaders, when arrested, admitted they had been paid by the Chamber of Commerce.<sup>61</sup>

Despite the numerous arrests, despite the creation of the Four L's and the Macy Board, and despite the arrest of many radicals and

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<sup>61</sup>In April 1918 the Daily Call, near bankruptcy, ceased publication. Some of its reporters, including Harvey O'Connor, Sam Sadler, and Anna Louise Strong, joined the staff of the new daily UR. For a while the Daily Call was replaced by International Weekly until it, too, was "padlocked" by the Justice Department (1919) for an article with the headline: CAPITALISM TOTTERING.

Weinstein, pp. 91,93; Saltvig, pp. 451-452; O'Connor, pp. 95-96; Winslow, pp. 65-66; O'Connell, pp. 41-42; Seattle P-I 7 Jan. 1918; UR 6 Jan. 1918; Preston, pp. 160-179.

For the negative consequences of the anti-radical campaign on labor's political situation, see: Saltvig, p. 411; WSFL Procs., (1919), p. 68.

At the same time a recall removed anti-war socialist and pacifist Anna Louise Strong from the School Board. The main argument against her was that she had supported Louise Oliverreau, when the latter was tried for distributing anti-war literature.

On the other hand, the situation was not entirely bleak for the progressives. Two new labor-endorsed candidates were elected to the city council and T.H. Bolton won reelection. And following the election Hanson appointed a pro-public utility superintendent of Public Utilities. This led, a short time later, to the purchase of the city's near-bankrupt and decrepit streetcar system from the Stone & Webster interests. Pro-

their trade unionist supporters, the public appetite for still more stringent methods continued to grow. In April 1918 local authorities in Spokane renewed their efforts to obtain state aid to crush the trade union movement under cover of new supposed threat from the IWW. They again petitioned Governor Lister, saying they could no longer handle the situation. When Lister responded by going to Spokane and preparing to take over the city's police powers, however, the officials changed their tune and suddenly found the means to deal with the wobblies themselves. They had expected him to put the State Guard at their disposal, not to take over in person.<sup>62</sup>

Aside from Lister, however, very few state officials called for moderation. Among the few who did were Dr. Suzzallo and other officials of the SCD. They warned the amateur vigilantes to ease up on their efforts to ferret out disloyalty. P.M. Godner, executive secretary of the SCD, who had heard reports that some local councils were interfering with the IUT's efforts to organize timberworkers, warned:

At no time is it legitimate for defense committees to recommend or employ coercive measures abridging the right of citizens to assemble for peaceful purposes.<sup>63</sup>

Such remonstrations, of course, had only a marginal impact.

The major problem that the seekers of disloyalty faced was a growing

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gressives complained about the exorbitant costs, but it was approved by the voters, anyway, in November 1918.

Saltvig, pp. 452-455; Dickson, pp. 45,136,138,140; P-I 20,23-24, 26 Feb., 1,6 March 1918; Star 16 Feb. 1918; HR 23 Feb. 1918; Times 2,30 April, 7 Sept. 1918.

<sup>62</sup>Saltvig, pp. 455-456; Times 6,8,10 April 1918.

<sup>63</sup>Saltvig, p. 456; P.M. Godner to Fred Wolfe, 29 July 1918, Lister Papers; NSFL Procs., (1919), pp. 6-7.

lack of targets. By the summer of 1918 the IWW was nearly out of business as an organization. Many of its leaders were in jail, or had gone underground. The second line leadership was much less experienced and not as vigorous. Most of the rank and file had joined the Four L's or gone to work in the shipyards. At the same time a growing number of socialists were actually supporting the war. Thus it was that more and more of the loyalists' wrath fell on the labor conservatives and non-partisans. The anti-dissident forces turned more and more of their attentions on the Non-Partisan League. In this effort, they used all their weapons of terror, prosecution, and propaganda to good effect. This phase of the campaign, like the previous phases, was led by the State Employers Association.<sup>64</sup>

It is hard to see any justification for the anti-NPL campaign aside from domestic political considerations. The NPL's program consisted of toned-down socialistic and public ownership proposals. Chiefly, it appealed to farmers. In addition to public ownership of utilities, it called for state ownership of all canneries, creameries, flour mills, and warehouses; creation of rural credit banks; exemption of farm improvements from the property tax; equal taxation of all property, including that of the railroads and public utilities. The program attempted to provide a rallying point for the scattered and demoralized progressive forces. The JLC sponsored a marketing and

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<sup>64</sup>Early in December 1917 the State Employers Association had sent delegates to a meeting in San Francisco which organized a western branch of the "America First League". The League's purpose was to combat the NPL. Within days the campaign had begun, leading to a physical assault on Alfred Knutsen, state manager of the NPL, and threats against other NPL officials.

Prentiss, op. cit.; Saltvig, pp. 456-457; UR 13 April 1918; Johansen, p. 494.

transportation bill initiative which would have established the NPL's program on a regional basis, by allowing cities, counties, and port districts to operate mills, warehouses, cold storage plants, and grain elevators, and to market farm products. The WSFL, the Grange, the Farmers Union, the Commonwealth Club of Washington, and the Women's Legislative Council all endorsed it. Ole Hanson, Thomas Murphine, Seattle's new superintendent of Public Utilities, and other progressive politicians, including George Cotterill, the father of public ownership in Washington, also endorsed it, although they refused to endorse the NPL.<sup>65</sup>

The JLC also proposed two other initiatives, in line with the NPL's program, which were designed to attract labor support. These consisted of an initiative to restrict the use of anti-labor court injunctions and a non-partisan election law bill. The former would have prevented judges from enjoining trade unions from picketing struck establishments. The latter was a bill which had failed twice before. Even in peacetime these bills would have faced uphill struggles. During wartime the challenge proved insurmountable. The NPL was subjected to numerous vigilante attacks and its leaders were constantly threatened and harrassed.<sup>66</sup>

These attacks on labor's non-partisan, progressive allies demanded a unified response. Although both the WSFL and the SCLC were

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<sup>65</sup>Morlan, pp. 177-178; Saltvig, pp. 457-459; UR 16 March, 20, 27 April, 8 June 1918.

<sup>66</sup>For more on the anti-NPL campaign, see: WSFL Procs., (1919), pp. 6-7, 69; Saltvig, pp. 459-460; Morlan, p. 206; Seattle P-I 20 Aug. 1918; UR 15 June 1918; Lister to Fred W. Lewis, secretary, Washington State Grange, 1 July 1918, Lister Papers.

stronger and more thoroughly organized than ever before, the conflicts between them made cooperation on behalf of the NPL impossible. On the one hand, while the SCLC adopted a resolution demanding that Reamus be removed for indicting and prosecuting NPL, SPW, and anti-war SCLC leaders and strengthened its political welfare committee by hiring a full-time secretary to keep track of its affairs, a sizeable WSFL faction, led by its conservative leadership, was unprepared to be seen working with anti-war and radical groups. They did not want to get in trouble with the federal government during wartime. It was too dangerous and it ran counter to AFL policy. Also they disliked William Bouck and his faction of the Grange, which was most vocal in support of the NPL program. And, they did not want to be associated with the SCLC's pro-SPW wing, which also supported it. Finally, the WSFL had never been a strong supporter of the NPL, although they had supported the NPL's anti-injunction initiative and its marketing and transportation bills. Thus, WSFL President William Short, a member of the SCD, a vigorous supporter of the war and leader of the labor conservatives, called the SCLC's resolution against Reamus "nonsensical" and expressed his confidence in the federal prosecutor.<sup>67</sup>

The relations between Short's group and the leadership of the SCLC, never good, deteriorated rapidly after this. Short, a British immigrant who had risen to power through Mine Workers District No. 10, was a protege of AFL President Gompers. An excellent debater, he had no sympathy for the idealistic labor radicals or their revolutionary

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<sup>67</sup> Saltvig, pp. 411-412, 460-461; Dickson, p. 46; Minutes, 3 April 1918, Box 8, Records; P-I 6 Feb., 15 March, 5 Sept. 1918; UR 6, 20 April, 13 July, 24 Aug. 1918.



sentiments. He was allied with Frank Farrington, president of the Illinois Mine Workers District, and was thus a deadly enemy of John L. Lewis in the UMW. After being appointed to the WSFL's presidency, following E.P. Marsh's resignation, he stepped up the WSFL's support for the war and its opposition to the SCLC's radicals. During the summer of 1918 he even accompanied Gompers and other labor leaders on a tour of Allied countries in Europe to promote labor support for the war. On his return he became even more active on behalf of the war effort and reported to Gompers that he had been talking "almost constantly about our mission abroad." In July 1918, with the support of the non-Seattle locals, he was reelected president of the WSFL. His ascendancy thus represented the growing isolation of the SCLC in the WSFL.<sup>68</sup>

The WSFL's pro-war stand, however, conflicted sharply but only with the SCLC's anti-war position and with the Seattle Metal Trades unions economic needs. As 1918 progressed the breach widened. Support for the war made it awkward for the WSFL to press for redress of grievances within the Macy Board, the Four L's, and the newly created National War Labor Board, which had been set up, under former President William H. Taft and Senator Frank P. Walsh, as an overall arbitration board. The NWLB's motto was "no strikes or lockouts during the war." In return for a pledge not to strike, the government had promised not to fire workers for union membership or for "legitimate" trade union activities. Employers and government alike had constantly violated this agreement

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<sup>68</sup>Short to Gompers, 3 July 1918, Box 35; 6 Aug. 1918, Box 38, WSFL Records; WSFL Procs., (1918), passim; (1919), p. 9.

but, lacking the strike weapon, the WSFL could only issue useless denunciations. This opened the WSFL to severe criticisms from the SCLC's leadership and affiliated Left-wing local unions.<sup>69</sup>

Similarly, when the International Union of Timberworkers protested to Short that Colonel Disque's SPD officers were interfering with their efforts to recruit among the timberworkers, all Short could do was to forward these "well-founded" complaints to Gompers, with the comment that Disque's

...attitude(s) toward labor organizations (are) out of all harmony with Government policy and menaces (the) future peace of (the) Timber Industry.

The IUT, said Short, was eager to cooperate with the government. It promised not to strike, or interfere with production and asked only that the Four L's let them organize. Short blamed the IUT's eclipse on "Disque and (a) few employers (who are the) only menace." On behalf of the WSFL's executive board, he requested that Gompers seek to have Disque removed. Short followed this up with protests to the secretaries of War and Labor, but these were futile gestures. Gompers was a firm support of Disque and the Administration was hyper-sensitive to employers' fears of organized labor.<sup>70</sup>

In response to the WSFL's complaints the Labor Department sent E.P. Marsh to Portland, where he met with officials of the Oregon and Washington State federations of labor and with Colonel Disque. At the conference all the parties agreed that the Four L's had no right to

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<sup>69</sup>Weinstein, p. 46; Anonymous, "L.L.L.L."; Short to Gompers, 6 Aug. 1918, Box 35, WSFL Records; WSFL Procs., (1919), p. 9; Hyman, pp. 264-268, 282-283, 310-321.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid.

interfere with the IUT. Further Disque agreed to issue orders to stop the interference and promised that, when the war was over, he would disband the Four L's. The interference, however, did not stop. It continued right up to the Armistice and beyond. Neither did the Four L's disband at the conclusion of the war. When, on 6 December 1918, the Four L's held its first convention in Portland, Disque and his chief of staff, Colonel Stearns, brushed aside the objections of the workers' representatives. The convention, packed by the mill owners, lumber operators, superintendents, and foremen, voted to continue on as a peace time organization and to retain its military supervisors as long as the Army allowed the SPD's officers to remain.<sup>71</sup>

Short, who attended the convention, was incensed and called for an immediate AFL campaign to organize timberworkers. In a bitter letter to Frank Morrison, secretary-treasurer of the AFL, he accused the Four L's of prearranging the convention's program and of over-representing employers, foremen, and SPD officers. In derision he suggested that they rename themselves the "Last Lap in the Lumbermen's Lunacy" and accurately prophesized that they would decay due to their own internal fallacies. In a speech to the WSFL convention (1919) he said of the convention:

No meeting of the German Junkers during the rosier days for them could have presented such a spectacle of utter lack of understanding of the spirit of a new day that is here--and here to stay--than that presented by that convention.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup>Anonymous, "L.L.L.L."; Short to Frank Morrison, secretary-treasurer, AFL, 13 Dec. 1918, Box 35, WSFL Records.

<sup>72</sup>In the short run labor's anger came to nought. The AFL campaign never materialized. The AFL, distracted by more pressing events failed to respond. Not until the 1930's did the AFL build an effective organization in the woods and mills. Many workers, however, remembered

The radicals in the SCLC, on the other hand, had never agreed to the no-strike pledge and they felt no inhibitions about criticizing the WSFL for not striking. Although they were under massive attack for their radicalism, they had benefited tremendously from the war. The radical SCLC unions had been swollen by the influx of new-immigrants, ex-IWW's, migrant workers, and rootless young men who sought war-related work to escape the draft. This melange of individualists had not had time to assimilate the hard lessons of trade unionism. They had more easily absorbed the easy romantic notions of the wobblies and the revolutionary labor Reds. The IWW's idea of a general strike to overthrow the capitalistic system especially appealed to them. They were most numerous in the industrial Maritime and Metal Trades sections, which had grown most rapidly due to the war. The radical Seattle Boilermakers Local No. 104, for example, had grown from 500 members in 1918, to 5,900 early in 1919. The Bolshevik revolution had provided the radicals with a model. The idea that revolution was not only necessary but possible and, perhaps, imminent, rapidly took hold and spread. The moderate, progressive, experienced trade union leaders had increased difficulty controlling this mass of new members

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that the AFL had not come to their aid in their time of need. This feeling contributed to the greater success achieved by the Congress of Industrial Organizations.

Short's prediction about the Four L's, however, did come true. After the war the Four L's membership declined rapidly as it came more and more under the domination of the employers. By 1926 only about 10,000 members remained. By the 1930's it was a mere shadow of its former self. Most of the remaining members worked in the sash and door factories, ten per cent worked in the woods, none remained in the shingle mills.

WSFL Procs., (1919), pp. 18-19; Short to Morrison, 13 Dec. 1918, Box 35; Marsh to H.W. Call, 17 April 1926, Box 25-13, WSFL Records; Hyman, pp. 283-284.

gripped with the fire of revolution. The more concessions they made to the Left, the more they were attacked by the employers and conservative trade unionists, the more the radicals argued that no compromise was possible, and the weaker their leadership became. It was a truly vicious cycle.

James A. Duncan, the red-haired, Scottish-born leader of the progressive trade unionists and secretary of the SCLC, was the key figure in trying to restrain the wilder passions of the Left. His industrial union reform proposals, which he had been championing in the AFL since 1914, were designed to satisfy both sides: to unify the non-Marxist, non-revolutionary elements of the labor movement, without abandoning democratic principles or progressive reform. So far, this had proved an unworkable dream. Opposition from the international unions and Samuel Gompers defeated him every time. Each time he recommended compromise, the radicals would propose some new revolutionary scheme, which the conservatives would reject out of hand, leading to the break-down of talks.<sup>73</sup>

The factor which lent extreme urgency to Duncan's task was the prospect of post-war depression. What would happen when the government stopped ordering new ships? Would the radicals be in a position, by that time, to touch off a revolution? Would the conservatives retain enough authority to defeat them? Would Duncan and his middle faction be strong enough to hold the trade union movement together? It was Duncan's misfortune that he attempted to unify these mutually

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<sup>73</sup>Johansen, p. 484; Sister Maria Veronica, p. 3; Thompson, p. 110; Winslow, p. 75; UR 18 June 1918.

antagonistic forces. For even as he was planning to unify the movement, the radicals were plotting to take it over for themselves.<sup>74</sup>

The radicals' campaign had three main aspects. The first took the form of an independent political campaign to elect a more amenable State Supreme Court. The second took the form of a drive to support upward revision of the Macy Boards' 1 February 1918 award for shipyard workers. The third took the form of a drive to aid Tom Mooney, the San Francisco radical labor leader convicted of the Preparedness Day Parade bombing who was now languishing in San Quentin under a death sentence. Each aspect was designed to embarrass the labor conservatives and build radical support in the rank and file.

In 1917 the state Supreme Court had upheld the use of the injunction, as a weapon to prevent peaceful picketing, if the struck employer claimed that he was suffering irreversible damages to his business. This was an apparent effort to void the intent of the Clayton Anti-trust Act (1914) by which the federal government seemed to sanction peaceful picketing. In response the WSFL had vowed to elect a new slate of pro-labor judges in the November 1918 elections. In August, the WSFL's executive board, hoping to put this policy into action, met with representatives from the Grange and the Farmers Unions and agreed to endorse a slate of five candidates. Then, on 28 September the JLC met in Seattle to mobilize its forces and plan its campaign. It endorsed the WSFL-Grange-Farmers Unions slate. It also endorsed all the city, county, state, and national candidates endorsed by the central labor councils. Further, it decided to put

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<sup>74</sup>Ibid.

advertisements in all the major papers of the state on behalf of the court candidates. In other words, the WSFL's campaign promised to be quite vigorous. The SCLC's radicals, however, refused to abide by this policy. Supported by the UR, the SCLC put its own slate of candidates in the field, including Walter Thomas Mills, the socialist organizer whom the JLC had endorsed in 1916. As a result of this division, the JLC campaign collapsed. In analyzing the outcome at the WSFL's 1919 convention President Short reflected that the vote for Mills was sufficient to defeat two of the WSFL's candidates and to ensure the election of two anti-labor candidates responsible for the injunction rulings.<sup>75</sup>

The radicals actions also had the effect of disrupting negotiations in the shipbuilding industry. On 1 August 1918, soon after the last great German offensive of the war had been stopped in its tracks and while the situation on the Western Front seemed to lie in the balance, the contract between the Macy Board and the Pacific Coast Metal Trades District Council, which represented the Seattle shipyard workers, expired. The men continued to work without a contract, while their leaders negotiated a new six month wage scale, but progress did not come easily. The Macy Board was still pursuing the dream of a uniform, national wage scale for the industry. This, the Pacific Coast

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<sup>75</sup>Similarly, despite the WSFL and JLC endorsements, the well-financed Republicans defeated the Democrats' congressional ticket. C.C. Dill, who had voted against the war, was ousted from office. On the other hand, eight trade union members won seats in the legislature, mostly as progressive Republicans. Four came from King County, two from Pierce County, and one each came from Spokane and Raymond. Six were elected to House seats; two won Senate seats.

Call, p. 44; WSFL Procs., (1919), pp. 7-8,52.

shipyard workers continued to reject. They insisted on regaining their traditionally higher wage rates. Meanwhile, inflation had eaten away at their standards of living and added to the urgency of their demands. They argued that because of the higher cost of living in the West, and because of the greater efficiency and productivity of the Western shipyards, they deserved higher wages than Eastern workers. Thus, they requested exemptions from the national wage scale.<sup>76</sup>

Finally, on 31 October 1918, the Macy Board made what it called its final offer and denied the wage raises demanded by the Pacific Coast workers. The workers were stunned. The UR condemned the Board's actions in harsh terms:

The Macy Board award is a disgrace and a shame and a slap in the face to the loyal and patriotic shipyard workers of the Pacific Coast who have made possible the realization of the shipping board's program by getting out the ships, no matter what the difficulties they went up against.

The Seattle Metal Trades Council formally protested the Macy Board's award and stood by its original demands for higher wages and better conditions. The state government then attempted to mediate this potentially devastating dispute. At the last moment the state's Industrial Relations Commission held several conferences in Seattle to deal with this and other pressing labor issues affecting the shipyards and the waterfront, but did not get very far. While they achieved a temporary settlement of a Longshoremen's dispute, they made no progress on the shipyard workers' complaints. A strike seemed imminent.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup>Johansen, pp. 484-485; Friedheim, pp. 55-80; UR 24 Jan. 1919.

<sup>77</sup>O'Connell, p. 52; UR 31 Oct., 1 Nov. 1918; WSFL Procs., (1919), p. 10.



The war's end, however, delayed efforts to put more muscle behind the shipyard workers demands. The radicals began to move into the second phase of their campaign, whipping up enthusiasm for a strike. While the progressives sought desperately to keep control of the situation and the conservative forces stood on the sidelines hoping that they would find a way to regain some influence among the rank and file, the radicals sized the initiative. The efforts of the leadership to keep control were greatly complicated by the reemergence of the radicals' third inflammatory issue: the Tom Mooney case. In exchange for continued AFL support Tom Mooney had agreed not to press his case for a new trial, or a pardon, during the war. With the Armistice, however, this agreement lapsed and radicals in many states renewed their campaign for a retrial. On 20 November the SCLC, under the influence of the radicals, voted 155 to 0, after "lengthy and stormy debate," to send one last appeal for "justice" to Governor William D. Stephens of California. The SCLC also voted to hold a referendum of all affiliated unions on the question of whether to call a national general strike on Mooney's behalf if the governor did not act promptly. Thus, in the closing days of 1918, the radicals advanced on three fronts to upset the political plans of the conservatives and responsible trade unionists in the labor movement who cautiously opposed their efforts to set the stage for revolutionary actions.<sup>78</sup>

Meanwhile, the shipyard workers were considering their response to the Macy Board. On 23 November the Metal Trades Section locals began

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KCCLC → 78 Minutes, 20 November 1918, Box 8, Records.  
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to vote on whether to authorize a strike. Three days later, while the votes were still being counted, the Metal Trades Council rejected the award and demanded that the Macy Board be dissolved on the grounds that it was:

...incapable of understanding and recognizing the rights of workers, un-American, bureaucratic, and arrogating to itself powers not conferred on it by law.

On 30 November the Council appealed the award to the arbitration board.<sup>79</sup>

The Council also joined in the chorus calling for a general strike on behalf of Tom Mooney. It soon became apparent that the SCLC locals were overwhelmingly in favor of the Mooney strike and under ever stronger radical direction, the SCLC began to organize the machinery for a strike. Suddenly, however, on 4 December, the Tom Mooney Defense League, which had been coordinating Mooney's defense from San Francisco, requested a postponement. Instead of an immediate strike, they said that Mooney had endorsed a plan to call a National Labor Congress, in Chicago, on 14 January 1919, to devise more effective means of protest. The SCLC leadership, which had been opposing the strike as a highly risky adventure, seized upon this as a means of delaying the radicals' headlong rush into an ill-planned general strike. They joined the radicals, despite the strong protests of Gompers and conservative unionists, and voted to endorse the new idea. The radicals then beat a tactical retreat and abandoned their general strike proposal for the time being and endorsed the Mooney Congress idea instead. Thus,

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<sup>79</sup>O'Connell, p. 52; UR 23,27 Nov. 1918.

for the moment at least, the radical threat subsided. The SCLC leadership began to make plans to elect delegates to the Congress and devoted more energy to restraining the Metal Trades workers. As we shall see, however, any relief the leadership might have felt was entirely misplaced.<sup>80</sup>

The shift in the SCLC's plans, however, did not put William Short off his guard. He knew that the Left-wing campaign had not yet run its course and the Metal Trades Council's strike-authorization vote was still in progress. He remained an aggressive, combative, AFL partisan. Evidence suggests, however, that while he retained ultimate confidence in his ability to defeat the radicals, he was greatly worried about the short-term future and criticized the SCLC's policy of making concessions to the radicals. On 29 November, in a prophetic letter to Gompers he wrote that, since the Armistice, the SCLC had gone "Bolsheviki mad" and had fallen "temporarily" under the control of the IWW, by which he meant all radicals.

Hell may start popping here any time. They are determined to have a general strike, if not over "Mooney," they will attempt it over something else. The situation is quite serious because it may leave a wreck of what has been one of the best movements in the country.

Short explained that, during the war, the IWW had infiltrated quite a number of their members into different unions and a few of them had

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<sup>80</sup>Minutes, 27 Nov., 4 Dec. 1918, Box 8, KCCLC Records. See also: Minutes, 11, 18 Dec. 1918 for election of delegates to the Mooney Congress. The SCLC progressives who had at first seen the Congress as a way out of a general strike elected a number of their leaders, including Duncan, as delegates. The Machinists elected their ablest leader, James A. Taylor, as their delegate. The total SCLC delegation included several dozen of its best, most reasonable, most experienced leaders.

been elected as delegates to the SCLC and as union officers, and:

...since the "Mooney" agitation has started they attend the meetings in droves and applaud their speakers who are delegates and are leading the fight from within. They have succeeded by such tactics to overawe the more timid delegates (i.e., the non-partisan, conservative trade unionists).

He complained that they referred to AFL officers as "Labor Kaisers" and talked about "lifting scalps". He believed there was danger ahead and that the movement was in for a shaking up, but, he predicted that:

...when the crash comes, there will be some scalps lifted, but it won't be the ones they have in mind...

We will have to clean out a few Judases, but it can't be done until after the crash; but it will be done. I have weathered storms of this kind before, and I will be at the helm yet when the sea calms, but some of my former friends won't be on board.<sup>81</sup>

The proximate cause of the "crash," which Short had predicted, was not long in coming. On 10 December the Metal Trades Council counted the results of its referendum vote. The next day the Council announced that the membership had voted overwhelmingly in favor of a strike if the arbitration board rejected their appeal. The only real hope remaining for averting the strike lay with the arbitration board, but, on 26 December, this was dashed when the board rejected the Metal Trades Council's appeal. An industry-wide strike again became imminent.<sup>82</sup>

The role of the SPW in the troubles of the labor movement are quite clear. The party, now entirely in the hands of the radical new immigrants, had accepted the Marxist-Leninist line. The SPW's December 1918 convention called for a municipal program for a workers' city

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<sup>81</sup>Short to Gompers, 29 Nov. 1918, Box 35, WSFL Records.

<sup>82</sup>Friedheim, pp. 64-68; Anna Louise Strong, et al., The Seattle General Strike, (Seattle: SCLC, 1919), pp. 8-12; O'Connell, p. 52.

government which, it claimed, was:

..modelled very directly after the Russian method of municipal administration...an industry government of workers which will eliminate bourgeois control and disenfranchise the useless members of society.

Party members in the SCLC introduced several related resolutions inspired by the Soviet experience. In the fevered atmosphere of the time they received a serious hearing. The SCLC adopted a socialist "Reconstruction Program" and endorsed Hulet Wells' anguished call for an amnesty for all political prisoners. At the same time the SCLC unanimously passed a resolution opposing continued American intervention in Russia; denounced the American blockade of the Soviets; and demanded that the United States extend trade credits to the Bolsheviks. The SCLC also created a Bureau of Russian Information to plan a fact-finding trip to the Soviet Union. Generally, the SCLC worked closely with the SPW and other radicals at this time to promote the Revolution. By the last days of 1918 all sides were preparing for the test of strength to come early in the coming year. Never before had the revolutionary forces been so strong or so well prepared. Never before had the conservatives been so isolated. Never before had the swing groups in the middle been so doubtful, so weak, so divided.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>83</sup>A similar process occurred, nationally, in the SPA. After the Armistice the power of the Left-wing new immigrants grew rapidly. By early 1919 they constituted more than half the party membership. Most of the party's top leadership posts, however, remained in the hands of the old leaders. Just as the SPW and radical leaders plotted to take control of the SCLC and WSFL, the national Left-wing plotted to take control of the SPA. On 7 November 1918 the Slavic Language Federations of Chicago formed the Communist Propaganda League. About a week later Boston's Lettish Federation began publishing a journal, Revolutionary Age, edited by Louis Fraina, a communist propagand-

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dist. The paper soon produced a "Manifesto and Program of the Left Wing" (February 1919). Also in February, soon after Lenin issued his call for creation of the Third International, the radicals in the New York City SPA local organized the Left-wing Section of the SPA, with its own press, officers, and dues systems. It was in effect a maturation of the language federations. Like the SPW, they denounced the SPA and criticized its failures to turn World War I "into a civil war-- into a proletarian revolution." They attacked the SPA's Old Guard leadership as "social patriots" and called for "mass actions of the revolutionary proletariat" to overthrow the capitalist state and replace it with a government "of the Federated Societs." Similarly, they called on the SPA to organize "Workmen's Councils" to take over control of industry; to repudiate all national debts; to expropriate banks, railroads, and foreign trade; to abandon "immediate demands" and "agitate exclusively for the overthrow of capitalism and establishment of socialism through a proletarian dictatorship" similar to that of the Russian Bolsheviks and the German Spartacans. Unlike the SPW's new immigrants, however, they never succeeded in capturing the party machinery.

Winslow, pp. 73-74, 77-78, 83-84, 87; O'Connor, p. 149; DeShazo, p. 40; Philip Foner, The Bolshevik Revolution and Its Impact on the American Labor Movement, (n.p., n.d.), p. 37; Shannon, pp. 126-131; Glazer, pp. 34-35; Mark Litchman to Moses Horitz, 28 Nov. 1918, Litchman Papers, University of Washington Library.

**PART TWO:**

**Labor and Politics: The Struggle Over**

**A Labor Party, 1919-1925**

## Chapter 5:

### The Clash of Ideologies:

#### The Year of the Left-wing, 1919

##### Section One:

#### The Seattle General Strike, January, March 1919

In 1919 prosperity reached new peaks. The rate of increase, however, slowed. The labor force increased by only 0.17 per cent to 566,000 and total employment declined by 4.73 per cent to 578,000. This decline may actually have helped the economy for without it inflationary pressures would probably have been much worse. As it was the consumer price index in Seattle and the Lower Columbia region were far above the national averages. Despite the fall in employment so many jobs had been created by the war that Washington State still had a negative unemployment rate for the year of -2.12 per cent. (Table No. 1)<sup>1</sup>

The labor movement continued to benefit from economic growth. In the year ending in July 1919 membership in WSFL affiliates increased by 125.09 per cent, a rate of increase unsurpassed before or since. In that month the WSFL had 53,544 paid-up members and represented 9.28 per cent of the state's total labor force. (Table No. 2)

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<sup>1</sup>"Indexes of Business," Pacific Northwest Industry, (Feb. 1952), pp. 108-111; Johansen, pp. 476-490, 626-628; Sale, pp. 104-105.



The SCLC, however, grew scarcely at all. Membership in its affiliated unions increased by only 1.25 per cent to 21,712. Membership in the Maritime and Metal Trades sections fell sharply as did membership in the Miscellaneous Trades locals. The Printing Trades Section, too, lost members. Only the Brewery/Provision Trades, the Building Trades, and Amusement Trades sections gained significantly. (Table No. 3)

In large part these statistics help explain the conflicts in the labor movement. While some workers were suffering--the radical new immigrants in the SCLC--others were enjoying ever greater benefits --the conservative older immigrants in the WSFL. (Tables No. 4 and 5) They help explain why important elements of the SCLC moved ever closer to the political Left, why the political Left became ever more radical, and why different parts of the labor movement differed on the impending termination of the wartime shipbuilding boom.

In Seattle the fear of economic disaster caused the radicals to press their ideological advantages. Some of the socialist-inspired unions actually began to organize on the Soviet model. In January 1919, for example, the Metal Trades Council established a Bolshevik-style Soldiers, Sailors, and Workingmen's Council to organize returning veterans and workers to "strike a blow against the capitalist class." With the financial aid of the SCLC the SSWC published its own weekly newspaper, The Force, edited by Arne Swabeck.<sup>2</sup>

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The SSWC organized demonstrations against American intervention in Russia on behalf of the anti-revolutionary forces of Admiral Kolchak.

Winslow, pp. 40,86; Strong, p. 67; Draper, p. 139; DeShazo,

The radicals in the Metal Trades Council were encouraged to even more radical acts by the Pacific Coast Metal Trades District Council, which represented the Pacific Coast locals of the five AFL international metal trades unions which had relations with the Macy Board. On 9 January 1919 the District Council voted to break off negotiations with the Macy Board and allow local metal trades councils to negotiate directly with their employers, many of whom were willing to grant the raises the workers demanded. This tended to further reduce the restraints on the radicals.

The moderate forces in the SCLC were weakened, the radicals strengthened, and the uncertainties compounded when, on 10 January 1919, the large Seattle delegation to the Mooney Congress departed for Chicago. This removed the wisest, most experienced, and most responsible labor leaders from the scene at a critical moment. In their absence the rank and file in the SCLC became a volatile, leaderless body. The convening of the legislature in the same week also sapped the SCLC's leadership. It distracted the attention of William Short and the rest of the WSFL's conservative leadership from events in Seattle and left the conservative cause in the hands of C.W. Doyle, the SCLC's business agent. Doyle, a former contender for the world heavyweight championship and a regular Republican, had little influence with the rank and file and none with the radicals.<sup>3</sup>

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p. 40; Report of Agent 106, 29 July 1919, Papers on Industrial Espionage, University of Washington Library; UR 26 Jan., 12 Nov. 1918.

<sup>3</sup>The WSFL leadership cannot be blamed for being diverted by the legislature. It was their primary function to serve as a legislative lobby and numerous anti-labor proposals were threatened. Working

In the absence of these moderating forces the radicals accelerated their revolutionary time-table. The absence of an effective opposition provided them with ideal conditions in which to employ their tactics effectively. As a result the tension in the SCLC grew acute. Outside the SCLC tensions also mounted. On 12 January Machinists Union Local No. 79 held a joint demonstration with the SPW to protest continued American involvement in the Russian civil war. When Walker C. Smith, an IWW orator, declaimed:

Our system of government must change. The sooner it changes, the better. I would that it could change without bloodshed, but

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with Governor Lister, and after his incapacitation, working with Lt.-Governor Louis Hart, Short and his allies managed to achieve several important goals. The legislature agreed to an upward revision of workmen's compensation benefits, defeated the harshest of the anti-labor bills, and passed a compromise anti-syndicalist bill which the WSFL hoped would control the IWW threat while sparing "legitimate" trade unions. The legislature also established an Industrial Code Commission to review and recommend reforms of labor law and administration. It also passed a watered-down accident prevention bill.

Meanwhile, in Chicago, Duncan was elected chairman of the Mooney Congress. The Congress voted to call a national general strike, for 4 July 1919, to free Mooney. This never came to pass because California's governor commuted Mooney's death sentence.

For more information on the WSFL's role at the 1919 legislative session, see: Tripp, pp. 110,145-148,151-154,156-159,160-162; WSFL Procs., (1919), Legislative Agent's Report, pp. 1-18; General Report, pp. 145-146,151,211,223-224,233-234; Saltvig, p. 468; Call, pp. 21,28,44; Winslow, pp. 73-74,77; O'Connor, p. 149; Douglas R. Pullen, "The Administration of Washington State Governor Louis F. Hart, 1919-1925," (Ph.D. Dissertation: University of Washington, 1974), pp. 18,22,27-30,38,69,95-96; Minutes, 11 June 1919, Box 60; F. Morrison to Short, 8 Nov. 1919, Box 4-7; J.S. Korby (?) to Short, 12 June 1919, Box 31-15; Short to Lee Guard, 11 April 1919, Box 35, WSFL Records; Minutes, 26 March 1919, Box 8, Records; See also Minutes, 27 Nov. 1918; 27 Jan., 14 May 1919; UR 16 Dec. 1919; 3 Jan. 1920; Seattle Times 14 Jan. 1919; Spokane SR 10,14,15 Jan. 1919.

For more information on the Mooney Congress, its outcome, and its impact on the SCLC, see: Minutes, 26 March, 7,9,14,16 April, 14 May, 4,25 June, 6,13,27 Aug., 1,15,22,29 Oct. 1919, Box 8, Records; F. Morrison to Short, 6 Nov. 1919, Box 4-7, WSFL Records.

