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Toward industrial organization: Timber workers, unionism and syndicalism in the Pacific Northwest, 1900–1917

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TOWARD INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATION: TIMBER WORKERS, UNIONISM AND SYNDICALISM IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST, 1900-1917

by

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In loving memory of my dear uncle, René Dreyfus.

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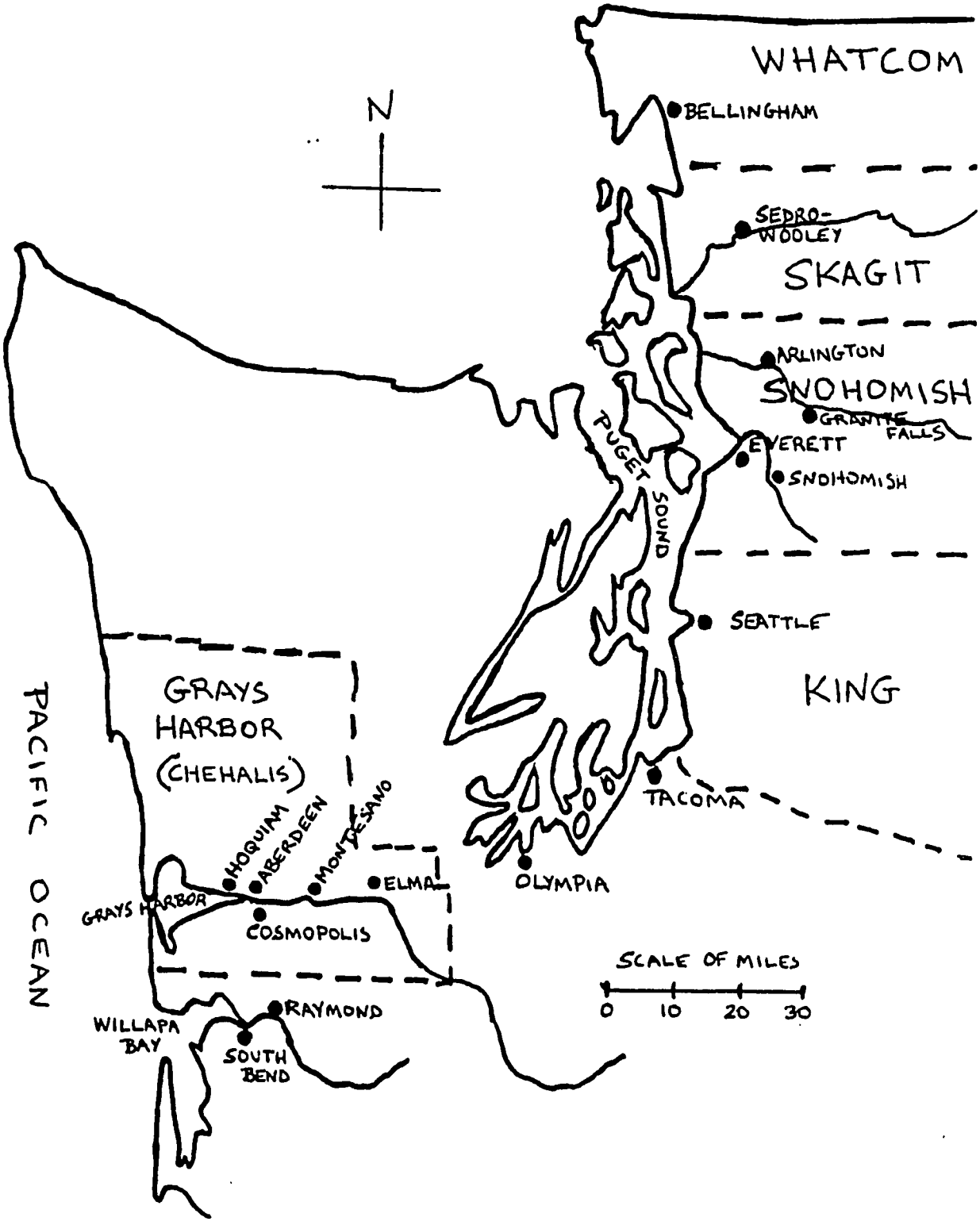

MAP OF WESTERN WASHINGTON

This map is not exact in every physical detail, but it illustrates the locations of the significant towns and cities mentioned herein.

INTRODUCTION

This is the story of the timber workers of Washington State in the heyday of the early twentieth century. These tens and hundreds of thousands of working men and their families felled trees, milled lumber, and made history—transforming the vast forested expanses of the Pacific Northwest into an integral part of an expanding American industrial empire. They left no eloquent accounts of their exploits, no testimonials to their efforts, and were noticed—as so often is the case with ordinary people—chiefly for their occasional "truculence."

We know a great deal about the fortunate men of wealth who envisioned and financed a "lumberman's paradise" in the lands west of the Cascades—from the pioneering Yankee merchants Andrew Pope and William Talbot to the German-born Frederick Weyerhaueser, who consolidated a huge timber syndicate at the very dawn of the twentieth century. But it was certainly not capital alone that transformed the State of Washington into the nation's leading lumber producer by 1905. Timber made fortunes, and it also made a working class.

This working class is in great need of being "rescued," as E. P. Thompson put it, "from the enormous condescension of posterity."[1] This is not, ironically, because it has been condemned by historians to insignificance and banality, but rather because its history has been burdened with the great romantic myths associated with the American West, with rough and-tumble wayfaring young men, and with the "One Big Union."[2] A synthesis of the various historical portraits of timber workers to date might yield the improbable image of a Marxist Paul Bunyan. The fog of romanticism has obscured the sometimes heroic and often mundane history of real human beings. It has also conspired to tar these workers with the brush of exceptionalism, making it difficult to place them in the broader context of American working class development at the onset of the corporate age. It is the purpose of this study precisely to make this larger historical placement possible.

One of the most notable and most described attributes of timber workers in the first two decades of the twentieth century was their short-lived but significant attachment to the syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World. As a consequence, their history has often been written as the history of their most

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[1]E. P. Thompson, E.P., The Making of the English Working Class, (Vintage: NY, 1966), p. 12.

[2]For an emphasis on "frontier conditions," see Robert L. Tyler, Rebels of the Woods: The I.W.W. in the Pacific Northwest, (Eugene: University of Oregon, 1967) and Selig Perlman and Philip Taft, History of Labor in the United States, 1896-1932, (New York: Macmillan, 1935). For an emphasis on idealism, see Joseph Conlin, Bread and Roses Too—Studies of the Wobblies, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1969).

visible and dramatic union.[3] David Montgomery has suggested, however, that:

> Syndicalist tendencies among American workers may have reached far beyond the limited influence of the Industrial Workers of the World, and that the customary image of the I.W.W. as representing conduct and aspirations far removed from the 'mainstream' of American labor development may be misleading.[4]

If such is the case, the apparent militancy of timber workers may not, as some have proposed, be attributed to the peculiarities of their lot, such as the special nature of extractive industries, migratory labor, or Western "frontier" conditions. The meteoric rise and fall of the I.W.W. in the Pacific Northwest may even conceal a certain continuity of syndicalist behavior among workers there.

Montgomery has also noted the convergence of two currents of working class activity throughout the United States in the period 1909 to 1922—the control struggles of skilled workers and the wage struggles of laborers and operatives. The latter often took the form of "continuous, covert, self-organization by small informal groups at work."[5] This convergence does appear to have occurred in the lumber industry, despite the fact that the inimical A.F.L. and I.W.W. claimed to represent each of these two groups of workers

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[3]In addition to the above, see Melvyn Dubofsky, We Shall Be All: A History of the Industrial Workers of the World, (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1969).

[4]David Montgomery, Workers' Control in America, (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 91.

[5]Ibid., p. 104.

respectively, and despite the fact that a majority of workers belonged to neither union. By what means did timber workers launch a common struggle in the first two decades of this century? How did they make themselves into a class? What were the actual patterns of working class behavior in the lumber industry, and what were the causes of that behavior at that time?

This author seeks to address these questions by placing the timber workers' brief expression of institutionalized syndicalism in the larger context of their ongoing relationship with their work, their employers, the society in which they lived, and of course, with each other. I hope to shed light on these relationships through the vehicle of a local study. Why the Pacific Northwest? First, because this was "the only place where unionism developed with any degree of continuity in organization."[6] Second, because this region was subject to a huge influx of labor and capital in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[7] Third, because the Pacific Northwest and the State of Washington in particular emerged from the First World War with a reputation for radicalism that merits explanation.[8] Washington was, to borrow from Alan

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[6]Vernon Jensen, Lumber and Labor, (New York: Farrar & Rinehard, 1945), p. 114.

[7]Earl Pomeroy, The Pacific Slope, (New York: Knopf, 1966), pp. 103-4; Jensen, pp. 95-105.

[8]Robert E. Ficken and Charles P. LeWarne, Washington: A Centennial History, (Seattle: University of Washington, 1988), p. 86.

Dawley, a "burning coal of discontent."[9] In short, this region serves as a microcosm of an expanding, industrializing, and urbanizing America fraught with all of the conflicts that these processes evoked nationally.

Since it would be impractical to describe the lives of workers everywhere in the region, the sociological profile of timber workers and their communities that is presented here will focus on three towns—Aberdeen and Hoquiam in Chehalis county, and Everett in Snohomish county. The United States census shows great similarities in the social composition and economic base of virtually all Washington towns, from the Willapa Bay on the Pacific coast near the Oregon border, north to the Chehalis River, inland to the Puget Sound, and north again to the Canadian border. This timber-producing crescent was therefore quite homogeneous, and one can rest assured of the typicality of almost any town in the region. The three communities chosen for this study had the advantage, however, of being well served by the local press. Chehalis and Snohomish counties were both among the principal timber producers of the state; Aberdeen and Hoquiam were virtual creations of the lumber industry; and Everett, while also an important timber center, was a larger community with a somewhat more diverse social and economic structure than the other two. Aberdeen and Hoquiam were sites of frequent I.W.W. agitation, while Everett was the headquarters of the Shingle Weavers' Union, noted for its militancy, and the only durable A.F.L.-affiliate in the lumber

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[9]Alan Dawley, Class & Community, The Industrial Revolution in Lynn, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), p. 8.

industry.[10] All three towns grew as a result of the aforementioned influx of midwestern timber capital, massive immigration from within and without the United States, and the expansion of the transcontinental railroad network.

As the social fabric of these towns was woven and rewoven, three well-documented strikes occurred that serve as the milestones of this story. First, in 1906 a strike of skilled A.F.L. shingle weavers took place, which organized labor at the time considered a paragon of solidarity, although it involved only a small percentage of timber workers. Second, there was a strike initiated by the unskilled in the Grays Harbor region—Aberdeen and Hoquiam—in 1912, which was the first instance of self-activity and leadership by predominantly foreign-born unskilled workers. Third, a great industry-wide strike erupted in the summer of 1917. Once described as "the most spectacular and all-embracing controversy that had taken place in the lumber industry up to that time,"[11] it involved fifty thousand workers, fewer than six thousand of whom were organized into A.F.L. and I.W.W. unions.

These examples illustrate a broadening of conflict in the industry during the era in question, and point to the participation of larger and larger numbers of workers of varied skill and ethnicity in this conflict despite the continuing small size of formal labor organizations. I hope to illuminate the process by which this solidarity was forged. While I do not seek to prove or disprove the

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[10]Jensen, pp. 118-122.

[11]Ibid., p. 128.

Montgomery hypotheses previously discussed, I will by example address the theme to which they lead—the idea that groups of workers may exhibit some continuity of experience or purpose that transcends the bounds of temporary organizational instruments. This study posits the existence of an ongoing struggle or movement of workers for greater control over their lives in which dramatic unions, such as the I.W.W., and dramatic strikes, as in 1917, are accents rather than aberrations. My hope is that this approach will provide some basis for understanding working class formation on a broader scale. Because of the emphasis that historians of the timber industry have traditionally placed on the I.W.W., or on the brotherhood of hardy young men, lumber workers have been portrayed as having an aberrant or exotic history. My focus will instead invite comparisons between lumber workers and laborers in other industries.

The great difficulty in writing any social history is the inadequacy and dearth of sources that can be used to reconstruct with any precision the lives of ordinary people. The United States census has proven to be a valuable resource in this case, since it offers a glimpse at the households that shaped the communities and workplaces of early twentieth-century Washington State. Unfortunately, the census provides a still photograph where cinema would be far preferable. This record of frozen moments in time leaves ten-year informational gaps, and consequently fails to keep pace with the great geographic mobility of the American people. And while a ledger of household characteristics can be a useful and often essential raw material of historical

reconstruction, the historian must still resurrect the social relationships and human interactions by which households behaved as communities and as social classes.

In light of these obstacles, breathing new life into the individuals and families whose names appear on the census schedules is a task that requires the historian's imagination. In this we are both blessed and handicapped by our own humanity. We tend to see our ancestors as we wish to see them. Like characters in a novel, historical actors begin to take on the hopes, aspirations, and disillusionments of those who portray them. It is therefore easy to understand how in our time one writer might look back at the laborers of yesteryear and see them as individualistic frontier democrats, another as utopian counter-culturists, another as radical hooligans threatening all that is good and decent, another as the harbingers of the yet-to-come proletarian revolution, and yet another as anachronisms of a simpler day now forever lost. Our only reasonable safeguard against excessive mythification is to heed G. M. Trevelyan's admonition, once evoked by Herbert Gutman, that the historian needs "to know more in some respects than the dweller in the past knew about the conditions that enveloped and controlled his own life."[12] In reconstructing the lives so schematically represented by the census, it is my hope that this study will provide a clear understanding of those "enveloping

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[12]Herbert G. Gutman, Work, Culture & Society in Industrializing America, (New York: Vintage, 1977), p. xiii.

conditions" of which individual timber workers may have been only dimly aware themselves.

If the quantifiable data afforded by census materials requires imaginative use in order to paint a portrait of a full human experience, other sources, particularly those left to us by the literate and powerful of their day, must often be stood on their heads to be interpreted in any meaningful way. These often treat workers marginally, if at all. One seemingly exhaustive company history, for example, describes the turbulent years of World War I with the following single sentence: "Most logging operators had a difficult time keeping workmen during the years of the first World War, and many of them had to resort to soldiers."[13] Were it not for the local and labor press, the real meaning of such a statement would remain forever obscure.