For more information on the role of the radicals in the SCLC in Jan. 1919, see: O'Connell, pp. 61-63; UR 10,13 Jan. 1919; Star 15 Jan. 1919.

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if not, the less bloodshed the better. Hail to the Bolsheviks, hail to the 'Revolution,'

the police "Red Squad," led by Captain W.H. Searing, ordered the crowd to disperse. The mention of bloodshed and revolution was too inflammatory for public consumption. When the crowd refused to disperse the police charged. This led to a scuffle in which Captain Searing's nose was bloodied. The incident and others like it raised public fears to a new level of intensity.<sup>4</sup>

Meanwhile the efforts of the Seattle Metal Trades Council to negotiate with local employers broke down. At first Charles Piez, vice-chairman of the EFC in charge of supplying the shipbuilding yards with steel, seemed to agree to let the unions negotiate directly with their employers. Then he refused to acknowledge his pledge and worked behind the unions' backs to sabotage their efforts. The Metal Trades Council learned of this perfidy when it "mistakenly" received a telegram from Piez intended for the Seattle Metal Trades Association, the employers' group. In the telegram Piez threatened to cut off steel shipments for the Association's yards if they agreed to the workers' terms. He threatened to cut off their contracts if they departed from the EFC wage quotations. Unable to resist such pressures the employers gave in. Finally, on 17 January, the Metal Trades Council voted to strike if the employers did not come to terms by 21 January. In the following days the employers made no move to

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<sup>4</sup>A number of similar disturbances occurred at approximately the same time between police and protestors demonstrating against the use of American arms to suppress the Soviet revolution: against persecution of domestic radicals, dissidents, union members, new immigrants, and Eastern and Southern European aliens.

For more on these events, see: Friedheim, pp. 18-20; P-I 13, 14, 17 Jan. 1919; Star 3 Jan. 1919; Daily Bulletin 14, 18 Jan. 1919.

conciliate the workers and as a result the metal trades struck all the shipbuilding yards in Seattle and Washington State on the appointed day.<sup>5</sup>

The next day, on 22 January 1919, the metal trades delegates to the SCLC asked the SCLC to endorse a sympathy strike of all locals in the Seattle area to compel the EFC, the Macy Board, and the employers to listen to the shipyard workers' demands. They also believed it would demonstrate the growing might and solidarity of the labor movement. In the absence of the SCLC's ablest leaders no one spoke against the proposal. Doubtful unionists were swayed in favor of a sympathy strike by the mounting ferocity of the employers' propaganda attacks on the labor movement in general and by their efforts to undermine the leadership of the labor movement. It was left to Hulet Wells, just out of prison for his anti-draft activities, to provide the clinching arguments in favor of a resolution calling for a membership referendum on the question:

I am confident that the shipyard workers could win alone. But if they did, all the little labor-hating bosses in the city would say, "they (the shipyard owners) don't know how to handle their men. I can handle my men all right." But if we win it with a universal strike, every union in the city will get the benefit of the victory.

On 26 January 1919 the SCLC adopted the metal trades' referendum resolution. The resolution called for rank and file membership approval of a sympathy strike of all affiliated locals, to begin on 1 February 1919, "unless the present strike is settled before that

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<sup>5</sup>Johansen, pp. 484-485; Friedheim, pp. 73-75, 78-79; O'Connell, pp. 64-65; WSFL Procs., (1919), pp. 19-20; UR 17 Jan., 3 Feb. 1919; Sale, p. 127.

time."<sup>6</sup>

The vote in favor of the referendum alarmed Short and the WSFL leadership. Short had noticed the unfavorable legislative reaction to the earlier disturbances in Seattle and feared further erosion of labor's position at Olympia if the SCLC's affiliates actually joined the shipyard strike. The strike by 30,000 shipyard workers in Seattle, Tacoma, and Aberdeen was bad enough. The threat of a general strike increased his alarm. When the Tacoma and Aberdeen central labor councils voted to submit the issue to referenda he wrote to Gompers of his increasing anxiety:

The whole situation is pregnant with serious danger not only to the Metal Trades organization, but to the entire labor movement. For several months past the I.W.W. who had gone into the shipyards and other war-essential industries by the thousands during the progress of the war to escape military service, have been showing their hand.

Short urgently asked what help the AFL could offer if the WSFL established its own semi-weekly or daily publication to counter the radical propaganda. Without such aid, he promised darkly, the IWW would soon control the entire state labor movement.<sup>7</sup>

Conditions in the SCLC confirmed Short's fears. In the absence of the leadership order broke down. The radicals and IWW's packed the galleries of the SCLC and disrupted debate. C.W. Doyle, who presided

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<sup>6</sup>Friedheim, pp. 79-80; O'Connell, pp. 65-66; UR 23 Jan. 1919; Minutes, 22 Jan. 1919, Box 8, KCCLC Records; Sales, p. 128.

<sup>7</sup>In his eagerness to stir up the AFL on his behalf, Short wildly exaggerated the influence of the IWW. The IWW was, indeed, present and very vocal, but most of the pro-strike agitation was coming from non-IWW radicals in the metal trades locals. Most were probably affiliated with the SPW. Short found it useful to categorize all his enemies as IWW's.

Friedheim, pp. 81-88; Short to Gompers, 22 Jan. 1919, Box 35, WSFL Records; P-I 1 Jan. 1919; Winslow, pp. 90-91.

over the SCLC's sessions, could not control the unruly delegates. When the news reached Chicago that a general strike referendum was in process in Seattle, Seattle's delegation to the Mooney Congress immediately recognized that they were needed at home. They rushed back to Seattle to try to save the situation but they arrived too late to avert the referendum. Afraid to be left behind by their own rank and file they desperately sought ways to bring order out of the chaos, but with little success.<sup>8</sup>

While the referendum proceeded the Metal Trades Council pledged that they would not return to work until the members of all the other organizations participating in the strike had returned to work with their pre-strike conditions intact. This proved to be an unnecessary encouragement. The vast majority of SCLC locals voted to endorse the sympathy strike, some by enormous majorities. By 29 January only two small locals, of the Gas Workers and the Federal Employees unions which were forbidden by law from striking, voted against the strike. Later some small conservative unions also opposed the strike: the Web Pressmen, the Photoengravers, and most importantly, the Electrical Workers voted not to strike. Although some locals protested that they would be violating their charters if they broke valid contracts it soon became evident that the referendum was being passed.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Minutes, 29 Jan., 5 Feb. 1919, Box 8, KCLC Records; Sales, pp. 128-129; O'Connell, pp. 66-67; Friedheim, pp. 116-121. The Tacoma CLC voted to support a sympathy strike, but not as strongly as the SCLC did. In Tacoma the referendum passed 4,160 to 1,605. The Tacoma Tribune estimated that over half of those who favored the sympathy strike were members of the swollen Metal Trades Council unions who, although not directly involved in the shipyard dispute, were deeply sympathetic to those who were. Many others in non-MTC unions, however, opposed the strike. In fact, only 16 unions endorsed the strike; 21

Meanwhile, however, the international unions concerned began to inundate the SCLC and its affiliates with orders opposing and countermanding the strike vote. On 2 February the SCLC's General Strike Committee called a mass meeting to determine what the Council's next course of action should be. The Committee, in the words of Anna Louise Strong, was

...composed of more than three hundred delegates from one hundred and ten unions. (It) met all day Sunday, February 2, 1919. They faced and disregarded the national officers of craft unions, who were telegraphing orders from the East. They met the threats of the Seattle Health Department to jail drivers of garbage wagons if garbage was not removed, by agreeing to permit the collection of "wet garbage only" on special permit under the strikers' control. They rejected as strike slogan the motto, "We have nothing to lose but our chains and a whole world to win" in favor of "Together We Win." For they reasoned that they had a good deal to lose--jobs at good wages with which they were buying silk shirts, pianos, and homes. They wanted solidarity but not class war. Then so little did they realize the problems before them that they fixed the strike for the following Thursday at 10 A.M. and adjourned to meet on Thursday evening after the strike should have started, meantime referring any new problems that might arise to a rather hastily elected "Committee of Fifteen."

The demand for an immediate walk-out came from the radicals who feared that any delay would give the employers time to organize a counter-attack and allow the conservative unionists time to dissuade some

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unions opposed it; and four refused to put the issue to the membership at all. Nine unions took no action whatsoever. On 5 February, despite these divisions, the Central Labor Council endorsed the general strike by a vote of 65 to 27. It did so under strong pressure from its radical secretary, A.L. Dickson. Unlike the SCLC unions, Tacoma unions showed little initial enthusiasm for the strike: only the Meat Cutters, Timber Workers, Barbers, Street Carmen, and about five per cent of the Retail Clerks walked out with the MTC unions. The Brewery Workers, Moving Picture Operators, Tailors, Gas Workers, Printing Trades, Teamsters, Cereal and Flour Mill Workers and Carpenters continued to work. The city continued to function normally. By 7 February, when federal troops arrived to keep order, some of the radical strike leaders were reported to have fled the city. By 10 February the local labor movement was in full rebellion against Dickson's leadership. WSFL Procs., (1919), pp. 19-20; Friedheim, p. 204; Tacoma News-Tribune 3-15 Feb. 1919.



locals from joining the strike. The moderates, who had at first tried to prevent the strike and then had tried to guide it, delay it, or limit its ambitions, were shouted down at the radicals' instigation. They feared to press their point lest they lose all credibility. At a time when ordinarily conservative unions were eager for a general strike they were frightened that the rank and file would go over to the radicals.<sup>10</sup>

The lack of enthusiasm of the leadership for the strike, in fact, proved to be a great weakness. It produced confusion and disarray on all sides. No one could speak with authority about what the strikers actually hoped to achieve. Nowhere is this confusion more evident than in an editorial which appeared in the UR on 4 February, two days before the strike was to begin. Written by staff writer Anna Louise Strong, the editorial was designed to explain how the labor movement intended to conduct the strike and what they intended, and did not intend, to achieve by it.

There will be many cheering and there will be some who fear.  
Both of these emotions are useful, but not too much of either.  
We are undertaking the most tremendous move made by LABOR in  
this country, a move which will lead--NO ONE KNOWS WHERE!

We do not need hysteria.

We need the iron march of labor.

LABOR WILL FEED THE PEOPLE.

Twelve great kitchens have been offered, and from them food  
will be distributed by the provision trades at low cost to all.

LABOR WILL CARE FOR THE BABIES AND THE SICK.

The milk-wagons and the laundry drivers are arranging plans for  
supplying milk to babies, invalids, and hospitals, and taking care  
of the cleaning of linen for hospitals.

LABOR WILL PRESERVE ORDER.

The strike committee is arranging for guards, and it is expected

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<sup>10</sup>Sale, p. 129; Friedheim, pp. 46-50, 106-107; O'Connell, pp. 65-66; UR 13 Jan. 1919; Times 27, 28 Jan. 1919.

that the stopping of the cars will keep people at home. A few hot-headed enthusiasts have complained that strikers only should be fed, and the general public left to endure severe discomfort. Aside from the inhumanitarian character of such suggestions, let us get this straight--

NOT THE WITHDRAWAL OF LABOR POWER, BUT THE POWER OF THE STRIKERS TO MANAGE WILL WIN THIS STRIKE.

What does Mr. Piez of the Shipping Board care about the closing down of Seattle's shipyards, or even of all the industries of the Northwest? Will it not merely strengthen the yards at Hog Island, in which he is interested?

When the shipyard owners of Seattle were on the point of agreeing with the workers, it was Mr. Piez who wired them that, if they so agreed--

HE WOULD NOT LET THEM HAVE STEEL.

Whether this is camouflage we have no means of knowing. But we do know that the great eastern combinations of capitalists COULD AFFORD to offer privately to Mr. Skinner, Mr. Ames, and Mr. Duthrie a few millions apiece in eastern shipyard stock.

RATHER THAN LET THE WORKERS WIN!!

The closing down of Seattle's industries, as a MERE SHUT-DOWN, will not affect these eastern gentlemen much. They could let the whole northwest go to pieces, as far as money is concerned.

BUT, the closing down of the capitalistically controlled industries of Seattle, the WORKERS ORGANIZE to feed the people, to care for the babies and the sick, to preserve order--THIS will move them, for this looks too much like the taking over of POWER by the workers.

Labor will not only SHUT DOWN the industries, but Labor will REOPEN, under the management of the appropriate trades, such activities as are needed to preserve public health and public peace. If the strike continues, Labor may feel led to avoid public suffering by reopening more and more activities.

UNDER ITS OWN MANAGEMENT.

And that is why we say that we are starting on a road that leads--

NO ONE KNOWS WHERE!<sup>11</sup>

Instead, Miss Strong's editorial convinced many that Seattle was headed for revolution. It caused a wave of panic and suspicion in the middle classes and official quarters. In fact, however, it meant no such thing. Rather, a close reading of the editorial reveals that

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<sup>11</sup>Friedheim, p. 111; Ault and Strong were later arrested for publishing the "Who Knows Where" editorial. But the Democrats, fearing the loss of labor votes to the Farmer-Labor Party, convinced the federal government to drop the charges. Winslow, p. 105; Strong, I Change Worlds, p. 84.

the strikers had neither clear-cut goals, nor any clearly defined enemies. The editorial, however, clearly left the impression of radicalism. After it appeared none of Seattle's political authorities were willing to negotiate on any terms less than absolute surrender of the labor position. Even if they had been willing to do so there is little evidence that they had the power to redress labor's grievances. These powers were in the hands of politicians and businessmen in the East.<sup>12</sup>

At 10:00 A.M. on 6 February 1919 the Seattle general strike began. On that moment Seattle came to a complete standstill. Nothing moved. As a sign of labor's solidarity and economic power the general strike was a complete success. The workers simply went home and stayed there. Except for emergency services the economic life of the city came to a halt.<sup>13</sup>

Local politicians soon saw which way public opinion wafted. Mayor Ole Hanson saw the strike as an opportunity for political gain and attempted to capitalize on the latent fears of revolution by proclaiming the strike as a Bolshevik revolution and announcing his intention to crush it. The day after the strike began he sent this notice to the Committee of Fifteen:

I hereby notify you that unless the sympathy strike is called off by 8 o'clock tomorrow morning, February 8, 1919, I will take advantage of the protection offered this city by the national government and operate all the essential services.

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<sup>12</sup>Sale, p. 130; Friedheim, pp. 111-112, 134-135; Winslow, pp. 97-98; Star 10 Feb. 1919.

<sup>13</sup>Sale, pp. 130-131; Friedheim, pp. 107-109, 134-135; Winslow, pp. 97-98; Seattle Times 10 Feb. 1919; Star 10 Feb. 1919. For more information on the strike, see: Johansen, pp. 485-486.

The middle classes and the city's business community breathed a collective sigh of relief and acclaimed Hanson as their savior, a title he accepted with delicious pleasure. In fact there was never any danger of revolution. The next morning the Committee of Fifteen recommended that the strike be declared a success and urged all the workers to return to work. The leadership seemed to favor the proposal but the rank and file rejected it that evening. The next day the strike continued but, on Monday, the Committee renewed its suggestion to end the strike. The Committee had begun to notice cracks in the facade of labor solidarity. This time the workers were more amenable. On Monday the strikers had begun to drift back to work and by Tuesday the strike was over.<sup>14</sup>

Thus ended the first, premature, effort by the Left-wing to seize control of the labor movement. In many respects it resembled a failed coup d'etat. The Left had rushed headlong into the strike without adequate preparation, without proper goals, and without leadership. Not surprisingly it had collapsed. In its wake the radicals who had inspired the strike faced retribution from a number of different sources. After the strike the daily press resumed its attacks on the labor Left with all its pre-strike fury. Calling on employers to cooperate with the labor conservatives to rid the SCLC of its radicals the Times said:

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<sup>14</sup>Hanson later attempted to profit by his notoriety. He went on a well-publicized speaking tour and even entertained the notion of running for a place on the Republican national ticket in 1920. He also published a book glorifying his own role in the strike, entitled Bolshevism v. Americanism, (Golden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Page, & Co., 1920). Sale, pp. 131-132; Friedheim, pp. 140-145; Minutes, 12 Feb. 1919, Box 8, KCCLC Records.

A handful of radicals put Seattle in the position of staging a revolution against the government of the United States. These radicals must go and it is the business of employers TO SEE THAT THEY DO GO by cooperating with conservative labor in the reconstruction.

And the normally pro-labor Seattle Star said:

Temporarily misled by a gang of criminal, unAmerican leaders, Seattle union labor can be depended upon not only to repudiate the false leadership, but to see that punishment goes with retribution.<sup>15</sup>

The conservative unions, although they did not achieve their goal of ridding the SCLC of its radical menace, did succeed in weaning a number of unions away from their flirtation with radicalism. The AFL, embarrassed by the strike which had slowed down the organizational drive in the Eastern steel industry, began to urge its international unions to supervise their Seattle locals more closely. Some international officers even arrived in Seattle, in person, to conduct a review.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Such attacks did, indeed, inspire an anti-radical movement in the SCLC. The Produce Workers introduced a resolution "urging that Council request Local Unions to bar 'Reds' as delegates." After about ninety minutes of debate the SCLC voted down the resolution on the grounds that "it would appear that we were following the instruction of the Chamber of Commerce and (Mayor) Ole Hanson to 'Clean House.'" The conservatives were more successful when they worked through the AFL chain-of-command. After the strike A.E. Miller, of Steam Engineers Local No. 40, who had served as chairman of the Metal Trades Council's conference committee during the strike, was expelled from his international union for his activities. The international also instructed his local to dismiss him from all his elective offices. But here too, the radical locals fought back and refused to comply. Instead, they endorsed Miller's stand.

Minutes, 5 March 1919, Box 8, KCCLC Records; Short to Gompers, 9 April 1919, Box 35, WSFL Records.

<sup>16</sup>Friedheim, pp. 139-140; Interview with Dave Beck, 25 Feb. 1976, Seattle, Washington, The Author's possession; Short to Gompers, 9 April 1919, Box 35, WSFL Records. See also: Footnote No. 15.

The strike also embarrassed the WSFL. In addition to complicating its legislative responsibility the general strike made it more difficult for the WSFL to maintain contact with the Metal Trades Council and resolve the disputes of the shipyard workers. The shipyard workers kept calling upon the WSFL to "endorse" the strike, which the WSFL could not do.<sup>17</sup>

After the end of the general strike many of the locals which had struck to support the shipyard workers found that, despite the promises of the Metal Trades Council, they were forced to accept poorer terms than they had had before the strike. Soon, even the wealthy metal trades locals were in the same position. After the failure of the general strike the Metal Trades Council began to run out of money. Finally, on 9 March, the Council voted to return to work under a temporary truce agreement with the employers and the Macy Board which provided for pre-strike conditions. After striking for more than a month the shipyard workers had failed to gain a single one of their demands. The truce was scheduled to last until the end of March at which point the Macy Board's October 1918 award was due to expire.<sup>18</sup>

After the expiration of the truce the negotiations, between the Metal Trades Council and the WSFL on the one hand and the employers and the Macy Board on the other hand, began again. The Macy Board, no more flexible than before, insisted on terms which Short believed would mean a \$40 million wage reduction for Seattle shipyard workers.

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<sup>17</sup>Short to Morrison, 3 Feb. 1919, Box 35; Minutes, 9 Feb. 1919, Box 60, WSFL Records.

<sup>18</sup>O'Connell, pp. 85-86.

Finally, on 26 August, after much pulling and hauling, the two sides hammered out a settlement which provided for an across-the-board eight per cent wage increase for all the men in the industry. Had this agreement gone unchallenged the shipyard workers might have saved face. The next month, however, in fulfillment of Piez's earlier threats, the EFC and the Navy Department informed the shipbuilders that they "would not permit the builders to pay the (eight per cent wage) increase." This, in turn, forced the shipbuilders to renege on their 26 August settlement with the shipyard workers.<sup>19</sup>

On the other hand, the EFC did promise not to stand in the way if the builders, themselves, wished to grant the increases. This opened the way for local settlements on the Pacific Coast. In Seattle the builders agreed to pay the workers' demands, but in Tacoma, where most of the Todd Company's cost-plus contracts for the Navy and EFC were in progress, this did not occur. In response the Metal Trades called strike, beginning on 1 October and lasting for eleven weeks. This time the strike ended in complete defeat. The men agreed to return to work on the company's terms. By this time, however, it was too late. The government had cancelled most of its shipbuilding contracts and the Pacific Northwest's shipbuilding industry lay in ruins.<sup>20</sup>

Writing to Gompers in the spring of 1919 Short summed up the consequences of the metal trades general strikes:

...The general strike that they (the radicals) had planned for the last six or eight months has been had and, of course, proved a fizzle. Yet the men who were responsible for this catastrophe

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<sup>19</sup>Minutes, 7 May 1920, Box 60; Short to Woll, 2 May 1919, Box 35, WSFL Records.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

are still exercising a dangerous influence on our Movement here, and it is going to require a great deal of hard up-hill courageous fighting to restore the Labor Movement of this vicinity to the right channels again.<sup>21</sup>

In short, these strikes opened a near fatal breach in the solidarity of the labor movement. They finally drove the conservatives into open rebellion against the SCLC's Left-wing policies. They forced those moderates who endorsed the policies of the Left-wing but who wanted even more to remain in the AFL to choose between their friends and their principles. All the old wounds rubbed raw by the war opened and bled again.

In the wake of the strikes a further wave of anti-radical repression began. Actually, it was a continuation of the wartime repression. E.B. Ault and Anna Louise Strong were arrested for their part in the "NO ONE KNOWS WHERE" editorial. Although they were soon released others were not so lucky. The SPW and IWW, for example, were among the less fortunate groups. Shortly after the strike Mayor Hanson ordered a police raid on the Equity Printshop, which published both the Industrial Worker and International Weekly, and on all the IWW and SPW halls in Seattle. The justification for this campaign was that Morris Pass and Harvey O'Connor, two SPW members, had distributed a leaflet during the general strike urging the workers to take over their industries. The police dragnet also picked up Aaron Fislerman, F.M. Cassidy, and twenty-six other SPW officials and members. All were charged with trying to overthrow the city, state, and national governments, and with conspiracy and criminal anarchy. On the advice of their

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<sup>21</sup>Short to Gompers, 9 April 1919, Box 35, WSFL Records.



attorney, George Vandever, they all left town on bail, returning only when the charges were dropped.<sup>22</sup>

At the same time conservatives within the radical unions began to reassert themselves. When the Metal Trades Council formed an organization known as the Federated Unions of Seattle to oppose the efforts to conciliate their international union officials. The conservatives convinced the SCLC to declare the FUS a dual labor organization and cause its dissolution. The see-saw battle between these forces continued for the next four years.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Winslow, pp. 104-105; Strong, p. 84; Freedom 29 March 1919.

<sup>23</sup>O'Connell, pp. 87-88, 117; Thompson, p. 78; DeShazo, p. 71;  
UR 12 May 1919.

## Section Two:

### The Open Shop Movement, Spring 1919

Another consequence of the general strike was the reinvigoration of the employers' open shop drive. The general strike drove the employers into a frenzy. The largest and most powerful of these organizations, the Waterfront Employers Association, the Metal Trades Association, and the Master Builders Association, had expected the unions in their industries to honor their contractual obligations and not join the strike. When they did strike the employers were stunned and resolved to destroy the labor movement. On the other hand there is evidence that even before the general strike they had begun planning such a campaign. Regardless of whether the strike inspired their anti-labor campaign or whether it merely provided the occasion for its implementation the employers began a concerted drive to eliminate unions soon after the workers returned to their jobs.<sup>1</sup>

On 12 March, a month after the collapse of the strike, the various employers associations in Seattle united and incorporated themselves as the Associated Industries of Seattle. AIS declared itself to be a non-profit organization dedicated "to promote harmony between employer and employee." It did not mention that it aimed to promote such "harmony" by destroying the labor movement but merely announced its opposition to the closed shop on the grounds that it restricted a worker's freedom of contract. AIS thus represented a

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<sup>1</sup>The events in Seattle should not be seen in isolation. Shortly after the Seattle strike a wave of bombings and strikes occurred throughout the nation. These touched off a new wave of anti-labor, anti-radical, anti-immigrant repression, known as the "Red Scare."

Friedheim, p. 160.

continuation of the employers' traditional anti-labor policies, but in a new, better-organized and more sophisticated form. The employers had learned much from the repression of dissidents during the war and had developed new contacts in government. They now wished to employ these new techniques and influence against the labor movement.<sup>2</sup>

In ordinary times the labor movement could withstand such efforts to destroy it. But these were not ordinary times. The internal

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<sup>2</sup>In many respects the AIS drew its inspiration from the Los Angeles Merchants and Manufacturers' Association, the fountainhead of the open shop in the West.

Friedheim, p. 14; Taft, Organized Labor in American History, p. 364; Savel Zimand, The Open Shop Drive, (New York: Bureau of Industrial Relations, 1921), pp. 18-20; Seattle Daily Bulletin 15 Jan. 1919; P-I 5 Jan. 1919; Times 22 Jan. 1919.

For more on the strategy of AIS, see: O'Connell, pp. 96,128; Winslow, pp. 98-99,1056; Zimand, p. 16; UR 15 Dec. 1920; William M. Short, History of the Activities of the Seattle Labor Movement and Conspiracy of Employers to Destroy It and Attempted Suppression of Labor's Daily Newspaper, the Seattle Union Record, (Seattle, 1919), p. 19; "How Seattle Fights Unfair Labor Unions," Iron Age VCI (21 Oct. 1920), p. 1055.

For more on the early organizational efforts of AIS, see: UR 24 Oct. 1919.

For more on AIS' use of blacklists, lock-outs, strike-breakers, company unions, and propaganda, see: O'Connell, p. 129; "How Seattle Fights Unfair Labor Unions," op. cit.; Zimand, p. 15; UR 15 Oct. 1919; Short, p. 10.

For information on AIS' methods of internal discipline, see: O'Connell, pp. 132-133; UR 15,16 Dec. 1920; Thompson, pp. 68-69.

For the regional and national implications of the AIS campaign, see: Warren S. Gramm, "Employer Association Development in Seattle and Vicinity," (M.A. Thesis: University of Washington, 1948), passim; Sister Maria Veronica, p. 8; John D. Hicks, The Republican Ascendancy, 1921-1933, (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), p. 68.

For the degree of success achieved by AIS, see: UR 6,20 Jan. 1920; Friedheim, pp. 156-160; Joseph S. Jackson, "The Colored Marine Employees Benevolent Association of the Pacific, 1921-1934," (M.A. Thesis: University of Washington, 1939), pp. 4-5,21,30-35.

For AIS' use of industrial espionage, see: O'Connell, pp. 135-136; Report of Agent 106, 27 June 1919; Report of Agent 17, 29 June, 4 July 1919; Report of Agent 172, 3 March 1920, Papers on Industrial Espionage, University of Washington Library. See also: Roy J. Kinnear Papers, 1881-1959, University of Washington Library, for examples of industrial espionage.

disarray of the labor movement, heightened by the war and intensified by the general strike, weakened the labor movement's defenses. While the SCLC was attempting to respond to the AIS challenge it was also trying to fend off the efforts of the remnants of the wobblies to subvert the AFL. Following the failure of the general strike the IWW had begun to organize a drive in Seattle to destroy the AFL. They had concentrated their efforts among the industrial metal trades and maritime trades workers, who had proven to be the most sympathetic to their cause. They had even established a dual trade union, Shipbuilders Industrial Union No. 325, to organize the shipyard workers and had tried to get the longshoremen to join their Marine Transport Workers Union No. 8. They had also tried to get building tradesmen to join Construction Workers Industrial Workers Union No. 573 and to get provision trades workers to join their Hotel, Restaurant, and Domestic Workers Industrial Union No. 1100. The IWW even saw AIS as a potential ally in the struggle to destroy the AFL in Seattle. This effort failed largely because the employers looked upon the IWW with even less favor than they did the AFL and because the Boilermakers began a vigorous anti-IWW campaign in the shipyards to weed out those IWW's "two-card men" who belonged to both the AFL and the IWW. The dual attack, however, took an inevitable toll.<sup>3</sup>

The question of how to respond to AIS's challenge was made more difficult by the ideological splits in the trade unions. The radicals in the SCLC and the Tacoma Central Labor Council wished to hit back hard. They may have hoped to provoke the employers into

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<sup>3</sup>Friedheim, pp. 160-161.

over-reacting and producing a revolutionary situation. They argued that the middle classes had abandoned the labor movement during the war and that there was no longer any need to seek their support through moderation. They believed that labor should reject its policy of incremental economic progress and non-partisan politics. Labor should abandon all compromises short of workers' control of the economy and should endorse the SPW or create an entirely new political party of its own. To this purpose they obstructed the efforts of the conservatives to appease the employers and those of the SCLC's progressive leadership to mediate the disputes within the labor movement. Their obstruction prevented development of a unified labor strategy.<sup>4</sup>

Part of the strength of the radical line was that it was highly plausible. Any effort to challenge their proposals brought the response that such efforts would merely play into the hands of AIS and the Chamber of Commerce. Their charges were made all the more believable due to the growing anti-radical campaign in the commercial press. Since the press also played a critical role in the dissemination of AIS propaganda this gave the impression that labor and the radicals faced a mutual enemy. The Seattle Times attacked both labor and the Left when it criticized the UR:

Bolshevism must be stamped out. Seattle labor unions have a real problem on their hands in the anarchist newspaper "Union Record."

The Times blamed all the SCLC's internal and external troubles on the UR's "Bolshevism" and claimed that the UR had misrepresented

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<sup>4</sup>Saltvig, p. 474; Winslow, p. 73; Friedheim, p. 159; UR 29 May 1919; Minutes, 5 March 1919, Box 8, KCCLC Records.

Seattle labor during and after the general strike. Such arguments had the added effect of encouraging the labor conservatives to move even further away from the radical position and to undermine the UR's support within the SCLC. When, late in May 1919, the SCLC officially endorsed the SPW open ideological warfare broke out in the SCLC.<sup>5</sup>

With the radicals in charge of the SCLC's political policies for the first time their enemies lost no time in organizing a resistance movement. In April 1919 the fourteen major non-AFL railroad unions initiated a drive to establish a progressive alliance with the WSFL and the Grange to endorse major party candidates in the 1920 primary elections. The Railroad Brotherhoods had benefited enormously during the war from government operation of railroads and now wished to prevent the return of the railroads to their original owners. In June 1919 the Railwaymen's Political Club's executive committee instructed their fraternal non-voting delegates to the WSFL convention to propose such a "Triple Alliance." Opposition to the plan within the WSFL, naturally, centered in the Left-leaning central labor councils in and around the Puget Sound region, particularly the SCLC which did not want to see a revival of labor's ties to the major parties. Support for it centered in the WSFL's executive board and was coordinated by William Short. As a result the WSFL's 1919 convention shaped up as a test of strength between the labor factions.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid.; Times 30 March 1919.

<sup>6</sup>Saltvig, p. 474; UR 7 June 1919.

### Section Three:

#### The One Big Union Movement, Spring-Summer 1919

It was at this point that the One Big Union movement appeared to further complicate labor's political and organizational struggles. In addition it brought the AFL even more directly into the fray. The One Big Union idea originated in the Winnipeg general strike which followed upon the heels of the Seattle general strike in May-June 1919. Essentially, the idea was to reorganize the AFL by abolishing all craft distinctions. In their place, the OBU proponents proposed to create a single organization in each industry. One can easily see how this idea appealed to the industrial unionists in the SCLC. It was similar in intent to Duncan's repeatedly unsuccessful proposals to create twelve industrial departments in the AFL. It also resembled the doctrines of the Knights of Labor, the WFM, the SPW, and the IWW. In the weeks after the Winnipeg general strike the OBU idea swept the western provinces of Canada and invaded Puget Sound.<sup>1</sup>

The SCLC's industrial unionists were so receptive to the idea that, on 28 May 1919, the SCLC endorsed a Metal Trades Council resolution commending

...the strikers in Winnipeg and other points in Canada for their splendid demonstrations of courage and solidarity and instructing (the) secretary to communicate (the) same to our fellow-unionists

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<sup>1</sup>With their effort to organize dual industrial unions in the SCLC already in decline, many former IWW's seized upon the OBU idea to revive their fading fortunes. For example, Joseph Taylor, president of the ILA's Pacific Coast District, strongly supported the OBU. Previously he had supported the IWW.

Friedheim, pp. 27,170-171; Call, p. 16; The Rebel Worker, (1 March 1919), p. 1; Schwantes, "Leftward Tilt...", p. 21; Local No. 38, 12 protestors to O'Connor, 2 July 1920; O'Connor to Taylor, 25 August 1919, Box 15-63, WSFL Records.

across the line.<sup>2</sup>

Writing to Gompers, Short described the tense situation in the labor movement:

...(The) situation in (the) entire labor movement here (is) extremely dangerous. Disruption may set in at any time. Advocates of one big union similar to British Columbia (are) active. (They) plan to control (the WSFL) state convention in June and replace (the) present officers with officers favorable to this policy and for (a) Mooney strike, July fourth.

Short also reported that the Seattle Metal Trades Council had called on the SCLC and all metal trades locals to elect pro-OBU delegates to the convention and send them to a pre-convention caucus to agree on a slate of officers. He further reported to Gompers that the Machinists had already elected thirty-one delegates pledged to the OBU. Short complained that his efforts to combat the OBU were rendered more difficult by the Seattle-Tacoma labor press which, as in the general strike, favored the "disruptionists" and supported the OBU. Worst of all, he said, the OBU had a real chance to succeed because:

...A.F. of L. supporters are laying down and allowing (the) reds to run wild. (I) am fighting almost alone here. Something must be done immediately with (the) Metal Trades Section.<sup>3</sup>

As revealed by the note of panic in Short's message the situation was serious. Nevertheless, Short exaggerated his difficulties, since he had received some support. Reverend Mark A. Matthews, in a letter to Gompers, revealed, for example, that James A. Taylor, WSFL vice-president in the Seattle district and an organizer for the

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<sup>2</sup>Schwantes, "Leftward Tilt...", p. 21; Minutes, 28 May, 25 June 1919, Box 8, KCCLC Records.

<sup>3</sup>Short to Gompers, 9 May 1919, Box 35, WSFL Records.



Northwest District Council of Machinists, was working strenuously on behalf of the AFL in the Metal Trades Council. Matthews called upon Gompers to suggest to William H. Johnston, president of the International Association of Machinists, that he support Taylor by appointing him as an international organizer because he was the only man in the Council

...who is successfully combatting disruptionists and irrationalists generally. Reds fear him and are laying plans to have him taken out of their way.... He is needed in Seattle until (the) general situation can be cleared up.<sup>4</sup>

At the June 1919 WSFL convention in Bellingham the OBU forces put their plan into action. They were only partially successful, however, and failure to achieve complete victory spelled ultimate defeat for it gave the conservatives in the AFL and the WSFL time to organize a counter attack. Nevertheless it was a hard fight, perhaps the hardest in the history of WSFL conventions. Never before had the Left been so powerful. The OBU forces managed to defeat C.P. Taylor, the WSFL's Left-wing but anti-OBU secretary-treasurer, and succeeded in replacing him with L.W. Buck, another pro-SPW leftist more to their liking. The next day they also passed a resolution, introduced by Harry Wright, an OBU leader and member of Tacoma Longshoremen's Union Local No. 38-3. The resolution "recommended" that each affiliated local be allowed to vote on whether to form one big union along industrial lines. If a majority of the rank and file approved, the WSFL would issue a call for a constitutional convention to be held in Seattle within sixty days to discuss the reorganization of the WSFL.

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<sup>4</sup>Matthews to Gompers, 29 May 1919, Box 35, WSFL Records.

However, and this proved to be their greatest failing, the OBU forces failed to unseat William Short or the other conservative officers of the WSFL's executive board. Short was reelected by a vote of 444 to 278 over F.B. Clifford, the OBU-endorsed candidate. And, as Short reported to AFL headquarters after the convention, the new secretary-treasurer, though "very progressive," was no "ultra-radical" and concluded that, "I believe that we will be able to keep him within proper bounds...." Thus, Short tried to minimize the impact of the OBU on AFL headquarters. To this end he explained that the OBU resolution had been passed on the last day of the convention when, "a large portion" of the "Conservative element having left," the "Reds" were in practically complete control. Even then, Short argued, the resolution had passed only because a majority of the delegates could not deny the rank and file the right of voting on the issues. If only the AFL did nothing drastic to prejudice the case of the OBU the WSFL's own leadership would be able to convince a majority of the rank and file to vote against it. In summation Short said that the results of the convention gave him increased confidence in the wisdom of the workers. Although the situation remained "delicate" he hoped the failure of the OBU in Western Canada might have a "sobering effect on our Movement."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>At the same time the convention may have reduced the pressure on the conservative unionists by approving a resolution which called on the WSFL to approve a referendum on the question of creating standing Departmental Committees in the WSFL similar to the SCLC's trade sections. The referendum passed. It established three standing committees: Metal Trades, Building Trades, and Miscellaneous Trades. Each committee consisted of three delegates: one from Eastern Washington; one from the Seattle area; and one from the Tacoma area.

WSFL Procs., (1919), pp. 121,131; O'Connell, p. 178; Pullen,

Short had read the signs accurately. Despite the surprising show of strength exhibited by the OBU forces the conservatives and progressives had managed to hold together on a number of important points. The convention had considered the issue of a political alliance with the Railroad Brotherhoods and the Grange. Most of the 700 delegates to the convention appeared to support the idea. The chief opposition came from pro-OBU, pro-SPW forces in the large delegations from Seattle (250) and Tacoma (112) unions which wanted the WSFL to create an independent third party on the model of the British Labor Party, or to endorse the SPW. Others, who distrusted the motives of the Grange, like C.P. Taylor, also objected. But the opposition was weak and divided on the issue. In the end some radicals reluctantly accepted the idea of a triple alliance because it did not exclude the establishment of a labor party at a later date. As a result the convention adopted the special recommendations of its Committee on Triple Alliance "to secure remedial legislation through political solidarity..." with the Grange and Railroad Brotherhoods. The vote was 600 to 85.<sup>6</sup>

Thus it was that, despite the efforts of the OBU and pro-SPW forces, the WSFL decided to continue along a non-partisan path. It

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p. 32; Cravens, pp. 84-88; UR 14 June, 30 Dec. 1919; Friedheim, p. 156; C.W. Doyle to Short, 7 June 1919, Box 9-20; Short to Lee Guard, 29 July 1919, Box 35; Minutes, 9 Jan. 1920, Box 60, WSFL Records.

<sup>6</sup>The convention also approved committee recommendations to establish joint committees with the Grange and Railroad Brotherhoods to settle organizational details, subject to ratification by each organization's executive officers, and to establish a joint twenty-one member state central committee (consisting of seven delegates from each group) to set up local and county committees.

WSFL Procs., (1919), pp. 68,97-98,133,140-141; Cravens, pp. 84-89; O'Connell, p. 158.

was indeed a remarkable victory for Short and his allies. The only trouble was that it did not look like a great victory. When the WSFL failed to command decisive influence on the executive board Short's victory looked even less notable. Although the WSFL had by far the most members of the three organizations, the others dominated the Board and received veto powers over all its actions. As a result of the disparity of influence in the Washington State Triple Alliance, the WSTA remained a dead letter. There was little follow-up work on the county level and the local officers remained isolated from one another. Another result was that the WSTA never developed into a true statewide organization. It always retained a split personality. The WSFL operated chiefly in Western Washington, while the Grange and the Railroad Brotherhoods confined themselves to Eastern Washington. This was complicated by the fact that in each of the other two organizations strong factions continued to oppose the WSTA.<sup>7</sup>

Still, the WSTA remained as a clear signal that the labor movement did not wish to engage in an independent political movement if it could avoid it. To make the WSTA into an effective political weapon was a more difficult task. Nevertheless, Short and his non-partisan allies in the WSFL tried. Their first problem was how to eliminate, or reduce, the internal opposition to their political leadership from the OBU forces and for this he needed cooperation from the AFL.

Unfortunately for Short and his allies, during the summer of 1919 Gompers was not on hand to provide the necessary support. He was

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<sup>7</sup>For the early organizational activities and leadership of the State Triple Alliance, see: WSFL Procs., (1919), p. 20; Cravens, pp. 84-89, 154-155; Crawford, pp. 270-274; Minutes, April-October, 1919, Box 8, KCCLC Records.

out of the country, travelling through Europe in support of the International Labor Organization. In the weeks which followed the WSFL convention Short was forced to deal with the AFL through Lee Guard, Gompers' personal secretary. Guard did not understand the delicacy of the situation. This greatly complicated Short's problems. To Guard it appeared that Short had proven himself an incompetent leader who had let events get beyond his control in the general strike and in the OBU uproar. In mid-July Guard received a letter from H.O. McCarthy, of the Seattle Engineers Union, which made these fears seem all the more real. The OBU, said McCarthy,

...is progressing in Washington--16 municipally employed crafts in Seattle have entered into organization of O.B.U. during (the) last few days and consummation (is) expected this week. That this will succeed there can be no doubt, and I have reason to believe that several locals of carpenters here are arranging for affiliation of O.B.U.

The Washington State Federation of Labor has a 'Red' for (a) Secretary now, which means that the A.F. of L., as represented by the Washington State Federation will be used to spread 'Red' propaganda among the members of the A.F. of L. at the expense of that institution. In plain English the A.F. of L. is being used in this State to dig its own grave on its own time, and as is intended will get the credit for its own destruction.

And while those things happen those of us who could interfere, look on.

Should you think of writing me, I might give you considerable facts concerning the movement, including the fact that, if radicals are allowed to proceed without opposition for another six weeks, there will be very few conservatives to work with here.

Understandably alarmed, Guard forwarded the letter to Short and asked his advice.<sup>8</sup>

Short attempted to refute McCarthy's analysis. He was afraid that if the AFL responded too aggressively to the proposed OBU referendum it might backfire to the detriment of the conservatives. It

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<sup>8</sup>Guard to Short, 19 July 1919, Box 3-11, WSFL Records.

might look like external interference in local matters. He wrote to Guard:

While it is true that the I.W.W. (i.e., the OBU forces) have secured a tremendous hold in sections of our movement in Washington, yet, I think, there is no particular reason for the alarm that might be caused if McCarthy's letter were not taken with a grain of salt. For instance, the sixteen municipally employed crafts in Seattle which are referred to in McCarthy's letter, have amalgamated for the purpose of getting unity of action in securing badly needed increases in wages right now, but they have in no way severed their connections with their separate internationals, or with the A.F.L., and only a very small minority of them have any intention of ever doing this.

In addition, Short termed the charge that several carpenters locals were planning to join the OBU "silly":

The one solid rock in the whole Labor Movement of our State against which all appeals of the O.B.U. always break is the Carpenters. They have a few radicals in all of the locals, it is true, but they have fewer of them than any other Organization, and the least danger in the whole situation will come from their Organization.<sup>9</sup>

In the context of the times, however, Short's logical arguments did not carry much weight. The AFL's reaction to the OBU threat is only comprehensible in view of national and international events which followed when, early in 1919, Lenin issued his call for a Third Socialist International to replace that destroyed by World War I. He called on American socialists to reject their Right-wing national leaders, whom he compared inaccurately to the European social democrats who had supported the war. He further demanded a massive uprising of the American proletariat. The SCLC and other Left-wing organizations seemed to support their revolutionary sentiments. They voted to send delegates to the International's inaugural meeting in Moscow and, at

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<sup>9</sup>Short to Guard, 29 July 1919, Box 35, WSFL Records.

the 1919 AFL convention, James Duncan, the SCLC's delegate, introduced a resolution expressing sympathy for:

...the noble defensive fight waged against tremendous odds by the workers of Russia for the right to work out their own salvation without outside interference...

He demanded an end to the American intervention, a lifting of the blockade, and the extension of credit to the Soviets. Under the leadership of Gompers and the conservatives the convention defeated the resolution but grew alarmed at the SCLC's independent line and began to take steps to bring the SCLC locals into agreement with AFL policy.<sup>10</sup>

Lenin's call for a proletarian revolution also increased the divisive pressures within the SPA. As noted previously, the Reds in the SPA, based in the foreign language federations, had begun to organize independently to take over the leadership of the NEC in the fall of 1918. By May 1919 the distance between the Left-wing new immigrants and the Old Guard's older immigrants was unbridgeable. In the last week of May the NEC met and voted to suspend seven of the Left-wing foreign language federations from the party. Although the NEC left room for a reconciliation few of the 25-30,000 members affected ever returned to the SPA.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Winslow, pp. 84-85, 100-101, 109-110; Taft, The AFL in the Time of Gompers, p. 456; Philip Foner, The Bolshevik Revolution, (New York: International Publishers, 1967), p. 37.

<sup>11</sup>For more information on the consequences of Lenin's International on the SPA and on the suspension of the radical, pro-Bolshevik Russian, Lettish, Lithuanian, Hungarian, Ukranian, South Slavic, and Polish foreign language federations, from the SPA, see: Glazer, pp. 40-41; Shannon, pp. 136-137.

For more on the widening splits in the SPA during the summer of 1919, and on the efforts of the Left-wing to organize a united front against the party's Old Guard, see: Shannon, pp. 140-141.

For more information on breakup of the Left-wing, the formation of pro-Soviet communist parties, and on the conservative counterattack,

By the fall of 1919 the SPA had split into four different groups. One of these four had already disintegrated but another had split again. By the end of the year the SPA's Old Guard retained the loyalties of only a rump faction of the Party and was much reduced in vigor. The competition for support among the different Left-wing factions and parties weakened the political influence of the Left as a whole. It filled the air with radical rhetoric, but prevented coherent, unified action. Above all, it frightened the social democrats into an alliance with the labor conservatives, based on loyalty to the AFL. Depending on the influence of new or old immigrants in their memberships, local parties followed the national pattern.

In view of these political upheavals on the Left it should come as no surprise that the AFL saw the OBU issue as simply another manifestation of the communist effort to capture or destroy the labor movement by infiltration tactics. They knew of the successful efforts of the SCLC's radicals to endorse a labor party and reject non-partisanship. From Short they had learned that the general strike and Mooney strike proposals had the same intent. Undoubtedly, they assumed that the OBU represented yet another attempt to subvert the AFL on behalf of these revolutionary ends. The AFL had more than mere suspicion to back up its beliefs. In the SCLC's annual elections radicals won all of the top offices except business agent. In the important battle for vice-president, Phil Pearl, the radical delegate from the Barbers Union, won despite desperate resistance from the conservatives.

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see: Ibid., p. 141-142. For more information on the 1919 SPA convention and the conflicts between rival communist factions, see: Ibid., pp. 137-138, 141-148; See also: Glazer, pp. 38-46, for a discussion of the role of the new immigrants in the communist parties in the 1920's. For information on the movement of an SPW majority into the Communist Labor Party,



After failing to win a majority of the votes against two opponents in the first round of balloting he defeated M.E. Weisfeld by a narrow margin in the ~~run~~-off. Thus, Short was unable to convince the AFL's leadership that they should view the OBU threat with greater sanguinity.<sup>12</sup>

While the WSFL's executive board reluctantly planned the OBU referendum, the AFL's executive council broke with Short's policy and issued a harsh condemnation of the OBU referendum resolution and followed this up with a second, equally harsh, blast. Showing a stunning lack of confidence in Short, the council called the WSFL convention's actions "radical" and "illegal" and threatened to revoke the WSFL's charter if the latter did not quash the referendum. The AFL argued, with some justification but without much discretion of sympathy for Short's position, that the referendum infringed upon the jurisdictions of the international unions. Many internationals, thereupon, joined the attack and ordered their local affiliates not to participate in the vote. The WSFL also received numerous private letters condemning it for passing the resolution.<sup>13</sup>

The AFL's condemnation greatly complicated the WSFL's problems. In response, Short called an executive board meeting to consider a response to the AFL's ultimatum. On the one hand they had to consider the AFL's threat to revoke their charter. On the other hand, however, they had also to consider the influence of the radicals. Although the OBU resolution had no support on the executive board and had relatively little at the local level except in Seattle and Tacoma the WSFL rank and file jealously guarded its independence and autonomy. To bow

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see: Winslow, pp. 6,95-96,111-113; Shannon, pp. 148-149; Weinstein, pp. 194,226; Seattle UR 31 Oct. 1920; 7 July 1923; Agent 106, June 1919, Papers on Industrial Espionage.

<sup>12</sup>Minutes, 23,30 July 1919, Box 8, KCCLC Records.

<sup>13</sup>Minutes, 12 July, 16 Aug. 1919, Box 60, WSFL Records; Schwantes,

too meekly to the AFL's dictate might hand the OBU forces the very weapon they needed to weld the fractious Left-wing into a legitimate voice of the rank and file.

The WSFL executive board's decision in the matter marked a parting of the ways in the labor movement. When the board voted to bow to the AFL's will on the grounds that they had "no other choice" they raised loyalty to the AFL above their loyalties to the political sympathies of the rank and file. They had time and again proclaimed their loyalty to the AFL. Now they would have to live by their commitment. The prospect, however, was not pleasing to them. In protest to the AFL, the board complained about the AFL's lack of "courtesy" and of not

...being consulted in connection with any act of our Federation that might in any way (have) violated the laws of the American Federation of Labor, before any decision was reached by your Executive Council.

The WSFL accused the AFL of lacking confidence in them and in relying upon

...opinions and advice of your organizers, and keeping the executive officers of the Federation in complete ignorance of your contemplated action.<sup>14</sup>

The AFL's attacks on Short and the WSFL leadership greatly embarrassed the WSFL. In agreeing to comply with the ultimatum the executive board could not accept the validity of the charge that it had condoned a secessionist movement. On the contrary, it protested that it had tried hard to preserve labor unity. In fact, the board argued, while a true danger still existed, the worst

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"Leftward Tilt...", p. 21; WSFL Procs., (1920), pp. 11-12.

<sup>14</sup>WSFL Procs., (1920), pp. 11-12; Minutes, 14, 16 Aug. 1919, Box 60, WSFL Records.

had already passed. By quiet efforts the board claimed that it had effectively isolated the OBU forces and undermined their arguments. The board pointed out that, while the original wording of the OBU resolution had an obvious secessionist intent,

...yet the vigorous fight conducted against it had forced the proponents of the resolution into the issuance of a public statement to the effect that no secession was contemplated, but merely a conference to discuss closer cooperation between the different organizations within the laws of the separate Internationals and the American Federation of Labor. Had the conference been held it would have been controlled and confined to such limits, and no act countenanced that would have in any way violated such laws and rules.

Accusing the AFL of blundering into an already-improving situation and creating a crisis which would require "most delicate handling" to avoid serious injury to the labor movement, the board requested that, in the future, "you ask our advice" before taking actions concerning Washington State.<sup>15</sup>

Then the board voted to lay the WSFL-AFL correspondence before the membership and send a letter to every affiliate explaining why they had been forced to accept the ultimatum. Further, they enclosed a resolution for the locals to endorse saying that the OBU had not been intended as a secessionist movement and that this impression had been the result of "mistaken language." They also called a conference to achieve "closer affiliation and cooperation," discuss labor's proposals to nationalize certain industries and complain about the high cost of living. These were obvious efforts to mollify the OBU enthusiasts in lieu of a statewide referendum and constitutional convention. Cautiously, however, they limited representation at the conference to

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

one delegate from each affiliate. By this means they limited the influence of the radicals in the large Seattle and Tacoma locals and magnified the influence of the smaller, more conservative locals outside the urban areas.<sup>16</sup>

The executive board's plan for a conference had the desired effect. When the board's letter reached the locals it became clear that most locals had no stomach for a fight with the AFL. Only in Seattle and Tacoma did significant pro-OBU forces still have influence. Even there, many pro-OBU elements had not lost their loyalty to the AFL. Many union leaders feared that they would lose political influence if the radicals succeeded in adopting an OBU system. Unlike those who had openly proclaimed the OBU to be a secessionist movement they did not want to lose touch with the national labor movement. They may have favored the principle of industrial organization but, as practical labor leaders, hesitated to divide the labor movement at such a critical moment in its history.<sup>17</sup>

The crucial figure in the outcome of the OBU controversy was James A. Duncan, long the leader of the industrial union forces in the SCLC. The OBU activists probably hoped that they would be able to convince him to join them because he had supported similar reorganization plans for many years. In addition he agreed with the Left on many other doctrinal points. As recently as the Mooney Congress he had

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Friedheim, pp. 27-28; Schwantes, "Leftward Tilt...", pp. 21-22; UR 12,14,19,21 Aug. 1919; Minutes, 14,16 Aug. 1919, Box 60, WSFL Records; Minutes, 13 Aug. 1919, Box 8, KCCLC Records.

been in the forefront of the effort to convince the AFL to adopt an industrial form of organization. Now, however, he warned the radicals in the SCLC that they were getting too far ahead of the rest of the American working class and that to maintain solidarity with the AFL they should restrain themselves. When the radicals refused to forego what they saw as their golden opportunity he broke with them and carried a large faction of the SCLC with him. Thus, after a prolonged debate, the SCLC voted to endorse the WSFL's surrender to the AFL. The vote was ninety-five to fifty-seven. Duncan's forces made the difference. This vote represents the high tide of regional parochialism in the Washington State labor movement. It represents the last time when loyalty to the AFL was a question in serious dispute.<sup>18</sup>

Even after the SCLC voted to remain loyal to the AFL many locals and many individuals refused to accept the decision. Gradually, however, as the implications of the SCLC vote became clear, responsible union leaders regained influence over their locals. Some hotbeds of OBU sentiment continued to simmer, adopting new tactics. The Seattle Longshoremen's Union Local No. 12-38, for example, began a boycott of ships bound for the counter-revolutionary forces in Russia with arms and munitions. By summer the situation was so serious that the SCLC had to ask President Short to intervene to straighten out the factions. Short managed to get the ILA to cooperate, but was notably unsuccessful in getting the local's factions to do likewise.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Minutes, 2 July, 27 Aug., 22 Oct. 1919, Box 8, KCCLC Records; Report of Agent 106, 3,5,15 June, 3,20 Aug., 28 Oct., 17,26 Nov. 1919,

Meanwhile, Short was busy organizing anti-radical campaigns throughout the WSFL in an effort to regain his credit with the AFL. The case of Tacoma is illustrative. The Tacoma leadership continued to plot how to force out, or humiliate the conservatives who remained within the body. To a far greater degree than the SCLC they retained their independence of action. The AFL retained so few loyal supporters in Tacoma that they did not even know how many locals there were in the city. Only gradually, over a period of years, did the AFL advocates eliminate the OBU and other radicals from their positions of authority.<sup>20</sup>

On 30 October 1919 the conference suggested by Short and the executive board to replace the OBU constitutional convention convened in Seattle and adopted several resolutions. The delegates voted to endorse the "Plumb Plan" to nationalize the nation's railroad system instead of returning it to its original owners. They also voted to endorse the farmers' nationalization plans. In view of growing evidence that employers were planning a coordinated attack on organized labor they also voted to support the SCLC in its efforts to resist the assault. They also called for closer affiliation with the AFL and for industrial reform within the craft structure. They asked the

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Papers on Industrial Espionage; WSFL Procs., (1919), p. 48; Winslow, pp. 87-88, 101-102; Short, p. 17; Friedheim, pp. 18, 158, 160.

<sup>20</sup>For more on the efforts to root out OBU radicals in the Tacoma Central Labor Council, see: Short to F. Morrison, 8 Oct. 1919, Box 35; F. Morrison to Short, 8 Nov. 1919, Box 4-7; Dickson to Gompers, 18 Oct. 1919; Gompers to Short, 27 Oct. 1919, Box 3-11; Local #38-12 to O'Connor, 25 Aug. 1919; 2 July 1920, Box 15-63, WSFL Records; Minutes, 2 July 1919, 12 May 1920, 6, 27, 28 April 1921, Box 8, KCCLC Records.

international unions to submit referenda to their members on industrial unionism, interchangeable transfer cards for union members, an AFL benefits plan, and a waiver for all the crafts in a given plant, to negotiate blanket agreements with their employer instead of having to negotiate separate agreements for each craft.<sup>21</sup>

As expected, these pleas fell on deaf ears. The conference was primarily intended as a face-saving device for the defeated OBU forces. Labor had little influence on the Republican Congress' determination to return the railroads to their corporate owners. Neither did the Administration lend much assistance. The AFL took no action on any of the proposals until the 1930's because the internationals were too jealous of their own power to allow the AFL to administer a huge benefits program for the rank and file and distrusted their own locals too much to allow them much latitude in negotiating contracts. Such freedom might undermine the authority of the internationals to set conditions and approve contracts.<sup>22</sup>

With hindsight these resolutions can be seen as embodying an inevitable trend. At the time they appeared to be futile gestures. The Old Guard of the AFL, like the Old Guard of the SPA, did not want to step out of the way in favor of the new immigrants in the less-skilled, lower-paid, industrial trades. They intended to hold on to power in the labor movement as long as they could. Thus, the

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<sup>21</sup>The WSFL did prove somewhat responsive on the issue of the Plumb Plan and the other nationalization schemes and supported them throughout the 1920's, but only in the context of non-partisan political action and within the AFL structure. Also, the WSFL did lend valuable assistance to the SCLC in its open shop fight.

WSFL Procs., (1920), pp. 11-12.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

resolutions represented the failure of the radicals to achieve any of their goals on behalf of the new immigrants.<sup>23</sup>

On the other hand, the defeat of the Left opened the way for a Center-Right rapprochement. Although the WSFL had, by the end of 1919, thrown back the radical challenge, it had yet to establish its own post-war political direction. Despite the formation of the Triple Alliance the WSFL had yet to create effective political institutions with which to carry out its ends. It needed a sense of direction, a sense of control emanating from the top which was not provided by Gompers. Labor's national policy evolved in stately disregard for policies in the state labor movements. For example, on 13 December 1919, the AFL's executive council held preliminary discussions with its international union executives at AFL headquarters in Washington, D.C. to plan a joint program with Railroad Brotherhood and Farmer organization leaders. Yet, a month and a half later, Short and the WSFL had received no guidance from AFL headquarters. Although Short wrote to Washington requesting information, apparently he received none. Thus, as the 1920 presidential campaign season dawned, labor was quite unprepared to conduct a coherent campaign.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Gompers to Short, 1 Nov. 1919, Box 3-11; Short to F. Morrison, 31 Jan. 1920, Box 35, WSFL Records.



## Section Four:

### The Centralia Massacre, Fall-Winter 1919-1920

The costs of labor's internal divisions, its economic weakness, and its political isolation were soon apparent. By the fall of 1919, when the employers were ready to unleash their anti-labor campaign, labor had not yet begun to prepare its defenses. Only too late did labor realize the magnitude of the employers' plans. And, just when labor began to realize its danger, it was thrown on the defensive by the so-called Centralia Massacre. In the end the labor movement survived, but primarily because the onset of the post-war recession forced the employers to call off their offensive.

Twice, during the summer of 1919, the local bravos of the American Legion had raided the IWW headquarters in Centralia, a small lumber town which served as the county seat of Lewis County. Twice, the patriotic veterans had run the blind local agent of the Seattle UR out of town. The second time, he was beaten and threatened with death if he returned. They also raided his home searching for IWW or radical literature, destroying books, clothing, and furniture in the process. Despite these efforts to intimidate him, he and the IWW's remained in Centralia. All these efforts represented a merging of the wartime campaign to destroy all dissenters with the new anti-radical, anti-labor campaign to support the employers' open shop "American Plan."<sup>1</sup>

In the fall of 1919 the tensions between the remnants of the IWW and the American Legion in Centralia grew even more acute. Rumors

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<sup>1</sup>O'Connor, p. 120; WSFL Procs., (1919), p. 151.

began to circulate that the townspeople were going to "get" the wobblies for refusing to leave. These rumors increased after the IWW relocated its hall and vowed not to be displaced. The rumors soon became quite specific. The anniversary of Armistice Day, 11 November 1919, was said to be the target date for tar-and-feathering, or lynching the IWW's as an appropriate finale for the day's parade and celebrations.<sup>2</sup>

By now, this was normal fare for the wobblies. Throughout their twelve year history they had been subjected to a long litany of similar jailings, beatings, raids, railroadings, and "massacres." The police had seldom protected them. The courts had provided no recourse. Indeed, the wobblies even seemed to have encouraged official over-reaction, since it justified their radical doctrines.<sup>3</sup>

Usually, when the wobblies had fought back it was with songs, speeches, and demonstrations. This time, however, they reacted differently. On the advice of Elmer Smith, a local labor lawyer with radical leanings, they decided to defend their constitutional rights, through force of arms. On the date of the scheduled Armistice Day parade and celebrations several of the IWW's, armed with rifles, took up positions across the street from their hall in two hotels. Several others took positions on a nearby hill. Thus situated they held the

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<sup>2</sup>O'Connor, pp. 172-173; "Partial List of Prisoners," One Big Union, Vol. II, (March 1920), pp. 12-14; "Partial List of IWW deportees," One Big Union, Vol. II, (June 1920), p. 39.

<sup>3</sup>See, for example: Robert C. Eckberg, "The Free Speech Fight of the Industrial Workers of the World at Spokane, Washington: 1909-1910," (M.A. Thesis: Washington State University, 1967); Charles LeWarne, "The Aberdeen Free Speech Fight of 1911-1912," Pacific Northwest Quarterly LXVI (Jan. 1975), pp. 1-12. See also: Clark, Smith, and Tyler.

street in front of the hall in a deadly crossfire. There they waited for the legionnaires' parade, which was designed to pass in front of the hall, despite its out-of-the-way location.<sup>4</sup>

At this point the various versions of what happened began to diverge. Only this much is certain. When the legionnaires reached the IWW hall, they stopped and reformed their ranks (as if to charge the hall?). Suddenly shots rang out. Several legionnaires fell dead or wounded. Then the legionnaires rushed the hall, capturing its occupants, except for one or two who escaped by a rear entrance with legionnaires in hot pursuit.<sup>5</sup>

More than this cannot be established. Who shot first? Who fired the fatal shots? These questions remain unanswered to this day. Some witnesses said that the legionnaires' parade stopped in front of the hall and rushed the door even before the first shots were fired. This was the account an Associated Press reporter phoned in to the Seattle P-I. Other witnesses said the IWW's fired the first shots from their places of concealment while the marchers were still trying

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<sup>4</sup>O'Connell, pp. 102-103; Seattle UR 12 Nov. 1919. See also: Walker C. Smith, Was It Murder?, (Seattle, 1922); Frank Walkin, A Fair Trial, (Seattle, 1920?); Ralph Chaplin, The Centralia Conspiracy, (Seattle?, 1920), which view the event from the IWW point of view. See also: The Federal Council of Churches, et al., The Centralia Case, (Brookly, 1930); and the American Civil Liberties Union, The Issues in the Centralia Murder Trial, (New York, 1920), which give a liberal interpretation to the event. In addition to the several general works on the IWW, already cited, Robert L. Tyler's "Violence at Centralia, 1919," Pacific Northwest Quarterly VL (Oct. 1954), pp. 116-124, gives the best academic account. The four murdered legionnaires included: Warren O. Grimm, the local post commander; Ben Casagrande, Dale Hubbard, and Arthur McElfresh. The 11 wobblies tried for the murders were: Eugene Barnett, John Lamb, D.C. Bland, Bert Bland, Britt Smith, Ray Becker, James McInerney, Elmer Smith, Mike Sheehan, and Loren Roberts. See Federal Council of Churches, pp. 7,30.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

to reform their ranks. Probably no one will ever know what actually happened. What is certain is that the shootings did occur--on both sides--and, when the firing stopped, five of the legionnaires lay wounded, two of them mortally hurt.<sup>6</sup>

After the firing stopped the legionnaires entered the hall and pursued those wobblies who fled out the rear entrance. Soon all were in custody. One of the fugatives, however, refused to surrender. Wesley Everest, a war veteran, led his pursuers on quite a chase and, when cornered in a rapidly moving stream, turned and shot to death his closest pursuer before being subdued himself. He was dragged back to the county jail and placed in a cell with the other IWW's.

That night, at about seven o'clock, the lights in Centralia failed. While they were out, a group of men broke into the jail and, under the cover of darkness, silently removed Everest from the cell. They took him to a place near where he had been captured and, after torturing and mutilating him, hanged him from a bridge. The next day, when the corpse was discovered, no undertaker would accept it. Instead, it was dumped back into the cell holding the other IWW prisoners. Later, four of the wobblies were forced to bury their comrade.<sup>7</sup>

Within days, the events of 11 November had touched off a state-wide uproar which quickly engulfed every part of the labor movement. No one, it seems, could avoid using the issue for partisan purposes. The day after the killings, for example, the SCLC adopted a resolution:

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Pullen, pp. 32-33; O'Connell, pp. 104-105; Federal Council of Churches, pp. 13,18.

...deploring (the) Centralia tragedy and the causes that lead up to it, and calling upon all true Americans to arouse themselves to the suggested violations of the law and see to it that every principle of the constitution be upheld and kept inviolate.

At the same time the UR sent two reporters to Centralia. Their account of the previous days' proceedings squares, essentially, with that first published in the P-I. Meanwhile, Harry Ault published an editorial on the "tragedy" in the UR which had an even more inflammatory impact than Anna Louise Strong's "NO ONE KNOWS WHERE" editorial had had. The editorial, entitled "DON'T SHOOT IN THE DARK!", said:

"Violence begets violence.

Anarchy brings forth anarchy.

And that is the answer to the Centralia outrage.

And the reason for it is found in the constant stream of laudation in the kept (i.e., commercial) press of un-American, illegal and violent physical attacks upon the persons of those who disagree with the powers that be.

"The rioting which culminated in the deaths of three of our returned service men at Centralia last night was the result of a long series of illegal acts by these men themselves\*--acts which no paper in the state was American enough to criticize except the Union Record.

"The attempt of the Post-Intelligencer in this mornings' edition to make the Union Record responsible for the troubles (by having encouraged the IWW hostility) and to incite an attack upon this paper by the vicious element of this city is merely an indication of the depths of depravity to which that paper has fallen.

"The Union Record points to a career of more than 20 years in which it has consistantly and insisently fought for the preservation of the laws of this country BOTH BY THE RICH AND THE POOR. It is because the Union Record has insisted upon the observation of the law by the rich that it is now being assailed.

"The Union Record, unlike its competitors, has never printed a line advocating that anyone be "stood up against a stone wall and shot," it has never advocated nor countenanced physical violence for redress of grievances. On the contrary the Union Record has, during its entire lifetime, pointed out the legal, orderly, American way of bringing order out of our present chaotic industrial system, and has set human life above any and every other consideration.

"Organized labor has no connection with nor has it any sympathy for the perpetrators of the violence at Centralia, NO MATTER WHOM THEY MAY BE, and from the facts at hand both sides

have earned the severest condemnation of law-abiding people.\*

"We advise all to await with us the development of the truth about the whole affair."<sup>8</sup>

The logic of this editorial, which seemed to place equal blame on the wobblies and the dead legionnaires, did not satisfy "Colonel" C.B. Blethen, the rabidly patriotic editor of the Seattle Times and a prominent figure in the employers' open shop campaign. That morning, Blethen went to Robert C. Saunders, the aged and somewhat vacillating United States District Attorney in Seattle, and convinced him that Ault's editorial constituted a federal crime. Saunders, moved by Blethen's fury, decided to arrest Ault, Miss Strong, and the chief officers of the UR--four altogether. Charging them with sedition under provisions of the wartime act, Saunders also submitted an affidavit to Robert W. McClelland, the United States Commissioner in Seattle, in order to get a search warrant to seize evidence belonging to the UR. Early that afternoon the Deputy United States Marshall, Edwin R. Tobey, served the warrants on Ault and the other UR workers. He impounded all the paper's printing machinery, records, unopened mail, including the personal letters from the desks of the staff, and carried them all away to the federal building as evidence.<sup>9</sup>

This reaction greatly worried the leadership of the WSFL which had belatedly recognized the existence of an organized, coordinated open shop movement. In the words of Short:

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<sup>8</sup>\*emphasis added. Minutes, 12 Nov. 1919, Box 8, KCCLC Records; Seattle UR 12 Nov. 1919.

<sup>9</sup>Seattle Times 13 Nov. 1919; O'Connell, pp. 105-107; Earl W. Shimmons, "The Labor Dailies," American Mercury XV (Sept. 1928), pp. 85-93; Ault to H.W. Stone, Jr., 14 Jan. 1938, Ault Papers, University of Washington Library.

The murder of several returned servicemen at Centralia, Washington, by the I.W.W. the other day, is raising h--- in general here, and the reactionary press is up in arms and with full-page editorials attempting to connect the labor movement of our state up with the tragedy. We will have to handle matters very carefully, but will be able to take care of the situation alright.<sup>10</sup>

Under the direction of the open shop forces the Centralia "massacre," as it soon became known, quickly became a statewide crisis for the labor movement. Mobs closed down all the IWW halls. The police rounded up radicals, trade unionists, and suspected aliens, wholesale. To avert further violence and to protect the remaining prisoners from being lynched, Governor Hart ordered the national guard on alert in Centralia and Spokane. Seeking to retain his conservative credentials and business support, however, Hart sought to place all the blame on the IWW's and called for strict enforcement of the recently-passed Anti-Syndicalism Act. Hart's position is clearly related to his campaign for reelection. He could not afford to allow room for his closest rival for the Republican gubernatorial nomination, Roland H. Hartley, to attack him on the Right. Deflecting popular, conservative animosity from his Administration, while not at the same time advocating a return to lynch law, proved to be a delicate maneuver.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Short to F. Morrison, 13 Nov. 1919, Box 35, WSFL Records.

<sup>11</sup>One of Hart's suggestions was creation of County Loyal Leagues, on the pattern established by the national, state, and local Councils for Defense, which had been so effective in keeping the lid on wartime labor and radical dissent. The members of the Leagues would be sworn to defend American principles and work through established procedures to end the "red menace." Hart obviously hoped to divert the super-patriots from their immediate goals and perhaps to moderate their methods in the process while, at the same time, retaining their political support.

Pullen, p. 34.

Blethen and the super-patriots continued their attacks.