As far as local and labor newspapers are concerned, they are an invaluable resource for a study such as this, as they provide the narrative of the significant events of the day. These too, however, must be read with caution. Some local papers are clearly biased against working people and their organizations. One Hoquiam newspaper publisher, Albert Johnson, fought the I.W.W. from early on. Elected to Congress in 1912, he became Chairman of the House Committee on Immigration and used this position after the war to steer through revisions of the immigration laws that effectively limited the

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[13]Edwin T. Coman, Jr., and Helen M. Gibbs, Time, Tide and Timber, A Century of Pope & Talbot, (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1949), p. 233.

number and type of immigrants allowed to enter the United States.[14] Labor papers, on the other hand, speak to us through the voices of labor leaders, organizers, and activists. We must assume that such persons achieve and maintain their positions because they express the unexpressed ideas of their followers to some extent. But how directly? It is yet another difficult task to extrapolate the consciousness of the mass from the views and actions of their leaders. Nonetheless, the press offers the essential insights and perspectives of contemporaries that can help to inform historical accounts.

This historian, therefore, has treated manuscript census schedules as the skeletal remains of a working class, and has used local and industrial histories, "mainstream" and labor newspapers, and government documents as the clues by which to reconstruct the physiognomy of its body and the processes of its mind. Since this is the story of a solidarity in the making, the actions of workers themselves will always be at center stage. Since this is a story of process, worker behavior as it evolved will always be placed in the context of an evolving set of "enveloping conditions," which shaped the paths of change from which these workers chose.

The pages that follow herein describe the birth and explosive growth of the timber industry and its rapid transformation of a wilderness into a civilization. They describe the making and remaking of communities as thousands of newcomers from America and abroad pursued the economic opportunities

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[14]Ficken, p. 88.

offered by an industrializing Northwest. And they describe the struggles of workers for control of their labor, their lives, and for their sheer physical well-being. They describe the process by which a new working class was made.

CHAPTER ONE

TIMBER! THE ORIGINS OF THE INDUSTRY IN THE NORTHWEST

It was the summer of 1853. San Francisco was booming from the recent discovery of California gold, while two transplanted scions of Maine logging families sailed into the Puget Sound aboard the Julius Pringle.[1] William Talbot and Andrew Pope were certain of their mission—to discover a source of cheap lumber, which would satisfy the burgeoning market of their new home town. The shores of the Puget Sound proved to be an ideal location to put their industrial ambitions into practice. While every harbor north of San Francisco was blocked by bars, the Sound offered an accessible, deep, and sheltered anchorage with stands of timber growing right down to the beachfront. Douglas firs twelve feet across and one hundred fifty feet tall would have sparked the dullest of imaginations.

When Pope and Talbot established their sawmill at Port Gamble, they became pioneers of a process that would revolutionize the Pacific Northwest. Their enterprise was not significant so much for its novelty as for its scale. In its first year of operation, the Puget Mill produced four million feet of lumber, and established itself as Washington's leading industrial concern until

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[1]Coman, p. 53.

Weyerhaueser's arrival in 1900.[2] In fact, it was typically scale, rather than novelty, that distinguished the Pacific Northwest timber industry from its predecessors in other places and at other times.

Lumbering was one of the most ancient of civilized pursuits. Fernand Braudel once noted that "civilizations before the eighteenth century were civilizations of wood and charcoal, as those of the nineteenth were civilizations of coal."[3] Wood was habitually used as fuel, in buildings, for tools, for vessels of transport by land and sea, and for the construction of navies. The power and success of a civilization depended in large part on its endowment with forests. The principal obstacle to the exploitation of this resource, however, had always been the problem of access. It was ruinous to transport it more than thirty kilometres—unless, that is, it could float on its own by waterway or sea.[4] Little had changed in this last regard by the mid-nineteenth century, especially in the Pacific Northwest. Yet within a matter of decades Western Washington would be recast as a cornerstone of the massive transformation of American industry which by 1893 placed the United States as the world's leader in the manufacture of timber and steel, the refinement of crude oil, the packing of

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[2]Ficken, p. 31.

[3]Fernand Braudel, Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century, Vol. I, The Structures of Everyday Life (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), p. 362.

[4]Ibid., p. 365.

meat, and the extraction of gold, silver, coal, and iron.[5] In other words, the historical significance of Washington's timber industry was to be its integration into the corporate industrial America that emerged at the turn of the twentieth century. The rapidity of this transformation was astounding.

In the mid-nineteenth century the Pacific Northwest well deserved the title "frontier." When Pope and Talbot sailed into the Puget Sound in 1853, they confronted a true wilderness. California had been wrested from Mexico a mere five years earlier, Alaska was still Russian, there were no transcontinental railroads or telegraph lines, and the slavery issue was foremost on the nation's political agenda. The Civil War was still seven years into the future. On the shores of the Sound, the efforts of man were dwarfed by the grandeur of nature. It was remarkable indeed "that tiny men should live and breathe and work . . . through so tremendous an elemental strife!"[6]

Over the course of the next decade, the pioneer lumbermen were joined by others, competitors attracted by the immense stands of virgin timber and the public waters of the Sound. These early milling companies were virtually all based in San Francisco, with junior partners managing their manufacturing operations in Washington. All produced for a California market. The irregularity of this market led as well to a supplemental trade with the growing sugar

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[5]Thomas C. Cochran and William Miller, The Age of Enterprise, A Social History of Industrial America (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), p. 136.

[6]Jack London, The Sea-Wolf (New York: New American Library, 1964), p. 135.

plantations of Hawaii, and to a lesser extent with South America, Australia, and China. Until 1880, eighty percent of all capital invested in manufacturing in the territory of Washington went into lumbering, but the region's lumber production ranked only thirty-first in the nation.[7]

By 1880, then, lumber was Washington's most significant enterprise, but its rise to national prominence was still over a decade away. The industry's growth was aided by the ready availability of free or virtually free resources and hindered by the limits of transportation and the bulk and immobility of first-growth logs. Until 1878, the federal government made no provisions for the legal sale of timber land, stressing agricultural development instead. Until that time, San Francisco-based milling companies either filed claims on their mill ports under farm settlement laws, such as the Oregon Donation Act, or made no pretense at legal acquisition at all. After 1878, the lumbermen had to contend with a piece of reform legislation designed to eliminate such theft —the Timber and Stone Act.[8] This law enabled any citizen of Washington, Oregon, California, and Nevada to purchase up to one hundred sixty acres of timberland for $2.50 per acre. This acreage limitation was easily circumvented by proxy purchases, through which individuals known as "dummy entrymen" acquired small land grants and transferred their legal claims for a fee to the mill firms. By the early 1890s, for example, Pope and Talbot's Puget Mill

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[7]Ficken, p. 36.

[8]John A. Garraty, The New Commonwealth, 1877-1890 (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), p. 10.

Company owned 186,000 acres, approximately half of which were acquired under the Timber and Stone Act.[9]

As they acquired land and built their mills, the lumber companies established a string of communities encircling the Puget Sound whose sole activity was the harvesting and milling of wood. Water access was crucial, as there existed no other means of transporting the logs. Although steam powered the mills, technical progress had no effect on the felling of trees until the 1880s. Lumberjacks used single-bitted axes to bring down trees so large that the earth shook when they fell, and these were then hauled short distances to water by teams of oxen along a skid road—a path of greased logs set side by side. The limits thus established by this nexus of geography and technology prevented the early mill towns from growing to any substantial size. "No community around the Sound had even two thousand inhabitants at the time."[10]

In the early 1880s, a number of technological improvements altered the scale of the timber business in the Pacific Northwest. First, the two-man cross-cut saw replaced the ax as the loggers' principal tool, and substantially increased productivity. Second, band saws replaced or supplemented circular saws in the mills, enabling a tenfold increase in the daily cut of lumber.[11] Third, in 1881, John Dolbeer of California invented the steam-powered donkey

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[9]Ficken, p. 85.

[10]Daniel Jack Chasan, The Water Link, A History of the Puget Sound as a Resource (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981), p. 9.

[11]Ibid., p. 365.

engine at a fortuitous time. The depletion of tidewater timber was forcing logging operations to move further and further inland, but the skid road system of moving logs was inefficient at distances of more than a mile from the water. The donkey engine was essentially a steam-driven winch whose cables could move logs farther and faster at less cost.

This new device eliminated the need for draught animals, feed, and perhaps most importantly, teamsters. By the dawn of the twentieth century, Washington state loggers employed three times as many steam donkeys as California and Oregon combined. Finally, logging railroads made their first appearance during this time in the Olympic foothills. The heavy capitalization they required encouraged combination in the timber industry and gave a significant competitive advantage to those firms that could afford to avail themselves of this method of transport.[12]

The most fundamentally transforming event in the economy of the Pacific Northwest was the coming of the railroad. The nation's industrial growth depended on the completion of its internal transportation system. "The expansion and integration of the railroad network between 1877 and 1890 was probably the most significant single reason why the economy [of the U.S.] developed so rapidly in those years."[13] This held even more true for the Northwest, where the frontier rapidly gave way to civilization, thanks to the

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[12]Ficken, p. 38; Ralph W. Andrews, Glory Days of Logging (Seattle: Superior Publishing Co., 1956), p. 19.

[13]Garraty, p. 85.

advent of the transcontinental lines from the Midwest. The arrival of the Northern Pacific in Tacoma in 1883 and James Hill's Great Northern Railroad in Seattle in 1893 heralded a reorientation of the northwestern lumber industry's economic ties. The booming industrial Midwest would soon become the major new market for Washington timber, while investment capital from Minneapolis and St. Paul would find its way to the Puget Sound and beyond.

The virtual bodily transplantation of the lumber industry of the Great Lakes that followed the railroad lines resulted in a tenfold increase in production in Oregon and Washington between 1880 and 1905.[14] It also spawned new companies and new cities and towns. In June 1888, a consortium of capitalists that included Minnesota grocer Chauncey Griggs acquired eighty thousand acres of timberland from the Northern Pacific Railroad and organized the St. Paul and Tacoma Lumber Company. Their Commencement Bay mill was the most modern on the Sound and the first to deliver its logs entirely by rail. Seattle, now the terminus for the Great Northern Railway, had for decades been home to many small and relatively insignificant sawmills. But the city's Stimson Mill Company, owned and operated by a Michigan family, became one of the state's most important firms. Just north of the city limits, the town of Ballard ranked as the world's largest producer of cedar shingles, a position of prominence made possible entirely by the shipment of shingles by rail to

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[14]Pomeroy, pp. 117-18; Jensen, p. 99.

the Mississippi River and beyond.[15] In 1890 a syndicate of investors was formed by Henry Hewitt Jr. of the St. Paul and Tacoma Lumber Company with the intent of founding the city of Everett at the mouth of the Snohomish River. Everett suffered early setbacks, not the least of which were James Hill's refusal to make the city his Puget Sound terminal, and John Rockefeller's withdrawal from the Everett Land Company after the Panic of 1893.[16] Nonetheless, Everett emerged as a principal center of lumber and shingle manufacturing by 1900.

The growth and development of the Grays Harbor region to the southwest of the Sound was also facilitated by the railroads and Midwestern capital. Grays Harbor had first come to the attention of the San Franciscan Captain Asa Mead Simpson in 1882. Previously inaccessible timber would soon offer a new and cheap supply as a result of government plans to excavate a navigation channel across the harbor's bar and through the interior tideflats. Simpson's envoy George Emerson took advantage of the opportunity that presented itself and established the North Western Lumber Company at Hoquiam. By 1890, Emerson was joined by competitors from the Great Lakes, and by the mid-1890s the Northern Pacific linked the milltowns of Hoquiam,

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[15]Ficken, p. 36.

[16]Norman Clark, Mill Town—A Social History of Everett (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1970), pp. 27-30.

Aberdeen, and Cosmopolis to eastern markets, establishing them as industrial rivals of the Sound.[17]

Unfortunately for most workers and businessmen alike, growth and prosperity were not to continue unimpeded for long. The Panic of 1893, the most serious depression that the United States had yet suffered, was to have disastrous consequences for much of the Pacific Northwest's lumber industry. The lucrative eastern rail trade collapsed and by 1895, three quarters of Washington's shingle plants had closed down. When the pall lifted with the return of prosperity in 1897, it revealed an industry much consolidated with yet greater links to Midwestern capital. James Hill now controlled both the Great Northern and the Northern Pacific Railroads, assuring his chosen Seattle's commercial supremacy over neighboring Tacoma.[18] In 1900, to meet his need for capital, Hill sold 900,000 acres of Northern Pacific's land-grant timberland to Midwesterner Frederick Weyerhaueser for six dollars per acre, greatly strengthening the economic bond between the Puget Sound and the Great Lakes.[19]

San Francisco capital's era of dominance over the economy of the Pacific Northwest ended once and for all with the creation of the Weyerhaueser Timber Company. Two of the foremost California-owned firms,

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[17]Yvonne Short, "A Historical Study of Grays Harbor County," (M.A. thesis, University of Washington, 1956).

[18]Chasan, p. 35.

[19]Ficken, p. 41.

the Port Blakely Mill Company and the North Western Lumber Company, were sold to Midwestern investors by 1903. These sales and the many bankruptcies fostered by the Panic left the Puget Mill Company as the only survivor of the territorial era.[20]

It was in these early few years of the twentieth century that the Northwestern timber industry would take shape as the nation's and as the world's leading producer.

> Between 1900 and 1905, the mill at Port Gamble increased its cut from 55,642,000 board feet per year to 70,342,000. The Bellingham Bay Improvement Company went from 39,523,000 to 65,000,000. Port Blakely went from 84,311,000 to 119,231,000. The St. Paul and Tacoma Lumber Company . . . 86,378,000 to 125,000,000. In Everett, the Clark-Nickerson Company, which cut 9,000,000 board feet in 1900, cut 50,025,000 in 1905.[21]

Statewide, the lumber product of Washington increased from 160 million board feet in 1880 to one and one half billion in 1900 to over four and one-half billion board feet on the eve of Europe's entry into World War I.[22] This phenomenal increase in production was made possible by a huge and rapid immigration of labor from all corners of the United States and the globe. Population figures for the decade leading to Washington's statehood show that:

> Between 1883 and 1893, Oregon and Washington, whose combined populations in 1880 were less than the city of San Francisco, got three direct transcontinental rail connections

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[20]Ibid., p. 42.