Isolated and divided the labor movement had few weapons with which to respond to the maelstrom of anti-radical and anti-labor sentiment evinced by the popular press and local establishments throughout the state. With the UR closed down labor's voice was silenced. Still, there were some signs that labor was willing to cooperate in the common interest. To protect the UR from further attack was obviously a major concern. Soon after the raid on the UR's offices, the Private Soldiers and Sailors Council offered their services as guards. Their aid may have prevented the complete destruction of the UR's office and property in the days which followed.<sup>12</sup>

Physical protection, alone, however, did not suffice. So long as the government remained in unfriendly hands no amount of physical protection could prevent irreparable harm to the paper. For example, as soon as the paper was charged with sedition, the Seattle postmaster barred the UR from the mails. Since the UR earned much of its income from out-of-town editions and sales, this proved to be a crushing blow from which the paper never truly recovered.<sup>13</sup>

Despite the dangers and the threats, however, the UR made desperate and surprisingly successful efforts to stay in business. Ault realized that the UR was a vital link in labor's defenses and that union members throughout the state relied upon it for information and advice. When, on the evening of 13 November, Tobey returned the

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<sup>12</sup>O'Connell, p. 106; Simmons, passim; Winslow, p. 86; Theodore Draper, The Roots of American Communism, (New York, 1960), p. 139; P-I 4 Jan. 1919; Friedheim, p. 13; Report of Agent 106, 29 July 1919, Papers on Industrial Espionage.

<sup>13</sup>O'Connell, p. 107.



UR's confiscated material to Ault, he hurriedly assembled his staff and issued an "extra" edition. In it he printed the SCLC's resolution condemning the Centralia violence and an editorial which tried to put some distance between the legitimate labor movement and the IWW. Ault charged that the commercial press had distorted the facts by publishing fragmentary passages from the UR's stories.<sup>14</sup>

The UR's continuing signs of life seem to have maddened Blethen further. On 14 November Tobey returned to the UR's offices and, using the same warrant from the previous day's raid, searched the premises again. This time, however, he locked the doors when he left, posted guards, and ordered the employees to leave.<sup>15</sup>

Ault, however, proved equal even to this test of his resourcefulness and managed to keep the UR in operation. Using the presses of the Fremont Colleague, a small suburban weekly, he issued 25,000 copies of an abbreviated, four-page edition of the UR which longshoremen hawked through the streets crying "Liberty Smothered!"<sup>16</sup>

Meanwhile, Blethen changed his tactics. He began to use his economic power by buying up the UR's newsprint supply. The paper, which had been struggling all along without an assured supply of newsprint, was seriously hurt. Ault would now have to purchase his

<sup>14</sup>UR 13 Nov. 1919.

<sup>15</sup>O'Connell, p. 109; Short to Gompers, 14 Nov. 1919, Box 35, WSFL Records.

<sup>16</sup>Besides being an accurate description of recent events, the cry "Liberty Smothered!" was a pun. It referred to the fact that, during the war, super-patriots had tried to exterminate all things German or German-sounding. Among those words which the patriots despised was "hamburger". They renamed the meat patties "Liberty Steak". In waitresses' slang, therefore, a hamburger with onions became known as "Liberty Smothered".

O'Connell, pp. 107,125.

supplies at market prices above those which his competitors paid. At the same time the Times and P-I and the Star all lowered their newsstand prices from five to two cents per copy forcing the UR to follow suit. This deprived the poorly capitalized labor paper of vital resources at a critical time. The UR needed every penny to fight the sedition charges pending against its officers and employees, to fight to regain its mail privileges, and to fight for labor against the employers' widening open shop campaign. Indeed, Blethen's attacks on the UR may be seen as an integral component of the employers' strategem.<sup>17</sup>

It is not hard to understand why the employers seized upon the pretext of the Centralia "massacre" to launch their open shop campaign, or why they directed their initial assaults at the UR, or why the popular press led the fight. The popular press spoke for those interests allied in AIS and the other employer associations behind the American Plan. They played the same role in the employers' organization as the UR played in the labor movement. Not only did they dislike the UR's ideological role, they also disliked the UR's economic competition. At a time when most Seattle newspapers had been losing money for years the UR was drawing readers and advertising revenue away from them. At the same time they disliked the UR for its role in local politics. Before the Centralia "massacre" the UR was conducting a vigorous campaign for labor-supported candidates in the up-coming School Board and Port Commission elections. In fact, George P. Listman, president of the UR's board of control and prominent in several other

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<sup>17</sup>O'Connell, pp. 108,114-115; Sister Maria Veronica, pp. 7-11.

labor-financed enterprizes, was one of labor's School Board candidates. His arrest on sedition charges undoubtedly had a negative effect on his campaign.<sup>18</sup>

Thus, the Centralia "massacre" put labor on the defensive. The absence of liberal voices in the community protesting the treatment meted out to the "legitimate" labor movement, if not the IWW, seemed to justify the radicals' doctrine that the working classes had nothing in common with the bourgeoisie. It also tended to discredit those labor conservatives, like George P. Listman, who advocated Gompers' non-partisan political approach. It weakened the AFL loyalists by showing how ineffective the AFL was in protecting labor's interests and strengthened the radicals. Although only a few months before the conservatives had sidetracked the OBU forces the repressive response to the Centralia "massacre" revived interest in industrial unionism and an independent labor party.<sup>19</sup>

Only occasionally did the labor movement go on the offensive in this period. The employers were practically unchecked, but sometimes they went too far. On 15 November the Seattle Business Chronicle published an editorial entitled "THE THING--THE CAUSE--THE CURE" which advocated violence and vigilantism as a cure for labor radicalism. The editorial was clearly directed at the labor movement as a whole although it concentrated on the radicals in the SCLC and drew its inspiration from the Centralia "massacre". Such an open threat was too blatant even for the police to ignore. Acting on a

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<sup>18</sup>O'Connell, pp. 108,133-134; Short to Gompers, 14 Nov. 1919, Box 35, WSFL Records.

<sup>19</sup>Cravens, pp. 94-95.

complaint from the Seattle Metal Trades Council the police arrested BC's publisher, Edwin Selvin, for sedition and confiscated that issue of the paper. A week later Selvin was rearrested and charged with criminal syndicalism as well.<sup>20</sup>

It was at this point that the WSFL concluded that it would have to take some action lest it begin to undermine its hard-won authority among the rank and file of the labor movement. President Short concluded that the labor situation and the political environment were so dangerous that outside help was needed. He suggested that labor send a representative to Washington, D.C. to explain the situation to the AFL and the officers of the international unions. He also requested that the AFL's executive council schedule an emergency meeting to discuss the problems. Two days later, at the unanimous request of the SCLC, Short himself left for Washington, D.C. On the trip Short took with him representatives of the UR, the SCLC, and the State Department of Labor and asked the AFL officers to meet with him as soon as he arrived.<sup>21</sup>

In Short's absence the anti-labor campaign continued unabated. On 2 December a Seattle grand jury indicted Ault and the other UR officers under the Espionage Act but dismissed the sedition charges against Selvin after he apologized.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Selvin was quickly freed on bond, pending a hearing on his case which was appended to those of the UR's officers and employees. O'Connell, pp. 110-111.

<sup>21</sup>Short to F. Morrison, 18 Nov. 1919; Short to Gompers and Morrison, 20 Nov. 1919, Box 35, WSFL Records; Minutes, 19 Nov. 1919, Box 8, KCCLC Records; O'Connell, p. 113.

<sup>22</sup>The criminal syndicalism charges against Selvin, however, still

Meanwhile, in Washington, D.C., Short frantically sought to ease the Post Office's ban on the UR. With the help of AFL leaders he managed to get William H. Lamar, the solicitor of Post Office Department, to remove the blanket restriction and convinced him to bar only particular offensive issues from the mails. This meant the UR could return to full scale operation. It was clear to everyone on the labor scene, however, that there had been a coordinated effort to use the Centralia violence to crush the labor movement.<sup>23</sup>

To a certain extent the events in Seattle and Washington, D.C. tended to obscure the proximate cause of the uproar, the Centralia "massacre." In fact, as later events proved, the "massacre" had merely been the incendiary spark which touched off a carefully prepared bonfire planned by the employers. Afterwards it served them as a perfect justification. Still both sides focussed considerable attention on the proceedings in Centralia for on the outcome rested the validity of their other positions. As a result large numbers of anxious on-lookers, reporters, and national guardsmen, swarmed around Centralia, especially near the court house. Soon the quiet village had a "boom town" atmosphere.<sup>24</sup>

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stood. The jury's lenient treatment of Selvin is not surprising. Ebenezer Shorrock, Listman's opponent in the School Board race, was the foreman of the grand jury.

UR 19 Nov., 3 Dec. 1919; O'Connell, p. 112.

<sup>23</sup>Gompers, at Short's request, had also agreed to ask Attorney-General A. Mitchell Palmer to intervene on behalf of the IWW and the UR without success.

O'Connell, pp. 115-116; Gompers to Short, 15 Nov. 1919, 20 Nov. 1919; Palmer to Gompers, 17 Nov. 1919, Box 3-11, WSFL Records.

<sup>24</sup>UR 2,8,14,16,20 Jan. 1920. For evidence of local hostility to the IWW, see: Aberdeen World 14 Nov. 1919; Elma Chronicle 20 Nov. 1919; Montesano Vidette 14,21 Nov. 1919. For evidence of the American Legion "running" Centralia, see: Centralia Daily Chronicle 12,21,24 Nov. 1919;

It also became apparent that the accused wobblies could not receive a fair trial in Centralia's fevered atmosphere. The unruly mob of spectators who camped out on the courthouse steps, who jammed the courtrooms, and who were obviously biased against the defendants prejudiced the case of the imprisoned men.<sup>25</sup>

In addition, the court itself showed bias. Elmer Smith, chief counsel for the wobblies and George Vandever, the famous Seattle labor lawyer who had volunteered his services to the defendants, were both arrested on trumped-up charges a week before the trial was scheduled to begin. Judge John M. Wilson, in particular, showed partisanship. First he agreed to grant a change of venue to nearby Montsano. Then, possibly due to outside pressure, he reversed himself. Then, despite the fact that many local newspapers carried numerous articles prejudicial to the defense, Wilson ruled that they were inadmissible as the basis for a second request for a change of venue on the grounds that only new evidence, discovered since the previous denial of a venue change, could be admitted. Although a coroner's investigation failed to produce any evidence to show that any of the eleven accused wobblies had been personally responsible for any of the killings, despite evidence that they fired in clear self-defense, and despite evidence that several of the deceased had previously attacked and destroyed the defendants' property and threatened their lives, Wilson allowed the trial to continue.<sup>26</sup>

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and Pullen, pp. 34-35.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

The accused, of course, suffered under the terrible pressure and constantly feared for their lives but, in general, seemed to bear up well. At their arraignment, on 27 December, they all pleaded not guilty to charges of first degree murder and, when they gave their first press interview two months after the tragedy, they seemed well-groomed, cheerful, and un-afraid to the reporters.<sup>27</sup>

The defendants may have been encouraged when the court finally did agree to grant a change of venue to Montesano. This also led to the appointment of a new judge. But, while it removed one element of the forces aligned against them, it did not help the defendants very much. In addition to their other problems the wobblies found it hard to produce a valid legal defense for their actions on 11 November. The defense tried to argue that the defendants had not planned to kill anyone, as the prosecution contended, but had merely been trying to defend their lives and property from an expected raiding party. Even an impartial jury might have doubted this explanation in view of the fact that the wobblies had not confined themselves to defending their own property, but had also stationed snipers in adjacent buildings. It is not surprising, therefore, that the jury did not believe, or was "influenced" not to believe, their story. The presence of federal troops, assigned to keep order in Montesano during the trial, may also

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<sup>27</sup>Not all of the men bore their tribulations with equanimity. Loren Roberts, the only defendant who admitted firing his weapon, was driven insane by the pressure, particularly by the memory of Wesley Everest's mutilated remains. His co-defendants and jailers alike held this view. Nevertheless, Judge Wilson denied a motion to try his case separately on grounds of insanity.

UR 14,26 Jan. 1920.

have influenced the jury, since they were always in plain sight.<sup>28</sup>

Thus, despite evidence to support mitigating circumstances, despite the change of venue, despite the mental condition of one of the defendants, in March 1920 the jury found all but two of the defendants guilty. In so doing they ignored the fact that the prosecution never actually proved that the IWW "snipers" had been following anyone's instructions. In addition, the jury found two of the defendants guilty of third degree murder, a crime for which they had not been tried. Although it is clear that few participants in the proceedings were debating the finer points of law, or logic, this forced the judge to order the jury to reconsider their verdicts and come up with more appropriate results. After reconsidering their judgments the jurors returned a second time. This time they found seven of the defendants-- Eugene Barnett, John Lamb, O.C. Bland, Bert Bland, Britt Smith, Ray Becker, and James McInerney--guilty of second degree murder. Although the men had not been tried for this crime, either, the jury may have felt constrained to find the men guilty of something in order to satisfy public opinion. They also found Loren Roberts guilty, but insane, a verdict for which no legal precedent existed. In his case the jury may have been trying to be lenient. Indeed, there is some evidence that the jurors were looking for a way to obtain leniency for the men without at the same time placing their own lives in jeopardy. And, in

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<sup>28</sup>The federal troops arrived in Montesano on 25 February 1920. They remained until the trial ended. The prosecutor had invited them without consulting either the sheriff or the court. The troops bivouacked near the courthouse, within sight of the jurors. When Vandever tried to object, the judge over-ruled him. The American Legion was also in prominent attendance. They paid numbers of ex-soldiers to attend the trial, paying them \$4.00 per day to pack the courtroom, wearing their uniforms.

Federal Council of Churches, pp. 7,29.



fact, they appended a request for leniency to their verdict.<sup>29</sup>

The jury found only two of the defendants, Elmer Smith and Mike Sheehan, not guilty. The case against Bert Faulkner, the remaining defendant, had been dismissed previously for lack of evidence. If the jury actually hoped to ameliorate the judge's sentences, however, it miscalculated. The judge ignored the jury's recommendations and sentenced the seven men guilty of second degree murder to terms ranging from twenty-five to forty years.<sup>30</sup>

On the other hand, a jury of labor representatives, appointed by the SCLC at the request of the Metal Trades Council to observe the trial, found the defendants not guilty and reported that the press had distorted the actual trial testimony. For this reason and because of the nature of the trial and its participants the case did not end with the sentencing. Liberal groups, such as the American Civil Liberties Union, joined with labor and church groups to lobby for a new trial, pardons, or commutations of the sentences. Several such campaigns, some sponsored by the IWW and supported by the SCLC and WSFL, were launched during the 1920's to gain the prisoners' release. They were of no avail. Several of the men died in prison and the others refused to accept less than full pardons. As late as 1939 the case remained a principal cause celebre in liberal and labor

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<sup>29</sup>Loren Roberts spent a short time in an insane asylum. Then, the State moved him to Walla Walla with the other IWW prisoners. In August 1930 a judge finally freed him after ruling that he had regained his sanity.

Federal Council of Churches, pp. 7,30.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

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<sup>31</sup>Minutes, 14,28 Jan. 1920; 3,17 March 1920, Box 8, KCCLC Records; American Civil Liberties Union, The Record of the Fight for Free Speech in 1923: the Works of the A.C.L.U., January to December 1923, (New York, 1924), pp. 10,16; Ralph Chaplin, The Truth About the Armistice Day Tragedy, (Chicago, 1924), passim; "From a Centralia Prisoner," Christian Century XLVI (8 May 1929), p. 619; and Albert F. Gunns, "Ray Becker, the Last Centralia Prisoner," Pacific Northwest Quarterly LIX (April 1968), pp. 88-89; Johansen, p. 487.

## Section Five:

### The Open Shop Offensive, October 1919-September 1920

While the Centralia case wound its way through the courts to its unhappy conclusion the open shop campaign in Seattle gained momentum on its own. Since the formation of AIS labor had known that the employers were up to something but they suspected neither the scale nor the vehemence of their efforts. At first labor hoped that AIS's propaganda calling for "fairness" in labor-management relations might presage more leniency than they had previously experienced. They were encouraged to believe this by statements from AIS's leadership such as the following by Frank Waterhouse, president of AIS:

...The Associated Industries of Seattle is by no means opposed to trade or labor unions or to organized labor; but it is unalterably opposed to the closed shop, which system means that a working man cannot seek a job unless he belongs to some particular union, and an employer can't comply. We are for the open shop, the fair square American plan of industry which permits the union man, as well as the non-union man to find a job.<sup>1</sup>

It was not until October 1919, just before the open shop campaign was scheduled to burst forth in public, that labor realized the full extent of what was to come. In that month William Short naively proposed to Frank Waterhouse that the WSFL and AIS cooperate to reduce industrial inequities. He proposed that the two organizations hold joint conferences to work out plans to adjust industrial disputes. Short realized his error when Waterhouse summarily rejected these overtures and said that AIS did not recognize WSFL unions as the sole bargaining agents of their employees. At the same time Short reported

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<sup>1</sup>Friedheim, pp. 160-161; Winslow, pp. 98-99; Short, p. 19.

in growing alarm to Frank Morrison that the WSFL was in the "throes of a general open shop fight especially in (the) building and printing trades." The employers, he wrote, had cut off communications with the labor movement. Herman A. Horowitz, chairman of the Seattle Employing Printers Association, for example, had written to the chairman of the SCLC's Printing Trades Section:

In reply to your communication of the twentieth instant I beg to inform you that Seattle is an open shop town, insofar as the offices controlled by the Employing Printers Association are concerned. I assure you that should any vacancies occur in any of our offices, we would be glad to consider any and all applicants regardless of union affiliations...<sup>2</sup>

Such rejections quickly disabused Short of any illusions he may have entertained regarding the policies of AIS. He immediately called on the international officers of the printing and building trades unions to help their local organizations in the emergency and asked for an extraordinary meeting of all presidents, business agents, and secretaries of the WSFL's Seattle affiliates to consider the alternatives. The meeting had a special urgency since many of the locals concerned were already involved in strikes and had their backs to the wall. Also, since the SCLC was so wracked by its internal disputes it was virtually useless as a coordinating body.<sup>3</sup>

The conservatives in the SCLC vigorously supported these proposals and added their own. The Seattle Joint Council of Teamsters

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<sup>2</sup>Short, p. 15; Dickson, pp. 54-55; Short to Morrison, 23 Oct. 1919; Short and L.W. Buck to Gompers, 31 Oct. 1919, Box 35, WSFL Records; Minutes, 29 Oct. 1919, Box 8, KCCLC Records. See also: Winslow, p. 99; UR 30 Oct., 15 Dec. 1919; WSFL Procs., (1920), pp. 7-8.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

No. 28 moved adoption of a resolution to hold SCLC meetings in "executive session" in order to "expedite business" and to prevent the radicals from packing the galleries and obstructing adoption of coherent policies.<sup>4</sup>

With the support of those SCLC leaders who remained loyal to the AFL the conservatives also managed to convince the delegates to the extraordinary meeting that the SCLC needed a much more effective decision-making structure. As a result, the delegates created a special sub-committee patterned after the committee which had conducted the general strike and also referred to as the Committee of Fifteen, or the Strategy Committee. The Committee of Fifteen, like its predecessor during the general strike, consisted of delegates from each of the SCLC's trade sections. It was given wide latitude in formulating the SCLC's response to the open shop campaign.<sup>5</sup>

By so husbanding and focussing their energies in the hands of a few responsible union leaders, Short and his allies hoped to achieve the unity previously lacking under the democratic, but chaotic,

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<sup>4</sup>Shortly thereafter the WSFL's executive board voted in "special session" to request the AFL to call a special convention to consider an offensive and defensive alliance against the nationwide open shop campaign.

Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>The Committee was authorized to direct the defense of the entire Seattle labor movement, without reference to the SCLC as a whole. Later the SCLC endorsed this delegation of its authority. In addition, central labor councils throughout the state copies the Seattle formula.

Operating independently from the SCLC, the committee had powers to solicit funds from affiliated organizations, to meet daily, and to publish its own propaganda. Its most significant power, however, was that of strike sanction. With this power, the committee could deny labor support to any local which struck in violation of its contract, without good prospects of victory. It could also deny support to locals whose struggle the committee did not consider essential to the labor movement.

Ibid.

methods then in force.<sup>6</sup>

The committee may have served an ulterior purpose as well. It provided a counter-balance to the radicals in the SCLC. An important provision of the committee's charter was that, unlike the General Strike Committee, it contained non-SCLC members. William Short and L.W. Buck were given ex officio positions on the committee. By this device Short and his allies gained increased influence over the policy of the SCLC and strengthened the hand of the conservative faction in the SCLC.<sup>7</sup>

In another move which also increased the power of the conservatives the SCLC adopted a recommendation which changed the executive board's regular meetings so that they no longer conflicted with the SCLC's sessions. This enabled Duncan and Doyle to turn over <sup>to</sup> ~~the~~ the executive board:

...such matters as will facilitate the business of the council and give speedy action to matters of vital interest to the unions affiliated. The board (is) to act in conjunction with and in harmony with the Committee of Fifteen.

It greatly eased their problems in controlling the radical forces in the council.<sup>8</sup>

Quickly the committee went to work. One of its first acts was

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<sup>6</sup>One of the committee's first actions was to allocate half of its total resources for the Union Record Defense Fund. Without the ability to promulgate its point of view, the labor movement could not counter that of the employers.

Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Later, early in 1920, when four new members were added to the committee, most came from the conservative craft unions.

UR 26 Jan. 1920.

<sup>8</sup>Minutes, 5 Nov. 1919, Box 8, KCCLC Records.

to appeal to local union members to contribute one day's pay per week to finance the struggle. The committee declared that labor's three main goals were attainment of the union shop, defeat of the American Plan, and support of the UR in its legal battles and financial difficulties. By this technique the committee hoped to raise \$10.00 per week per union member on strike (or as much of the balance as the strikers' own locals could not provide). At the same time the committee tried to persuade some employers to sign union contracts. The committee also sought the aid of the international unions.<sup>9</sup>

Despite enormous difficulties the committee did achieve some successes. For example, it convinced the Shoe Repairmen's Union to call off their strike against their employers on the grounds that it was a needless drain on the SCLC's resources. Mainly, however, the committee served as a counter-propaganda device. The committee tried to associate AIS with the eastern capitalists who were commonly supposed to be planning the destruction of the local shipbuilding industry. It printed advertisements which compared AIS's anti-labor campaign with that currently being waged in the big steel strike by "Judge" Elbert Gary, head of United States Steel Corporation. The committee charged that Seattle's employers were trying to adapt

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<sup>9</sup>The committee's efforts were only partly rewarded. In several cases employers did sign union contracts in spite of the AIS pressure, but the international unions proved to be nearly as much of a hindrance as a help. For example, when the international officers of the printing trades unions arrived in Seattle to negotiate with the job printers, they agreed to a open shop settlement. Most importantly, the building trades were forced back to work under open shop conditions.

O'Connell, pp. 113,132; Friedheim, p. 160; Thompson, p. 67; UR 15,31 Dec. 1919; WSFL Procs., (1920), p. 8; Minutes, 19 Nov. 1919, Box 8, KCCLC Records.

Judge Gary's ethnic divide and conquer tactics to Seattle. It also attacked AIS's claim to represent public opinion. When AIS boasted that it had 1,700 members in Seattle alone the committee pointed out that this was only a small fraction of Seattle's 400,000 residents and that it was even a small fraction of the 6,000 businessmen in Seattle. The committee demanded that AIS reflect on these facts before they contemplated speaking for the whole city again.<sup>10</sup>

The significance of these developments lies in the growing cooperation between the committee, the UR, the SCLC, and the WSFL, which lay behind them. The committee supported the UR's fund drives and the SCLC's legislative funds. In return, the SCLC became more conservative. It shrugged off old policies and moved closer to the WSFL's line. On 6 November, for example, the SCLC discharged all committees still working on the Mooney case and ordered them to stop fundraising. On 19 November the SCLC adopted a resolution expelling all IWW's from its affiliates and it barred reporters for the radical Forge and International Weekly from SCLC meetings. The SCLC also banned all "obnoxious literature" from the Labor Temple. The key factor beginning to be evident since the OBU vote was the support the leadership lent to the conservative initiatives. To a large extent they had abandoned the radicals.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Gary was leader of the national open shop forces.  
UR 6,7 Jan. 1920.

<sup>11</sup>It would be a mistake, however, to read too much into this cooperation. It was largely the function of necessity. As soon as the open shop campaign subsided, the radical forces returned to their anti-conservative policies. Similarly, the effect of the Centralia "massacre" was to drive the centrist forces closer to the Left. And



One should not forget the context of these events: the Centralia case, the prosecution of the UR, the persecution of known or suspected IWW's aliens, or Bolshevik sympathizers. Throughout this period, for example, the Seattle police, citing Ordinance No. 39,993--the so-called "anti-red law"--made frequent "sweeps" of working class taverns, pool halls, and "flophouses" during which they picked up anyone who looked suspicious. On just one day early in 1920, for example, the UR reported on a hearing in the cases of four American-born union men and seven Russians who had been arrested by Sergeant P.F. O'Keefe's "red squad." The union men arrested included a UR newsdealer, two longshoremen (one of whom was a delegate to the SCLC), and one Peter Smith, who had been arrested for selling copies of the Force.<sup>12</sup>

In a typical "sweep" the police picked up as many as several

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many of the SCLC's anti-radical moves were for public consumption only. UR 6,7 Jan. 1920; O'Connell, p. 113; F. Morrison to Short, 6 Nov. 1919, Box 4-7, WSFL Records; Minutes, 19,29 Oct. 1919, Box 8; 5 Nov. 1919, Box 15, KCCLC Records.

<sup>12</sup>The clear object of these arrests was to harrass the radicals and the union men and aliens, not to really punish them. The police court judge did not mete out stiff sentences. He reduced bail from \$250.00 to \$100.00 and continued the cases for three weeks. Usually, in such cases, the charges were later dropped. Still, the sentences were sufficient, due to the poverty of the accused, to cause significant hardship. Similar events occurred in other cities across the nation, coordinated by the Justice Department.

Another anti-radical ordinance, introduced in the city council, in July 1919, would have allowed the city to abate as a common nuisance any building "owned, leased, rented, or occupied, or...used as the headquarters or meeting place of the Industrial Workers of the World or its kindred affiliated organizations, or its agents, or any organized branch of any anarchistic organization." It failed to pass due to the objections raised by Council President W.D. Lane and pro-labor councilmen R.B. Hesketh, T.H. Bolton, and O.T. Erickson. Since the ordinance carried the emergency clause it required seven out of nine council votes to pass. Thus, the four councilmen who opposed it were able to block its passage.

UR 10 Aug. 1919, 6 Jan. 1920; Friedheim, p. 173; O'Connell,

hundred vagrants, workers, union members, aliens, and IWW's and held them over-night for questioning. The next morning they usually released most of the prisoners, except for a few who were found to be genuine criminals, illegal aliens, or radicals. By far the most numerous group harrassed in this manner were the new immigrants and it rapidly became an important issue to them. One of the few organizations to support the civil rights of the immigrants was the SCLC. In response to such abuses and to protests from the leaders of Seattle's Russian community the SCLC appointed a five-man committee to investigate the raids on alleged radicals in Seattle and throughout the country. The scope of this committee included all violations of constitutional rights. A similar committee was set up to investigate the slaying of John Martin, a union auto driver, by a strike-breaker employed by the Seattle Taxicab Company, but none of these committees achieved any apparent results.<sup>13</sup>

After the dismissal of the charges against the UR and its officers some of the steam seemed to go out of the open shop drive. Probably the employers began to feel the impact of labor's propaganda counter-attack. Still, it was not until mid-1920 that the open shop drive really began to wane and then it was probably due more to the onset of a massive economic slowdown than anything else. At the same

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p. 98; Business Chronicle VII (2 Aug. 1919), p. 110.

<sup>13</sup>In one raid, on 6 January 1920, the UR reported that Police Chief Joel Warren had raided the offices of the IWW's Defense Committee, organized to help the imprisoned defendants in the Centralia case and confiscated "everything in the place."

UR 6,8,22 Jan. 1920; Friedheim, p. 173; O'Connell, pp. 60-61.

time, however, labor's propaganda campaign was skillfully designed to exploit the economic liabilities of the employers.<sup>14</sup>

Finally, in September 1920, the employers called a complete halt to their open shop campaign, attributing the present low levels of production to the high cost of living rather than trade unionism alone. They even accepted part of the blame, along with the unions, for the slowdown. In a conciliatory report entitled Profitism, Slackism, and You, the Seattle Chamber of Commerce and Commercial Club recommended scientific management, an humane approach to labor-management relations, and a shop committee system, instead of the American Plan. With a huge sigh of relief the labor movement accepted this reversal of AIS's policy as a welcome move in the right direction.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>For more on labor's efforts to show that the open shop was responsible for the depression, see: UR 21,23,26 Jan., 12,22,25,31 March, 2 April 1920; O'Connell, pp. 122,135-140.

For the UR's successful propaganda attack on Seattle's banks, see: Short to Morrison, 5 March 1920, Box 35, WSFL Records; UR 31 March, 2 April 1920; O'Connell, pp. 135-140.

<sup>15</sup>The end of the campaign did not mean adoption of the closed or union shop. The employers did not immediately recognize their employees' right to bargain collectively. Instead, it meant that they gave up their forward strategy. Instead of a wholesale attack on the labor movement, they conducted piecemeal, selective attacks against targets of opportunity. In the 1920's they were far more successful using these tactics than they had been with their open shop drive in 1919-1920.

O'Connell, p. 143; UR 11 Oct. 1920.

## Chapter 6:

### The Conservatives Lose Control:

#### The Rise of the Farmer-Labor Party, 1920

In 1920, Washington's economy continued to grow. Most of this growth, however, was concentrated in the first half of the year. After mid-1920, economic activity declined rapidly affecting both industrial and agricultural sectors of the economy. The major causes of this recession were the cancellation of government shipbuilding contracts and the first post-war harvest in Europe. The first resulted in the loss of thousands of urban jobs; the second led to a major reduction in wheat prices, production, and exports. Meanwhile, however, the wartime inflation continued to roar ahead. By mid-1920 the Seattle consumer price index was 17.6 per cent higher than in 1919. Then came the crash between May 1920 and July 1921. The University of Washington's College of Business Administration estimated that the cost of living for a Seattle family of five dropped by twenty per cent.<sup>1</sup>

The post-war recession came at a bad time, just as the economy was forced to absorb thousands of returning veterans. In 1920 the state's labor force grew by 2.12 per cent to 578,000, faster than at

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<sup>1</sup>Dorothy O. Johansen, Empire of the Columbia: A History of the Pacific Northwest, 2d ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), pp. 487-489, 626; College of Business Administration, University of Washington, "Report of Change in Cost of Living in Seattle from May 1920 to November 1921," Washington State Federation of Labor Records.

any time since 1910-1911. In the meantime the number of jobs available, which had declined sharply in 1919 from its wartime peak, declined again by 1.38 per cent to 570,000. But whereas the decline in employment in 1919 had merely cut into the negative unemployment rate, that of 1920 produced a positive unemployment rate for the first time since 1916. Unemployment increased by 164.41 per cent to 7,700. This, however, represented only 1.33 per cent of the labor force. Toward the end of the year unemployment began to grow more serious. Between 1919-1921 the number of production workers engaged in manufacturing in the state declined by about 50,000. Most of these were members of new immigrant groups. (Tables No. 1 and 5)<sup>2</sup>

Though most of the workers thrown out of work by the recession were not organized, membership in WSFL and SCLC unions fell sharply too. The bulk of this decline, however, occurred in the second half of 1920. As late as June 1920, membership in WSFL unions had increased by 5.53 per cent, over 1919, to a new peak of 55,544, or 9.56 per cent of the state's labor force. (Table No. 2) By that time there were 334 local organizations affiliated with the WSFL.<sup>3</sup>

Overall, the SCLC fared less well than the WSFL. Since most of the shipbuilding workers lived in Seattle, the recession struck there

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<sup>2</sup>Johansen, p. 627; United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Union Scale of Wages and Hours of Labor, May 15, 1921, No. 302 (Washington, D.C., 1922), p. 19; Union Scale of Wages and Hours of Labor, May 15, 1922, No. 325 (Washington, D.C., 1923), pp. 61-63; and Retail Prices, 1913 to December 1921, No. 315, (Washington, D.C., 1922), pp. 15,50-51; Mayor Caldwell to W.M. Short, 17 Sept. 1921; R. Kinnear to Short, 18 Jan. 1922, Box 21-51; Short to H.W. Fox, 30 Jan. 1922, Box 35, WSFL Records; Seattle UR 10,16,17 Jan. 1920-Jan. 1922.

<sup>3</sup>WSFL Procs., (1919), p. 59.

hardest. Yet, here too, the rapid growth of SCLC membership early in 1920 concealed the drop later in the year. By June 1920 membership in SCLC unions stood at 21,501, down only 1.23 per cent from the previous year. Virtually all of the losses were concentrated in the Metal and Maritime Trades sections, although the Miscellaneous and Printing Trades sections also lost members. The Brewery/Provision, Building, and Amusement Trades sections actually gained members. (Table No. 3) One important effect of this was to weaken the radical new immigrants in the SCLC, vis-a-vis the old immigrants. (Table No. 5)

In June 1920 there were 132 SCLC-affiliated locals, an increase of 7 over 1919. Of these, however, only 66 were affiliated with the WSFL. Most of the 66 non-WSFL locals and many of the WSFL locals (perhaps as many as half) were small radically oriented locals. They contained large numbers of new immigrants, who suffered severely in the recession. Their declining strength and economic prospects led them to advocate ever-more-radical solutions. At the same time their growing relative strength encouraged the conservative unions to resist their demands.<sup>4</sup>

Politically, the conservative and moderate craft unions tried desperately to revive the progressive, non-partisan coalition. It represented, for them, the only alternative to one of the socialistic, or communist splinters. In 1919, as we have seen, they joined with the Grange and the Railroad Brotherhoods to form the Washington State Triple Alliance to coordinate their political activities. Unfortunately,

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid.; Membership and Per Capita Tax Records, 1907-1957, Box 11, King County Central Labor Council Records, University of Washington Library.

personal and organizational rivalries weakened the WSTA and prevented unified action. Similarly, policy differences, particularly over Prohibition, rent the organization. While a large majority of the Grange strongly supported Prohibition, a large majority of the WSFL opposed it. The many Protestant fundamentalist groups in the Grange endorsed Prohibition, while the many Catholic and immigrant groups in the WSFL opposed it. A minority of WSFL Protestants, especially those led by James Duncan in the SCLC, supported Prohibition.<sup>5</sup>

The problems inherent in the WSTA for the labor movement soon became apparent. In Seattle, the local WSTA organization was controlled by Duncan and his allies in the SCLC. They were intent upon transforming the WSTA into a third party. However, a large minority, perhaps a majority, of the union men in Seattle remained committed to one of the existing parties, or to the WSFL's non-partisan approach. The conservatives warned Duncan and his allies that they might split the labor movement if they moved too far in this direction, but they, under increasing pressure from the Left in the wake of the general strike, the Mooney controversy, the OBU affair, the Centralia "massacre",

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<sup>5</sup>Pullen, p. 180; Norman H. Clark, The Dry Years, Prohibition and Social Change in Washington, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1965), pp. 147-148.

For more on the lack of political coordination and organizational efforts of the WSTA, see: Executive Board Minutes, 9,10,12,13 Jan. 1920, Box 60, WSFL Records; Minutes, 21,28 Jan., 4 Feb. 1920, Box 8, KCCLC Records; Hamilton Cravens, "A History of the Washington Farmer-Labor Party, 1918-1924," (M.A. Thesis, University of Washington, 1962), pp. 60,100-101; Washington State Federation of Labor, Proceedings of the 1920 Convention, (Olympia, 1920), pp. 22-24.

For more on the personal conflicts and distance between WSTA leadership groups, see: Robert Leslie Cole, "The Democratic Party in Washington State, 1919-1933: Barometer of Social Change," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Washington, 1972), pp. 110-111; WSFL Procs., (1920), pp. 22-23.

and the open shop fight, felt they had to demonstrate their Left-wing sympathies.

The campaign began late in 1919, when the King County Triple Alliance first began to organize. In December 1919 the KCTA endorsed Mrs. Lorene Wiswell Wilson and George P. Listman for the school board and J.A. McCorkle for the port commission. Later, the WSFL endorsed the slate. Listman and Wilson, running on a common platform, called for "academic freedom," endorsed the right of teachers to organize and have a greater say in school policies and their own conditions. They endorsed equal pay for female teachers, opposed the so-called "merit system" of determining salaries, promised to place telephones in the schools and to resume the school building program.<sup>6</sup>

In the city council races, the SCLC had endorsed a full nine-man slate of candidates, including the three labor-endorsed incumbents: O.T. Erickson, W.D. Lane, and Robert Hesketh. The radicals in the SCLC, however, succeeded in placing Ben F. Nauman, of the Hoisting Engineers Union Local, on the list. He had been chairman of the general strike Committee of Fifteen and was currently city Boiler Inspector. C.L. Gallant, another radical, was also on the list. For mayor, the SCLC endorsed James A. Duncan, their secretary. Politically, Duncan resembled a social democrat. That is, he advocated radical economic and political parties, but only within the structure of the AFL and the existing political system. Except for the fact that he was a

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<sup>6</sup>Wilson and Listman were basically conservative in their approach. McCorkly, a former socialist orator and president of the KCTA leaned further to the Left. Their major problem was that their proposals would all cost money.



deeply religious man (sanctimonious in the view of his enemies) he might have been a social democrat. In addition he strongly supported Prohibition.<sup>7</sup>

On 9-10 January 1920 the KCTA endorsed the entire SCLC slate. The problem was that most of the candidates, including all of the incumbents, were very uncomfortable with this support, fearing that it might jeopardize their chances. They did not wish to be associated with a potential third party. They did not want to be associated with Duncan or prohibitionism. They did not want to jeopardize their support from the WSFL. Thus, the incumbents and most of the candidates endorsed by the KCTA tried to put distance between themselves and the Alliance. Hesketh, for instance, repudiated the KCTA's endorsement.<sup>8</sup>

Duncan, on the other hand, welcomed the KCTA's support. This so angered the incumbents and their conservative allies that they refused to endorse him. On 23 January, all three of the conservative incumbents boycotted a large Duncan-for-Mayor rally sponsored by the KCTA. The commercial press used this split to advantage, congratulating the labor movement for not supporting the radicals. The Seattle Times,

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<sup>7</sup>Labor was on the defensive from the beginning of the campaign. For example, in November 1919 the KCTA's school board candidate, G.P. Listman, who was also president of the UR's board of directors and involved with many other labor-run enterprises, was arrested on sedition charges stemming from a UR editorial on the Centralia massacre. Despite his conservative credentials, his KCTA support condemned him in the eyes of the Establishment.

Mary Joan O'Connell, "The Seattle Union Record, 1918-1928: A Pioneer Labor Daily," (M.A. Thesis: University of Washington, 1964), pp. 100-101; Cravens, p. 95; UR 10 November 1919, 1, 8 January 1920.

<sup>8</sup>The main issues in the council races were: park improvement bonds, street construction bonds, and West Waterway bridge bonds.

Short to Gompers, 14 Nov. 1919, Box 35, WSFL Records; Cravens, p. 90; O'Connell, pp. 151, 153; Times 17 Jan. 1920; UR 20-23 Jan. 1920.

for example, heartily endorsed Hesketh's candidacy because he was "leading the fight against the element in the Central Labor Council which has trailed along with Secretary James A. Duncan." Soon afterward, however, the KCTA began to back away from its position and denied that it had actually endorsed any candidates at all.<sup>9</sup>

Duncan faced two opponents in the mayoralty primary. C.B. Fitzgerald, the incumbent mayor, had acceded to power when Ole Hanson had decided to resign. Fitzgerald, a Catholic, was extremely conservative and won the support of the organized businessmen. He also had the support of C.B. Blethen, publisher of the Times, who especially approved Fitzgerald's virulent anti-union policies. In return, Fitzgerald reserved his greatest praise for "Americanism" and the American Plan, the employers' code words for the open shop. Hugh Caldwell, the other candidate, although nearly as conservative as Fitzgerald, refrained from overt attacks on the labor movement and refused to spend all his time attacking Duncan. He down-played his anti-labor policies. This angered Blethen, who felt that all of the Establishment candidates should submerge their own interests in the battle to defeat Duncan. Caldwell ignored these attacks and ran his own campaign.<sup>10</sup>

As a result of the split in the anti-labor forces, Duncan ran

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<sup>9</sup>W.J. Dickson, "Labor in Municipal Politics: A Study of Labor's Political Policies and Activities in Seattle," (M.A. Thesis: University of Washington, 1928), pp. 86-87, 108-136, 138; O'Connell, pp. 153-154, 157; Times 12, 27, 29, 31 Jan., 2, 3, 5, 9 Feb. 1920; UR 26 Jan. 1920; P-I 15 Feb. 1920.

<sup>10</sup>O'Connell, pp. 154-155; P-I 4, 20 Jan., 5 Feb. 1920; UR 14, 26 Jan., 10, 12 Feb. 1920.

ahead of Fitzgerald in the primary, to the dismay of Blethen and the employers. In addition, the three labor-endorsed councilmen and the two radical challengers won places on the general election ballot. Labor's position looked formidable indeed. This did not last long. When the race narrowed to Duncan and Caldwell, Blethen and the employers abandoned their attacks on Caldwell and endorsed him. Caldwell's press support solidified. Meanwhile, Duncan's liabilities increased. Instead of a divided opposition, he faced their combined forces alone. The Times and the P-I renewed their attacks on him and published Caldwell's condemnation of him for leading the general strike, for opposing the war, for attending the Mooney convention, and for plotting to split the AFL by defending the "red" element in the SCLC. The Times editorialized:

Never in all the history of Seattle has the sky been so threatening, the horizon so black. Duncan's election would, of course, be followed by a general strike....Soviet government in Seattle would last just long enough for federal troops to arrive, but meanwhile, the City would be set back at least 100 years.

In fact, the chances that Duncan would win the election were very slim. As the campaign progressed his forces had lost cohesion while those of his opponent had gained strength. Blethen's rhetoric served mainly to ensure his defeat. It also inspired a rumor that Duncan favored "the Soviet form of government," which would lead to the "nationalization of women." Unable to do much to counter the main features of Caldwell's campaign, Duncan's forces did manage to respond to the latter charge after a fashion. Through the UR they said:

Nationalization of women, did you say, Messrs Caldwell and Blethen? NOT ON YOUR LIFE! Already your kind have exacted too

much of that sort of toll. Duncan and his forces are going to try and stop it. GET THAT STRAIGHT.

Behind these brave words, however, the Duncan campaign became ever more demoralized.<sup>11</sup>

In the general election Caldwell defeated Duncan by a vote of 50,873 to 33,777, the largest margin ever given a Seattle mayor. The New York Times analyzed the result as a rejection of the "Russian gospel," but it was more than that. In retrospect, the failure of the conservative unionists, many of them Catholic, to support him probably cost Duncan the election. Not only was Duncan a strict Presbyterian and a strong prohibitionist, he was also a British immigrant. Thus, Irish voters opposed him on religious as well as ethnic grounds. The returns showed that Duncan ran behind Erickson in both labor and non-labor precincts alike. Of the 103 members of the predominantly Protestant Street Carmen's Union who were eligible to vote in 1920, however, 62 (or 68.1 per cent) voted for Duncan, while only 19 (or 31.7 per cent) voted for Caldwell and 12 (or 11 per cent) did not vote. Following the election, when Denzil Cline interviewed many of the union's members and asked them to explain their voting behavior, their responses clearly show the ethnic basis of their political affiliation. They also show that both Duncan's and Fitzgerald's class, or economic interest group, approach led to their defeats. Most of the street carmen--like the population at large--had an anti-Catholic, anti-immigrant bias. In the primaries, they ignored Fitzgerald's anti-labor appeal, but not his religion. Said one street carman:

I know I didn't vote for Fitz, for he is a Catholic and I

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<sup>11</sup>O'Connell, p. 156; Times 25-29 Feb. 1920; UR 1 March 1920.

wouldn't vote for a Catholic if I had to vote for a horsethief. Anyway there are plenty of good men without voting for a Catholic.

Fitzgerald's Catholicism may also explain his weak performance in the wealthier neighborhoods, were a pro-business candidate would expect to do best. Similarly, Duncan's Presbyterian and British background hurt him among certain groups of workers. One of the street carmen voted against him, he said, because he hated Englishmen:

I voted against Duncan because of the attitude he took and not because he was too radical. I thought there were plenty of good Americans in Seattle without going to England to get a man for mayor.

One can easily attribute such motives to Irish-American labor voters. On the other hand, one street carman of English ancestry supported Duncan on the basis of his "personality," which may be another way of expressing ethnic sympathies. The same man supported an Anglo-American alliance of English-speaking people to rule the world.<sup>12</sup>

The failure of the conservatives to support the SCLC-KCTA candidates outraged Duncan and his followers. In return, they vowed not to cooperate fully with the WSTA. This played directly into the hands of the Left-wing. On 14 April, the SCLC voted to affiliate with the National Labor Party, which was committed to fielding an independent slate of national candidates in the fall elections. The NLP was based on the model of the British Labor Party. At the same time, however, the SCLC did agree to support the WSTA's state campaign.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>O'Connell, p. 157; Dickson, p. 108; Denzil Cline, "The Street Car Men of Seattle," (M.A. Thesis: University of Washington, 1926), pp. 132-133, 148-149; Seattle Star 3 March; New York Times 4 March; UR 5 March 1920.

<sup>13</sup>The SCLC's decision spelled ruin for the SPW. By June 1920 most of its membership had left to join the communists, or the National Labor Party. Most of those who remained later tried to cooperate with

The SCLC's decision ruined the plans of both the radicals and the conservatives. When they heard of it, the conservatives, especially those in eastern Washington, were outraged. They were aghast that the "reds" thought they could manipulate the WSTA, without giving it their wholehearted support. When the WSTA failed to take immediate action to expel the KCTA, a number of NPL organizations, including those in Spokane and Vancouver, voted to disband rather than cooperate with the KCTA. Though serious, these remained localized secession movements.<sup>14</sup>

A slightly more serious split occurred in the Grange over the formation of the WSTA. At its June convention, Grangemaster William Bouck got into an ideological battle with the conservative Yakima grangers. The conservative grangers favored a non-partisan political policy, but opposed farmer-labor political cooperation as both unworkable and undesirable. Bouck and his followers in the Puget Sound region agreed to endorse non-partisanship, but leaned toward a separate, unified "producers" party. The conservatives, who regarded Bouck's proposals as extremely radical, introduced a resolution censuring him for trying to impose his political will. With the support of some conservatives, who saw in the anti-Bouck resolution the outside interference of the National Grange leadership, Bouck turned back the censure effort by a wide margin, but the conservatives did not give up. Using their influence in the National Grange, they sought to reverse the State Grange's policies. The conflict which this produced limited

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the Farmer-Labor Party.

Barbara Winslow, "The Decline of Socialism in Washington: 1910-1925," (M.A. Thesis: University of Washington, 1969), pp. 95-96.

<sup>14</sup>Cravens, pp. 102-104.

the influence the Grange as a whole was able to employ on behalf of the WSTA.<sup>15</sup>

Meanwhile, the state's Democratic Party was destroying itself, splitting into eastern and western regional factions, and the third party movement gained momentum, drawing off support from the non-partisan progressive forces.<sup>16</sup>

The third party activity reached a peak in July 1920. In early July, the National Labor Party, meeting in Carmen's Hall, Chicago, agreed to fuse with the Committee of 48, a Left-wing splinter of the Democratic Party. It consisted, primarily, of liberal businessmen, professionals, and "labor oriented" intellectual reformers. Though not large, numerically, it had a significant political following. This convention, chaired by James A. Duncan, who was also a National Labor Party vice-president, voted to change the name of the party to the "Farmer-Labor Party." The primary motive behind the formation of the FLP was to avoid political extremism, of both Left and Right, without having to associate with the two major parties. FLP partisans viewed the Democratic and Republican parties as hopelessly

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<sup>15</sup>Although the convention defeated their resolution, the conservatives took their case to the national Grange convention. There they succeeded in passing a resolution censuring Bouck and ordering him to stand trial at the Grange's 1921 convention in Portland.

Cravens, pp. 64,67,71,154-155; Crawford, pp. 270-274; Washington State Grange, Proceedings of the Thirty-second Annual Session, (Seattle?, 1921?), pp. 17-25; UR 3,4 June 1920.

<sup>16</sup>The only good news the non-partisans received in this period came from the Railroad Brotherhoods. On 16 May their convention voted to actively support the WSTA and agreed to participate in a joint convention with the WSFL in July to decide on a political program for the fall.

For more on the Democratic Party, see: Cole, pp. 18-25; Pullen, pp. 55-56; Cravens, pp. 125-126; WSFL Procs., (1920), p. 24.

committed to the status quo, unable, or unwilling to succor the work-  
ingman. They wanted to show that democracy could work, without the  
dictatorship of the proletariat: that workers could find much in com-  
mon with farmers and other "producers." They wanted to show that  
Gompers and the labor conservatives were wrong in their assertion that  
no labor party could survive in the United States.<sup>17</sup>

While the radicals in the SCLC, who had formerly supported the  
SPW, moved more and more into the communist ranks, the SCLC leadership  
became evermore involved with the newly formed FLP. The problem with  
this was that it ran counter to the non-partisan policy of the AFL and  
the WSFL, which continued to insist that the SCLC support the WSTA.  
The leadership was caught between these two forces. They had earned  
the hatred of the Left by agreeing to submit to the AFL on the OBU  
question; if they were to persist in third party activities, they would  
also bring down upon themselves the wrath of the Right. The WSFL lost  
no time in making them aware of their choices. On 27 June, the WSFL's  
executive board voted to support a resolution at the Federation's  
Spokane convention, endorsing the WSTA and "repudiating any and all  
dual movements." The convention, itself, proceeded to affirm the AFL  
position. When it met in early July, it overwhelmingly approved the

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<sup>17</sup>In October 1919 a Washington state chapter of the Committee  
of 48, led by C.J. France, Stuart A. Rice, and W.D. Lane of Seattle,  
had been formed to oppose President Wilson's labor and economic  
policies.

It should be noted that the FLP actually contained few  
farmers at this time. The designation "Farmer" was primarily a propa-  
gandistic device since few farmers' organizations sent representatives  
to the convention.

O'Connell, pp. 159-160, 174; Cravens, pp. 112-113; Nathan Fine,  
Labor and Farmer Parties in the United States, (New York: The Rand  
School, 1928), pp. 392-394; Selig Perlman and Philip Taft, History of  
Labor in the United States, 1896-1932, 4 vols., (New York: The Mac-  
Millan Co., 1935), IV, p. 528; UR 12 July 1920.



board's recommendation. Further, it voted to approve a special assessment on all affiliates to fund the WSTA. It also reelected Short, Buck, and an even more conservative slate of district vice-presidents to the WSFL's executive board. Although the convention voted to endorse labor candidates in the state elections, it rejected all efforts to endorse the FLP. In a letter to Gompers, shortly after the convention, Short credited his careful preparations for the conservatives' success.

The situation...in this state renders it extremely unwise to open a convention without a definite program outlined in advance, and full preparation made for the carrying out of the same...

Short did not want a repetition of the OBU referendum resolution fiasco.

"We had," he went on,

...a splendid convention; undoubtedly the best ever held in our state, and in striking contrast to the one a year ago. The A.F. of L. advocates were in complete control....The Administration was vindicated in everything it had done. We were unanimously elected amidst the greatest enthusiasm ever shown in one of our conventions; I was presented with a bouquet of roses.

Short, however, neglected to point out that part of this harmony derived from an implicit compromise between the conservatives and the FLP forces by which the conservatives would support the FLP's labor candidates who won primary elections.<sup>18</sup>

The following week (19-22 July), the WSTA held its first public convention in Yakima to formulate its campaign program for the November

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<sup>18</sup>O'Connell, in her thesis on the UR, misinterprets the convention's actions when she concludes that a vote, overwhelmingly in favor of a resolution calling for labor candidates in the state elections, was a defeat for the conservatives and Gompers non-partisan policies. Afterwards Gompers even congratulated Short on his triumph.

WSFL Procs., (1920), pp. 88-89, 98, 101, 109-110; O'Connell, p. 159; Minutes, 27 June 1920, Box 60, WSFL Records; Short to Gompers, 13 July 1920, Box 35; Gompers to Short, 22 July 1920, Box 3-12, WSFL Records.

elections. Simultaneously, the NPL, the Railwaymen's Political Club, and the Committee of 48 held conventions in nearby halls. A number of schismatic NPL locals also sent "unofficial observers."<sup>19</sup>

At the WSTA convention, the WSFL leadership proposed a joint non-partisan program together with the Grange, NPL, and RPC and had high hopes of getting rank and file approval. Instead, the radical third partyists sabotaged Short's non-partisan policy and convinced the WSFL delegates to endorse the FLP. Short and the WSFL, already committed to the WSTA, had no choice but to go along despite their distaste for the FLP, but the Grange, RPC, and NPL had no such ties and walked out. Short's dream of a unified non-partisan campaign was dead.

The next day, in an effort to recoup something from the disaster, the two factions agreed to a hastily worked-out compromise: the NPL and the eastern Washington labor leaders, would enter the Republican primaries in eastern Washington, while the WSTA, supported by the WSFL's and Grange's Puget Sound locals, would organize their third party in western Washington. Then, in the general election, the WSTA would support the NPL's winning candidates and the NPL would support the FLP's nominees. The dream of a state-wide, progressive

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<sup>19</sup>The WSTA was the largest of the four organizations hoping to cooperate politically. So far, its membership was restricted to WSFL members. 180 delegates from 23 counties attended, mainly from western Washington. The NPL was represented by one delegate from each of 35 counties, mainly from eastern Washington. Most of its delegates were grangers, but it also included some Spokane trade unionists. The RPC was simply an extension of the Railroad Brotherhoods. Its strength paralleled the NPL. The Committee of 48 was the smallest and least important of the organizations. Its members came primarily from Seattle.

Cravens, pp. 112-113; Pullen, p. 57; O'Connell, p. 161; WSFL Procs., (1921), p. 5.

coalition to capture the Republican primaries, however, was dead. Divided, both groups suffered, but the NPL-RPC group in eastern Washington suffered most. Its two top candidates for state office refused to run on the grounds that they supported the FLP. Similarly, many of the NPL's county organizations, and even its state executive committee, endorsed the WSTA policy of backing the FLP.<sup>20</sup>

At the same time, Short's failure to control the WSFL's political policies, for the second year in succession, tried the patience of the AFL national leadership. They demanded an explanation for his failure. In a letter to Gompers, soon after the convention, Short tried to excuse his behavior. He said that he had opposed the decision to put a third party in the field

...with all the vigor at my command, but was voted down on the question, due to the fact that the trade unionists, as usual, were mostly at home, while all of the third partyists who could worm their way in were on hand as delegates.

He explained that though he still believed that the non-partisan route would have been more successful, he had reluctantly agreed to support the FLP. The workers had spoken and "the dye (sic) was cast." He had taken the only route left open to the conservative leadership: to

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<sup>20</sup>For more on the efforts to achieve compromise, see: WSFL Procs., (1921), pp. 5-6.

The disagreement over political policies split the progressive forces from stem to stern. The RPC and the Workers NPL also voted to stay in the Republican primaries. Much of the WSFL's strength in eastern Washington also refused to go along with the decision of the WSTA.

In the wake of the WSTA convention, the eastern groups caucussed and drew up their own program and nominated Robert Bridges for governor and Elihus Bowles for Lt. Governor. They also adopted a platform calling for the eight hour day, public ownership of public utilities, nationalization of telephone and telegraph companies, the release of political prisoners, and non-partisan election laws.

WSFL Procs., (1921), pp. 5-7; Cravens, p. 117; O'Connell, p. 161; Pullen, pp. 57-58; UR 19,23 July 1920. For more on the efforts

unite with the third partyists as best they could and hope for the best. Though he doubted they could win any state-wide races, he still hoped that they might have a creditable showing and win a few legislative and local races.<sup>21</sup>

On primary day, the FLP held its first state-wide convention. After more than a month of organizing, twenty-two county units, primarily from western Washington, representing 40,000 dues-payers, primarily from the WSFL, sent 153 delegates to the meeting. The Railroad Brotherhoods, committed to non-partisanship, refused to take part. The most active groups included the WSTA, the Committee of 48, certain NPL units, and the Workers' NPL. Despite their reluctance to engage in third party tactics, the Short-Coates coalition from the WSTA dominated the proceedings. They pushed through the unit rule which ensured the nomination of a balanced ticket. Robert Bridges and Elihus Bowles, who had declined to run in the Republican primaries for the NPL, were selected as the FLP's candidates for governor and lt. governor, respectively.<sup>22</sup>

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to establish a cooperative arrangement between pro- and anti-FLP forces, see: Minutes, 22 July 1920, Box 60, WSFL Records; WSFL Procs., (1921), pp. 6-7; Cravens, pp. 117-118; Pullen, pp. 57-58; UR 31 July, 2 Aug. 1920.

<sup>21</sup>Short to Gompers, 28 Sept. 1920, Box 35, WSFL Records.

<sup>22</sup>S.J. Smyth, like Bridges and Bowles a member of the NPL, won the nomination as commissioner of public lands. James A. Duncan, of the WSTA; William Bouck, of the Grange; Homer Bone, a former socialist; the Rev. Sidney Strong, father of the radical journalist Anna Louise Strong; and Mrs. Minnie Ault, wife of the editor of the UR won nominations as candidates for congress. C.J. France, of the Committee of 48, won the senatorial nomination and Elmer Smith, the IWW's attorney, won the nomination for attorney-general, but later withdrew to run for Lewis County prosecutor.

Cravens, pp. 129-130; O'Connell, pp. 161-162; Seattle P-I 14 Sept. 1920.

Then, after the convention chose its presidential electors, it adopted a platform similar to that agreed upon in Yakima. It was also in line with the National FLP's "declaration of principles." In effect, the FLP called for enactment of a full range of progressive legislation.<sup>23</sup>

In the primaries the main surprise was Governor Hart's unexpectedly narrow victory over Roland Hartley for the Republican nomination and the weakness of the Democrats. The 19,612 votes won by John A. Gellatly, the fifth place finisher in the Republican gubernatorial primary, was greater than the combined total of all four candidates in the Democratic gubernatorial primary, won by W.W. Black, of Everett, with a mere 9,735 votes. The primary results made it crystal clear that the general election contest would be between the Republican and FLP candidates.<sup>24</sup>

In Washington, the Republicans merely needed to avoid taking strong positions to win. Their tactics worked to perfection. The Republican campaign was based on frequent, but vague, references to Hart's "record," slim as it was. They emphasized reform of the

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<sup>23</sup>The FLP's platform called for revision of the election laws to enfranchise migratory workers, a constitutional amendment to allow amending the state's constitution by the initiative, laws to encourage cooperatives, home rule for first and second class cities, a "bone dry" prohibition law, tax exemptions for farm and home improvements under \$400, a ban on long-term harbor-area and tide-land leases, increased state support for schools, especially for rural schools, more democratic control of schools, "impartial and accurate teaching of civics, economics, history, especially industrial and social history," bonuses for veterans, mandatory reapportionment of the state's legislature, and proportional representation therein.

Cravens, p. 130; O'Connell, pp. 160,161; The Rand School of Social Sciences, American Labor Yearbook, 1919-1920 (New York, 1920), pp. 438-439.

<sup>24</sup>Cravens, p. 123; O'Connell, p. 162; UR 10 July 1920. For more on the national politics in 1920, see: David A. Shannon, America Be-

bureaucracy, aid for rural areas, and attacks on the radicalism of the FLP. The Republicans claimed that the FLP was being more help to the IWW than either farmers or labor. They also attempted to use ethnic divide and conquer tactics against the FLP.<sup>25</sup>

Robert Bridges and the FLP countered these charges by trying to link the Republicans to "special monied interests," and accusing them of trying to enslave workers and farmers through high railroad tariffs, among other means.<sup>26</sup>

The attacks on the FLP had a cumulative negative effect but not so great as that caused by the division--or lack of enthusiasm for the party--within the ranks of labor. Short, for example, though pledged to support the FLP and its candidates, believed that only Bridges had a real chance of success. In his view, the rest of the FLP ticket had no real chance to win. Gompers refused to have anything to do with the FLP campaign and would not endorse any of its candidates, even those supported by the WSFL. He argued that it would be considered an endorsement of the FLP tickets in other states and that it might jeopardize the AFL's traditional non-partisanship. He complained that it would take away votes from pro-labor candidates in the major parties. Meanwhile, in the Republican race, Roland H. Hartley, the defeated gubernatorial candidate, endorsed Hart.<sup>27</sup>

The most difficult problem the FLP faced, however, was that

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tween the Wars: 1919-1941, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1965), pp. 14-15, 31-32; Cole, pp. 26-27.

<sup>25</sup>Pullen, pp. 65-68; Cravens, pp. 121-132.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Short to Gompers, 28 Sept. 1920, Box 35; Gompers to Short, 6 Oct. 1920, Box 3-12, WSFL Records; Gunns, p. 58.

presented by the anti-Japanese issue. This issue, in various forms, was prominent in all the Pacific Coast states. An anti-Japanese initiative, to ban aliens ineligible for United States citizenship from purchasing land, or even acting as guardians for their American-born children, had narrowly failed to qualify for the 1920 ballot. When W.W. Black, the Democratic gubernatorial candidate accused Bridges of having leased some of his lands to two Japanese farmers, the FLP was placed in a difficult moral and political situation. Due to the onset of the economic recession anti-Japanese feeling was particularly strong among workingmen fearful of low-wage Japanese competition. At the same time many small farmers were also opposed to leasing or selling land to Japanese truck farmers since this under-cut already low agricultural prices. Similarly, many pro-soviet radicals had become very anti-Japanese as a result of Japanese attempts to exploit the Russian revolution by extending their influence in Siberia.<sup>28</sup>

The problem for the FLP arose from the fact that it had a racial equality "principle" in its platform. The prudent position would have been to avoid taking a strong public stand on this issue. Yet when the Democrats did bring it in to the open, Bridges and the FLP courageously met it head on. Bridges came out against discrimination and alien exclusion laws. Brave as this was, it probably cost the FLP its last, slim, chances for victory in the election. It split the remaining forces in the FLP still further. One FLP state committeeman even refused to continue to support Bridges. It also provided

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<sup>28</sup>O'Connell, pp. 163-165; UR 7 Oct. 1920; Times 7,11,24 Oct. 1920.

welcome grist for the anti-FLP press. The Seattle Times took to referring to the FLP as the "Japanese Labor Party," suggesting that Bridges should be expelled from the FLP for favoring "throwing open America's gates to hordes of immigrants from Asia."<sup>29</sup>

The FLP forces, however, did not conduct a real education campaign on the issue. It made few attempts to justify its policy, morally justifiable though it was. Instead, the FLP tried to point out that leaders of other parties had done just as bad or worse. The pro-Bridges Seattle UR, for instance, charged that Black had leased hotel property to several Japanese. Bridges also explained that he had leased his land to the Japanese strictly as a wartime food production measure. At the same time, he argued, no race should suffer discrimination merely because it was industrious.<sup>30</sup>

The most serious consequence of the anti-Japanese uproar was that it upset the FLP's grand strategy of ignoring the Democrats and attacking the Republicans. It forced the FLP to devote its precious resources unproductively, attacking a party which could not win. The Republicans, of course, were not slow to take advantage of the situation. The Republican state central committee ran advertisements in the UR quoting Bridges' opposition to Japanese exclusion and charged that he favored leasing land to Japanese and supported unrestricted immigration.<sup>31</sup>

The FLP attempted, sporadically, to focus on the Republicans, but were unsuccessful. Such attempts did not succeed. On 27 October,

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>UR 18 Oct. 1920; Pullen, pp. 67-68.

<sup>31</sup>O'Connell, pp. 164-165; UR 30 Oct. 1920; Pullen, pp. 65-67.



when Parley P. Christiensen, the National FLP's presidential candidate, arrived in Seattle to campaign, the reporters who confronted him were primarily interested in his position on immigration restriction. In self-defense Christiensen was forced to reveal that National FLP policy endorsed even stricter immigration laws.<sup>32</sup>

The election results confirmed labor's worst fears. Hart carried the five urban counties, where the FLP was strongest, by 50.6 per cent of the vote. Bridges and Black trailed with 32.7 per cent and 16.2 per cent, respectively. In eastern Washington, especially in the wheat producing regions, Hart won by an even greater margin. Only in the western Washington lumber counties did Bridges get more support than Hart. He also had greater support among the less prosperous small farmers, loyal to William Bouck. The prosperous wheat farmers, who supported Hart, distrusted the agricultural radicalism of Bouck and the NPL. They feared the immigrant, working-class groups which supported the FLP. Black's support came primarily from urban, immigrant, and Catholic voters, who could not support the FLP's stand in favor of prohibition.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>O'Connell, pp. 162-166; Pullen, pp. 67-68; UR 1,2,5,16,26-30 Oct. 1920; Times 27 Oct. 1920; P-I 29 Oct. 1920.

<sup>33</sup>In addition, the FLP had to deal with the fact that labor voters were extremely hard to mobilize. Earlier in the year, for example, Secretary McConnell of the Spokane Brick and Clay Workers Union Local No. 305, explained part of the problem. In a letter to Short he explained that he could not organize a non-partisan political campaign committee "on account of our local being most all foreigners and they don't seem to understand. I am getting class in citizenship started, it may help some."

Beyond the fact that many immigrants, anti-Japanese groups, Catholics, wets, and non-partisans, refused to support the FLP, the party also faced the problem of official discrimination. Certain legal

Following the election, the FLP were apprehensive. Though they had succeeded in replacing the Democrats as the major opposition party in the state, they had failed to win many elections. All their state-wide office-seekers had lost. FLP candidates had won only two House seats and one Senate seat in the legislature. When the editor of the Literary Digest asked UR editor Harry Ault to comment on statements from the Republican leadership attacking Samuel Gompers, Ault replied:

The recent statement of Johnathan (sic) Bourne of the republican publicity headquarters anent the quote autocracy quote of Gompers...if it at all expresses the attitudes of the managers of the...party, means,...(there will be a) policy of repression and suppression of all ideas in conflict with those of the ruling class(;) then indeed the election has been a blow from which labor will find it hard to recover.

...all thought of securing remedial action through either of the old parties must be given up and a new party, the nucleus of which has already developed in the Farmer-Labor party, take its place as the champion and representative of the producers.

Ironically, in view of Gompers' stand against the FLP, Ault believed that labor should renew its efforts to build up the FLP despite its failures in 1920. The WSFL conservatives, on the other hand, who had been dragged into the FLP against their wills, and the radicals, who had successfully sabotaged efforts to compromise on a non-partisan

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obstacles prevented registration of potential FLP voters. Until the UR protested, for example, voter registration offices in Seattle only opened from 8 o'clock in the morning until 5 o'clock in the afternoon. By the time many urban workers got off the job, the office was closed. Another such regulation required the children of naturalized citizens to present their parents' citizenship papers when they registered. The UR protested this, but to no avail.

Pullen, pp. 69-71; UR 5,6 Nov. 1920; McConnell to Short, 11 June 1920, Box 3-12, WSFL Records; Johansen, pp. 614,617,622,623,494.

policy, had different ideas.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>O'Connell, p. 170; Ault to ?, 7 Nov. 1920, Ault Papers, University of Washington Library; Cole, p. 40.

## Chapter 7:

### The Radical Coup d'Etat

#### The Labor-Capitalist Controversy, 1921

In 1921 the economic downturn accelerated. Production and export of wheat dropped sharply. Coal production fell from 3,757 thousand tons to 2,422 thousand tons. The value added by manufacturing fell sharply. In particular the food industries suffered a sharp reduction in their share of the value added by manufacture. In western Washington department store sales fell by 13.79 per cent. The shut-down of the shipbuilding industry removed much of the region's purchasing power. As a result, consumer prices began to decline from their 1920 peaks. The Seattle consumer price index fell 16.5 per cent.<sup>1</sup>

The workingman bore a large part of the burden of the recession. The labor force did not grow so rapidly as in 1920, increasing only 1.03 per cent to 584,000, but total employment in the state fell sharply by 9.12 per cent to 518,000. Although employment had been falling since 1918 this was the sharpest drop yet. Unemployment increased by 758.44 per cent to 66,100 or 11.31 per cent of the labor force. (Table No. 1) Between 1918 and 1921, the total number of production workers employed in manufacturing industries in Washington

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<sup>1</sup>Johansen, pp. 488-489, 626-628; "Indexes of Business Activity," pp. 108-111.

fell from approximately 130,000 to approximately 75,000.<sup>2</sup>

The labor movement declined even more than the economy at large. Membership in WSFL unions fell from 55,257 in June 1920 to 39,910 in June 1921, a decline of 27.77 per cent. The WSFL's per cent of the labor force fell to 6.83. (Table No. 2) The number of WSFL affiliates fell from 334 to 284, a decline of 14.97 per cent.<sup>3</sup>

The SCLC, similarly, faced retrenchment. Total paid-up membership declined by 27.67 per cent to 15,335, the 1917 level. The Maritime Trades lost almost half their membership. The Metal Trades lost nearly 1,000 members. The hardest hit, however, were the Building Trades Section unions, which lost more than 3,000 members. All of the other trade sections lost members. (Table No. 3)

The recession, the rise in unemployment, and the decline in union membership changed the balance of forces in the Seattle labor movement. While the total number of SCLC affiliates fell by 5.64 per cent to 117, the total number of SCLC affiliates also affiliated with the WSFL fell by 12.12 per cent to 58. Despite the decline in membership in radical unions, especially those in the Maritime and Metal Trades sections, their relative political importance actually increased. This was to have a dramatic impact on the internal struggle for control of the SCLC.<sup>4</sup>

After the failure of their efforts to take over the labor movement, in 1919 and 1920, the radicals were in an awkward position. They

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<sup>2</sup>Johansen, p. 627.

<sup>3</sup>WSFL Procs., (1921), p. 40.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 40; Membership and Per Capita Tax Records, 1907-1957, Box 11, KCCLC Records.

needed to evict the labor conservatives from their positions of influence in the SCLC quickly, before any further erosion of their support occurred. Also, they would need the support of at least some of the AFL loyalists to do so. In other words, they needed a cause which would isolate the labor conservatives and split the AFL loyalists. As luck would have it, such a cause was easily at hand: the "labor-capitalist enterprises."