[21]Chasan, p. 36.

[22]Washington State Bureau of Labor, 10th Biennial Report, 1915-16 (Olympia, 1916), p. 93.

> . . . . The greatest influx of population on the coast after the gold rushes followed the lines that came to Washington Territory . . . . The largest growth was in the urban counties, in the cities of Seattle, Tacoma, and Spokane . . . . During the 1880s nearly two and a half times as many newcomers reached Washington from other territories and states as reached California.[23]

The earliest waves of migrants appear to have followed their employment westward—first from the state of Maine, and then from the Lake States. "Perhaps as much as half the labor force in the western lumber industry in the early twenties had worked in the lumber industry in the Lake States."[24] In the first decade of the twentieth century, workers whose families were often several generations American were joined by immigrants from overseas. Scandinavians predominated, but these worked alongside Finns, Greeks, Italians, Russians, and the many nationalities of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires. Chinese and Japanese were less substantially represented, but played their part nonetheless among the more than forty different ethnic groups that comprised the lumber industry's labor force.[25] Many, but not all, were young men. Most, but not all, were unmarried, especially among the loggers. The larger portion of them sought permanent employment in the lumber industry, but movement from job to job, milltown to milltown, and camp to camp was common due to the vagaries of the economy. And though

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[23]Pomeroy, pp. 103-4.

[24]Jensen, p. 104.

[25]United States Bureau of the Census, manuscript census schedules, 11th Census of the United States, 1900; 13th Census of the United States, 1910.

geography and capital did much to shape the physical environment in which these workers lived, it was this heterogeneous mass of humanity that left its imprint on the fabric of social life in the burgeoning communities of the Pacific Northwest.

Most of what is known of these workers is the legacy of their conflicts with their employers. Readiness for collective and individual action against the hardships of labor ran high, and understandably so. Prospective loggers often had to buy their jobs from employment "sharks" who shared the fees they collected with the gang foremen. The foremen, in turn, were notorious for their use of arbitrary dismissals to perpetuate the cycle of "kickbacks."[26] Wages were high by comparison to other lumber districts, as much as twice those of the South by 1910,[27] but employment was not always regular, and wage payment practices were erratic. Disagreements between workers and employers over piece rates, time records, and indebtedness were non-negotiable, and employees often found it difficult to collect their earned wages in full.[28] Living conditions in the logging camps were abominable. Bunk-houses were overcrowded, unsanitary, and infested with vermin. There were

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[26]Philip S. Foner, History of the Labor Movement of the United States, Vol. IV, The Industrial Workers of the World, 1905-1917 (New York: International Publishers, 1965), p. 216; Jensen, p. 109.

[27]Jensen, p. 108.

[28]United States Department of Agriculture, Logging in the Douglas Fir Region, Bulletin #71, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1918), p. 9.

no facilities for bathing, for drying clothes, or for the adequate disposal of human waste. Workers' pay was docked for food that was unpalatable and for medical care that was often nonexistent. And when worse came to worse, labor relations were conducted at the point of a gun.

Laborers in mill towns fared somewhat better, although cheap lodging houses and saloons did little to uplift the human spirit. In the mills, "for ten hours each day a man stood beside a whirling, razor-sharp saw with instantaneous death his constant companion."[29] Accident rates were exceedingly high. Most casualties went unreported to state labor authorities, but of the 243 industrial accidents recorded by the Washington State Bureau of Labor between April 1901 and November 1902, fully 238 occurred in the lumber industry.[30]

Many workers undoubtedly responded to these conditions by voting with their feet, as reflected in the industry's high turnover rates; but strikes were also extremely common. In 1902, Washington's State Labor Commissioner William Blackman plainly understood the fact that social disruption served as ordinary folks' only claim to the historical record, as workers' voices were only audible to the powerful when they were raised very, very loudly. Blackman noted: "Strikes have been important in securing the attention which labor interests have received of late. Had this class of our fellow men been

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[29]Foner, p. 217.

[30]Washington State Bureau of Labor, 3rd Biennial Report, 1901-02 (Olympia, 1902), pp. 123-140.

at all times submissive and suffered in silence their interests would undoubtedly have been overlooked."[31] Perhaps the commissioner should have added that strikes in and of themselves were not as likely to command attention as the unions that were presumed to inspire and instigate them.

Just as most American workers did not join unions, neither did most timber workers; but unionization was still one of the important means by which lumber workers sought to control their conditions of labor and limit the power of their bosses. In contrast with other lumbering regions in the United States, the West Coast developed a tradition of labor organization; and this, far more than the inconvenience of high turnover, was a bitter pill for employers to swallow. In the West, lumbermen's associations fought the unions tooth and nail.

Unions first appeared in the forests of the Pacific Northwest during the era of economic expansion that coincided with the arrival of the railroads and the Midwesterners. In the early 1880s, The Knights of Labor claimed two thousand members in western Washington and focused its activities on the expulsion of Chinese laborers, who were held responsible for depressing the wage scale and depriving whites of jobs. In 1886, the Knights launched a campaign for a ten-hour day in the lumber industry, where the prevailing workday had been twelve hours. The Tacoma Mill Company was shut down by strikers, while the Port Blakely Mill was kept open only by the intervention of territorial militia. Port Gamble and Port Ludlow acceded to the new standard without a

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[31] The Shingle Weaver (Ballard, Washington), January 1903, p. 1.

struggle.[32] Ten hours remained the industry's standard even after the subsequent nationwide collapse of the Knights of Labor left workers momentarily without any formal organizations.

In 1890 the International Shingle Weavers' Union of America was formed and chose affiliation with the American Federation of Labor.[33] The relative centralization of shingle production by comparison to other branches of the timber industry facilitated organization as did the homogeneity of its craftsmen. But the union's fortunes tended to rise and fall with the economic fluctuations of the industry. A shingle weavers' strike was called in response to a pay reduction during the first year of the depression of 1893 and was particularly hard fought in the "shingle capital" of Ballard.[34] Workers sought reinstatement of a one-cent per thousand cut in shingle-packing wages but failed. The union was ultimately destroyed. With an improvement in the economic situation after 1897, local strike activity resumed, with sporadic success. In April 1901, shingle weavers were successful in obtaining a pay increase after a two-week strike in Everett, while the same became true of their fellows in Tacoma after a four-week strike in the month of September. Others were not so fortunate. Shingle packers for the North Western Lumber Company in Hoquiam were discharged in February 1902 for their demand of a one cent-

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[32]Ficken, p. 39.

[33]Foner, p. 218.

[34]Jensen, p. 117; Foner, p. 218.

per-thousand pay increase, as were the box-factory workers who refused to take their places. Sawyers and packers in nearby Cosmopolis were discharged for similar demands.[35] All of these events culminated in the formation, once again, of the International Shingle Weavers' Union of America-A.F.L., in Everett in January 1903.[36]

The reborn union emerged in a reborn industry. Overall production had increased substantially, shingle workers represented only a small portion of the total labor force in timber occupations, and the International Shingle Weavers' Union represented only a fraction of the weavers. In 1900, six leading Washington counties—Snohomish, Chehalis, Pierce, King, Skagit, and Whatcom—were producing almost 24 million shingles annually in 250 mills employing 3,800 workers. These workers were part of a total labor force of over 24,000 lumber workers, 10,000 of whom labored in camps and 7,000 in saw mills.[37] The Weavers' Union's membership totalled 1,300. In 1903, the Shingle Weavers' local union in the shingle capital of Ballard could boast only 50 members, and although growth was steady thereafter, it was only of modest proportions.[38] Strikes were won or lost with roughly the same frequency.

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[35]Washington State Bureau of Labor, pp. 143, 147-48.

[36]Jensen, p. 117.

[37]Washington State Bureau of Labor, 2nd Biennial Report, 1899-1900 (Olympia, 1904), pp. 63-5.

[38]Washington State Bureau of Labor, 3rd Biennial Report, 1901-1902 (Olympia, 1902), p. 101.

In May 1903, Spokane shingle weavers won union recognition after a two-week work stoppage, while in Olympia one year later the Richardson Shingle Company managed to convert to a fully non-union operation after a one-month lockout of its union men. A similar lockout occurred in Everett in June 1904, yet work was resumed at union scale after five weeks despite a proposed 20 percent wage cut. In August, millworkers at Hoquiam lost their struggle to avert a pay cut at the North Western Lumber Company and returned to work under the threatened use of scab labor.[39]

Despite this very mixed record of success and failure, lumber operators viewed unions as an onerous burden and an unmitigated curse on the manufacturer. This hostility was undoubtedly reinforced by the increasing prevalence of strikes as the twentieth century went on, and the fact that these tended more and more to extend beyond the ranks of the unionized. One example of this was the closure of the Potlatch Company's Mill in Palouse as a result of a strike by 160 "unorganized" loggers in the fall of 1903 in protest against a mandatory one-dollar per month hospital fee.[40] Lumber operators had made fledgling attempts from 1891 on to control production and regulate prices, but as the former was often elusive, the latter was usually accomplished by cost reduction. Unions made this task more difficult. In 1901, the Pacific Lumber Manufacturers Association was formed, and E. C. Griggs of the

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[39]Washington State Bureau of Labor, 4th Biennial Report, 1903-04 (Olympia, 1904), pp. 63-5.

[40]Ibid., pp. 52-3.

St. Paul and Tacoma Lumber Company was elected its president. This employers' association maintained a lobby in the Washington State Legislature to defeat pro-labor legislation, such as attempts to make employers liable for industrial accidents. The lumber operators also became the best represented members of the Employers' Association of Washington, which was particularly strong in the vicinity of Seattle and in the Grays Harbor region. Operating under a veil of secrecy, this organization served as an "intelligence bureau on industrial matters," particularly on labor disputes and labor legislation.[41]

One of labor's early encounters with the power of organized employers was during a shingle weavers' strike at Ballard in 1906. Manufacturers met in Seattle in April of that year to raise a defense fund to be used against the union at the discretion of the Shingle Mills Bureau, an organization originally established to control price competition.[42] Employer cooperation in this case broke the strike at the end of a four-month struggle despite effective solidarity among the weavers. As employers became more adept at breaking strikes, the American Federation of Labor attempted to broaden its base of support by enlisting loggers and sawmill workers into locals of their own. Although the International Brotherhood of Woodsmen and Sawmill Workers was born in

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[41]Jensen, pp. 115-17.

[42]Ibid., p. 118.

1905 as a result of these efforts, virtually all of its locals had collapsed by the time of the shingle weavers' defeat at Ballard at the end of July 1906.[43]

By 1906, the pioneer loggers of 1853 might barely have recognized the physical and social geography of the Pacific Northwest. The Puget Sound had been thoroughly urbanized and industrialized, as had the former tidewater region of Grays Harbor. Communities of tens of thousands—American and immigrant—teemed on their shores, joined to each other and to the country to the east by railroad. Logging operations functioned at distances increasingly remote from the towns and cities as more and more forest was converted from wilderness into raw material. The scale of industry had grown substantially, as had the concentration of capital. And as the phenomena of employers' associations and labor unions demonstrated, Northwesterners would now speak with regularity of the interests of capital versus the interests of labor. It was in this setting that the Industrial Workers of the World emerged as a standard bearer for industrial unionism in timber.

Born in 1905, the I.W.W. made its first notable appearance in the Pacific Northwest when it assumed leadership of a spontaneous strike in Portland, Oregon in 1907. A work stoppage was initiated by 28 chute men at one mill in protest against an increase in the workday from ten to eleven hours. This soon spread to encompass all millworkers, who were then joined by the lumberjacks. Virtually all the strikers signed up with the I.W.W., and only one of

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[43]Foner, p. 218.

twelve Portland mills remained open. This unprecedented solidarity that crossed lines of skill and craft was bolstered by the refusal of strikebreakers imported from the Puget Sound to take the striking workers' places. The Western Federation of Miners sent a $20,000 strike fund to Portland, but the struggle was ultimately lost after the A.F.L.-affiliated Central Labor Council of Portland, fearful of I.W.W. raiding, denounced the strike and assisted in the securing of crews. Despite this setback, a wage increase followed, for which many workers gave credit to the I.W.W.[44] Setting aside for a moment the internecine conflict of labor organizations, the Portland strike revealed the potential for success that rested in concerted action. It appeared that at least some lumber workers were beginning to see themselves and each other in a new light, one that would shine equally on sawyers, on packers, and on jacks.

One obstacle that remained a difficult one for workers to overcome was that of nationality. Employers found it equally convenient to inveigh against foreign-born laborers as rabble-rousing trouble-makers as to offer them employment as scabs. American workmen found it convenient to rail against the foreigners' passivity and exclusivity, and American unions found solace from their own failings by proclaiming the immigrant "unorganizable." Immigrant labor shattered these stereotypes at Grays Harbor in 1912. A spontaneous strike of Greeks and Finns for higher wages broke out in March of that year, and once again the I.W.W. assumed leadership, adding the "union shop"

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[44]Ibid., p. 219; Jensen, pp. 119-20.

to the list of demands. The Aberdeen Trades Council-A.F.L. refused to grant its endorsement to workers who had once taken "American jobs," and employers refused to recognize the unions, but wages increased and immigrant workers had clearly announced by their actions the stake they now felt themselves to have in American industry.[45]

Perhaps one of the most notable features of labor activity in the first decade and a half of the twentieth century was the dogged persistence of struggle on the part of timber workers despite the high frequency of failed strikes and the apparent difficulty of wide coordination among workers of varied skill, craft, ethnicity, and geographic locale. Equally notable was the progressively broader base of this struggle over time, despite the tenuous nature of official or apparent labor organizations. The American Federation of Labor and the Industrial Workers of the World differed greatly in their rhetoric and structure, but shared a powerlessness to fundamentally alter the conditions of labor beyond the restrictions imposed by economic circumstance and the limits of working class cohesion. The I.W.W. frequently criticized the A.F.L. for its narrow brand of "business unionism," and yet the members of the latter's major Northwestern affiliate, the Shingle Weavers, were as determined and stalwart in their battles with capital as the most ardent Wobbly "bindlestiff."[46] The A.F.L. frequently criticized the I.W.W. for its dangerous lack of

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[45]Timber Worker, March-April 1912.