The question of operating and managing the SCLC's labor-owned firms had long been a bone of contention between Left and Right in the SCLC. As far back as 1902 and 1903, the question of the management of the UR had led to turmoil in the council. Since then, the SCLC had acquired a number of other such firms, including the Trade Union Savings & Loan Association, and the Mutual Laundry, among others. These firms were being run by SCLC-appointees, supposedly in the interests of the labor movement. The Left, including many AFL loyalists, however, accused many of the managers of being "labor-capitalists," of using the SCLC's endorsement to squeeze profits for themselves out of gullible workers who thought that by patronizing such firms they were helping other workers. The most prominent of these labor-capitalists were E.B. Ault, managing editor of the UR, George P. Listman, of the Trade Union Savings & Loan, and Frank Rust, of the Mutual Laundry, but many other prominent labor conservatives also had investments in labor enterprises. Indeed, several of the most prominent were involved in half a dozen or more different concerns in one capacity or another.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Cravens, p. 145; Earl Shimmons to E.B. Ault, 90 page memo,

Of all the labor-capitalists, Ault was the most important. He held the key ideological-propaganda position in the SCLC. So long as Ault remained as managing editor of the UR, the labor-capitalists were safe. This irritated the Left. Ault had once been a member of a socialistic commune, had helped Titus publish The Socialist, and been an important member of the labor Red faction in the SCLC. Since the war, however, he had become more conservative. He had sunk much of his own money into the UR to convert it into a daily operation and was indebted to many of the other labor-capitalists who supported the paper as members of its board of control. He, himself, served on the boards of their other enterprises. Thus, Ault had tried to mediate between the extremists in the interests of preserving the unity of the labor movement. Only thus could the UR remain viable.<sup>6</sup>

Ault had antagonized the radicals who wanted the SCLC to endorse a socialist or communist party, to form a third party of its own, or to reform itself along industrial lines. The great expense of the UR worried the SCLC leadership, who wondered where all the money was going. And the conservatives, who had never fully forgiven Ault for endorsing the general strike and the FLP, did not trust him. He thus served as a convenient target of opportunity for the Left.<sup>7</sup>

In June 1920 the SCLC had voted to authorize an investigation of possible conflicts of interest in the labor-owned firms. In July it had approved a five-man committee, consisting of L.W. Buck, Phil Pearl, M.J. Kennedy, F.W. Clifford, and William McNally, to conduct

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1924, pp. 45-46, Ault Papers.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

the investigation. All five had long been deeply involved in radical politics and McNally had long been one of Ault's loudest critics on the UR's staff. He continually opposed Ault's moderating influence. Due to the pending election campaign, however, the investigation was delayed.<sup>8</sup>

After the elections, the radicals, led by Phil Pearl of Seattle Barbers Union Local No. 195, renewed their examination of the labor-owned firms and their inter-locking directorates. Their first move was to convince the SCLC to create a three-man Labor Legal Bureau Department, ostensibly to help defend the SCLC from external attack. In December 1920, the SCLC approved the plan. In addition to Pearl, the LLBD's executive committee consisted of two other radicals, Paul K. Mohr and William McNally, and a token AFL loyalist, Jean Stovel. The first two were to play significant roles in the coming controversy.<sup>9</sup>

The investigating committee's first action was to hire Mark Litchman and George Vandever, two crusading Left-wing labor lawyers, to represent the committee. Vandever, who had earlier advised disgruntled stockholders in labor-owned firms who had found that their shares were not negotiable, was assigned to conduct the preliminary investigation into the labor-capitalist issue. He soon proved to the committee's satisfaction that their suspicions were justified. He and Litchman then took over tactical direction of the radical forces in the SCLC.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Cravens, p. 145; O'Connell, pp. 182-184; Minutes, 14,21 July 1920, Box 8, KCCLC Records.

<sup>9</sup>Minutes, 15,22 Dec. 1920, Box 8, KCCLC Records; O'Connell, p. 198.

<sup>10</sup>Cravens, p. 145.



At the same time, labor conservatives also began to attack Ault and the UR for their excessive radicalism. The Northwest Painters Conference, for example, approved a resolution which accused the UR of accepting advertisements from non-union firms. What was worse, however, was that its reporters wrote "for sensation rather than for the best interests of the paper and the local labor movement in launching attacks on people who Labor must deal (with) during their term of office." The painters also complained that radicals on the UR's staff altered articles submitted by conservatives to "suit the fancy of some of the employees of the UNION RECORD."<sup>11</sup>

The conservatives never had the time or energy to take on the labor-capitalists. While the radicals were single-mindedly establishing their case against the labor-capitalists, the SCLC's leadership, together with the WSFL's officers, were distracted by a number of critically important events. In addition to the immediate economic crisis, the conservatives faced a herculean task in protecting the labor movement against the Republican-dominated 1921 session of the legislature. Afterwards, Short termed the session:

...one of the most reactionary and anti-labor sessions that has occurred in our state for many, many years, and we have been totally unable to secure any consideration at its hands for any of the labor legislation introduced there, and have been forced to fight every inch of the way to prevent their taking away from labor many of the gains made in a legislative way during the last ten years. (We) failed to get acceptance (of a) Federal Vocational Rehabilitation Act for industrial cripples.

In addition the legislature gave:

...no serious consideration for Workmen's Compensation award increases or amendments to the law. Every labor bill of any character was either immediately buried in committee or indefinitely

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<sup>11</sup>O'Connell, pp. 184-185; Resolution, 28 Feb. 1921, Ault Papers.

postponed. In fact it was with the most extreme difficulty that we even secured a hearing before the proper committee on our bills.

The prospect for remedial legislation was so bad that when a representative of the Federal Department of Vocational Rehabilitation visited Olympia during the session to examine the situation first hand, Short reported that he "simply threw up his hands and said: 'No Use,' and left the state."<sup>12</sup>

At the same time, the WSFL was embroiled in the throes of an internal election campaign. The 1920 convention had approved a number of referenda, amending the constitution, which were designed to limit the influence of radicals at future conventions. The campaign to pass these measures took much time and effort.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Minutes, 2 Feb. 1921, Box 8, KCCLC Records; Short to John B. Andrews, 9 March 1921, Box 35, WSFL Records; Pullen, p. 95; Tripp, pp. 239-240.

For more on the legislative session, which also approved the governor's Administrative Code Commission bill, thus creating the State Department of Labor and Industries, and for information on the WSFL's long, unsuccessful effort to get the courts to declare the Act unconstitutional, see: WSFL Procs., (1920), pp. 29-30; Tripp, pp. 239-244; Pullen, pp. 94-95, 98-99, 103-104; UR 15-17 Jan. 1921; Minutes, 10 May, 7 Nov. 1920, Box 60, WSFL Records; State ex rel Short v. Hinkely, 116 Wash. 6 (1921); State ex rel Brislawn v. Meath, 84 Wash. 304 (1915); State ex rel Robinson v. Reeves, 17 Wash. (2d) 210 (1943).

<sup>13</sup>The most important of the referenda provided for the election of WSFL officers by referendum, rather than at the conventions. Another provided for the recall of WSFL officers. A third provided a method of filling vacancies on the executive board. A fourth changed the method of paying per capita taxes. A fifth provided for the creation of departmental councils similar to the SCLC's trade sections. These had just recently been authorized by the WFL. Finally, a sixth referendum, providing for the consolidation of the offices of president and secretary/treasurer, had been added to the ballot, early in 1921. This measure was designed both to save money and to eliminate a traditionally Left-wing position on the executive board. By the 1921 convention all the referenda had been overwhelmingly approved despite Sec. L.W. Buck's desperate efforts to save his job by invalidating the referenda.

For more on the campaign, see: WSFL Procs., (1920), pp. 85-

In the fall of 1920, while the SCLC's radicals were organizing mass demonstrations to protest rising unemployment and the Wilson administration's obdurate refusal to release political prisoners, or to recognize and establish trade relations with the Soviet Union, the SCLC's investigating committee began to focus on the management of the UR which, of all the labor-capitalist enterprises, appealed to them as the most vulnerable.

The investigation divided the UR's staff, already beset by political and financial conflicts, into pro- and anti-Ault factions. One group of workers in the circulation and editorial departments, whom Ault had had to reprimand for incompetence and over-zealous propagandizing during the election campaign, saw this as an opportunity to get back at Ault. When Ault dismissed several newsboys, they appealed to their union, to the Printing Trades Council, and to the SCLC. They lodged counter-charges that Ault refused to address legitimate employee grievances.<sup>14</sup>

Another group of radical staff members, who opposed Ault's moderating influence on the UR, also joined the attack. Both groups funnelled anti-Ault information to the investigating committee. This produced a wave of fear and distrust among the staff members. Bill

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87,96,100,103,111; (1921), pp. 11-12,40-42; (1922), p. 16; Minutes, 26 June, 1920; 6 March, 27 April, 15 July 1921, Box 60; Short to W.T. Morris, 25 April 1922; Short to F. Morrison, 4 Aug. 1921; Short to John J. Manning, 8 Oct. 1921, Box 35, WSFL Records; UR 15 April 1921.

<sup>14</sup>Minutes, 5,12,19 Jan. 1920; 19,26 Jan. 1921, Box 8, KCCLC Records; O'Connell, pp. 181-182; Ault to Joe Corbett, n.d.; Corbett to Ault, n.d., Ault Papers; Litchman to Reb Slater, 25 June 1921, Litchman Papers, University of Washington Library; William McNally to Ault, 17 Jan. 1921; Employees of Circulation Department to Ault, 23 Jan. 1921, Ault Papers; SCLC, In the Matter of the Seattle Union Record, (Seattle, 1921).

Swenson, a conservative staffer, suspected that Joe Havel, the UR's accountant, was the prime conduit for unfavorable information about the paper. In a letter to Ault he charged that Havel:

...was part of the cabal that has Pearl for its floor leader and whose purpose it is to get you out of the Record... (Havel) is one fellow I would have banked on with my life. However, in these days of intrigue one can't trust anyone it seems.<sup>15</sup>

Ault and the other labor-capitalists, of course, were not entirely innocent of the charges against them. Some had been guilty of making profits at the expense of the labor movement. Ault's main crime, however, was not self-aggrandizement. He had not, like some of the other labor-capitalists, feathered his own nest, or used the SCLC's endorsement to solicit funds from union members to finance risky undertakings. Instead, Ault had been too optimistic and extravagant. In 1918, when the UR became a daily, labor's future looked bright: membership was climbing rapidly and all the trends looked good. As late as mid-1920, the labor movement appeared in good financial shape. Ault had gambled that it would continue to fare well and purchased a second press, moved to a new, larger location, and hired more workers. When the economic collapse came, he failed to cut back quickly enough. As union membership fell, and as more and more locals went out of business, sales declined. Since, even in good times, the UR relied upon the trade unions to make up its operating deficit by contributing a percentage of their revenues, this had a catastrophic effect on the resources of the paper. On top of the open shop campaign, this placed the UR in desperate shape. The refusal of the big department stores

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<sup>15</sup>O'Connell, p. 184; A.W. Swenson to Ault, 5 Feb. 1921, Ault Papers.

to advertize in the UR hurt. The UR had also suffered an estimated cash loss of \$25,000 when its plant was seized following the Centralia massacre and in subsequent court actions. The combination of these factors led many ordinarily loyal AFL trade unionists to suspect that the radicals' charges had some element of truth, as indeed they did. If Ault expected the trade unionists to make up his losses without a close inspection of his financial affairs, he was mistaken. They would demand an exact accounting.<sup>16</sup>

On 2 February 1921, the investigating committee made its preliminary report to the SCLC. It was highly critical of the UR's management, but it also aimed at much wider targets. Its main recommendation was that all of the paper's employees work full-time and not use time paid by the UR to further their private business, whether labor-endorsed or not. This struck directly at the labor conservatives who made up the interlocking directorates of the labor-owned firms. It revealed, for the first time, that if the radicals succeeded in destroying Ault, they would soon thereafter begin on the other labor-capitalists.

The committee's other recommendations were similarly motivated. It recommended the establishment of monthly departmental meetings of the UR's staff to consider employee suggestions and provide for an appeal mechanism if the manager did not respond. Not only would this have provided radical staff members with regular opportunities to

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<sup>16</sup>Sister Maria Veronica (M.J. O'Connell), "The Seattle Union Record," (Research Report: University of Washington School of Communications, 1963), pp. 7,10-12; George W. Ficks, et al., "Report to the Officers and Members of Typographical Union No. 202 by the Committee Appointed to Investigate the Control and Management of the Seattle Union Record," Ault Papers; O'Connell, pp. 244-246.

vilify the responsible officers, it would have provided them with a constant supply of charges with which to attack Ault in the SCLC. To the conservatives and the labor-capitalists, this looked suspiciously like the "Soviet" form of government. Then, in yet another slap at Ault and the labor-capitalists, the committee recommended that no one working in labor-owned firms should be allowed to get a majority of his income from profits, rents, interest, or dividends. In other words, everyone in these firms should be wage-workers. This provision was designed to prevent labor conservatives from directing labor-owned firms.<sup>17</sup>

Suddenly recognizing the potential danger to their own positions, the labor conservatives, led by the labor-capitalists, rallied their forces. Uniting behind Ault, they organized to fight off the radical challenge. Although the conservatives still did not approve Ault's own radical rhetoric, they supported him in this case because "the enemy of my enemy is my friend."<sup>18</sup>

With the support of the conservatives, Ault lashed back at his antagonists. He would not give up his beloved paper without a hard fight. Gradually, over a period of a month and a half, he drove the radicals on to the defensive. He fired several of the more radical UR staffers who opposed his policies and succeeded in getting several radical SCLC delegates recalled by their locals. Slowly, the

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<sup>17</sup>P.J. Pearl and F.B. Clifford, "Partial Report to the SCLC," 2 Feb. 1921, Box 7, KCCLC Records.

<sup>18</sup>WSFL Procs., (1919), p. 22; Minutes, 6 March 1921, Box 60, WSFL Records; Winslow, pp. 102-103; Anna Louise Strong, I Change Worlds, (New York: The Garden City Publishing Co., 1937), p. 87.

votes in the SCLC on the conduct of the investigation began to go his way. Then, on 16 March, Ault's defenses showed signs of crumbling. The radicals, with the support of many concerned AFL loyalists, convinced the SCLC to discuss the investigating committee's final report in open session. This was a great blow to Ault and the labor-capitalists. They would have to defend their complex and often unprofitable business ventures in public.<sup>19</sup>

A major reason for the success of the radicals' early maneuvers was the inaction of the WSFL. No sooner had the legislature adjourned and the referenda campaign been completed than a whole new series of woes arose. On 16 March, United Mine Workers District No. 10 initiated a strike against all of the state's coal operators. This strike, idling more than 2,000 miners, involved nearly ten per cent of the WSFL's total membership. The miners, who had long been the strongest, most loyal, least radical industrial union in the AFL, claimed the bulk of the WSFL's attentions.

The miners were forced to strike when the operators refused to live up to a national agreement negotiated through the National Bituminous Coal Commission and accepted by the UMW's national leadership and by the largest coal producers in the east. Despite efforts to arbitrate the dispute, and despite determined WSFL efforts to aid the strikers, only a few small coal operators in Washington agreed to

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<sup>19</sup>The three employees Ault fired were: A.B. Callahan, an old SPW red, who had worked on Dr. Titus' old paper; Floyd Kaylor, the city editor; and Jake Lighter, a mechanical department employee. The two recalled newswriters delegates were: Callahan and Barbara McLoney.

O'Connell, pp. 54-55,187; Minutes, 16 March 1921, Box 8, KCCLC Records.

settle. The larger operators continued to produce coal with imported strikebreakers, or simply closed down. Considering the low price of coal and the growing competition from imported petroleum products, many of the mines would probably have shut down even without a strike. The only way many of them could stay in operation was if they managed to reduce labor costs.

The strike was long and bitter. Workers from all over the state made generous contributions of time, effort, and scarce resources to help the strikers and their families keep up the fight. They collected food and clothing. They held rallies. The WSFL carried the strikers on the membership statistics even though they could not afford to pay their per capita taxes. In the end, it was all in vain. After two hard years on the picket lines, the miners were forced to return to work on the operators' terms. In many cases the locals, themselves, had ceased to exist. Those which survived lost their contracts, saw their working conditions erode, and were forced to accept unilateral wage reductions. Soon intramural rivalries arose which further decimated the union as various factions sought to escape the blame for the defeat. The miners' bitterness was increased by the partiality of the courts, which favored the operators. The operators especially benefited from a state supreme court ruling that the Anti-Injunction Act, which Short and the labor lobby had won in 1919, had in no way altered the common law governing trade unions. In effect, this ruling upheld the court's previous decision, in the St. Germaine case (1917), which banned virtually all picketing. The court's action was also consistent with that of the United States



Supreme Court in American Steel Foundries v. Tri-City Trades Council, which practically negated the impact of the Clayton Anti-Trust Act. As a result of this confluence of factors, District No. 10 collapsed and did not begin to revive until the 1930's.<sup>20</sup>

The mine strike was not the only labor dispute which distracted the WSFL from protecting its interests in the SCLC. Shortly after the mine strike began on 18 April, the Pacific Coast Seamen's Union struck in response to the ship owners' unilateral decision to cut wages. The ship owners imported strikebreakers--"scabs"--mainly unemployed Blacks. Again, the courts prevented picketing. By 6 June, the strike had been broken. In place of the union, the employers instituted their own hiring halls and the open shop. The seamen, like the miners, did not recover until the 1930's.<sup>21</sup>

Then, on 1 May, the International Typographical Union began a

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<sup>20</sup>For more on the strike, its origins, its consequences, and its national ramifications, see: Philip Taft, Organized Labor in American History, (New York, 1964), pp. 315,349-350; John D. Hicks, The Republican Ascendancy, 1921-1923, (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 69; "Indexes of Business Activity," pp. 108 - 111; Tripp, p. 247; WSFL Procs., (1920), Executive Council's Report, pp. 10-11; (1921), p. 11; (1922), pp. 5-6,77-78; (1923), pp. 18-19; (1924), pp. 12,26-27; (1926), p. 68; Official Yearbook of Organized Labor, State of Washington, 1930, (Seattle: Washington State Labor News, 1925-1944), pp. 33,38; UR 1-30 Jan., 30 Aug. 1920; Pacific Coal Co. v. District 10 U.M.W., 122 Wash. 423 (1922); United Mine Workers v. Coronado Coal Co., 259 U.S. 344 (1922); Coronado Coal Co. v. United Mine Workers, 268 U.S. 295 (1925); Minutes, 14 Aug. 1919, 5 March 1921, Box 60; Resolution ?, 14 May 1921, Box 34-1, WSFL Records; See also: Boxes: 8-7,8-11,8-13,8-14,8-32; 9-3,9-20;12-18;17-12,17-13,17-32;23-6;34-8;35;36-19, WSFL Records; Minutes, 29 Oct., 5 Nov. 1919; 21,28 Sept., 5,12,19,26 Oct., 16,23 Nov., 7 Dec. 1921; 15 Feb. 1922; 6 June 1923, Box 8, KCCLC Records.

<sup>21</sup>J.S. Jackson, "The Colored Marine Employees Benevolent Association of the Pacific, 1921-1934; or, Implications of Vertical Mobility for Negro Stewards in Seattle," (M.A. Thesis: University of Washington, 1939), pp. 20--; P-I 1 May-6 June 1921; UR 1 May-6 June 1921.

nationwide strike for the forty-four hour week. Several Seattle plants were among those struck, including those of the Pacific Type-setting Co. In response, the company sued Philo Howard, president of the ITU, and the officers of the Seattle Typographical Union Local No. 202. The company argued that the local should not have struck its plants since it had a valid contract with the union which did not specify the forty-four hour week. It asked the court to award it \$20,000 in damages. The lower court, which was not controlled by the employers, ruled in favor of the union, on the grounds that the ITU should not have been made a party to the suit, since it did not have a valid contract with the company. Thus, the strike continued but, like the other strikes, ended badly for the union. The men ultimately returned to work on an open shop basis. Later, on 5 June 1923, the state Supreme Court overruled the lower court's decision and ordered the case retried. This time Local No. 202 was found guilty and fined \$500 in damages for violating its contract.<sup>22</sup>

The inability of the WSFL to focus on the labor-capitalist controversy gave added importance to the SCLC's moderate "swing" group, who remained loyal to the AFL. They wanted the UR to promote radical causes and the WSFL to support a third party and they were concerned about the financial condition of the UR and the other labor-capitalist enterprises. It soon became clear that, as in the past, the key figure in the SCLC--the man who held the balance of power--was James Duncan. The radicals hoped that he and his followers would side

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<sup>22</sup>WSFL Procs., (1923), pp. 46-48; (1924), p. 7.

with them as he had done in previous disputes such as the Mooney strike and FLP campaign. Unfortunately for them, they had forgotten Duncan's unwavering loyalty to the AFL. He had been the deciding factor in getting the SCLC to back down in the OBU referendum. While he agreed with the radicals on many ideological points, he treasured the unity of the labor movement. So long as there was no conflict between these purposes, he and the moderates were willing to work with the radicals. When these purposes conflicted, he invariably broke with the radicals and endorsed the AFL position.

The critical moment in the labor-capitalist controversy occurred when the radicals came to Duncan for his support and <sup>CHRG</sup> refused them. From this point onward, they could not win. Rather than accept defeat, however, they decided to appeal to the rank and file. With their hopes of gaining control of the UR stifled, they had no alternative if they wished to continue the battle. Without Duncan's support, however, it was a futile exercise. Though they succeeded in convincing Machinists Union Local No. 79 to recall Duncan as their SCLC delegate, the conservative Auto Machinists Union Local No. 289 soon granted him new credentials. Duncan never missed a single SCLC session.<sup>23</sup>

With victory already in the wind, the WSFL then joined the battle on Ault's behalf. Despite his ideological disagreements with

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<sup>23</sup>The radicals, in a desperate effort to publicize their side of the story published a leaflet entitled In the Matter of the Union Record, which probably reached relatively few readers. A copy of the leaflet is in the Ault Papers with a marginal note: "8 lies in 17 statements."

O'Connell, pp. 188-189, 192, 207; Cravens, pp. 146-148; Minutes, 23 Feb., 18 March 1921, Box 8, KCCLC Records; Reb Slater to Mark Litchman, 22 March 1921, Litchman Papers; UR 17 March 1921.

both Ault and Duncan, Short helped them round up support among Provision Trades and Building Trades section delegates. He had become increasingly active in the controversy as soon as he realized that he might be personally vulnerable. In a crucial miscalculation, the radicals had charged that Short was among those who had "suspicious" interests in a \$15 million labor bank. By late March, Ault and his new-found allies were nearing complete success. More and more unions recalled their "Leftist" SCLC delegates and elected pro-Ault, conservatives and moderates in their place.

As the radicals' position deteriorated, Ault's counter-charges against them grew more extreme. He swore that he would publish the UR privately if they succeeded in convincing the SCLC to withdraw its support. Meanwhile, the unity of the radicals began to fray. Some of them appear to have lacked the "killer instinct." Phil Pearl, for example, sought to rebuild the facade of labor unity when it became obvious that his side could not win. He urged the radicals to avoid personal attacks on Ault and even tried to reach an agreement with Ault to "wash dirty linen in private." It was, however, too late for reconciliation. Ault would hear none of it.<sup>24</sup>

The SCLC's public sessions on the labor-capitalist controversy seethed with bitterness during this period. Sometimes the participants could not restrain themselves. On 23 March, for example, William P. Dyer, circulation manager of the UR and Ault's ally, nearly got into a fist fight with William McNally of the investigating committee, while they were both on the floor of the council. They had to be separated

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<sup>24</sup>O'Connell, pp. 189-190,192; Shimmons to Ault, 90 page memo, 1924, Ault Papers, pp. 49,52; Litchman to Slater and Brewster, 22 March 1921, Litchman Papers; Minutes, 21 March 1921, Box 8, KCCLC Records.

forcibly.<sup>25</sup>

On 24 March, when the SCLC renewed its consideration of the investigating committee's report, the council was in even greater turmoil. This time the committee introduced its final, complete report. Essentially, it repeated the criticisms offered in the preliminary report and expanded upon the solutions also offered therein. Following the reading of the report, the SCLC debated whether to accept it. Bill Swenson, who defended the UR's management, and Phil Pearl, who spoke for the investigating committee, led the debate. Surprisingly, the radicals won the day.

In the debate, Pearl tried to argue that the SCLC's businesses were making profits from unsuspecting workers. He also criticized the inefficiency and mismanagement of the UR's plant and operations. This brought shouts of "Liar" and "Lie" from Ault and Charles W. Doyle, the SCLC's business agent and a conservative leader. Their supporters in the galleries joined in the uproar, but they were drowned out by the radicals and IWW's who outnumbered them there. Joe Havel, the radical delegate from the Office Employees Union, also made a lengthy speech against the UR's management. Finally, amidst general confusion and disorder, the SCLC voted to adopt the committee's report by a vote of 100 to 94, with 153 not voting. The absence of many moderate delegates helped wreck Ault's plans.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>O'Connell, p. 190; In the Matter of the Union Record.

<sup>26</sup>As a result of his speech the office employees recalled Havel and their other radical delegate, William McNally.

Minutes, 24,30 March 1921, Box 8, KCCLC Records; O'Connell, pp. 190-191; Cravens, pp. 147-148; Mark Litchman to Eugene Belmont, 27 May 1921, Litchman Papers.

The radicals' success getting approval for their final report, with only a few insignificant amendments, was real but short-lived. Short, Duncan, and their conservative and moderate allies continued to work behind the scenes. SCLC President Jack Mundy and Business Agent C.W. Doyle proved especially helpful. While Ault and Short tried to build up support for the labor-capitalists, Mundy and Doyle combined to obstruct implementation of the radical-inspired resolutions. When the radicals discovered this they were so angered that they began efforts to recall the two from their SCLC offices. On 30 March, they introduced a resolution signed by forty-seven SCLC delegates demanding that the SCLC's officers enforce the SCLC's resolution approving the investigating committee's report. They demanded that Mundy, Doyle, and Ault comply with the decision of the council, resign, or face dismissal. They also asked that the UR's board of directors remove Frank Rust and George P. Listman from the board. In a show of utter disdain, Mundy and Doyle used their influence to have the matter referred to the resolutions committee. The resolutions committee, however, did not want to become enmeshed in the controversy and ducked the issue, sending it back to the whole council. Meanwhile, the labor-capitalists reorganized.<sup>27</sup>

This time the labor-capitalists recognized that they would have to make some concessions to the loyal doubters in the council if they wished to fend off the radical challenge. Thus Ault and Rust prepared letters in which they detailed their various business

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<sup>27</sup>Minutes, 30 March 1921, Box 8, KCCLC Records; O'Connell, pp. 191-192, 194-195; Harvey O'Connor, Revolution in Seattle, A Memoir, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1964), pp. 85-86; Resolution, 30 March 1921, Box 7, KCCLC Records.

affiliations and reported their intentions concerning them. Neither agreed to resign from any of their posts. Rust did, however, agree to forbid the United Finance Company to use his name in their promotions and Ault agreed to instruct "those so-called private institutions with which I am connected to cease the use of my name on stationery, printed matter, or in any other way that might be construed as promotion work." He did so, he said, not as an admission of guilt, or because the enterprises did not deserve his support, but in order to erase any doubt about where his loyalties lay. The labor-capitalists had done their lobbying well this time. When these letters were read, an out-pouring of support came from conservative unions. The Seattle Joint Council of Teamsters No. 28, Electrical Workers Union Local No. 1117, Mine Workers District No. 10, Auto Mechanics Union Local No. 289, and several other locals endorsed the UR's management and condemned the SCLC's actions of 24 March. The only leaders to support the radicals were the secretary of the Tacoma Central Labor Council and a reporter for the Tacoma Labor Advocate. Sensing that victory was now his, Ault moved for a quick vote on the reconsideration of the radicals' resolution. His timing was perfect. The SCLC voted 102 to 123, with 127 not voting, against the resolution. Then, the SCLC voted to discharge the investigating committee.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Actually, very few delegates switched sides. Those who had opposed the committee's report on 24 March, did so again on the 30th. During March, both sides had picked up support among the uncommitted delegates. In the final analysis, however, the labor-capitalists had picked up more new support among those who had not voted on 24 March.

Ault to SCLC; F.A. Rust to SCLC, 30 March 1921, Box 7; Minutes, 30 March 1921, Box 8, KCCLC Records; State Mine Workers Executive Board to Ault, 6 April 1921, Ault Papers; Shimmons to Eugene Belmont, 27 May 1921, Litchman Papers; UR 31 March 1921; Cravens, pp. 148-149.

The votes of 30 March left the conservatives and their pro-AFL allies in complete control of the SCLC--for the time being. They immediately set out to consolidate their gains. The SCLC sent a letter to Gompers, asking him to rule on the constitutionality of the radicals' 24 March resolution. Gompers replied by return mail that the 24 March resolution was, indeed, unconstitutional since the SCLC had no jurisdiction over its members outside business interests. Gompers' position added to the radicals' discomfiture. With the pressure off, Ault, who had previously attacked Short as a "slave to Gompers's (sic) views," began to identify himself more closely with the AFL position. On 2 April, he published a front-page editorial in which he promised, "We will fight to the ultimate limit every attempt to turn this paper to either the I.W.W. or the Communist party."

The radicals' most imaginative response was to establish a sixteen-member "Committee of 100," which was designed to rally radical support against Ault and the labor-capitalists. They also began to publish a weekly newsletter, entitled Save the Record, in which they attacked the UR's leadership and which they mailed to all AFL locals in the state. In response the UR published a counter-circular and conducted a further housecleaning of those with radical sympathies. In the end the radicals' efforts came to nothing. Their efforts to destroy the labor-capitalists had suffered a mortal blow. They soon abandoned these fruitless efforts to take over the SCLC and its labor enterprises.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Cravens, pp. 149-150; UR 7 May 1919; 2 April 1921; Save the Record, 14 April 1921, Ault Papers; O'Connell, pp. 96, 177, 193, 202-203; Circular Letter from the UR's board of directors, 19 Dec. 1921, Ault Papers.



With the radicals in retreat the SCLC set out to reorganize the UR. On 27 April, the council elected a new board of directors for the UR. This time, it consisted largely of AFL loyalists. The paper's financial situation, however, did not improve. Mark Litchman felt that, without unified support from the labor movement, it would soon die. The cut-off of support from radical unions hurt badly. So did increased operating costs. On 16 April, the UR had moved into its expensive new building. The total cost of the move--up to \$35,000--was added to the \$12,000 operating deficit incurred in 1920. The depression and William Randolph Hearst's purchase of the faltering P-I made the future seem bleak indeed.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, the consequences of victory were dire. Though the WSFL and the conservative unions increased their support for the UR, they could not replace the support that had been lost. Ault was forced to reduce the size of the paper. Indeed, he was reduced to:

...paying a little on one bill, getting a creditor to wait a little longer for his money, contracting a new debt here to pay on an old debt there...hoping, praying, that he (Ault) may be able to stave off the day till slow moving labor responds to our appeals for funds.<sup>31</sup>

To raise money Ault began a campaign to enlist his own "Committee of 1,000" who would contribute \$10 per month to the UR. The SCLC offered to help by presenting Ault with a \$500 Liberty Bond and by endorsing a \$2 assessment on each member of each affiliated organization. In addition seven other unions contributed in amounts up to \$2,000.

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<sup>30</sup>Minutes, 27 April 1921, Box 8, KCCLC Records; O'Connell, p. 196; Ault to Edward Nolan, 25 April 1921, Ault Papers; UR 18 April 1921; Litchman to Belmont, Slater, and Browett, 25 April 1921, Litchman Papers.

<sup>31</sup>O'Connell, pp. 195-197, 202-203; Litchman to Belmont, 4 June 1921, Litchman Papers; Shimmons to Ault, 90 page memo, 1924, Ault Papers, p. 49.

The aggregate amount, however, did not significantly ease the paper's plight. As long as the radical unions, such as Machinists Local No. 79, refused to contribute no real solution was possible. It may have been impossible even with unified support.<sup>32</sup>

As a result of the divisions within the SCLC, its offer to endorse a \$2 increase in the per capita tax came to nought. Although a majority of the membership supported an increase--the vote in favor was 935 to 888--the measure did not get the necessary two-thirds majority to amend the constitution. Only 31 of the 109 affiliated locals sent in their returns at all. In the final vote, twenty-three locals favored the measure and fifteen opposed it.<sup>33</sup>

In addition to the troubles it caused the UR, the labor-capitalist affair also had a negative impact on labor's political fortunes. Indeed, the SCLC was fortunate that 1921 was a quiet political year. Otherwise, the damage might have been much greater. As it was, the SCLC was active in only two city council races. The council, hoping to concentrate its efforts, endorsed the candidacies of C.W. Doyle, its business agent, and T.H. Bolton, the incumbent labor councilman. The problems arose on 2 March when Painters Union Local No. 300 objected to the fact that Bolton was accepting the support of the Seattle Star, even though the Star was attacking Doyle. They asked that the SCLC force Bolton to repudiate either the Star or the SCLC, and instruct the UR to publish Bolton's response to the order.

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<sup>32</sup>O'Connell, pp. 195-196,199; UR 25 April 1921; Shimmons to Ault, 90 page memo, 1924, Ault Papers, p. 53; Minutes, 1,15,29 June 1921, Box 8, KCCLC Records; Ault to Carpenters No. 131, 28 June 1921; John von Carnop to Ault, 14 June 1921, Ault Papers.

<sup>33</sup>Minutes, 20,27 July 1921, Box 8, KCCLC Records.

This was an obvious attempt to embarrass the SCLC's conservative leadership and to alienate the moderate AFL loyalists. The moderates and conservatives, however, held together, easily preventing passage of the Painters' resolution.<sup>34</sup>

The election results were predictable. Doyle managed to win the nomination, but failed to win in the general election. Bolton was not even renominated. The only ballot proposition that labor endorsed also failed. This was the nadir of labor's political fortunes.<sup>35</sup>

At the same time, the labor-capitalist controversy spread to the WSFL. The conflict could not be isolated within the SCLC, particularly in view of the role Short played in support of the SCLC conservatives. This was particularly true of the UR which, like many other labor enterprises, served a statewide labor constituency. Many of its readers, contributors, and investors were located in out-lying areas of the state. They relied upon the UR for much of their information. Although the non-Seattle unions were overwhelmingly conservative, their main interest in the SCLC's ideological struggle was to see that it did not destroy the paper. Thus, when Phil Pearl, the radical vice-president of the WSFL's Seattle district, introduced a resolution in the WSFL's executive board condemning the labor-capitalists for advertising themselves as cooperatives or labor-owned concerns, the other vice-presidents had more than one reason to be concerned. In response, Short appointed a three-man committee to investigate the charges and counter-charges. However, he also took the precaution of

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 5 Jan., 9 Feb., 2 March 1921.

<sup>35</sup>Dickson, pp. 136,138,141.

packing the committee with prominent labor conservatives and AFL loyalists. The committee then invited members of the SCLC investigating committee and anyone else who was interested to testify before it. The radicals, recognizing that the committee was stacked against them, refused to appear when the committee opened hearings in Seattle.

Thus, when the committee went ahead on its own, it found no evidence to justify the accusations against the UR's management, or those of the other labor-related firms. It blamed the whole conflict on factionalism in the SCLC.

When the committee made its report to the 1921 WSFL convention, it recommended that, in view of the UR's importance to the state labor movement as a whole and in view of the SCLC's inability to support the paper, it was the responsibility of the WSFL to rescue the paper. They recommended that the WSFL should offer to help support the UR, in exchange for a louder voice in its management and editorial policies. To accomplish this end the committee recommended that ownership of the UR should be extended by the creation of 50,000 new shares of common stock, which would be sold to non-SCLC unions. The committee hoped that wider ownership would lessen the impact of ideological factionalism within the SCLC. Incidentally, it would also increase conservative influence over the UR's editorial policies. Realizing this, the SCLC's moderate delegates at the convention, led by James Duncan, tried to water down the proposal. After a difficult struggle, they managed to amend the committee's proposal to limit the sale of each \$1 share of voting stock to those who had already purchased \$20 worth (\$10 per share) of non-voting stock. Despite continued objections

from Pearl, the convention approved the amended proposal. Soon, the SCLC also approved.<sup>36</sup>

The convention destroyed the radicals' last chance for statewide influence within the WSFL. William Short won reelection over L.W. Buck, the Left-winger whose job as secretary-treasurer had just been eliminated by statewide referendum, by a vote of 7,179 to 1,854. Short's supporters also won all the vice-presidential contests. Phil Pearl lost to V.E. Blomberg, Short's ally in the Seattle district, by a vote of 1,375 to 3,124. Both Short and Blomberg ran with the support of the SCLC. Thus, after the 1921 convention, the WSFL was once again completely and unalterably in the hands of its "old regime"--the conservative, non-partisan, craft unionist, native-born, old immigrant groups--who, with the recent support of the AFL loyalists and other non-communist forces in the SCLC, were committed to keep the WSFL aligned with the AFL. After the 1920 election, the radicals had lost their chance to control the WSFL's political policy. After the labor-capitalist controversy, they began to lose their influence in the SCLC. They still held on in a number of locals--mainly in the Puget Sound area--but, there too, their numbers began to fade. Their dream of a radical labor movement was dying.<sup>37</sup>

All this, of course, was not immediately clear to the radicals. After the WSFL convention, they renewed their efforts to win control

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<sup>36</sup>O'Connell, pp. 198-204; Minutes, 27-28 April 1921, Box 60; Short to All Local Unions, 21 March 1922, Box 35, WSFL Records; WSFL Procs., (1921), pp. 14-15, 68-69, 71-72, 75-76; (1922), p. 85; Minutes, 30 Nov., 7 Dec. 1921, Box 8, KCCLC Records.

<sup>37</sup>Minutes, 16, 23 Feb., 16 March, 18 May 1921, Box 8, KCCLC Records; WSFL Procs., (1921), pp. 42-43; (1922), p. 17; UR 8 June 1921; Litchman to Slater, 25 June 1921, Litchman Papers; Cravens, p. 150.

of the SCLC and reverse the decisions in the labor-capitalist case. They put up a complete slate of candidates in the SCLC elections and issued a pamphlet charging the incumbents with forming an interlocking directorate. It was a bitter, losing campaign. The incumbents all won reelection. The radicals still held on to a few offices but, as in the WSFL, they never again presented a serious challenge to the conservatives. The moderates, on the other hand, still faced problems. In the wake of their defeat, the radicals reserved their harshest criticisms for those who remained loyal to the AFL. From their few remaining sources of influence, particularly in the Tacoma Central Labor Council, they poured out their wrath on James Duncan and the other loyalist leaders. On 9 December, the Tacoma Labor Advocate published an article by Bruce Rogers which criticized both Duncan and Jean Stovel, the SCLC's women's organizer and a former member of the investigating committee. When the SCLC, thereupon, barred Rogers from his SCLC seat, on the grounds that the ITU had suspended his local for non-payment of its dues and assessments, Rogers blamed Duncan for the SCLC's actions. When asked to admit that he had written the article he:

...replied that he was (the author), and further charged Secretary Duncan with posing as a little tin Jesus, hypocritically using religion to further his own selfish end and to cover up his crookedness.<sup>38</sup>

The changed balance of power in the SCLC soon became apparent. It is appropriately symbolized by two constitutional amendments adopted

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<sup>38</sup>Cravens, pp. 149-152; UR 15 April, 28 July 1921; Litchman to Slater, 25 June, 21 Dec. 1921, Litchman Papers; O'Connell, p. 202; Minutes, 18 Oct., 1 Nov. 1921; UR Shop Steward Records, Ault Papers; Labor Advocate 8 Nov., 9 Dec. 1921, 3 Feb. 1922, and passim; Minutes, 4 Aug. 1920, 3 Aug., 21, 28 Dec. 1921, Box 8, KCCLC Records.

in September 1921, after the SCLC elections. The first, to hold SCLC business meetings in executive (i.e., private) sessions, passed 90 to 68, with 182 not voting. In protest, several radical unions withdrew from the SCLC. Walker C. Smith, the IWW and Left-wing socialist who represented the Cleaners and Dyers Union in the council, demanded a referendum on the issue, but the SCLC rejected his plea. At the same time, the amendment won plaudits from the conservative trade unions. Electrical Workers Union Local No. 46, which had withdrawn from the SCLC at the end of the general strike, asked to reaffiliate. In the weeks which followed more radical unions protested, or withdrew, from the SCLC, but their absence only served to increase the relative power of the AFL loyalists and conservative trade unionists who, in the absence of the radicals could control the council's sessions.<sup>39</sup>

The loyalists were also reenforced by the SCLC's actions in response to an IWW boycott of the "Our House" cafeteria, which employed both IWW and AFL workers. When the IWW struck the cafeteria, the AFL workers remained on the job and crossed their picket lines. When the IWW pickets physically attacked some of the union employees on several occasions, the SCLC voted, angrily, to adopt an anti-radical constitutional amendment. The proposed amendment functioned like a test, or exclusion act. It amended the delegates' oath, or obligation of office, to read:

I further renounce any and all allegiances that I may now have to any labor organization whose work or objects in any manner conflict with the American Federation of Labor and that I will not join or aid any such organization as long as I am a delegate to

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<sup>39</sup>Minutes, 14,21,28 Sept., 5,11 Oct. 1921, Box 8, KCCLC Records.

this Council, but will strive at all times, while a delegate for the upbuilding of the American Federation of Labor.

The clear intent of this amendment was to drive out the IWW's, communists, and other radicals from the SCLC. The moderates hoped, by this means to eliminate the remaining challenge to their authority from the Left. They succeeded, but in doing so played into the hands of the conservatives.<sup>40</sup>

Later in the same day, Ault and Duncan succeeded in passing resolutions which limited the number of visitors permitted in the galleries and which required the SCLC to adjourn its sessions by 11 o'clock in the evening. Both these actions helped appease the conservatives' anger at the radicals' use of dilatory tactics and demagoguery in the labor-capitalists controversy. The next week, when Walker C. Smith was called to appear before the SCLC's strike and grievances committee and explain his case against the AFL unions in the "Our House" dispute, he failed to show up and refused to say when he would do so. In the first test of the new constitutional amendments, the SCLC voted to force his resignation or recall.<sup>41</sup>

The radicals made one last, futile effort to recoup something from the labor-capitalist debacle, this time by means of their own constitutional amendment. They introduced their own proposed amendment to the delegates' oath which required the new delegates to declare that they did not employ labor for profit. Their effort did not get far. The chair ruled that the proposition was unconstitutional and,

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 28 Sept. 1921.

<sup>41</sup>Cravens, pp. 151-152; UR 13,17,19 Aug., 15 Sept. 1921; Minutes, 14,21,28 Sept. 1921, Box 8, KCCLC Records.



on appeal, the council sustained the chair by better than two to one.<sup>42</sup>

As for the Labor Legal Bureau Department, which had supported the radicals throughout the controversy, it became an instrument of the SCLC's conservatives. The change came suddenly. In July, the LLBD requested that the WSFL convention endorse its activities. Instead, the convention filed the Bureau's letter in order, it said, "to avoid undesirable controversy." Angered, the SCLC voted to invite Short to appear before the council to defend his position, or be "declared unfit and unworthy of further confidence." Later, the Tacoma Central Labor Council made a similar threat. Both were merely the result of wounded pride and neither pressed the issue. In August, however, after Pearl was defeated for reelection, even the pretence of support for the Bureau faded. The council ordered the bureau to drop its activities on behalf of radical causes. Thus ended the radicals' efforts to drive the conservatives out of the labor movement.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Minutes, 12 Oct. 1921, Box 8, KCCLC Records.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 20 July, 10, 28 Aug., 12 Oct. 1921; O'Connell, p. 198.

## Chapter 8:

### The Conservatives Regain Control:

#### Back to Progressivism, 1922

By mid-1922, in the eighth quarter of the economic recession, conditions began to improve. Although wheat production and exports continued to decline in response to falling prices, industrial production began to edge upward. Coal production increased about 7.39 per cent, despite the mine strike. Western Washington department store sales increased by seven per cent. Gross postal receipts increased by 9.14 per cent. In eastern Washington, however, the economy continued to lag, hurt by the poor market for wheat. In Seattle the consumer price index fell by 6.26 per cent.<sup>1</sup>

As a result of the economic turn-about the pressure on the labor force eased. The labor force increased by 1.19 per cent to 591,000 while employment rose by 5.59 per cent to 549,000. As a result unemployment fell by 37.21 per cent to 41,500, or 7.02 per cent of the labor force. (Table No. 1) At the same time the total number of production workers engaged in manufacturing industries also began to recover. Though wage levels remained depressed the future looked brighter.<sup>2</sup>

This ray of light did not greatly benefit the labor movement.

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<sup>1</sup>Johansen, p. 626; "Indexes of Business Activity," pp. 108-111.

<sup>2</sup>Johansen, p. 627.

By June 1922 the WSFL had lost 42 per cent of its membership in the previous twelve months. In the previous two years it had lost 69.77 per cent of its members and could claim only 23,117 members, or 3.91 per cent of the state's labor force. Even this figure was misleading since it included between 1,000 and 2,000 striking mine workers who paid no dues. (Table No. 2) Over the same period the number of WSFL affiliates fell by 8.09 per cent to 261 locals.<sup>3</sup>

The SCLC did not suffer as severely as the WSFL in the twelve months preceding June 1922. Membership fell by "a mere" 17.47 per cent, to 12,665. The biggest losers were the Maritime and Metal Trades sections. Membership in the former declined from 762 to 270, and in the latter from 2,149 to 1,110. Most of the other sections also lost members. Meanwhile, the total number of affiliates declined by 6.83 per cent to 109, as a number of radical locals withdrew from the council. At the same time the number of WSFL affiliates affiliated with the SCLC also declined by 7.40 per cent to 54.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to the administrative code bill, opposed by labor, the 1921 session of the legislature had passed three anti-labor bills which labor had opposed bitterly but unsuccessfully. Instead, the labor lobby resolved to try to have the bills held up for a referendum on the 1922 ballot. The first of these anti-labor bills, which collectively became known as the "anti-radical bills," would have changed the primary laws and required candidates to sign statements supporting their party's platform. It was designed to limit the

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<sup>3</sup>WSFL Procs., (1922), p. 37.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.; Membership and Per Capita Tax Records, 1907-1957, Box 11, KCCLC Records.

ability of progressives to run in the Republican Party primary against the wishes of the party leadership. The second anti-radical bill would have required all voters to declare their party affiliation and vote only in that party's primary. The third bill was not specifically directed against radicals, or the labor movement, but it would have had a similar impact on the political Left. This was the so-called Certificate of Necessity Bill. Supported by the state's private power companies, it resembled measures introduced in 1915 and 1919, but which had failed to reach the floor due to progressive opposition. It would have required publicly owned electric utilities to get a certificate in order to build, expand, maintain, or operate its facilities where a private company already provided similar services. It also repealed a section of a 1911 law exempting public utilities from the jurisdiction of the Public Service Commission.<sup>5</sup>

These bills flew in the face of nearly everything the labor movement stood for. Many times the WSFL convention had gone on record supporting liberal reform of the state's utility and election laws. They now believed that the Republican Establishment was set to destroy the last vestiges of labor's ability to make its political weight felt. In 1920 the WSFL had not been able to take part in the Republican primaries. Instead, it had endorsed the FLP against the better judgment of its leadership and over AFL opposition. In 1922, with the radical threat diminished, the leadership vowed that nothing would deflect them from a non-partisan course again. The problem was

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<sup>5</sup>Pullen, pp. 298-301, 341; Washington State Legislature, Session Laws of 1921, (Olympia, 1921), pp. 682-699.

that, although the labor movement was united on the need to defeat the anti-radical bills, there was wide disagreement over the means to that end.<sup>6</sup>

Following the passage of the anti-radical bills, the WSFL called together the leaders of the Grange, RPC, FLP, and the UR to organize referendum campaigns. W.D. Lane, who served as the WSFL's attorney, was the principal spokesman against the first anti-radical bill (which became known as Referendum 15 B). He described it as a "vicious" bill which would make it nearly impossible to launch a new party. Opponents of 15 B and the other election law bill (which became known as Referendum 15) worked closely with those who opposed the Certificate of Necessity Bill. The opposition to the Certificate of Necessity Bill was spear-headed by Seattle and Tacoma public utility officials and was coordinated by J.D. Ross, superintendent of Seattle City Light, and Homer Bone, an FLP legislator from Tacoma. Together they organized a highly effective campaign to defeat the bill. Ross felt that if the bill survived private companies would eventually control all power production in the state and would be able to prevent public utilities from opening new markets for power. This lent urgency to the campaign.<sup>7</sup>

The campaign against the Certificate of Necessity Bill received widespread support. The P-I, the UR, the Spokesman-Review, and

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<sup>6</sup>WSFL Procs., (1919), pp. 123-124, 130-131, 134, 151; (1920), p. 92; Minutes, 10 May, 7 Nov. 1920, Box 60, WSFL Records.

<sup>7</sup>Pullen, pp. 301, 341; Minutes, 5, 30 March, 6, 27 April 1921, Box 8, KCCLC Records.

a number of the state's political leaders, including Mayor Charles Fleming of Spokane, opposed it. The WSFL's executive board became very actively involved in the campaign to defeat the bill and appointed a committee to work with the Certificate of Necessity Bill Referendum Committee.<sup>8</sup>

Those who supported the referendum (which became known as H.B. 174) included the Seattle Times, the Everett Daily Herald, and several smaller papers, in addition to the private power companies. They failed, however, to unite all the private power companies behind the bill. Certain eastern Washington power companies, such as the Washington Water Power Company of Spokane, had their own plans to develop the state's water power resources and suspected that the bill would benefit out-of-state-based companies, like the Stone & Webster interests. Thus, in the end, all three referenda went down to defeat in the November 1922 elections.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to these signs of political resurgence, the non-partisan leadership in the labor movement continued to make headway against the third party and dual-union radicals in the labor movement. In Bremerton the central labor council passed an anti-radical resolution similar to that approved by the SCLC. It required all delegates to swear oaths to represent their organizations truly and to renounce all allegiances which conflicted with the principles of the AFL. In

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Referendum 15B lost by a vote of 60,593 to 164,004; Referendum 15 lost by a vote of 57,324 to 140,299; and the Certificate of Necessity Bill lost by a vote of 64,800 to 154,905. After years of constant defeats, these victories greatly encouraged the non-partisan progressive forces.

Pullen, pp. 301-302, 350-351; Minutes, 13 April 1921, Box 8, KCCLC Records.

a letter to Short, the secretary of the council commented, "This leaves us comparatively clean and the loss (of several radical delegates who withdrew from the council rather than sign) will undoubtedly prove to be a gain in the end." Meanwhile, in the SCLC, the AFL loyalists (i.e., the moderate-dominated Center-Right coalition) remained in control.<sup>10</sup>

However, the sense of peace and harmony which thereupon enveloped the labor movement proved to be short-lived. True, labor had survived the worst ravages of the American Plan and the post-war depression. But it had not yet recovered its nerve. Labor was too uncertain about its own internal cohesion as yet to venture into new organizational endeavors. All over the state labor played a waiting game. After being locked out all the summer of 1922 the Anacortes Longshoremen's Union Local turned in their charter rather than continue the fight. In Everett efforts to organize the auto drivers, newsboys, mild condensary workers, and timber workers all failed due to the continuing inability of radicals and conservatives to work together harmoniously in the face of unified employer opposition. Efforts to convince suspended radical locals to reaffiliate also failed. The state's Culinary Crafts Council reported hard struggles in every region of the state. In Hoquiam the Tailors Union Local had only six members left after losing a strike. In Raymond the labor movement was at a "low ebb." In Roslyn businessmen said they were willing to negotiate with union representatives but, no sooner had

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<sup>10</sup>Leonard to Short, 13 April 1922, Box 13-43; Fiske to Short, 17 March 1922, Box 9-1; Phil J. Pearl to Short, 22 May 1922, Box 7-10, WSFL Records.

talks begun between the employers and the unions' three-man bargaining committee than the union negotiators started getting lay-off notices from their employers. In Tacoma the Building Trades Council, for the second year in a row, struck the Puyallup State Fair for refusing to employ union labor. And in Walla Walla the central labor council's secretary reported to Short that:

Everything seems as dead as h--- and we are anxious to revive things in general before the spring season arrives. Something has simply got to be don (sic), and a few of us old heads dont (sic) feel like tackling it alone but will give every aid and assistance to an organizer.

Please dig us up one and direct him to Walla Walla care of your humble servant and we will all appreciate it.

But when Short, himself, arrived in Walla Walla to help revive the council, the local leaders could get no one to attend union meetings and Short addressed nearly empty halls.<sup>11</sup>

The WSFL attempted to respond positively to these needs, but without much success. The leadership was limited by their refusal to adopt the extensive reforms advocated by their radical and moderate colleagues. The moderates could do nothing on their own without drawing fire from the AFL. And the radicals were more interested in destroying the WSFL and everything it stood for than in improving the present lot of the labor movement. Despite these limitations the WSFL did try to extend support to its needier affiliates. On 1 August 1921, in response to the wave of strikes already noted, the executive

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<sup>11</sup>Maryott to Short, 19 Jan. 1923, Box 15-63; Leonard to Short, 13 April, 16 Sept. 1922, Box 13-43; O.F. Wefferling to Short, 3 June 1922, Box 43-1; Sturm to Short, 27 June, 18 Sept. 1922, Box 23-5; F.B. Norman to Short, 26 Feb., 21 March 1922, Box 19-17; R. Flummerfelt to Short, 14 April 1922, Box 1-36; Hesketh to Short, 7 Jan. 1922, Box 13-32; G.L. McMurphy to Short, 3 June, 28 Aug. 1922, Box 35; Clarke to Short, 6 Feb. 1922, Box 9-29; Short to Fred Lewis, 17 Aug. 1922, Box 35; Short to McMurphy, 22 Aug. 1922, Box 35, WSFL Records.



board had agreed to let locals in financial difficulties (e.g., the miners), due to strikes or unemployment, to reaffiliate with the WSFL, without having to pay all the back taxes normally required. Then, on 7 January 1922, the board extended the six month deadline they had placed on this dispensation--until the end of February 1922. Such efforts had little over-all effect, though they may have helped a few locals. In November 1922, when O.K. Sweeney, the WSFL vice-president for the Walla Walla-Yakima district heard that Short proposed to visit eastern Washington, he wrote;

I. See by the (Spokane) Labor World you are going to be on this side of the state before long we hope you will get down in this corner while over here. All you kneed (sic) to fetch with you is A. shovel all we kneed (sic) is some one to bury us. We are all shot to pieces...<sup>12</sup>

Earlier, at the WSFL's 1922 convention, the delegates had approved an organizational campaign for eastern Washington, the first such campaign in the WSFL's history. It was designed to combat the rapid decline in the WSFL's membership in eastern Washington. Short requested the assistance of an AFL organizer for the campaign, but Gompers dismissed this possibility as "utterly out of the question" and said that if the AFL managed to preserve its own organization, "It will be doing well." In addition, most international unions rejected Short's pleas for help. Lacking external support, internally divided, facing strong and unified opposition, the state labor movement seemed on the verge of disintegration.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>WSFL Procs., (1922), p. 18; Sweeney to Short, 26 Nov. 1922, Box 9-29, WSFL Records.

<sup>13</sup>WSFL Procs., (1922), p. 83; Sullivan to Short, 22 Aug. 1922; Ford to Short, 23 Aug. 1922, Box 11-40; Short to O.A. Dirkes, 7 Sept. 1922, Box 35, WSFL Records.

Then, as if things were not already bad enough, a major new statewide labor-management conflict broke out into the open. On 1 July 1922 the Railroad Brotherhoods struck their employers. The strike, which was part of a nation-wide strike of the Federated Shop Craft Unions, resulted from the railroads' efforts to roll back wage raises granted by the Railroad Labor Board on 1 May 1920. The railroads had succeeded once before, on 1 June 1921, in reducing wages. This time the workers refused to accept the cuts without a fight. With the railroad workers on strike, all of the major industrially organized unions in the state were on the picket line. By fall of 1922, however, the Railroad Brotherhoods were forced to return to work on their employers' terms. Like the miners, longshoremen, and other industrial unionists, their organization was severely hurt.<sup>14</sup>

By this time the labor movement had begun to take an increased interest in politics. The use of anti-labor injunctions by employers in the mine, typographical, and railroad strikes provided an impetus for political activity. As intra-union tensions eased, some important unions, including the Teamsters, began to reaffiliate with the SCLC. In the absence of the more extreme radicals the WSFL non-partisans and the AFL-loyalist leadership in the SCLC wielded increased influence. Unlike 1920 they kept the SCLC from endorsing any of the three declared mayoral candidates. Rather, the SCLC

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<sup>14</sup>For more on the strike and its resolution, see: Philip Taft, Organized Labor in American History, pp. 376-380; Hicks, p. 72, O'Connell, p. 221; UR 7 July-13 Sept. 1922. See also: WSFL Procs., (1922), p. 77; Minutes, 11 Jan., 14 Aug. 1919; Minutes, Everett Central Labor Council, 13 Sept. 1922, Box 9-4; Short to Trumby, 22 March 1922, Box 35; O.A. Dirkes to Short, 19 Sept. 1922, Box 1-51; R.M. Perkins to Short, 6 Nov., 21 Dec. 1922, Box 1-53, WSFL Records; Minutes, 2,9,23,30 Aug., 20,27

concentrated on defeating the one strongly anti-union candidate, Walter F. Meier. Meier was a former associate of the Stone & Webster "power trust's" attorney, and he strongly supported the Certificate of Necessity Referendum. The Union League Club, which was closely tied to AIS, endorsed him. The SCLC had fewer objections to the two other men in the race: State Senator Dan Landon, a pro-business, conservative Republican lawyer; and Dr. Edwin J. Brown, the former leader of the SPA Yellows, who was now practicing as an "advertising dentist." Since 1912 Brown had been a member of the Democratic Party. Of the three candidates Brown was the most popular in labor circles. A number of locals endorsed him, although Landon also won some labor support.<sup>15</sup>

This tactic had obvious benefits. It prevented labor's opponents from "ganging up" against it. In the primaries Meier was eliminated by a margin of thirty-two votes and in the general election Brown went on to defeat Landon by 12,000 votes out of 69,000 cast. According to Cline, the Street Carmen supported Brown far more strongly than they had supported Duncan. Brown did not antagonize the "wets," or the political Establishment. Of those Street Carmen eligible to vote, 91.2 per cent supported him. In addition, labor's favorite candidates for the port commission and two labor-endorsed women won city council seats. Again, these victories would not have been possible without the support of non-labor groups, particularly the

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Sept., 25 Oct. 1922, Box 8, KCCLC Records.

<sup>15</sup>H. Dail to Short, 7 April 1922, Box 23-79; Short to Ellis, 21 Nov. 1922, Box 35; Duncan to SCLC locals, 6 April 1922, Box 9-10, WSFL Records; Minutes, 3 May 1922, Box 8, KCCLC Records; O'Connell, p. 214; Cline, pp. 133-134.

League of Women Voters. Their successes in the Seattle mayoral elections greatly encouraged the non-partisan forces in the SCLC.<sup>16</sup>

Shortly after the municipal elections, however, the SCLC's difficulties with the WSFL and AFL resumed. On 12 April Hulet Wells returned from his mission to Moscow, where he had attended Lenin's Red International. In his report to the SCLC he recommended that the AFL affiliate with the International. This outraged the supporters of the AFL in the SCLC. It again placed the moderate leadership in the SCLC in jeopardy. Many of them agreed with the policy objectives if not the tactics of the Left and knew that their rank and file members did so as well, but did not want to violate their oaths of loyalty to the AFL. Gompers immediately sought to remind them of the fact and accused Wells of violating the SCLC's new loyalty oath because, while in Moscow, Wells had denounced the AFL. The AFL's executive council now demanded that the SCLC reaffirm its loyalty to the AFL and repudiate Wells, the Soviets, communism, and the IWW. Still further, it ordered the SCLC to send no more anti-AFL delegations to AFL conventions and demanded that the SCLC give up its claims to an independent political policy.<sup>17</sup>

Behind the charges, the AFL's policy was to bring the SCLC and WSFL back into the non-partisan fold. Despite the vicissitudes of the

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<sup>16</sup>O'Connell, p. 214; UR 5 May 1922; Dickson, pp. 136,138; Cline, pp. 133-134.

<sup>17</sup>Minutes, 12 April 1922, Box 8, KCCLC Records; Winslow, pp. 85, 100-101; Philip Taft, The A.F.L. in the Time of Gompers, (New York: Harper and Bros., 1957), p. 456; Short to William F. Kramer, 22 June 1922; Short to James W. Kilne, 6 July 1922, Box 35; J.W. Kline to Short, 27 June 1922, Box 7-27, WSFL Records.

previous two years and the revitalization of the leadership of both the WSFL and the SCLC, both still endorsed the FLP officially. The AFL thus sought to use the opportunity provided by Wells' return to force the SCLC to renounce the FLP and follow the AFL's political policy. For example, it wanted the SCLC to give up its strong stand in favor of prohibition. These "outside" attacks on the SCLC's policies split the leadership. It drove the industrial unionists and the regional loyalists even more firmly into the third party camp. It increased the isolation of the AFL loyalists. Although the AFL worked with the international unions and the WSFL to make life difficult for the pro-FLP leadership in the SCLC, they failed to oust the latter from their local offices. The FLP forces continued to work with the radicals, who had resigned or been expelled from the SCLC, to build up the third party.<sup>18</sup>

While these larger matters shook the labor movement, one should not ignore the smaller but still important issues which concerned the labor movement. Throughout the 1920's labor continued to face local problems of significant proportions. One such case involved labor's relations with the John Danz Theater Company, which operated a chain of theaters in Seattle. In the 1920's movie theaters were among the fastest growing businesses. To a large extent they cut into the demand for live performances. At the same time, they were attempting to reduce their labor costs and avoid union recognition. This led, inevitably, to labor conflict. In Seattle, it broke out in June 1922, when the SCLC complied with a request from Musicians

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

Union Local No. 76 to place the John Danz Company on the unfair list for refusing to employ sufficient projection room workers and live performers. Eventually, this strike became the longest strike in Seattle's history. It did not end until 1935, after thirteen years of picketing, violence, injunctions, court battles, harrassment and dogged determination on both sides.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>The strike might have ended much sooner had the courts supported either side more consistently. In the summer of 1922, for example, the King County Court ruled that picketers could not sell newspapers outside the struck theaters which called attention to the unfair conditions within the theaters. In September 1923, however, King County Superior Court Judge Walter French denied Danz's request for a permanent injunction against the union. The judge ruled that, in upholding the Anti-Injunction Act (1919), Danz had not proved "irreparable damage" to his business.

Despite such victories, the struggle continued. Danz appealed French's verdict to higher courts. This resulted in one of the most significant decisions in the history of the state supreme court. In 1925 it reversed Judge French's decision. The majority argued that the Anti-Injunction Act, which French had presumed to have legalized "peaceful picketing," did no such thing. The judges held that "peaceful picketing" was a contradiction in terms and hence meaningless. By this decision, the court upheld its previous rulings in the St. Germaine case (1917), which the Anti-Injunction Act had been intended to overturn.

Throughout the 1920's Danz defied the union. He continued to resist even though other Amusement Trades unions joined the Musicians' strike. He stayed in business and even flourished. Supported by employers' associations from as far away as Los Angeles, Danz hired gunmen to obstruct the pickets and rough up union members. He even hired people to stand in line to buy tickets to his shows when real customers were scarce.

As a result of his outside support and the favorable court rulings, the unions' strike against Danz dragged on year after year. It was not until the New Deal that Danz was forced to come to terms. In December 1934, the National Recovery Administration audited the Danz Company's books and found that it owed its striking employees \$20,000 in back salaries. Several months later, with the assistance of the mayor, the union finally convinced Danz to recognize them and sign a contract.

Minutes, 28 June, 30 Aug., 6,20 Sept., 15 Nov., 6 Dec. 1922; 2 May, 6,20 June, 18 July, 12,19 Sept., 10,24 Oct., 7,14,21,28 Nov., 12,26 Dec. 1923, 30 Jan., 6 Feb., 30 July, 15 Oct., 17 Dec. 1924; 4,11 March, 1 April, 29 Sept. 1925; 3 Aug. 1927, 4,11,18 Jan., 8,15 Feb., 6,13 June 1928, 21,28 Aug., 9,16,30 Oct., 27 Nov. 1929, 15 Jan., 12

Prior to the start of the 1922 election campaign, President Short began to organize the WSFL's political campaign. He was determined that the WSFL not repeat its endorsement of a third party. Having defeated the radicals in the SCLC with the solid support of the AFL and the SCLC loyalists, Short was determined to push through a non-partisan progressive program. Labor's successful campaign to get the most conservative, anti-labor pieces of legislation passed by the 1921 legislature placed on the 1922 ballot, had greatly stimulated interest in non-partisanship. The successes in the 1922 municipal campaign in Seattle had also served to stimulate interest in non-partisanship. The campaign to get the referenda on the ballot went so successfully, in fact, that Short was encouraged to venture further into the direct legislation approach. He began to solicit ideas about using the initiative process to enact those programs which the legislature had refused to enact and to help build up a non-partisan coalition for the 1922 elections. One of Short's strongest supporters, outside the WSFL's executive board, and his most influential political adviser, was Fred B. Norman. Norman, the WSFL's legislative agent in Olympia, had been a capable labor legislator. As a member of the House from Raymond he had been instrumental in preventing much harsher anti-labor actions at the 1919 session. Until swept out of office in 1920, he had served as chairman of the House Labor Committee. Since he was a strong AFL loyalist, a progressive Republican, and an astute

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Feb. 1930; 14 June, 2 Aug. 1933; 12 Dec. 1934; 3,10 April 1935, Box 8, KCCLC Records; Tripp, pp. 263-264,293-294; WSFL Procs., (1925), pp. 6-7; (1930), p. 9; Danz v. American Federation of Musicians, 133 Wash. 186 (1925). See also: Short to J. Webber, 26 Oct. 1923, Box 36; Short to ?, undated, Box 35; Short to J. Taylor, 30 March 1925, Box 36-34; A.G. Bixby to Short, 20,27 May 1925, Box 21-61, WSFL Records.

politician, Short turned to him to develop labor's political program for 1922.<sup>20</sup>

After many internal consultations, and discussions with the Grange and Railroad Brotherhoods, the WSFL agreed to support a series of initiatives in an effort to enact a progressive program without recourse to the legislature. Originally, labor proposed to concentrate on a limited number of proposals, including initiatives to increase workmen's compensation benefits and another to limit the use of anti-labor injunctions. The Railroad Brotherhoods strongly supported both measures. Soon, however, the WSFL's hopes dimmed. In order to maintain a broad political alliance, labor was forced to adopt many more initiative proposals, some of which were not very popular among trade unionists. As these took more and more time and effort, the WSFL's enthusiasm for the campaign flagged and dissipated. Then occurred an event which rendered irrelevant the entire campaign as far as labor was concerned. Norman discovered a typographical error in the printed copies of the workmen's compensation initiative which had already been distributed to collect signatures. Instead of providing for 5.2 weeks of compensation for each one per cent of disability, the printed bill, by omitting a decimal point provided for fifty-two weeks of compensation. Norman, in alarm, reported his discovery to Short, who soon learned that industry analysts were also aware of the error and were lying in wait for the initiative's advocates should they collect enough signatures to place it on the ballot. In

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<sup>20</sup>Yearbook, (1927), p. 23.



the end, the WSFL was forced to begin its campaign all over again, with a new bill and a new ballot number. By then, however, no hope for passage remained.<sup>21</sup>

At the same time that the WSFL's initiative proposals were falling apart, the Grange's internal problems grew worse. Although State Grangemaster William Bouck continued to support pro-labor policies, he was more closely tied to the radicals and third party forces in the SCLC than to the conservatives and AFL loyalists. The Yakima grangers, on the other hand, supported the conservative, pro-business policies of the national Grange. After the 1920 state Grange convention had supported Bouck's policies, the Yakima grangers had appealed their case to the national Grange convention, which had obliged by passing a resolution censuring Bouck and suspending him as grangemaster. This interference had outraged the state Grange. Although they had appeared to bow to the wishes of the national Grange convention, replacing Bouck with Fred Nelson, the Grange's state executive committee had appointed Bouck to another position from which he retained effective control over the state organization.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>For more on the initiative campaigns, see: F.B. Norman to Short, ? Jan., 26 Feb. 1922, Box 19-17; Walker to Short, 24 April 1922, Box 26-34; Maude Swetman to Short, 12 April 1922, Box 8; 2 May 1922, Box 11-58; 3 May 1922, Box 35; 25 Aug. 1922, Box 18-18; J.R. Montgomery to Short, 12 Feb. 1922, Box 43-1; G.E. Hedges to Short, 12 Feb. 1922, Box 43-1; Cooper to Short, 27 April 1922, Box 13-38; William F. Dau to Short, 29 April 1922, Box 23-21; O.F. Wefferling to Short, 30 Jan. 1922, Box 43-1; Short to C.D. Buckley, 1 March 1922; Short to O.A. Rhinard, 3 March 1922; Short to Fox, 30 Jan. 1922; Short to J.R. Justham, 15 Feb. 1922; Short to F.B. Norman, 3,28 March 1922; Short to Frank J. Walkin, 28 March 1922, Box 35; Minutes, 7 Jan., 9 April 1922, Box 60, WSFL Records; Minutes, 1 Feb. 1922, Box 8, KCCLC Records; WSFL Procs., (1922), pp. 7-10,41-43; Pullen, pp. 150-155,167,203-206.

<sup>22</sup>Cravens, p. 155; Crawford, pp. 272-279; UR 27 July 1921.

Bouck, however, had demanded more than effective control. By September 1921, he had openly begun to organize a secessionist movement of his supporters in the state Grange. But although Nelson and the other grangers sympathized with Bouck and resented outside interference, they did not want to break with the national Grange. They feared that the national Grange would grant a new charter to the Yakima organization to set up a rival state organization, if Bouck did not desist. When Bouck refused to stop his secessionist activities, Nelson and a majority of the state organization broke with him. When the 1921 state Grange convention formally expelled Bouck, he had taken about one-third of the membership with him. By December 1921, his organization had about 7,000 members and had taken the name Western Progressive Grange. By the end of 1921 the Grange had split into two factions: the conservative Yakima branch and a majority of those progressives who remained loyal to the national Grange remained within the original body; the pro-labor third partyists, mainly from the Puget Sound area, had left to form their own organization.<sup>23</sup>

The split in the Grange angered the WSFL. Now both of labor's non-partisan allies, the Railroad Brotherhoods and the Grange, were on the verge of ruins. Bouck's secession, in particular, angered Short since it added to the ability of the third partyists to disrupt his non-partisan proposals. Short could only see Bouck's secession as part of an over-all plot to destroy the progressive coalition. Immediately after the split in the Grange, Short began to direct a drumbeat of criticism against the splinter group.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Cravens, pp. 155-156; Crawford, pp. 279-284, 290-291.