[46]See numerous editorials in the Shingle Weaver, Everett, and Timber Worker, Seattle, from 1903 on.

realism, especially its focus on strikes to the detriment of contracts; yet by 1913 hardly any of Washington State's A.F.L.-affiliated locals in the timber industry were able to offer any benefits or to convince employers to accept a union contract.[47]

In light of the limited effectiveness of unions, one may understand why a relatively small proportion of timber workers joined labor organizations. Yet the protracted nature of labor/capital conflict in the Northwest suggests that union membership alone is not an adequate measure of class solidarity or class consciousness. For many workers, membership in one or another or no organization was no doubt a tactical decision—workers sought to employ methods that "worked" in their battle with their bosses. Unions, for their part, also hoped to employ methods that "worked" in order to maintain the allegiance of their members and hopefully to attract new recruits as well. They also hoped, or perhaps assumed, that their own particular rhetoric might speak to the workers' common experiences. In other words, union activists either hoped or believed that workers at large would find their own beliefs reflected or crystallized in the ideology of their leaders. Sometimes this occurred and sometimes it did not. Working class attitudes and behavior were continually shaped by experience. A tactical success by a particular group of workers, unionized or not, would go far to inform the future actions of many others of their fellows. The same could be said of failure. For example, much

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[47]Washington State Bureau of Labor, 9th Biennial Report, 1913-14 (Olympia, 1914), pp. 101-7.

has been made of the I.W.W.'s syndicalist philosophy. Some have argued that the Wobblies brought the ideology of syndicalism to the Pacific Northwest, creating a particular brand of class consciousness in the woods. Others have suggested that direct action and an anti-political stance had an innate appeal to the "individualistic" workers of the "frontier."[48] Neither of these positions considers the possibility that political action might have been given due consideration and might have failed in practice. Yet this latter scenario is precisely what did occur, in more than one instance.

An especially crucial failure of politics occurred in 1914. Inspired and threatened by the I.W.W.'s industrial approach to organization, the A.F.L.'s Shingle Weavers sought jurisdiction over the entire lumber industry with the formation of the International Union of Shingle Weavers, Sawmill Workers and Woodsmen in 1913. Led by President J. G. Brown, the union issued a demand for the eight-hour day in February 1914, and threatened a May 1st strike if its demand was not met. Employers countered with an aggressive campaign against the union, and successfully managed to operate their mills on an open-shop basis. The union then backed away from its strike threat, and sought passage of an eight-hour measure at the polls in November. The bill failed, membership in the union declined dramatically; and by 1916 the

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[48]See Robert L. Tyler, Rebels of the Woods: The I.W.W. in the Pacific Northwest (Eugene: University of Oregon Press, 1967); and Selig Perlman and Philip Taft, History of Labor in the United States, 1896-1932 (New York: Macmillan, 1935).

Shingle Weavers had dropped workers in other crafts and reorganized themselves on their original basis.[49]

Just as the selection of political as opposed to non-political means was not pre-determined, neither were strike tactics. The tragic and well-documented Everett Massacre of 1916 followed on the heels of a series of "quickie" strikes called by activists within the Everett Shingle Weavers' local.[50] Syndicalist tactics and industrial unionist sympathies were not restricted to workers who chose I.W.W. membership. This blurring of ideological and tactical lines, which were generally presented as immutable divisions by the unions themselves, demonstrates the difficulty in relying exclusively on union history as working class history. While the two are intimately interwoven, they are not identical.

In the great lumber strike of the summer of 1917, membership in A.F.L. and I.W.W. unions grew once the strike was under way, and not as an antecedent to the event.[51] What made this strike noteworthy was the solidarity demonstrated by as many as 50,000 lumber workers of all skills, crafts, and nationalities, most of whom belonged to no formal labor organizations. What was the source of this solidarity? As we have seen, the lumber industry of the Pacific Northwest changed greatly in the half century prior to the First World

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[49]Jensen, p. 122.

[50]Walker C. Smith, The Everett Massacre (New York: Dacapo Press, 1971), pp. 35-51.

[51]Jensen, p. 126.

War. Capital investment increased, new markets were created, towns and cities emerged in what had been a wilderness, production soared, and workers gathered from all corners of America and the world to labor in the camps and mills, and to populate the burgeoning communities that were inextricably tied to timber. As the first isolated sawmills became over time a modern industry, so too did these workers over time become a working class. Unions, because of their prominence in the historical record, give us some degree of insight into the hopes and aspirations of this class, but their actions and rhetoric tell only a partial story. One must wonder, given the spotty history of union successes, why workers' struggles were so persistent, and how so effective a solidarity as that demonstrated in 1917 was forged. One must wonder what the precise relationship was between dramatic strikes and leaders of labor and the working class as a whole. It seems evident that major conflicts between workers and employers can serve as windows to the interstices of time during which no apparent conflict occurred, but during which a class was made nonetheless. It is clear that while unions offered an often essential focus for workers' aspirations, the ultimate achievement of their goals was entirely dependent on the degree of cohesion achieved by the class of people they hoped to represent. It was not the rhetoric of unions or even the bravery of organizers that made this cohesiveness possible. It was rather that official ideology and outspoken leaders served as the imperfect conduits of a process that involved the day-by-day experiences of a large and heterogeneous mass of people in their workplaces and communities. It was the accumulated

baggage of pain and passion, of wishes satisfied and hopes dashed, of human interactions in the mills, camps, homes, and boarding houses, that gave lumber workers a distinctive understanding of their place in the world.

It was not only in the unions, but outside of them, not only at work, but in the commonplace routines of daily life that Americans, Finns, Dalmatians, and Greeks, sawyers and weavers and yardmen and jacks made themselves into a working class. What was the setting for this process? Let us see.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SOCIAL FABRIC: MIGRATION, IMMIGRATION, AND SOCIAL LIFE IN THE TIMBER TOWNS

> From a tiny steamboat you landed at the wharf and made your way on a one-plank sidewalk to one of the two hostelries of the town . . . . Stretching out before you were acres of land covered with wild rank grass, fallen trees with roots turned up ten or twelve feet in the air, old burned stumps, great holes, piles of brush and debris, the result of the ebb and flow of the tide, while slowly winding their way through the labyrinth of grass and wild shrubs were deep sloughs, or what to a stranger seem like small rivers, at full tide rather attractive, but at low tide quite the contrary. The only semblance of a street was the elevated one-plank sidewalk, no road, no way of convey for baggage, trunks, or furniture, from the wharf where the boat landed, only by again loading it into a little row boat and swing up one of the many sloughs as near your destination as possible and from there the united efforts of the family pulled it along the narrow one-plank sidewalk into the house.[1]

Such was the condition of the town of Aberdeen in 1885, and of countless similar settlements in western Washington where pioneer loggers hoped to hew their fortunes from the forest. With civilized amenities sparse or primitive, and the work to be done arduous at best, it was difficult in the early years to observe a clear distinction between labor and capital. This was especially true in the woods, where Alex and Robert Polson, Peter, Hubert, and Albert Shafer, and others of their ilk carved their logging operations out of the wilderness by

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[1]Short, p. 92, quoted from Aberdeen Daily World, August 4, 1938, Section E, p. 3.

the sweat of their own brows.[2] Character, more often than class, assured one's place in the collective memory. Even ordinary men whose anonymity would have been certain in the metropolitan East or Midwest could find some claim to fame in nineteenth-century Grays Harbor. Pugilistic skills alone were often sufficient to earn one's notoriety as a "Fightin' Billy" McCabe or a "Roughpile" Larson.[3]

But by the mid-1890s the wild and colorful had largely given way to the civilized and mundane. The railroads, the lumber and shingle mills, the capitalists, laborers, and missionaries had quickly conjured a semblance of the East in the trans-Cascadian West.

> One ancient and nostalgic miner from the Rockies who had heard that Everett was a mining town came looking for a gulch bristling with pistols and heated with the excitement of gold. The place was phony, he said: phony excitement, New York money, New York methods.[4]

Most migrants would not have shared his concerns. Transplants from Minnesota , Wisconsin, or the Dakotas, joined by immigrants from Canada, Norway, Sweden, and England[5] sought the very real opportunities of employment rather than the excitement of the untamed frontier.

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[2]Ibid., pp. 60-2.

[3]Edwin Van Syckle, They Tried to Cut It All (Seattle: Pacific Search Press, 1980), pp. 164, 169.

[4]Clark, Mill Town, p. 9.

[5]Ibid., p. 27; and United States Bureau of the Census, 11th Census of the United States, 1890, Report on the Population of the U.S., Part I, pp. 351-3; 12th Census of the United States, 1900, Population, Part I, p. 792.

The accelerating pace of industrial growth at the turn of the century brought ever larger numbers of people to the Pacific Northwest. In 1890, Aberdeen and Hoquiam could count barely 3,000 souls between them. By 1910, Aberdeen was a city of almost 14,000 inhabitants, while another 8,000 resided in neighboring Hoquiam. Everett, which did not even appear in the United States census in 1890, had a population of nearly 8,000 in 1900 and of 25,000 in 1910. In the latter year, an additional 10,000 persons in outlying areas could be counted among the city's economic dependents.[6] All three cities shared much in common with dozens of other newly urban areas in western Washington. In fact, if any distinction existed at all, it was generally to be found in the relative size of a city's working and middle classes. Everett, for example, was largely working class, while Hoquiam and Aberdeen were overwhelmingly working class.

In 1903, The International Shingle Weavers' Union published the results of a survey on the condition of Washington State's wage earners. Two-thirds were native born, and an equal proportion were married, with an average family size of 3.77 persons. One-third were homeowners, while the remainder were renters or boarders. The average workday was over nine hours long and the work year consisted of 288 days. A worker typically earned about $3 per day for an annual income of $848, eighty percent of which was disbursed for the necessities of life. One-third of all wage laborers were able to save

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[6]United States Bureau of the Census, 11th Census, 1890; 12th Census, 1900, Population, Part I, pp. 402-8; 13th Census, 1910, v. III, pp. 969-1009.

nothing.[7] By 1910, wages in the lumber industry were $4.50 per day for shingle weavers, and $2.25 per day for lumber mill workers,[8] indicating a substantial disparity in the ability of these two groups of timber workers to provide themselves with a home, a family, or savings as a buffer against hard times.

Between 1890 and 1905, the workers of the Pacific Northwest were mostly Americans born of native parents, Canadians, and recent northern European immigrants. Joined together in work by the omnipresent timber industry and in physical proximity by boarding houses and block after block of homes on twenty-five foot lots, these workers were also divided along lines of age, craft, family status, nationality, and religion. Many mill workers and shingle weavers were married, although men typically outnumbered women in northwestern industrial towns. Married men made up half the labor force in Hoquiam mills in 1900 and two-thirds in Aberdeen. A majority of these were native-born, since for Americans the ratio of men to women was three to two, while for immigrants it was two to one and intermarriage was very rare. Loggers were more likely to be single than other timber workers. In 1900 three-quarters of Grays Harbor lumberjacks were single men, a condition imposed by the isolation of the logging camps. But loggers were generally young men who probably did not spend their entire lives felling trees. It was unusual to encounter a logger over the age of thirty-five, and equally unusual to find a

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[7]Shingle Weaver, January 1903, p. 1.

[8]Clark, Mill Town, p. 91.

man over thirty-five who remained unmarried. This suggests some movement across occupations over time. The young single logger may have become the old married mill laborer or may have even abandoned the timber industry altogether as the years passed. It was also quite common for the male members of the same family to labor in different crafts or branches of lumber production.[9]

Shingle weavers were the most likely to be native Americans and the most likely to be unionized, bonded as they were "in the grim realities of blood and sawdust."[10] As early as May 1898, shingle mill workers in Aberdeen struck for $1.75 a day.[11] In Everett, the most militant members of the Trades Council were shingle weavers, and although union contracts were rare, the fraternal functions of their union were deemed at least as important as the economic.[12] Shingle weavers and other American workers also influenced their churches, many of which became congregations of union men. Again in Everett:

> The First Congregational Church for six years had the Reverend R.B. Hassell, a Populist-Socialist orator and pastor who built a tradition of congregational resolutions on social problems

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[9]United States Bureau of the Census, manuscript census schedules, 11th Census of the United States, 1890, Chehalis County, Cities of Aberdeen and Hoquiam, and Snohomish County, City of Everett; 12th Census, 1900, Aberdeen, Hoquiam, Everett.

[10]Clark, Mill Town, p. 91.

[11]Van Syckle, pp. 169, 173-4.

[12]See Chapter Three, pp. 75-7.

> . . . . The Grace Methodist Episcopal Church . . . regularly presented union speakers, and its minister often appeared before the Trades' Council as a friend of labor.[13]

One can assume that Joshua was rarely invoked from the pulpit: "Now therefore ye are cursed, and there shall never fail to be of you bondsmen, both hewers of wood and drawers of water." (Joshua 9:23)

Immigrant workers labored alongside the native-born in the woods and sawmills. Sobered by day by the roar of machinery and the thunder of falling trees, Americans and foreigners alike sought the easy rapport of the saloon by night. Aberdeen, for example, had eight saloons in 1895, twelve in 1899, twenty-four in 1904, thirty in 1908, thirty seven in 1909, and thirty-nine in 1914, an average in any given year of one drinking establishment for every three hundred twenty-five men, women and children.[14] Aberdeen in 1900 was home to 750 families, who comprised all but one-sixth of the population of slightly over 3,700.[15] All were dependent, directly or indirectly, on the timber industry. Native-born Americans outnumbered immigrants in a ratio of five to two, but this ratio was reduced to two to one in the lumber camps and mills due to the far greater disproportion of men to women among the foreign-born. Among the natives, those born of American parents were twice as numerous as the children of immigrants. And as for the immigrants, Canadians,

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[13]Clark, Mill Town, p. 89.

[14]Van Syckle, pp. 169, 173-4.

[15]U.S. Bureau of the Census, 12th Census of the U.S., 1900, Population, Part II, p. 658.

Norwegians, Swedes, English, and Irish predominated to the virtual exclusion of persons of other nations.[16] Americans, Canadians, and Englishmen found the most ready concord as they were all English-speakers and Protestants, and as among them were the greater number of craftsmen and men with industrial experience.

On a typical workday, the mills sounded their first whistles at six o'clock. In the pre-dawn winter darkness, in a large house on F Street, Maude Lewis, assisted by her daughter Grace, probably prepared a modest breakfast for her boarders. She could count herself among the fortunate, as the roof over her head was her own, paid for in large part, no doubt, by the small weekly stipends she earned caring for the needs of a dozen working men. At six-thirty, John Martin, Ted Kelly, Charles Larkin, Paul Fitzgerald, and their fellow roomers downed the last of their coffee and set off for work. Most were single and reasonably young and able-bodied. Two were widowers in their fifties with little likelihood of remarrying in Aberdeen. All but three were from the Northeast or Great Lakes, and the day-laboring Englishman Mr. Kirkuk was lucky to be alive at the age of seventy-one. At seven, the final whistle blew. Maude's husband Alex, a teamster, took up the reins of his two-wheeled, horse-drawn truck and prepared to haul wood. Like so many others, the Lewis family had come to Washington by way of the Midwest. Born in Iowa of American parents in the year Congress passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act,

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[16]U.S. Bureau of the Census, 12th Census, 1900, Population, Part I, pp. 402-8, 683, 792.

Alex had by now been married for twenty years. His Kansas-born daughter was eighteen years old.[17]

Anthony Ballen of 2nd Street was a sawyer born in North Carolina in 1851. He and his wife Julia had recently bid farewell to their native state and brought their six children with them to a new home in Aberdeen. At the age of forty-six, Julia Ballen gave birth to her seventh child and first-born Washingtonian, little Nellie. As a sawyer, Anthony held one of the more important positions in the mill. It was his job to determine what the log would cut out. With a chain lift and a "Simonson hook," which was a long steel shaft with a hooked end, Anthony would shunt the log against the carriage blocks and prepare to guide it through the saw. For a six-inch cut, he would raise his little finger and draw his hand sideways, signalling the setter, over the mechanical din, to draw the blocks out six and one quarter inches and to ready himself for the carriage to move past the saw. The fractional inches added to the cut served to compensate for the "scarf" or width of the saw.[18] The senior Ballen's first-born son, Fred, also worked in the mill. Single and twenty-four years old, he undoubtedly provided valuable economic support for his five non-working siblings. His sister Mary, at eighteen, also contributed to the family till as an ironer in a laundry. Fred was an off-bearer. He sorted the

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[17]U.S. Bureau of the Census, manuscript census schedules, 12th Census, 1900, Aberdeen.

[18]Van Syckle, p. 144. This book offers descriptions of most job categories and technical aspects of lumber manufacture.

planed lumber and trimmed it to length.[19] Anthony's, Fred's, and Mary's wages, and Julia's care of the home were luckily sufficient to spare the younger children from an early life of toil. Teenaged daughters Eartha and Nettie were in school, Edward was as yet too young, as was Nellie, but perhaps the most fortunate was thirteen year old Loren, whose family's efforts kept him from the mill at an age when many other adolescent boys began to labor. Were he not in school, Loren might have spent his days as a tier, tying the lumber trimmed by his brother Fred into bundles. This was the lowest paid job in the mill—often no more than fifty cents a day—and one of the most painful. Fingers were bloodied and blistered by the continuous jerking of the twine and eardrums damaged by the "high pitched whine" of the planers.[20]

Benjamin Harrison was President when the Underwoods moved from Ohio to Washington Territory. They now occupied a rented house on Hume Street. Son Paul was a sawyer, but at twenty-one, a less experienced one than the elder Ballen. Paul's younger brother Harry drew his wages outside of the lumber industry as a cigar maker. And the girls, Edna and Inel, were in elementary school. J.R. and Belle, the heads of the household, had been

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[19]Ibid., p. 140.

[20]Family data from U.S. Bureau of the Census, manuscript census schedules, 12th Census, 1900, Aberdeen; job description from Van Syckle, p. 140.

married since 1873. J.R. was a common laborer in the mills, perhaps a stacker and unstacker of lumber.[21]

Every mill needs a planerman, and John Damitio was just that. The son of German parents, John left Michigan as a young man for the opportunities that beckoned in the Northwest. At the age of twenty-four, he met a native Washingtonian, Augusta Poe, the woman who would be his wife. She was merely fifteen when they were wed, and bore a daughter and two sons. John's daily task was to finish the edges of the lumber that emerged from the kilns to assure a perfect edge-to-edge match.[22] The product of his labor was then passed along to the likes of a Fred Ballen for trimming. Arthur Poe, Augusta's younger brother, assisted John in his support of the household as a setter. When Anthony Ballen and Paul Underwood signalled the cuts to be made on a log, Arthur Poe, or another man like him, adjusted the carriage opening by turning a dial calibrated in eighths of an inch. Smaller carriages were adjustable from zero to sixty inches, while larger ones could handle logs up to nine feet in diameter.[23]

The filer's job was to keep the saws in good running order and to ensure that they would cut true.[24] Alvin Jones of Wishkah Street was a filer,

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[21]U.S. Bureau of the Census, manuscript census schedules, 12th Census, 1900, Aberdeen.

[22]Ibid.; Van Syckle, p. 140.

[23]Van Syckle, p. 145.

[24]Ibid., pp. 141, 147.

as was one of his boarders, Benjamin Averill. Jones was a Canadian immigrant whose parents brought him to the United States as a boy in the year before the onset of the Civil War. He undoubtedly developed his expertise in his craft in Michigan, where he married Martha, and where his daughter Minnie was born. She worked as a telephone girl in Aberdeen. The Jones residence was also home to another Canadian, a sawmill laborer by the name of Robert Coates, to a seventeen year old Washington-born logger—John Eversham, to John Hanlon, the Danish tailor, and to a sailor and recent immigrant from Norway—Ole Christianson.[25]

United in their possession of a skill, Alex Lewis, Anthony and Fred Ballen, Paul Underwood, John Damitio, Arthur Poe and Alvin Jones might rightfully and with pride consider themselves the backbone of an industry. Americans and Canadians, sawyers, edgermen, trimmermen, planermen, doggers, pilers, graders, off-bearers, tiers, scalers, setters, filers, teamsters, and millwrights were all joined in a production process whose success depended on the seamless interaction of many different men with many different functions. If a camaraderie of millmen existed in the community at large, its foundation was in large part this interdependency in the workplace. Millmen clearly understood this interdependency of the crafts when they struck as a

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[25]U.S. Bureau of the Census, manuscript census schedules, 12th Census, 1900, Aberdeen.

body in Grays Harbor mills in April 1904, and again in April and July of 1905, twice meeting with success.[26]

Although by no means all American workmen could boast of a distinct trade, by 1905 even fewer immigrants could do so. Scandinavians in particular usually began their years in America as common laborers. Carl Johnson was typical in this regard. Carl had emigrated from Sweden in 1892 at the age of twenty-five, and by 1900 was laboring in Hoquiam's sawmills and occupying a rented house on G Street, with his wife Emma and their two infant sons. The couple may have been engaged in their homeland, as Emma emigrated several years after Carl; and they were married upon her arrival.

Another Johnson, a sixty-two year old widower, lived on Market Street with his son Hans, a sawmill laborer. Hans arrived in America from Norway in 1893, and his father came in the following year. The two supplemented their income and paid their rent by boarding a couple of ship carpenters. One of them, Gabriel Olson, was a fellow countryman. The other, Lawrence Hanson, was a German of Scandinavian descent.

On First Street, Andrew Anderson was one of a few common laborers lucky enough to own his own house free and clear. This was perhaps facilitated by the presence in the household of his grocer son-in-law, Emile

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[26]Washington State Bureau of Labor, 4th Biennial Report, 1903-04, (Olympia, 1904), p. 103; and 5th Biennial Report, 1905-06, (Olympia, 1906), pp. 177, 192.

Satterstrom. The women of the family, Mary and her daughter Lottie, did not work outside of the home.[27]

In American and Scandinavian families alike, wage-earning wives were an extreme rarity. In 1900 there were fewer than two dozen such wives in all of Aberdeen and Hoquiam, and only six were married to timber workers.[28] In the event that a man's earnings were insufficient for the full support of his family, it was far more common for a wife to care for boarders, or for an elder single daughter to work outside the home, than for married women to work for wages. This apparent cultural similarity between native and Scandinavian families may have been reinforced by the lack of acceptable "female" employment options in a setting devoted largely to the wood products industry.

Scandinavian workers, because they were common laborers, were not likely to be unionized. Unlike in the shingle mills, no durable labor organizations emerged from the logging camps or lumber mills in the early years of the twentieth century. Yet just as the native shingle weaver might fulfill his need for community through the union—or the millman through the informal brotherhood of the crafts—the Scandinavian worker might easily join a fraternal order such as the Sons of Norway (Sönner av Norge) or the Swedish Club (Svenska Clubbens). Besides the companionship of one's own countrymen, such

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[27]U.S. Bureau of the Census, manuscript census schedules, 12th Census, 1900, Chehalis County, City of Hoquiam.

[28]U.S. Bureau of the Census, manuscript census schedules, 12th Census, 1900, Chehalis County, Cities of Aberdeen and Hoquiam.

organizations offered sickness and unemployment benefits and burial funds, and provided cultural amenities such as dramatic societies, choirs, and gymnastic clubs. Many Scandinavian workers and their families joined a Lutheran congregation as well, with the church serving as yet another national association.[29]

Scandinavian immigrants and Americans did not intermarry, but sometimes inhabited the same households, nonetheless, as one another's boarders. The smallest private households were most likely to be ethnically homogeneous, perhaps out of preference for fellow countrymen when only one or two roomers shared the intimacy of the family's table, or perhaps because the boarders were acquaintances or relations from the homeland. But families for whom taking in boarders was a major economic strategy usually inhabited ethnically heterogeneous households. Two-thirds of all family homes with boarders in 1900 Grays Harbor were ethnically mixed. And of the relatively few communal homes of single male workers that existed in that year, five times as many were ethnically mixed as were homogeneous. This latter situation held especially true for households of loggers, where full crews often shared accommodations in town.[30] While it appears likely that economic convenience was the principal factor bringing workers of different nationalities

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[29]Jorgen Dahlie, A Social History of Scandinavian Immigration, Washington State, 1895-1910 (New York: Arno Press, 1980), pp. 156-8.

[30]U.S. Bureau of the Census, manuscript census schedules, 12 Census, 1900, Aberdeen and Hoquiam.

together under the same roof, this form of interaction certainly must have served as an important counterpoint to the linguistic and cultural barriers that separated them. Even the majority of families who did not take in boarders lived on heterogeneous streets and in heterogeneous neighborhoods. To the extent that ethnic community existed in the cultural sense, it was not reproduced geographically.

Although language and faith were potentially divisive factors in America, Scandinavians were integrated into the community at large almost as rapidly as English and Canadians.[31] James Hill's Great Northern Railroad actively fostered Scandinavian migration to the Pacific Northwest. A.E. Johnson, the railroad's foreign immigration promoter, had nothing but praise for the children of the land of the midnight sun.

> We claim the Scandinavian countries as first choice from which to secure the best foreign immigration, for the reason that the best class of foreigners already located in the Northwest are from Sweden, Norway and Denmark, and by proper effort and intelligent work, this class of immigrants can be very materially increased . . . .[32]

Swedes and Norwegians, although occasionally treated with the disdain accorded to non-English speakers in the United States, were not met with nearly the same vicious invective reserved for non-Protestants, southern and eastern Europeans, and Asians. In fact, ethnic impulses often drew

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[31]Clark, Mill Town, p. 79; Dahlie, p. 95.

[32]Dahlie, p. 17; quoted from "The New Immigration Movement," the Northwest Illinois Monthly Magazine, xiv, January, 1896, p. 7.

Scandinavians into nativist alliances directed against foreign and native-born Catholics, especially the Irish, and against later immigrant groups as well.[33] For at least a time in the mid-1890s, Norwegians and Swedes joined in the American Protective Association's rhetorical attacks on Catholics, until the organization's indiscriminate anti-foreign bent became too pronounced.[34] In the early 1900s, Scandinavian-Americans found themselves in league with the American Federation of Labor's attempts to influence government immigration policy. The A.F.L. opposed the activities of the United States Bureau of Immigration's Division of Information—an employment agency for new immigrants—on the grounds that it encouraged strike-breaking.[35] In addition, race served as a strong bond between "Anglo-Saxon" workmen and those of "Nordic" descent. When workers in Anacortes turned back an attempted landing of one hundred Japanese there in June 1900, the Norwegian-language newspaper Tacoma Tidende editorialized that:

> We do not hold with the mishandling of either Japanese or Chinese, or people of other nations, because we do not ourselves wish to be mishandled on account of our nationality; but the workers in Anacortes would be dumb indeed if with open arms and cheers they should welcome their Asiatic brothers who come in large numbers to take bread from the mouths of the white man.[36]

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[33]Dahlie, pp. 108-111.

[34]John Higham, Strangers in the Land (New York: Atheneum, 1974), pp. 83-6; Clark, Mill Town, p. 50.

[35]Higham, pp. 189, 304.

[36]Dahlie, p. 110; quoted from Tacoma Tidende, June 16, 1900, p. 4.

In short, national distinctions between Americans and white immigrants during the first wave of migration to the Pacific Northwest were not substantial enough to cause serious ethnic cleavages among workers in the timber industry. In his description of early twentieth-century Everett, Norman Clark could just as easily have been speaking of Hoquiam, Aberdeen, Bellingham, and other similar lumber towns when he stated: "Despite its initial linguistic multiformity, Everett was essentially white and Anglo-Saxon in its values. The native American was clearly the dominant culture."[37] With ethnic divisions muted, perhaps the principal distinctions to be made between workers were those of union membership and craft, but even these would not provide clear demarcations over time.

By 1910, the class of workers laboring in the timber industry was changing quantitatively and qualitatively as a result of new waves of migration and some degree of occupational mobility. Aberdeen's neighbor Hoquiam grew threefold in the first decade of the twentieth century,[38] its population boom due directly to the expansion of the lumber business. The devotion of a larger and larger percentage of the local laboring class to the hewing and sawing of wood was reflected in the composition of a single rooming house on 8th between L and M Streets. In 1900, this small hotel was owned and operated by Henry and Mary Hungerford. Their son Earl ran the front desk

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[37]Clark, Mill Town, p. 79.

[38]U.S. Bureau of the Census, 12th Census, 1900, Population, Part I, pp. 402-8; 13th Census, 1910, vol. III, pp. 969-1009.

and their daughter Lulu gave piano lessons—an interesting vocation in a small industrial town. Two unmarried women and a divorcee ran the kitchen. The boarders were predominantly American-born and quite an eclectic lot including a house painter, a bookkeeper, three ship carpenters, a sewing machine salesman from Germany, three woodsmen—one of them Danish, a police officer, one sawmill laborer, one Irish lumberyard worker, one shipyard laborer, a salesman of general merchandise, and a watch repairer.[39] Ten years later, the landlady of this same lodging house was a thirty-six year old widow from Pennsylvania by the name of Ethel O'Bryan. She employed a Norwegian widow and a single man from Canada to clean and cook for her guests. Only six of her twenty-two lodgers were Americans. Seven were Canadian, four were Norwegian, one was Danish, another an Afrikaaner, two were from Sweden, and the last was a Serb. Although one Swede was a sailor, one American a barber, and the Serb a restaurateur, all of the others were timber workers. In fact the guest list of Mrs. O'Bryan's read like the payroll ledger of a logging operation:

Charles Oleson—bucker
John Gallagher—sawyer
James Kune—logger
Joseph Quigg—engineer
Edward Craibley—hooktender
Christian Peterson—head skidder
George Kite—faller
Lewis Heouser—bucker
Joseph Neill—skidman

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[39]U.S. Bureau of the Census, manuscript census schedules, 12th Census, 1900, Chehalis County, City of Hoquiam.

Edward Smother—head swamper
William Sheridan—bucker
Charles Seburg—teamster
Henry McDonald—engineer
Thomas Bodill—swamper
William Anderson—bucker
Olaf Anderson—teamster
Albert Kellar—blacksmith's helper
Lewis Kirkpatrick—cook[40]

A microcosm of the community that surrounded it, the hotel that passed from the Hungerfords into Mrs. O'Bryan's hands was truly far more multinational and occupationally homogeneous in 1910 than in 1900. At the onset of the twentieth century, the foreign-born constituted only one-fifth of Hoquiam's population. They and the native children of foreign parents represented one-half of the residents of the town.[41] A decade later, foreigners constituted the fastest growing segment of the population. During this span of time, there had been a five-fold increase in the number of Hoquiam residents born abroad, compared to a three-fold increase among the natives. In 1910, immigrants and their native-born children outnumbered citizens of native parents by a substantial margin. Precisely the same proportions applied to neighboring Aberdeen. In addition, a somewhat smaller percentage of persons were living in families by 1910; and over forty percent of school-age children were at work rather than at school.[42]

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[40]U.S. Bureau of the Census, manuscript census schedules, 13th Census, 1910, Chehalis County, City of Hoquiam.

[41]U.S. Bureau of the Census, 12th Census, 1900, Population, Part I, p. 683.

[42]U.S. Bureau of the Census, 13th Census, 1910, vol. III, pp. 969-1009.

The growth of Grays Harbor County and its working class between 1905 and 1910 was in part the result of a second wave of foreign immigration during those years—a migration that brought Finns, Greeks, Russians, and South Slavs into the lumber mills and camps of the Northwest.[43] The South Slavs were generally poor peasants driven to America by a ruinous array of economic and political hardships at home. Excessive taxation, marginal crop yields, the decline of Adriatic fisheries, the banning of goat-herding, the blight of the vineyards, the barring of trade unions, and conscription into a hated foreign army all conspired to send many a man either temporarily or permanently from the Austro-Hungarian Empire to the United States.[44]

The Slavs in America often lived in cooperative households or "drustvos" where living expenses were shared equally among members of the group. The groups usually consisted of single young men, although married men also came to America alone with the intent of rejoining wives and families a bit richer than the day they left. Drustvos were typically homogeneous, comprising men who shared a dialect and religious faith, and who were often related or acquainted before coming to the United States.[45] One such household was established at 315 Wood Street in Aberdeen. Andreo Batinura and his

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[43]U.S. Bureau of the Census, manuscript census schedules, 13th Census, 1910, Chehalis County, Cities of Aberdeen and Hoquiam.

[44]Roger H. Green, Jr., South Slav Settlement in Western Washington: Perception and Choice (San Francisco: R and E Research Associates, 1974), pp. 14-5.

[45]Ibid., p. 52.

wife Katu shared occupancy with seven other Croats. All the men were sawmill laborers between the ages of twenty and thirty-three, all but two were single, and all had emigrated between 1901 and 1909.[46] At 246 Tenth Street in Hoquiam, Mikko and Miandry Dragovich and their American-born children Pete and Mary were hosts to a work crew of a dozen Slovenian sawmill laborers aged seventeen to forty-five. Over half of these were married men living in America without their wives and children. All had emigrated between 1906 and 1910.[47]

As common laborers living communally in the absence of their families, and as Roman Catholics, Croats, Slovenes, and Dalmatians were set apart from many of their American, and by now Scandinavian-American, working-class counterparts. But some South Slavs did settle in Washington as families, as in the case of the Kasminikki family of 216 Portland Heights in Aberdeen. Like most Croats in the lumber industry, Joe Kasminikki was a sawmill laborer; but at the age of thirty and after a decade in the United States, he supported his wife Anna and three American-born children—Josie, William, and Johannah. The children's birthplaces are an indication of the great degree of geographic mobility experienced by workers in America at that time. The two older siblings, aged five and three, were born in New York, and

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[46]U.S. Bureau of the Census, manuscript census schedules, 13th Census, 1910, Chehalis County, City of Aberdeen.

[47]Ibid., City of Hoquiam.

the younger one, only a bit over a year old, was born in California.[48] Croats, Slovenes, and Serbs made their collective presence felt in the lumber regions through a variety of fraternal and benevolent societies. Aberdeen and Hoquiam together became home to seven Croatian associations and one Slovenian lodge.[49]

Greek workers were prominent in the lodging homes of Hoquiam in 1910, most of them having emigrated after 1906. A group of single Greek lumber mill workers shared accommodations at 409 Eleventh Street, with several male members of the same family having come to America together in search of employment. This address was home to two members of the Coules family, two of the Thernaros family, two of the Papalalos family, and four Papas brothers. At 717 Sixth Street, another household of Greeks brought together a dozen men, half of them married but in America alone.[50]

In Aberdeen, the young Lithuanian tailor Crist Degs, his Russian bride Hanna, and their infant daughter Nellie shared their home with a six-man Russian logging crew. These had emigrated, like the Croats, Slovenes, and Greeks, between 1906 and 1908. One of them, Frank Kisner, was a widower caring for his two and a half-year old, Massachusetts-born son John—no easy

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[48]Ibid., City of Aberdeen.

[49]Green, pp. 99-100.

[50]U.S. Bureau of the Census, manuscript census schedules, 13th Census, 1910, Chehalis County, City of Hoquiam.

task for an unmarried migratory woodsman. Perhaps Hanna Degs provided some assistance in this regard.[51]

Many Grays Harbor hotels were filled with young sawmill laborers from Finland. In fact, the Finns became the largest single foreign-born contingent in the area by 1910, representing twenty percent of all immigrants residing in Aberdeen in that year.[52] Unlike the Greeks, however, many Finns did migrate as families, and many of these families provided temporary homes for single workmen. At 200 Fairfield in Aberdeen, John Strommer was a Finnish widower and a logger living with his two children—sixteen year old Elizabeth and eleven year old Erick. He provided rooms for two more recent immigrants from his homeland—loggers Ed and Alfred Brunbach. Charles Anderson of 911 Summit was a carpenter and a family man with a wife, Matilda, and five American-born children. An immigrant from Finland, he provided rooms in his home to three sawmill laborers. Henry Carlson was from Sweden, and Victor Anderson and John Erickson were Finns. The entire Anderson household was probably comprised of Swedish-speaking Finns who had an organizational life of their own in the Pacific Northwest. Immigrants such as these founded the Swedish-Finns Workers' Club (Svenskfinska Arbetareklubben) in Seattle in 1907. Moses and Sandra Toivonen supported their four children and Sandra's

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[51]Ibid., City of Aberdeen.

[52]U.S. Bureau of the Census, 13th Census, 1910, vol. III, pp. 969-1009.

younger sister Olga by operating a boarding house at 914 East Heron. All of the occupants were Finnish loggers and sawmill workers.

Finnish social and cultural activities revolved around the Finn Halls constructed in many northwestern industrial towns. These halls also became centers of Socialist Party politics in which Finns played a large part. On January 8, 1912, a crowd of seven hundred gathered at the Finn Hall in Aberdeen to hear Socialist orators denounce a recent ordinance against street-speaking, originally directed against the Industrial Workers of the World.[53] The Socialist Party served as an important point of contact between workers of different ethnic groups, although some joined its ranks more readily than others. English, Germanic, and Finnish names appeared with equal frequency on the party's ballots in Chehalis County.[54]

While Swedish and Norwegian electoral support for the Socialist Party is difficult to ascertain, it is apparent that naturalized immigrants from these nations did not present themselves as candidates under the party's banner. Nor did they, however, seek political office as Republicans or Democrats. "On the whole, Pacific Northwest Scandinavians were not as quick to become involved politically as their counterparts in the Midwest.[55] Whether this was the result of cultural differences based upon time of immigration or the

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[53]See the Aberdeen Herald, January 8, 1912.

[54]Ibid., February-April, October, 1912.

[55]Dahlie, p. 126.

consequence of different degrees of geographic mobility within the United States is unclear. What is clear is that the Finns were far more consistently socialist in their political leanings than any other immigrant group in the Northwest in the early 1900s. Finnish history and patterns of immigration to the United States both contributed to this phenomenon.

Two-thirds of all Finnish immigrants to America arrived between 1900 and the First World War. These migrants entered urban industrial occupations in the United States as a result of their meager means and the lack of land available for rural settlement here. The overwhelming majority were "rural proletarians" with no industrial experience.[56] Characteristics such as these were common to many turn-of-the-century arrivals in America, but the Finns had the distinction of departing from their homeland at a time of heightened nationalist agitation against the Czarist policy of Russification. Finland's lower classes under the leadership of the socialist labor movement were major actors in this drama. Seventy percent of Finland's people were landless peasants dependent for their livelihood on casual employment in agriculture or lumbering. Even the most modest reforms to improve their lot were blocked by their complete lack of access to political representation. Finnish socialists, by taking up the cause of national autonomy and political rights for the great mass of Finns, were able to tap a wellspring of support far greater than that offered by the

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[56]A. William Hoglund, Finnish Immigrants in America, 1880-1920 (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), p. 148.

very small industrial working class.[57] Many Finnish immigrants were consequently well-versed in social democratic labor politics when they arrived in America, and it should be no surprise that they found a home in the Socialist Party of America during its own formative years. In fact, because the birth of the socialist movement in Finland preceded the rise of labor unions there, the Finns were far more accustomed to working class politics than to trade unionism,[58] and this colored their behavior as workers in the United States.

By contrast, Swedish and Norwegian emigration to America peaked between 1879 and 1893, and was quite substantial in the late 1860s and early 1870s as well.[59] This preceded by several decades their access to a political voice at home, and coincided with the acceleration of western settlement in the United States. More Scandinavians became farmers than workers during this period in America, and many aligned themselves politically over the next few decades with the Republican Party, the Populist Party, and the Progressive Republicans.[60] Subsequent Swedish and Norwegian arrivals therefore had access to different and older organizational networks, already established by their acculturated countrymen, than did the Finns. Consequently, although

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[57]Carl Ross, The Finn Factor (New York Mills, Minnesota: Parta Printers, 1977), pp. 42-4.

[58]Ibid., p. 104.

[59]Lars Ljungmark, Swedish Exodus (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University, 1970), pp. 7, 11.

[60]Ibid., p. 101; and Ingrid Semmingsen, Norway to America (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1978), p. 148.

late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Scandinavian immigrants generally entered the American working class, and some may have been drawn to socialism, many must also have found it attractive or expedient to join their established ethnic communities in pre-existing party loyalties. At least one observer has commented on the resultant lack of a cohesive Scandinavian political presence in the United States: "On the more specific issue of party affiliation, twentieth-century Swedish Americans resist an outright characterization."[61] Perhaps the Finns were more predictable since for them class and ethnicity were rarely conflicting attachments.

In the Aberdeen municipal elections of 1912, the Socialists were the only party challenging the Republicans for political office. Two of Aberdeen's six wards gave majorities to Socialist councilmen, while the Socialist vote represented one-third of the total in other wards. In relation to politics, however, it should be cautioned that not all northwestern workers were eligible to vote, fewer registered, and fewer still exercised their right at the polls. Two-thirds of the voting-age residents of Aberdeen and Hoquiam were potential voters on the basis of birth or naturalization. Only one-half to one-third of these might be expected to cast their ballots on election day.[62]

The results of the municipal election offer some insight into the limits of socialist electoral politics in the lumber towns. If one assumes that workers

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[61]Ljungmark, p. 105.

[62]Election results were posted in the Aberdeen Herald. See, for example, April 4, 1912.

would exhibit a natural affinity for a "workers' party," which as we have seen is not always certain, then the failure of working class majorities to translate into Socialist majorities on town councils merits explanation. Notably, the second and sixth wards of Aberdeen, which elected socialist councilmen by substantial margins, were the two wards of the city with the greatest ratio of timber workers to the total laboring population. In both cases, about forty percent of the workers were mill hands of one sort or another. Both wards had the lowest percentage of wage-earners of any of the distinctly working class districts, comprising forty-eight percent and thirty-nine percent of the population respectively. This would indicate a more substantial family presence in the Socialist wards. The second ward was occupied by a native-born American majority and was home to most of Aberdeen's very few shingle weavers. The sixth ward, by comparison, was the most ethnically mixed district which also housed large numbers of families. Americans, Austrians, Germans, Poles, Norwegians, Swedes, Canadians, Finns, and Italians all lived side by side here. About one-third of the foreign-born were naturalized.

Of the wards not returning socialist majorities, the third was distinctly middle class. The citizens here included merchants, physicians, lawyers, musicians, dressmakers, clergymen, clerks, tailors, managers, accountants, teachers, photographers, civil engineers, bankers, architects, optometrists, insurance salesmen, and so on. While timber workers constituted one-fifth of the residents, loggers outnumbered millmen four to one, and these were likely disfranchised by their lack of permanent residency. The fifth ward was

of mixed social class, mostly American, Canadian, and Scandinavian with few timber workers. Only seven percent of the population and fifteen percent of the workers here labored in the wood products industry.

The other two working class wards, the first and the fourth, were the most heavily foreign-born. The first ward, at the waterfront, comprised the greatest number of single aliens living in hotels, with many workers employed as sailors or fishermen. This was the only district harboring several large houses of prostitution. The alien and migratory status of the workers here certainly eliminated them as a factor in electoral politics. The fourth ward was occupied by Americans, Norwegians, Greeks, Bohemians, Finns, Swedes, and Poles, living in families and communal households. The Greeks, Poles, Bohemians, and many of the Finns labored in the timber mills but were too new to America to have sought or achieved naturalization. Among Americans, loggers outnumbered mill workers. The combination of recently arrived foreign-born sedentary workers and American-born migratory laborers no doubt resulted in a substantial diminution of the potential working class vote in the district.[63]

Clearly, sedentary native-born working class families did cast their votes for Socialist candidates in substantial numbers, as did the naturalized Finns, but their ability to shape their destiny at the ballot box was limited by the large numbers of migratory or unnaturalized workers whose presence assured that

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[63]U.S. Bureau of the Census, manuscript census schedules, 13th Census, 1910, Aberdeen.

the numerical strength of the northwestern working class would far exceed its political power.

The city of Everett was home to a substantial organization of Socialists, many of them also members of the International Shingle Weavers' Union. In fact, the editorial pages of the union's organ, the Shingle Weaver, were ardent in their advocacy of socialist views.[64] Everett in 1910, however, distinguished itself from the Grays Harbor communities in a number of ways. Native whites of native parents still constituted fully half the population there, families were proportionally more numerous, children were more likely to attend school, and immigrants achieved naturalization to a much greater degree. In addition, Everett's growth over the course of the prior decade owed much to immigration, but this was mostly the result of the expansion of existing ethnic groups rather than the entry of persons of as yet unrepresented nationalities. Although small numbers of Finns, Greeks, and Slavs settled in the city, the largest foreign-born contingents in 1910 were once again Norwegians, Canadians, Swedes, Germans, and English, in that order.[65]

Despite a good deal of continuity in ethnic and family life, Everett did undergo changes in the composition of its working class. Headquarters to the I.S.W.U., the city was a prominent producer of shingles. Although shingle weavers were only a small part of the working class in timber, they were the

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[64]Clark, Mill Town, p. 116; Shingle Weaver (Everett) and Timber Worker (Seattle), 1903 on.

[65]U.S. Bureau of the Census, 13th Census, 1910, vol. III, pp. 969-1009.

best organized and the most highly paid. In 1900, weavers were almost all American-born, and mostly of native parents. Missouri-born shingle weaver Frederick Swift owned a home at 176 Railroad Avenue which he occupied with his wife Lucy and baby girl Minnie. Charles Perkins of Tennessee was a shingle worker who took a room in the Monte Cristo Hotel at 906 Pacific Avenue. Shingle weaver Joseph Reed of Michigan was a boarder of James Anderson's, a Canadian ship carpenter. A Louisiana native, William Caylot was a weaver and a boarder with a day-laboring Norwegian immigrant named Peterson.[66]

Typical of Everett shingle mill workers in 1900, these men shared a common ethnicity and a common workplace, but differed in their domestic arrangements. The fact that some were homeowners and others boarders and roomers was partly a function of age but also reflected an industrial pay scale that rewarded sawyers, filers, knot sawyers, and packers differently for their labor. These variations in pay did not seem to affect shingle weavers' loyalty to their union. Nor did their unique solidarity as trade unionists isolate them from workers of other crafts or nationalities, as apparent in the living situations described above. As in Grays Harbor, contact between immigrants and natives, skilled and unskilled, was often the result of shared lodging.

A decade later, Charlie and Oscar Erickson of 2936 Grand Avenue labored in the shingle mills. One the foreign and the other the native-born son

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[66]U.S. Bureau of the Census, manuscript census schedules, 12th Census, 1900, Snohomish County, City of Everett.

of Swedish immigrants Emil and Christine, the Erickson brothers' two other male siblings worked as common laborers, as did the head of the household. At 1805 Hewitt Avenue, five sons of Irish, German, or Swedish parents roomed with logger Patrick McGrath. George Strom, Herman Sebold, Albert Strom, Michael McGaur, and Charles Trauf were all shingle weavers.[67] In fact, by 1910 over half of Everett's shingle mill workers were the native-born children of Irish, Canadian, German, or Scandinavian parents, most of whom had come to Washington by way of the older lumber-producing states of the Great Lakes.[68] This is suggestive of the social mobility within the working class enjoyed by at least the older northern European immigrants. Proportionally few workers of any nationality, however, shared this experience, since the expansion of the timber industry between 1890 and 1910 generated far greater employment opportunities for common laborers than for skilled workers.

The designation "common laborer," or "sawmill laborer," or "shingle mill laborer" applied to most of the work force in Everett and Grays Harbor in 1900 and 1910, and to increasing numbers of workers—old-stock American, children of immigrants, and foreigners alike.[69] Consequently, elder workmen with large families would not necessarily see all of their sons follow in their

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[67]U.S. Bureau of the Census, manuscript census schedules, 13th Census, 1910, Snohomish County, City of Everett.

[68]Ibid.

[69]U.S. Bureau of the Census, manuscript census schedules, 12th Census, 1900, and 13th Census, 1910, Aberdeen, Hoquiam and Everett.

fathers' footsteps. Walter Mackey was a Pennsylvanian millwright—a very demanding and highly regarded position upon which all other functions of the mill depended—but his adult son was only a laborer. German-born Henry Zemple was a common laborer and his American sons were as well. Canadian Lane Tucker worked in a sawmill as a master mechanic and one of his sons was a millwright and the other a laborer. All of the fathers were homeowners.[70]

Generational mobility aside, immigrants of the first wave exhibited strikingly different attitudes toward Americans and the American working class. A Scandinavian immigrant to Hoquiam, John L. Sjolseth,

> . . . found that the Fourth of July was a welcome break for the men who worked hard in the mills, but its real significance was that it marked the ascendancy of a great people—the Americans. He expressed pride in belonging to this country and regretted that he could not easily put aside his tools for the pen to explain the full meaning of the day.[71]

Another immigrant from Norway, Lars Emanuel Boman, was denied naturalization on April 12, 1912 by Superior Judge A.W. Frater of Seattle because Boman declared that "he would stand by his labor union in preference to the government of the United States."[72]

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[70]U.S. Bureau of the Census, manuscript census schedules, 13th Census, 1910, Snohomish County, City of Everett.

[71]Dahlie, pp. 98-9.

[72]Aberdeen Herald, April 15, 1912, p. 4.

When pressed to explain how he would deal with an order of the court that conflicted with the orders of his union, Boman's own words were: "A man who belongs to an organization should stick to it."[73] A dozen other immigrant workers were dismissed along with Boman on that day for sharing his sentiments.

The most striking feature of life in the northwestern lumber regions at the turn of the century and beyond was the enormous relative size of the working class and its diversity of skill, craft, property-holding and family status, and ethnicity. Equally striking was the absence of any permanent or set pattern of connections between these various characteristics. Lumberjacks were most often single young men, as noted by Vernon Jensen in Lumber and Labor and Melvyn Dubofsky in We Shall Be All, but they probably did not spend their entire lives logging. Nor were they completely isolated from other workers as many of them had relatives in the towns or boarded there with workers in more sedentary occupations.

Mill workers of all ages filled city homes and rooming houses. A substantial number lived as families, sometimes headed by a sole wage-earning man. Property owners, skilled and unskilled alike, often opened their homes to other workers who by choice or force of circumstance did not have places of their own. Such households were sometimes ethnically homogeneous, but often not. Shingle weavers, although well-paid, were not always sedentary

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[73]Ibid.

and home-owning. Many were the boarders of workers in other branches of the timber industry. All of these different timber occupations might appear in the make-up of a single family, with every man holding a different skill and performing a different function in the industry at large.

Although workers with greater craft expertise certainly could provide a higher level of material comfort for themselves and their families, one point which is insufficiently stressed in the literature on timber workers is that the distinction between "migratory" loggers and "sedentary" mill workers and between ordinary mill men and shingle men, although important, was not absolute, but one of degree. Working class mobility patterns in Grays Harbor and Puget Sound communities in the early twentieth century appear similar to those reported for Omaha in Howard Chudacoff's Mobile Americans. Movement in and out of the timber towns was more common than movement up or down the social ladder of those towns, a condition that was reinforced by the creation of a disproportionate number of relatively unskilled jobs in the lumber industry as the First World War approached. Even home-owning families did not reappear at the same address in successive census reports, and the payroll ledgers of at least two wood products firms—the Merrill and Ring Company and the Pope and Talbot Company—rarely showed the same workers receiving pay envelopes from month to month.[74]

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[74]These conclusions were reached by comparing schedules of the 12th and 13th Censuses and by studying payroll records held in the Manuscripts Division of the library of the University of Washington, Seattle.

This high degree of geographic mobility does not, however, appear to have interfered with the development of communities of identity and grievance, as had been suggested of American workers by Stephan Thernstrom in his essay, "Urbanization, Migration and Social Mobility."[75] While Thernstrom was correct in noting the absence of a mass socialist labor movement on the European model in America, the development of such a movement should not be the only measure of workers' consciousness. In the Pacific Northwest, workers created or joined numerous stable and ongoing organizations such as the ISWU, the Finn Halls, the Swedish or Norwegian clubs, the Socialist Party, the Croatian associations, and others. This clearly indicates that union, party, and ethnic loyalties were formed, despite the fact that the same individuals did not fill the ranks of local working class organizations on a continuing basis.

By 1905 Canadians, Englishmen, and Scandinavians were well integrated into a once wholly old-stock American working class. This process was probably facilitated by the prior experiences of many workers in the timber industry of the Great Lakes states. The relative absence of inter-ethnic conflict between first-wave immigrants and native-born Americans in the Northwest has been duly noted by Vernon Jensen and Melvyn Dubofsky, as well as by Jorgen Dahlie, Ingrid Semmingsen and Lars Ljungmark in their histories of

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[75]This essay appears in Barton Bernstein, ed., Towards a New Past (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), pp. 158-175.

immigration,[76] and by Norman Clark in his local study of Everett. All of these national groups labored in every timber occupation, in every camp and mill, and occupied every timber town as homeowners and lodgers, single and in families, irrespective of skill or craft. Most had adopted the United States as a permanent home, and many placed their loyalty to their class on at least an equal footing to the other attachments they held dear.

By 1910 this heterogeneous mass, which nonetheless shared and was unified in the common routines of daily life, faced the arrival of a new crop of strangers. As the Northwest entered the second decade of the twentieth century, Finns, Greeks, and Slavs joined earlier immigrants in the labor force of the lumber industry. The new arrivals were isolated by language, religion, and communal living arrangements that segregated them from the mainstream of working-class domestic life. Some Finns encountered the children of earlier arrivals in a burgeoning socialist movement, as described by Carl Ross and A. William Hoglung;[77] but many others, and most Greeks and Slavs, were seen as actual or potential strike-breakers unlikely to develop a stake in the working-class world, hard-wrought by natives and first-wave immigrants alike.[78] The course of events in the years leading to the First World War would shape the fate of these new and "strange" arrivals as it would lead the workers of the Pacific Northwest down as yet unforeseen paths.

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[76]For citations, see footnotes 29, 59, and 60 in this chapter.

[77]For citations, see footnotes 56 and 57 in this chapter.

[78]Timber Worker, March-April, 1912.

CHAPTER THREE

FREE-BORN MEN V. INDUSTRIAL CZARS: THE INTERNATIONAL SHINGLE WEAVERS' UNION OF AMERICA

Ernest P. Marsh was executive secretary of the International Shingle Weavers' Union in 1909. A married man in his late twenties with two children, Marsh was both an ardent unionist and a model of moderation. "His values were clearly expressed in church life, civic pride, democratic institutions and practice, loyalty, modesty, fraternity, family, and reason."[1] As a believer in compromise and mediation, overt class conflict was anathema to him, and yet he lashed out indignantly at the worst abuses of the industrial system—the exploitation of children, poverty, monopoly, cheap immigrant labor, and the casual disregard which employers exhibited toward the safety of their workers.

Although by 1909 Marsh was being outflanked on the left by more radical voices in his own union as well as in the labor movement at large, he was quite representative of the generation of northwestern workers that had reached maturity in the first years of the twentieth century. Marsh's views were in fact more universally shared in 1901 than in 1909. At the turn of the century the Northwest was new and raw. Men and women who had set themselves to the task of building a new life in a new place were not blind to its harsh

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[1]Clark, Mill Town, p. 94.

realities but neither were they without hope. People of all social classes came to the Northwest seeking opportunities, and for at least a short while, it seemed possible that even a working man's ambitions might be fulfilled. In labor circles a real sense of optimism prevailed as to human nature and the human spirit. A 1903 labor editor revealed his faith as he answered the question:

> Who is the scab? Who is the nonunion workman? . . . He is the man who for the sake of employment will take less than the wages that the mass of workmen banded together in a union declare should be the standard price at which they will . . . sell their services . . . . He does not work for the good of the mass, but for his own individual interest at the expense of the masses. Only the difficulty of getting a livelihood would force him to do this; for all men naturally desire to live in peace and harmony, in sympathy and accord with their fellows.[2]

The scab received surprisingly gentle treatment in the labor press precisely because it was believed he could be redeemed. Peace, harmony, fraternity—these were the most compelling of all human needs. In a just world, in a just industrial system, they were attainable ideals.

Among all northwestern workers, shingle weavers were perhaps the most suitable standard bearers of a working class perspective that juxtaposed hopefulness for the future onto a grimly realistic understanding of the industrial present. Shingle weavers were particularly noted for their persistence in the pursuit of economic "justice" on the job. What was the source of their solidarity and determination? Norman Clark has suggested that "shingle mill

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[2]Seattle Union Record, July 4, 1903, p. 4. Hereafter cited as SUR.

workers were linked by their common physical and psychological hazards, by their lack of occupational mobility, and by their casual disregard for craft differentiations."[3] After 1900, the introduction of new upright saws allowed a good sawyer to turn out thirty thousand shingles a day. The speed at which the work was performed and the proximity of hand to blade led to an extremely high rate of industrial accidents. Ironically, weavers who were thus maimed by their machines were more often condemned to remain in the shingle mills than not, as few occupations were open to men with mangled limbs.[4] The tendency of shingle workers to remain shingle workers for life strengthened their fraternal bonds.

Clark's contention that the dangers of shingle production were a major factor promoting the militance and solidarity of the weavers is well supported by statements from the workers' own representatives. During a shingle mill strike in 1901, workers defended their actions by pointing to the extreme hazards of their occupation.

> Each man engaged in the business, with the exception of packers, is constantly exposed to the danger of being maimed or crippled for life; indeed, the shingle weaver who can boast of the full complement of fingers is a rarity among his fellows. During the last few years the rate of speed and proficiency has increased the average daily product of the mills by one third, and in many instances crews have been reduced without affecting the output of the mill. The mill owners have of course profited in this, but invariably they display no intention of sharing the benefits with the employes, unless the matter is brought

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[3]Clark, Mill Town, p. 93.

[4]Ibid., pp. 91-2.

> home to them by a process similar to that prevalent in Everett and vicinity now.[5]

Shingle workers understood all too well that debilitating injuries and sometimes even death awaited them in the mills, yet they asked only that the benefits of their bodily sacrifices be shared with them. Most weavers undoubtedly viewed their choice of occupations as one entered into freely. Many certainly must have taken pride at their mastery of skill in the face of danger.[6] In 1901, their grievances were not framed in the language of exploitation and oppression, but rather in that of patriotism and fair play:

> As citizens and voters we feel that, having contributed somewhat to the present prosperous condition of the country, we are justified in using the only means we have of securing a fair share of the benefits. No one is more conscious of the evils and hardships attendant upon striking than we who are at present engaged in it, but we are nonetheless determined to secure by fair and open methods our just dues.[7]

The material consequence of shingle weavers' solidarity, coupled with their bosses' need to attract skilled and fearless workers, was a relatively high wage—in fact the highest in the lumber industry. High wages bought a certain level of security that supported the workers' hopes of a bright future. As productive citizens whose hard work "paid off," shingle weavers experienced themselves to be in many important respects masters of their own fate.

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[5]Everett Daily Herald, April 20, 1901, p. 5. Hereafter cited as EH.

[6]Shingle weavers, in fact, occasionally participated in sawing and packing contests, as described in the Shingle Weaver, July 1904, pp. 2-3. Hereafter cited as SW.

[7]EH, April 20, 1901, p. 5.

Homeownership was a feasible aspiration, and helped strengthen one's bonds to the community beyond the workplace. A weaver could conceivably marry, and spare his wife as well as his children from the drudgery of wage labor. Family life was a precious achievement and a great responsibility, which served both as a source of pride and as a moderating influence in the most difficult of times. And patriotism was often a natural outcome of the shingle workers' established stake in the commonly shared institutions of the land—work, family, community, and the ballot box.

On September 6, 1901 President William McKinley was shot by Leon Czolgosz, a deranged anarchist. On September 14 the President died from his wounds. A few days later, on September 18, the Western Central Labor Union met for the first time in its new headquarters at 1506 Second Avenue in Seattle. The crowd of unionists assembled in the hall represented a broad cross-section of organized labor—barbers, pressmen, musicians, sailors, waitresses, carpenters, plumbers, and lumbermen, to name only a few. As soon as President W. A. Bane called the meeting to order, Secretary Middleton moved to suspend the regular order of business in honor of the deceased chief executive of the United States. The motion prevailed and delegate Gordon Rice read the following resolution:

> Whereas, In common with all law-abiding people in the United States, the members of organized labor in Seattle have been shocked by the recent anarchistic event at Buffalo, N.Y., which resulted in the death of President William McKinley, and,
>
> Whereas, The raising of the hand of an assassin against the chief executive of this great republic is a direct blow to free

> institutions, for which no punishment can be too severe, therefore be it
>
> Resolved, That, while we will tomorrow join the populace in mourning at the bier of the martyred president, we will cherish the hope that, if present statutes be ineffective, the next session of Congress will enact laws that will drive anarchy and anarchists from this country.
>
> As a mark of respect for the late president this union hereby postpones all business for one week and stands adjourned.[5]

The resolution was carried unanimously.

As the editor of the Seattle Union Record noted, these patriotic sentiments were expressed in honor of a man to whom probably not one in ten union members claimed political allegiance. Although it may seem remarkable that workers would mourn the passing of a champion of the corporations, their indignation was clearly genuine. The trade unionists of Seattle were less concerned with the President's politics than they were incensed by Czolgosz's apparent assault against the institutions of the republic. After all, the Western Central Labor Union was itself an American institution, composed in 1901 of American-born men and women who in turn freely elected American-born officers to lead their organization. Union leaders bearing English names—Bane, Miller, Middleton, Gill, Griffin, Rice, Harrison and Pike—believed firmly in the superiority of American institutions and American democracy and in their own working-class version of "Americanism."

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[5]SUR, September 21, 1901, p. 6.

When President Matthew Buckham of Vermont University issued a statement condemning trade unions as bullies, the Seattle Union Record labeled him a monarchist. The editor remarked:

> There is a certain un-American type of brain that can never regard a workingman as an equal and fellow citizen. These foreign-minded people . . . are always willing to give the workers charity but not justice . . . . Sympathy and benevolence are virtues that kings, emperors, millionaires, etc., may possess without losing caste or dignity . . . . They are entirely consistent with despotism and an unjust industrial system. But equality—the right of every man and woman to count for one—is a different proposition. It means partnership, not kingship, whether in government or business. We sympathize with President Buckham and would like to remind him that if he does not like the way we do things in the United States, he can buy a ticket to Russia for less than a hundred dollars. There is no disagreeable equality there.[9]

The language of American trade unionism as the twentieth century dawned was not a language of revolution—or if it was, it was of a revolution long past and of a victorious democracy. The republic was "great," the institutions were "free," anti-unionists were "foreign-minded" and "monarchial." The monopolists were the traitors and working men were the true heirs to the legacy of liberty and equality handed down by the founding fathers. While labor spokesmen recognized the disparate interests of the unionist, the scab, and the employer, they also believed that an appropriate infusion of "true" American principles would see justice prevail. Moreover, since narrow class interests were "foreignisms," all the parties to industrial disputes could be seen as united in their common humanity and all conflicts between them could

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[9]SUR, June 27, 1903, p. 5.

hopefully be resolved peacefully through the application of mutually understood notions of logic, justice, and fair play. Supported by these ideological underpinnings, union militance was directed at maintaining or achieving a "fair" wage, preserving or fostering brotherhood and solidarity among working people, and later at gaining or maintaining some control over the pace of work and the length of a "fair" day's work. None of these aims were seen by union leaders as subversive, outlandish, or in any way at odds with good citizenship. Quite the opposite was true. As for the shingle weavers themselves, the faith that reason and justice might prevail on their behalf was reinforced in the first years of the twentieth century by some successful strikes over the issue of union-scale wages.

On April 10, 1901 Snohomish shingle mills were shut down by a strike of packers and knot sawyers demanding raises of a half-cent, and one cent per thousand, respectively. Everett shingle weavers followed suit five days later. Soon thereafter, shingle manufacturers all along the Northern Pacific line were affected by the strike. The mill owners of Pilchuck, McMurray, Arlington, Edgecomb, Getchell, Hartford, Granite Falls, Machias, Snohomish, and Everett met in conference on the night of April 17 to determine a response to the strike situation. All agreed to shut down production rather than pay higher wages. Oscar Nelson of the Bell-Nelson Mill Company, and an owner of Everett's Hall-Hill Mill, laid out the employers' position in terms that would become familiar in years to come:

> We are now paying $7 and $8 per thousand feet for logs which could be bought last year for $5 and $6 and other mill supplies have advanced accordingly. A shut down at this time cannot be otherwise than beneficial to the mill owners, as the market is overstocked and unsteady, and unless the production of shingles is reduced a slump in prices is likely to occur.[10]

Competition, market fluctuations, and uncontrollable production costs were all common justifications given by employers to support their resistance to advances in wages. One shingle manufacturer estimated that his profit was a mere five cents per thousand shingles after costs of eighty cents per thousand for lumber, forty-five cents for labor, and ten cents for supplies.[11] Workers' demands for what amounted to a seven to eleven percent pay increase, it was argued, would eliminate this already small margin altogether.

Unmoved by these arguments, about sixty Everett shingle weavers organized a union on April 18 and requested affiliation to the American Federation of Labor. President White and Vice-President Allen, in their new capacities as executive officers of what would someday become the Everett local of the I.S.W.U.A., presided over the appointment of a strike committee, while five delegates were elected to represent the shingle weavers' union in the Everett Trades' Council. This latter body, which sought to promote the interests of all of the city's organized workers, was itself a recent creation, dating back only to September 1900.

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[10]EH, April 18, 1901, p. 1.

[11]EH, April 19, 1901, p. 1.

On the morning of April 19, just a few hours after the birth of the shingle weavers' union, the Eclipse Lumber Company conceded to the new higher scale of wages. Although no official strike was in progress there, a number of men quit work, and the company apparently decided to grant the increase rather than operate short-handed. Since Eclipse was Everett's largest shingle mill and the eighth largest business establishment in town,[12] the weavers were elated at the prospects for a quick victory in anticipation of other mills falling in line.[13] And they were right.

No change occurred in the situation at Everett by April 20, but a weavers' union of fifty-eight members was formed in Snohomish on that day, with a delegation selected to bring the organizing drive to Arlington and other points on the Northern Pacific rail line.[14] Three days later, representatives of the shingle manufacturers were vehement in their denial that the unionization campaign had resulted in twenty-five more mills conceding to the strikers' demands. But the employers were wavering. W.J. McLaughlin of McLaughlin Brothers of Snohomish perhaps inadvertently made that clear: "We have signed the general agreement [between mill owners] and will not start up until a majority of the mills grant the raise, or the strike is declared off."[15] In other

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[12]EH, February 22, 1901, p. 1.

[13]EH, April 19, 1901, p. 5.

[14]EH, April 20, 1901, p. 4.

[15]EH, April 23, 1901, p. 5.

words, as more mills granted union scale, even more would follow. Coincidentally, as the work week began on April 22, Everett's Wheeler, Osgood and Company mill resumed operations at the higher scale of wages.[16] Wheeler and Osgood was the city's sixteenth largest firm and one of several smaller competitors of the Eclipse Lumber Company.[17]

Fearful of a general stampede toward concessions, shingle manufacturers held their largest meeting of the season in Snohomish on April 24. The thirty mills represented agreed unanimously to shut down in resistance to union demands. McCullogh Brothers and Sterling Mill Company in Machias, both of which had adopted the new pay schedule and resumed operations, now reneged and once again locked their gates, as did two mills in Snohomish. A committee was dispatched to Everett as well, to seek a general shutdown on the Puget Sound.[18]

Thus emboldened and stiffened in their resolve, the shingle manufacturers caved in to the weavers' demands only two days later. By Tuesday, May 1, 1901 shingle production on the Sound would resume at union scale.[19] Why this seemingly incongruous turn of events? The most important factor was probably the failure of the Snohomish manufacturers' mission to Everett.

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[16]Ibid.

[17]EH, February 22, 1901, p. 1.

[18]EH, April 24, 1901, p. 5.

[19]EH, April 27, 1901, p. 5.

With the Eclipse Mill in operation at union wages—and without having put up a fight—the largest producer in a major shingle center was essentially dictating the market conditions under which the other mills would function. At eight million shingles of monthly output, the Eclipse Lumber Company outdistanced its closest competitor twofold. And as a combination lumber/shingle mill with a yield of 1,700,000 board feet of lumber per month, Eclipse was in a position to sustain moderate increased costs in one area of production which might be compensated for in another. The manufacturers' inability to maintain effective solidarity among themselves was the principal cause of the shingle weavers' victory. And the union, which had crumbled in the wake of the Panic of 1893, was resurrected with great enthusiasm and fanfare.

At Everett City Hall on the night of the employers' acceptance of union scale—Friday, April 26, 1901—the Shingle Weavers' Union was formally incorporated into the American Federation of Labor. J.P. Griffin, business agent of the Western Central Labor Union, swore in seventy-nine members of the Everett local, with plans to do the same in Snohomish the following day, in Arlington on April 30, and in Sedro-Wooley on May 1.[20] The shingle weavers of the Puget Sound could well rejoice that in the short space of two weeks, they had won their raise by peaceful means and established their union as a force to be reckoned with in the mills.

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[20]Ibid.

The shingle manufacturers tolerated the new wage for the next three years. Then in June 1904, because of a weak market for shingles, an informal meeting of Everett mill owners announced a reduced pay scale. The wages won by the weavers in 1901 were to be lowered as follows: ten block sawyers would receive $3.50 instead of $4.50 a day, double block sawyers $4.00 instead of $5.00, knee bolters down from $4.00 to $3.00 a day, and packers would be paid six cents rather than seven and one-half cents per thousand.[21] The effect of these substantial cuts was to wipe out all of the gains made in 1901 and more.

For its part, the Everett Shingle Weavers' Union announced that it would take no action until June 27, the day on which the manufacturers' new scale was to take effect.[22] June 25 brought the first and only visible sign of dissension in the workers' ranks. At eight o'clock on that Saturday morning, the thirty shingle weavers employed in the Ferry-Baker Mill dropped their tools and walked off their jobs after about an hour of work. Apparently acting on behalf of the men, the mill's union steward had just submitted a counter