<sup>24</sup>For more on Short's campaign against Bouck, see: Short to

Short might have gotten even further involved in the Grange split had not Frank Goss, the new state secretary of the Grange, gradually stemmed the rate of defections to the WPG and reaffirmed the Grange's alliance with the WSFL. Goss even began to regain support among independent farmers with a campaign to limit property taxes by the initiative. This initiative did not have labor's full support, because it promised to place more of a burden on urban taxpayers, but in general Goss' political policies did appeal to the WSFL. From the beginning, Goss had doubted Bouck's third party tactics on the grounds that there was no legislative remedy for what ailed agriculture. Instead, he favored market-oriented economic action, through independent, cooperative efforts. He emphasized expansion of producer, marketing, and consumer cooperatives. Like Short, he favored non-partisan tactics, so long as it was consistent with the national Grange's conservative, anti-reform policies. By 1922, the Grange's drift to the Right had proceeded so far that the state convention voted to remain independent of any political party. In effect, they voted to continued their opposition to the FLP. The WPG, on the other hand, unanimously endorsed the FLP and reelected Bouck.<sup>25</sup>

The split-up of the Grange, the labor-management dispute in

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H. Arends, 3,9 Dec. 1921, Box 35, WSFL Records.

For information on Bouck's retaliatory efforts, see: WPG to H. Arends, 3 March 1922, Box 34-1, WSFL Records.

See also: Short to All Affiliates, 10 April 1922, Box 35; C.A. Doyle to Short, 2 May 1922, Box 34-1, WSFL Records.

<sup>25</sup>Cole, pp. 66-67; Cravens, pp. 64,164; Pullen, p. 163; A.S. Goss to Short and Duncan, 15 July 1922, Box 34-1, WSFL Records; UR 10, 16 June 1922.

the Railroad industry, and the continuing rift in the labor movement, made cooperation in the 1922 election campaign exceedingly difficult. Nevertheless, Short tried. The only basis he could see for a successful progressive campaign was a renewal of the Triple Alliance of 1919. All factions could agree on one major goal: the need to defeat Senator Miles Poindexter, the incumbent conservative Republican. But they could not agree on tactics. The SCLC leadership, led by Duncan, wanted to work through the FLP; the AFL loyalists, led by Short, refused to repeat what they saw as the errors of 1920.<sup>26</sup>

In March 1922, reeling from the failure of the workmen's compensation initiative, Short began to mobilize support along non-partisan lines focussing on the need to defeat Poindexter. Short's first move was to try to delay a WSFL decision until he had his forces lined up. He asked all WSFL-affiliates to defer taking any political actions until after the WSFL convention in July. This had a two-fold result. It inhibited the evolution of a third party "bandwagon" and it placed the onus for dividing the labor movement squarely on the pro-FLP moderates and their radical allies outside the labor movement: they could not afford to wait until after July to organize their campaign. Soon a number of WSFL affiliates, including Mine Workers District No. 10, and some of the largest SCLC organizations endorsed Short's policy. The only major objection in District No. 10 came from

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<sup>26</sup>Cole, pp. 63-68; Cravens, p. 159; For more on Poindexter's record and his relations with the labor movement and the progressives, see: Cole, pp. 56-57, 67, 79; Clark, The Dry Years, pp. 184-188; H.W. Allen, "Miles Poindexter: A Political Biography," (Ph.D. Dissertation: University of Washington, 1959), p. 565, passim; Fred C. Howe to Short, 22 July 1922, Box 10-59; Call to Short, 9 Sept. 1922, Box 23-46, WSFL Records; Minutes, 12 Nov. 1919, Box 8, KCCLC Records.

President Martin J. Flyzik, who was jealous of Short's influence with the mine workers and had pushed for support of the FLP.<sup>27</sup>

Although the SCLC continued to support the FLP, Short claimed that all of the other western Washington central labor councils, with the possible exception of the Everett Central Labor Council, also accepted his guidance. The demand for practical results, especially in eastern Washington but also in other areas of the state which were wracked by strikes and economic dislocation, gave a powerful impetus to the non-partisan forces. By the spring of 1922, the SCLC's third partyists, who still supported the FLP, were becoming increasingly isolated.<sup>28</sup>

On 9 April, the WSFL's executive board met in secret joint session with the executive boards of the Grange and the Railroad Brotherhoods. After discussing the disappointing progress of the initiatives, they also discussed (informally) the coming political campaign. Unable to agree on formation of a statewide campaign organization, each member of the progressive alliances promised to work together for passage of the initiatives and the defeat of Poindexter through its existing political mechanisms.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>For more on Flyzik's motivation and the action of District No. 10's state convention, see: O'Connell, p. 215; WSFL Procs., (1922), p. 11; Short to O.F. Wefferling, 21 March 1922, Box 35, WSFL Records.

See also: Joe T. Clemente to Short, 3 Nov. 1922, Box 11-1, WSFL Records.

<sup>28</sup>Short to Wefferling, 21 March 1922, Box 35, WSFL Records; Cravens, p. 160; Cole, p. 70.

<sup>29</sup>WSFL Procs., (1922), pp. 10-12; Minutes, 9 April 1922, Box 60, WSFL Records.

Meanwhile, the FLP recognized its growing isolation and took steps to gain allies. In mid-April, the leadership held a conference with representatives of the SPW, the SLP, and the newly formed Workers' Party (Communist). Like the non-partisans they agreed on the need for united action, but they agreed on little else. Two weeks later the same representatives met again. The FLP again made friendly overtures, but the WP delegates demanded numerous political concessions in return for their political cooperation which the FLP could not accept. The meeting adjourned before the delegates could reach any accomodation.<sup>30</sup>

The failure of the remaining third party forces to agree on a joint program placed the FLP in a poor tactical situation. It gave Short and his allies a tempting target. He was not slow in seizing the initiative. Soon after the joint executive board meeting Short began a campaign to negate the influence of the third partyists in the labor movement. In accordance with the decision of the meeting he sent a letter to all WSFL affiliates urging them, again, not to decide on their political policy until after the WSFL convention. The longer they held off their decisions, the harder the FLP's organizational problems became.<sup>31</sup>

The FLP fought back bitterly, but ineffectively. For the next two months the labor movement was rent by the attacks and counter-attacks of the warring factions. The SCLC responded to Short's letter

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<sup>30</sup>Cravens, p. 160; UR 4 May 1922; Litchman to Slater, 25 May 1922, Litchman Papers.

<sup>31</sup>WSFL Procs., (1922), pp. 10-12; Cravens, pp. 161-162; UR 20, 24, 27 April 1922; Minutes, 19 April 1922, Box 8, KCCLC Records.

by arguing that, until the WSFL convention decided otherwise, the FLP remained the WSFL's authorized political organ and that, hence, there was no need to wait until the convention before endorsing it. The Tacoma Central Labor Council joined the SCLC in endorsing James Duncan as the FLP's candidate for Poindexter's Senate seat. It went even further. After rejecting Short's advice, the Tacoma Central Labor Council also endorsed the WP. Thereupon, Short charged that the central labor councils were usurping the WSFL's functions as labor's statewide policy-making body.<sup>32</sup>

These battles aggravated the old fissures in the labor movement. The Seattle Building, Amusement, and Culinary Trades councils, together with the Teamsters Joint Council No. 28, demanded that the SCLC reverse its stand on the FLP. The Boilermakers Union Local No. 104, the Teamsters, and the Building Trades Council also censured the SCLC for its divisiveness and endorsed Short's position. On the other hand, support for the FLP came from numerous, smaller locals and central labor councils and WPG affiliates. Carpenters Union Local No. 131 was the only large local to support the SCLC's stand. Together with the SCLC, the Carpenters even sent delegates to the FLP state convention.<sup>33</sup>

Even as the WSFL's attack on the FLP mounted in intensity, the communists attacked from the Left. They felt that they were the rightful party of the Left. Attacked on both flanks, the FLP retreated further into political isolation. Most of the blame for this

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Cravens, p. 162; UR 24,27 April 1922; Minutes, 19,26 April, 3,10,17,24,31 May, 7 June 1922, Box 8, KCCLC Records; Short to McMonnies, 1 June 1922, Box 35, WSFL Records.

must rest with James Duncan. Duncan refused to have any truck with the communists. At the same time, he insisted on reforming the WSFL and AFL along industrial lines and rejected any effort to adopt non-partisan policies. He further complicated his position by supporting prohibition, which was highly unpopular among many union members, particularly those of Catholic, Jewish, and eastern or southern European origin. Without his energy--intellectual and moral, as well as physical--the FLP could not have lasted as long as it did. Yet his refusal to endorse a candidate with progressive principles in one of the major parties' primaries, ensured the destruction of the FLP. Duncan egotistically refused to allow professional politicians to control the business of reform.<sup>34</sup>

The FLP held its 1922 state convention in Seattle, on 3-4 June. It was far less dynamic than its primary day convention in 1920. Delegates from only nine western Washington counties attended. Only King and Pierce counties sent full delegations. Only a few Grange locals sent delegates. A WP delegation from Seattle and Tacoma attended under orders to extract political concessions in return for their cooperation. When the FLP refused to grant all of their demands, they walked out of the meeting.

The FLP had invited Short to attend their conventions, but he refused, on the grounds that the convention would deal with a definite political policy and the WSFL had voted to defer such decisions until after the WSFL's own convention. Thus, Short argued, there was nothing

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<sup>34</sup>Cole, p. 70; Cline, pp. 148-149; Call, pp. 60-61; Minutes, 21 Dec. 1921, Box 8, KCCLC Records; UR 1,13,17 Jan. 1920.



for him to discuss. It would only be a waste of time. Instead, Short sent the FLP a personal warning against attempting to split the progressive forces. He repeated his requests that they defer their political policy and appoint a committee to meet with the non-partisans after the WSFL convention. He warned that failure to comply would ensure the reelection of Poindexter and incur the undying wrath of all progressive elements.

E.B. Ault and D.C. Coates, brother of the editor of the Spokane Labor World, supported Short's recommendations. The latter introduced a resolution favoring deferral of a political policy. Duncan, however, was in no mood to cooperate and under his influence, the party rejected this course. Instead, the convention passed a resolution, introduced by Duncan, which pledged the FLP to place a full ticket in the 1922 primaries. The only concession Duncan offered to Short was to approve appointment of committees to visit the WSFL and Grange conventions to lobby for the third party route. The debate on Duncan's resolution was extremely bitter. Both sides knew the stakes.<sup>35</sup>

The failure of the FLP convention to endorse his policy convinced Short that the non-partisans could win in 1922 only if they could agree on a common program and a slate of candidates. In a letter to the state secretary of the NPL, he said victory was possible if they agreed on a program

...probably along the lines adopted by your recent convention, we will still have enough progressive forces aligned to make a big

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<sup>35</sup>For more on the 1922 FLP convention and party platform, see: Cravens, pp. 162-164; UR 26 May, 3,5,6,16 June 1922; Litchman to Slater, 25 May, 21 June 1922, Litchman Papers; WSFL Procs., (1922), pp. 12-13.

showing in the elections and get somewhere--something that is impossible for the Farmer-Labor Party, under present circumstances.

At the same time, the limited support flowing to the FLP encouraged Short to loosen up on his injunction against pre-convention policy discussions. For example, he accepted an unofficial invitation from Benjamin C. Marsh, of the national Farmers' Council, to attend a conference of progressives in Yakima. Marsh, who was also a representative of the national Committee for Progressive Political Action, urgently wanted the WSFL to adopt a non-partisan policy.<sup>36</sup>

Short attended the conference, which began on 7 June, together with C.L. Gallant, vice-president of the WSFL's third district (Walla Walla-Yakima). They intended, primarily, to keep an eye on developments, but also hoped to influence the development of a grand progressive coalition. In addition to Short and Gallant, delegates from the Women's Legislative Council, the League of Women Voters, the PTA, the WCTU, and the Grange also attended unofficially. At the convention, the delegates found that there was full agreement on the need to defeat Poindexter and for better organization. To achieve this they voted to call a conference in Seattle of all wage earners and producers organizations to work out a unity program. To ensure full WSFL cooperation the conference was scheduled for shortly after the WSFL convention.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>The CPPA was an organization, originally established by the National Leadership of the NPL and the Railroad Brotherhoods, to encourage support for progressives in the major parties.

Short to Mrs. A.L. Packard, 2,6 June 1922, Box 35, WSFL Records; Cole, pp. 70-71; Shimmons to Ault, 90 page memo, 1924, p. 66, Ault Papers; WSFL Procs., (1922), pp. 13-14; UR 16 June 1922; See also: Kenneth C. Mackay, The Progressive Movement of 1924, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1947), pp. 66-72, passim.

<sup>37</sup>The delegates also voted to begin interviewing prospective

These events set the stage for the WSFL convention which Short had spared no effort to control. Though he did agree to let FLP representatives address the convention he persuaded the executive board to endorse a non-partisan policy before the convention. So determined was he to ensure that no third party enthusiasts be allowed to disrupt his plans that he even refused to allow certain non-WSFL locals, whose credentials might be disputed, to attend the convention. For example, when Spokane Locomotive Engineers Union Local No. 17 asked permission to attend, Short refused. He explained that, while he had nothing against admitting Railroad Brotherhood locals to the convention, the AFL had just ordered all central labor councils and state federations to admit only locals of AFL international unions. If he admitted Local No. 17, Short said:

...there will be certain delegates at our coming state convention who will be advocating that we function thru the Farmer-Labor Party, etc., and who will seize upon any pretext to unseat delegates opposing such a policy and, of course, would have this latest communication from the A.F. of L. to sustain them. I think we are going to be able to take care of the situation in good shape (without your assistance).

Indeed, he was correct.<sup>38</sup>

On 10 July, the WSFL convention met in Bremerton. Numerous fraternal delegates from progressive organizations attended. In his

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candidates and appointed a committee to meet secretly with John C. Kennedy and Mrs. Wiswell Wilson of the FLP, to convince them to join the CPPA campaign. This effort collapsed when the FLP refused to compromise.

Kennedy, formerly a socialist alderman in Chicago, had been prominent in the FLP since moving West following the break-up of the SPA (1919).

Ibid.; See also: James Weinstein, "Radicalism in the Midst of Normalcy," Journal of American History 52 (March 1966), pp. 773-790.

<sup>38</sup>Short to Kennedy, 7 July 1922; Short to E.S. Harrington, 29

keynote address, Short stressed the need to defeat Poindexter. On the third day, after completing its routine business, the delegates got down to the task of approving a political program. J.C. Kennedy, who as chairman of the FLP was the party's leading delegate to the convention, took the floor to argue for WSFL's endorsement. He said that, after forty years of trying, the non-partisan method had failed to achieve the AFL's goals. It was time to give up and try something that might work: an independent third party controlled by the "producers."<sup>39</sup>

On the 14th debate began in earnest. Though the outcome was never in doubt neither side showed any restraint. Frank Cotterill, of the Seattle Building Trades, a Democrat, a leading conservative unionist, and the brother of George Cotterill, led Short's forces on the convention floor. He introduced a resolution endorsing the executive board's proposed non-partisan approach. James Duncan, the SCLC's other delegate to the convention, and Frank Turco, a radical from the Seattle Boilermakers Union Local No. 104, rose to object. They charged that Short was trying to "steam-roller" the convention against the wishes of the rank and file. Frank Clifford and L.W. Buck, two other pro-FLP delegates, supported Duncan and Turco. In response, Short and William Coates, editor of the Spokane Labor World, defended Cotterill. James McCabe, the Railroad Brotherhood's fraternal delegate, also endorsed Cotterill's resolution and warned that it was

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June 1922, Box 35; Minutes, 9 July 1922, Box 60, WSFL Records.

<sup>39</sup>Cravens, pp. 165-166; O'Connell, p. 215; UR 1,7,10,12,13 July 1922.

"folly" to enter the race against the Republicans.<sup>40</sup>

On the next day the debate continued. Coates reintroduced Cotterill's resolution and it passed by a vote of 110 to 48. Most of the FLP's support came from SCLC delegates. Yet, despite the fact that the SCLC had already endorsed the FLP, a majority of the SCLC's delegates voted to endorse a non-partisan policy. The vote of the SCLC delegation was forty-nine to twenty-five in favor of non-partisanship. This represented a stunning defeat for the SCLC's third partyists. Afterwards the SCLC bitterly censured those delegates who had voted against the FLP but, by then, it was too late. In any case they could not have turned the tide by themselves. The only question now was: would the moderate third partyists accept their defeat and work together with the non-partisans to ensure a progressive victory with the defeat of Poindexter.<sup>41</sup>

Following the vote on Cotterill's resolution the convention approved a resolution giving the executive board the power to meet with other progressive leaders to put the policy into effect. Duncan, perhaps sensing the failure of the third party plan, perhaps still hoping to influence the WSFL campaign, then offered his support for the WSFL's policy, but it was too late. Short refused to meet with him, or any other FLP representatives. Later he claimed that the FLP leaders had refused to accept the convention's decisions and not only withheld their support in the primaries, but openly opposed him "in every way possible." Duncan's offer might have been merely tactical,

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>WSFL Procs., (1922), pp. 11-14, 59-65, 73, 84; Cravens, pp. 166-167; Cole, p. 71; UR 14 July 1922.

it is true; nevertheless, it is only fair to point out that it takes two to quarrel. The essential fact was that, following the WSFL convention, the two largest factions in the labor movement remained divided politically.<sup>42</sup>

Following the convention the labor conservatives took control of the WSFL's political policy in earnest. After twenty years of struggle against third partyists of various character the conservatives had won undisputed control of labor's political fortunes. They had not yet eliminated the last vestiges of radical power, but they no longer needed to fear these isolated pockets of resistance to the AFL. Though the SCLC's moderate third party faction, led by Duncan, retained power in the SCLC, the vote at the WSFL convention showed that they were becoming an isolated minority there too. The question now was: could the conservatives maintain their alliance with the non-labor progressives long enough to win an election?<sup>43</sup>

As a first step in the campaign, the WSFL agreed to join the Committee for Progressive Political Action. On 16 July, together with the other progressive organizations in the state, the WSFL announced formation of a state CPPA. Benjamin Marsh, by now West Coast coordinator of the national CPPA, attended. One of the CPPA's first actions, following its organization, was to ban the SPW, SLP, WP, and WPG from membership.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Cravens, pp. 167-168; UR 17 July 1922; Ault to Albert F. Coyle, 27 Sept. 1922, Ault Papers.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

Short then began a damage control operation to shore up what remained of the WSFL's forces. He convinced the Spokane Brewery Workers Union Local, which had withdrawn from the WSFL over the convention's refusal to approve of a resolution favoring "light" wines and beers, to reaffiliate. Short explained that the resolution had failed to pass due, primarily, to Duncan's parliamentary maneuverings and the convention's exhaustion following the major debates on political policy. He suggested that he would support a membership referendum as a suitable alternative. In other words, Short explained that now that Duncan's power had been broken, there was no need to remain outside the WSFL.<sup>45</sup>

By July the FLP had fallen into dire straights. Only six county units remained. Only one daily paper, the UR, gave it any support at all and that was lukewarm. Still, J.C. Kennedy had insisted that the FLP would field a full slate of candidates in the fall. The question the party had faced was, who? The FLP no longer had a list of well-known personalities to choose from. In the end Duncan had agreed to file for the senate seat because he was virtually the only man left in the party who had a state-wide reputation. Though he faced no opponent in the primary, his campaign went nowhere. By 1922 he had become rather shop-worn. The lack of enthusiasm stirred up by Duncan mirrored the fortunes of the party as a whole. Its only new endorsements came from a few of the striking railroad shopcraft unions and from the Seattle Boilermakers Union Local No. 104, which bravely

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<sup>45</sup>Miles to Short, 21 July, 9 Aug. 1922, Box 7-49; Short to Miles, 25 July 1922, Box 35, WSFL Records.

voted to "take its stand with the Producers."<sup>46</sup>

The Democrats, meanwhile, nominated C.C. Dill of Spokane to run for Poindexter's senate seat. Formerly, Dill had represented the fifth congressional district in Congress. In 1918, however, he had lost his seat as a result of his vote against the war. Dill had close ties to prohibition and agricultural organizations. At the same time he was on friendly terms with the Spokane WSFL forces. Since Poindexter's vote, following the election of 1918, in favor of seating Truman H. Newberry, Dill had been actively seeking the nomination. Newberry, a conservative Republican, had defeated Henry Ford in the Michigan Republican primaries and had gone on to win in the general election. His campaign had been largely financed by the liquor lobby and he had violated the Corrupt Practices Act. The unsuccessful challenge to his seating became a cause celebre among prohibitionists and progressives. Poindexter's vote made him extremely unpopular among Washington's progressives, who had been the major source of his strength in 1912 and 1916. Thus Dill and the Democrats felt that they had a good chance to take the senate seat away from the Republicans for the first time in history.<sup>47</sup>

From the beginning it was clear that Poindexter's support was unenthusiastic. His only chance for victory depended on the progres-

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<sup>46</sup>Cravens, pp. 169-170; Shimmons to Ault, 90 page memo, 1924, pp. 65,67; Ault to A.F. Coyle, 27 Sept. 1922, Ault Papers; Minutes, 29 Aug., 6 Sept. 1922, Box 8, KCCLC Records; UR 18 July 1922.

<sup>47</sup>Clark, The Dry Years, pp. 186-188; Cole, pp. 56-63. See also: Mary Lou Krause, "Prohibition and the Reform Tradition in the Washington State Senatorial Election of 1922," (M.A. Thesis: University of Washington, 1963), *passim*.

For more on Dill's primary strategy, see: Cole, pp. 62,68; Clark, The Dry Years, pp. 186-188.



sives: if they failed to unite behind a single candidate and divided the anti-Poindexter vote, he could still win the Republican nomination. At first, Poindexter's enemies seemed prepared to oblige him. In the great tradition of American liberalism, the progressives could not agree on a single candidate to oppose Poindexter in the primaries. In late July the executive boards of the WSFL, Grange, Railroad Brotherhoods, NPL, and the several women's groups involved in the CPPA, met in Seattle to iron out their differences. Marsh, Short, and the WSFL's executive board, favored endorsing Col. George P. Lamping for the nomination. Lamping, who had been a progressive candidate for the gubernatorial nomination in 1920, was a favorite of laborites all over the state. Formerly a loyal follower of Theodore Roosevelt and an officer in the Spanish-American war, Lamping had had a long career as a progressive Republican. The women's groups, however, objected to him on the grounds that he was a wet. They threatened to leave the conference if the CPPA endorsed him. Fearing to alienate the women, whose vote-getting powers had been proven in the recent Seattle municipal elections, the conference abandoned him. Labor was disappointed but, to maintain unity, went along with the decision even though they believed he would have been Poindexter's strongest opponent.<sup>48</sup>

Several of the women's groups favored Mrs. Frances H. Axtell of Bellingham. Before 1912 Mrs. Axtell had been active as a

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<sup>48</sup>Short to Edward Keating, 17 July 1922; Short to O.R. Wefferling, 20 July 1922, Box 35, WSFL Records; Ault to A.F. Coyle, 27 Sept. 1922, Ault Papers; WSFL Procs., (1923), pp. 5-6; Cravens, p. 169.

progressive Republican. Then, between 1912 and 1916, she had been prominent in the Bull Moose, or Progressive Party. It was in this period that she made strong enemies among Republican conservatives. She compounded the number of her enemies, in 1916, when she switched over to the Democrats and served as a minor bureaucrat in the Wilson administration. This alienated many party loyalists, both progressive and conservative. Since the war she had returned to the Republican party and had become ever more active in various women's clubs. She had been prominent in their successful effort to elect candidates to the Seattle City Council in the 1922 elections. Axtell's most powerful outside support came from the Railroad Brotherhoods, the only labor organizations with surplus funds to spend in the elections. These were powerful qualifications. In fact, the CPPA needed Mrs. Axtell more than she needed them. As a result Short convinced the WSFL's executive board to endorse her candidacy, even though it was against their better judgment. It was the biggest mistake of his career.<sup>49</sup>

Following the conference the WSFL began to gear up its campaign on behalf of the CPPA, as well as for its referendum and initiative measures. It quickly ran into a brick wall of resistance. The chief problem was that neither Lamping, nor Judge Austin E. Griffiths, another progressive running for the Republican senatorial nomination, would agree to bow out of the campaign. Like Mrs. Axtell, but in contrast to Lamping, Griffiths was running as a strong prohibitionist.

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<sup>49</sup>Cravens, pp. 168-169; O'Connell, p. 215; Clark, The Dry Years, pp. 186-188; Shimmons to Ault, 90 page memo, 1924, p. 66, Ault Papers.

This tended to divide the "dry" progressive opposition to Poindexter. Other problems were nearly as vexing. For example, the women's vaunted vote-winning prowess proved chimerical outside of Puget Sound. From nearly all corners of the state labor leaders reported absolutely no enthusiasm for their candidate. Fred Norman warned that, if the WSFL did not switch its support to Lamping and Axtell lost, it would come back to haunt those labor conservatives who had promised victory through non-partisanship. It would give those who had supported the FLP at the convention a chance to say "I told you so."<sup>50</sup>

This led the WSFL's executive board to ask the CPPA's executive council to ask Mrs. Axtell to step aside in favor of one of the other two candidates. In response, the CPPA arranged a mid-campaign conference, attended by all three major candidates, but they could reach no agreement. Judge Griffiths refused to accept any other solution than the withdrawal of the other progressive candidates in his favor. That evening a second effort to persuade two of the candidates to withdraw also failed.

By now the labor leaders in the CPPA were becoming desperate. They could not afford to let the non-partisan progressives campaign fail and began to take action to force Axtell's withdrawal. A conference of Spokane CPPA leaders, dominated by representatives from the Spokane Central Labor Council, passed a unanimous resolution demanding that Short call conferences of CPPA labor leaders in Seattle and Tacoma to petition the state CPPA leadership to demand Axtell's

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<sup>50</sup>Clark, The Dry Years, pp. 186-188; F.B. Norman to Short, 17 Aug. 1922, Box 19-17, WSFL Records.

withdrawal and agree upon a candidate better-able to unite the progressive forces. Otherwise, they proposed that the WSFL go it alone. The state CPPA, however, proved unable to break the impasse.<sup>51</sup>

The failure to unite behind a single candidate in the Republican primary nearly dashed the WSFL's hopes for political success. It created renewed bitterness in the recently amicable relations between the WSFL and the Railroad Brotherhoods. It destroyed the last shreds of confidence between Short and Maston, the presidents of the respective organizations. Maston, who was also state chairman of the CPPA, had supported the FLP in 1920 and still favored the third party route. He wanted the CPPA to run its own candidates in the elections. When he charged that Short had been the one to originally support Axtell's candidacy and that he had betrayed the progressive cause by calling on the CPPA to dump her in favor of Lamping, Short exploded in anger. Short, who saw Maston's charges as part of a new third partyist effort to destroy the non-partisan cause, responded vigorously. In a letter to the president of the Bellingham Central Labor Council he branded the charges as "malicious lies" and "absurdly untrue." He accused Maston of "double dealing and underhanded work" and violating private confidences. In retrospect, he ruefully admitted, he should have let the "women walk" because nearly everyone else at the conference supported Lamping.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>For more on labor's unsuccessful efforts to obtain Axtell's withdrawal, see: Short to H.G. Beebe, 11 Sept. 1922, Box 35; Minutes, CPPA Executive Council, 3, 23 Aug. 1922, Box 10-61, WSFL Records; Shimmons to Ault, 90 page memo, 1924, p. 67; Ault to Coyle, 27 Sept. 1922, Ault Papers; Litchman to Slater, 18 Sept. 1922, Litchman Papers; WSFL Procs., (1923), pp. 6-7.

<sup>52</sup>For more on the WSFL-Railroad Brotherhoods split, see: Short to J.S. Houghton, 6 Sept. 1922, Box 35, WSFL Records.

In the wake of the WSFL-Railroad Brotherhood split Short's anger at Maston grew. In a letter to the secretary of the Montana CPPA he said that the Washington State CPPA had:

...busted up...over this man George I. Maston...and one or two women who refused to listen to reason of any kind and who we later became thoroughly convinced were not playing the game on the level.

There was every indication that the whole program had been formed to line our forces up behind a candidate so thoroughly weak that there was no hope of any other result accruing than the renomination of Poindexter....(Maston and the others) proved so vile in their lying and misrepresentation of the people...earnestly trying to save the situation...(that the WSFL could never work with them again).

Luckily, concluded Short, the Grange and a majority of the Railroad Brotherhood's rank and file still supported a genuine "constructive program."<sup>53</sup>

The primary results confirmed nearly all of labor's worst fears. After a lackluster campaign Poindexter triumphed over his three progressive opponents, though his margin of victory was lower than in the past. Lamping came in second, while Mrs. Axtell and Judge Griffiths trailed badly. In the Democratic primary Dill won the nomination easily. James Duncan received the FLP nomination.<sup>54</sup>

Poindexter's primary victory, however, proved to be a blessing

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<sup>53</sup>Short to Maston, 7 Sept. 1922; Short to W.H. Johnston, 13 Dec. 1922, Box 35; Short to Dorman, 25 Sept. 1923, Box 36, WSFL Records.

<sup>54</sup>Poindexter. . . 84,695  
 Lamping . . . . 56,189  
 Axtell. . . . 23,555  
 Griffiths . . . 23,257

For more on the primary results, see: Cravens, pp. 175-176; Washington Public Documents, Biennial Report of the Secretary of State, Abstracts of Votes Polled, 1922 Primary Election, (Olympia, 1923); Short to C. Leonard, 19 Sept. 1922, Box 35, WSFL Records.

in disguise for the labor movement. C.C. Dill, whose astute flexibility in the primaries had made him few enemies, reaped the rewards arising out of the progressives' defeat by offering to join their cause. Faced with the alternative of endorsing Duncan or Dill, most of the progressives, including those in the WSFL, chose to support Dill. Only a few progressives refused to join his camp. One of these was William Short. In a move designed to protect the UR from being torn apart by the rival supporters of Dill and Duncan, he agreed to remain neutral in the campaign. In fact, however, Short was neutral in name only. He actually favored Dill.<sup>55</sup>

With nowhere else to turn progressive support soon flowed in ever greater volume in Dill's direction and, as a result, he defeated Poindexter in the general election. It was the greatest victory for the Democrats and the progressives since the war. In addition, the Democrats picked up support in the state legislature and came close to unseating the Republican incumbent in Dill's old congressional district. Though the FLP also picked up a few legislative seats, it was an otherwise disappointing year for them. Duncan came in a poor third in the senatorial contest.

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<sup>55</sup>A.W. Johnson to Short, 21 Sept. 1922, Box 14-25; Short to Merwick, 6 Oct. 1922; Short to Justham, 2 Nov. 1922; Short to C.W. Cotton, 12 Oct. 1922; Short to W.D. Schmidtman, 17 Oct. 1922; Short to Leonard, 12 Oct. 1922; Short to Duncan, 9 Oct. 1922, Box 35; O.A. Dirkes to Everett Central Labor Council, 17 Oct. 1922, Box 9-24; Schmidtman to Short, 10 Oct. 1922, Box 8-58; Leonard to Short, 10, 17 Oct. 1922; Duncan to Short, 6 Oct. 1922; Minutes, Everett Central Labor Council, 1 Oct. 1922, Box 9-4, WSFL Records; Ault to Coyle, 27 Sept. 1922; Report of Negotiation Committee, 28 Oct. 1922, Ault Papers; Minutes, 1, 4, 11, 18 Oct. 1922, Box 8, KCCLC Records; O'Connell, p. 217; Cole, pp. 71, 75-78; UR 2 Oct. 1922; WSFL Procs., (1923), pp. 6-7.

Immediately after the election Dill moved to bolster his ties with the labor movement. He got in touch with Short and thanked him for the part he played in the election. This was a particularly gracious gesture in view of Short's official neutrality. Later, Short reported to Fred Norman that they had agreed that the Duncan campaign had actually proven to be an

...asset, because...the extreme left wing radical vote would go to the Socialist candidate if Duncan were out, and...if he could be kept in and held down to about thirty thousand votes he would take the "red curse" off the campaign, because the minute he was withdrawn the red Bolshevik hue and cry would be raised immediately throughout the state against Dill.

Norman estimated that such a "hue and cry" would have cost Dill the votes of 40,000 or 50,000 farmers and professional people. As it was, Dill was able to run as a:

...clean people's candidate, standing between Poindexter on the one side--the avowed candidate of the special interests--and Duncan on the other--the standard bearer for the red radicalists.

In the labor movement, too, the conservatives regarded the election as a personal victory for Short over the extremists on the Right and the Left. Especially sweet for Short were the accolades he accepted for his personal triumph over his arch-enemy, James Duncan. It mattered not a whit that this triumph gained as much through inadvertence as through political acuity.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>F.B. Norman to Short, 11 Nov. 1922, Box 19-17; B. Farrimond to Short, 11 Nov. 1922, Box 12-30, WSFL Records; Cole, pp. 72-83, 210; Cravens, pp. 183-184; Pullen, pp. 349-350; O'Connell, pp. 217-218; Washington Public Documents, Biennial Report of the Secretary of State, Abstracts of the Votes Polled, 1922 General Election, (Olympia, 1923), passim.

The general election results were: Dill. . . . . 130,375  
Poindexter. . . 126,556  
Duncan. . . . . 35,352

Especially note: Short to Norman, 21 Nov. 1922; Brackinreed to Short, 18 Nov. 1922; Sweeney to Short, 26 Nov. 1922, Box 35,

Nationally, too, the election results buoyed the progressives and disheartened both the conservative Republicans and the Left, the socialists and the communists. In December 1922 the national CPPA held a conference in Cleveland to go over the election results and plan for the future. They were in an optimistic mood after succeeding in eliminating a number of die-hard conservative Republicans from congress and assumed a political policy of "watchful waiting" with regard to the actions of the major parties. The CPPA was less circumspect with the Left. The CPPA also voted to exclude the communists from the CPPA and to have nothing whatever to do with them in the future. All these actions must have gratified the AFL's conservative craft union leadership. It is certain that they pleased Short and the leadership of the WSFL. Happy that the conference had "rejected the credentials of the Workers Party and other communistic and revolutionary factions," Short saw the CPPA's action as a justification of his own policies.<sup>57</sup>

The failure of their third party campaign left the moderates in the SCLC dismayed. The only course for them seemed to be to realign themselves with the conservative non-partisans. Following the election Duncan led an effort to send SCLC delegates to the CPPA's Cleveland conference. But until he offered to pay the delegates' expenses, out of his own pocket, however, he could

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WSFL Records.

<sup>57</sup>Short to W.H. Johnston, 13 Dec. 1922, Box 35, WSFL Records; Minutes, 6 Dec. 1922, Box 8, KCCLC Records; Cravens, p. 198; David C. Saposs, Left-wing Unionism, (New York: International Publishers, 1926), pp. 37-44; James Oneal, American Communism, (New York: Rand Book Store, 1927), pp. 161-164; Mackay, pp. 66-72.



find no one willing to attend the conference. Finally, he convinced Joseph Little, a radical who was going to Chicago as a delegate to the national metal trades amalgamation conference, to represent the SCLC at the CPPA conference. This "effrontery" amused Short and the "real boys in the movement." They were astonished that the SCLC, which had repudiated the CPPA and its policies, which had not only endorsed the FLP, but provided the candidate to head its ticket, now wanted to "cooperate" with the CPPA. They rejoiced at the problems of the third partyists.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid.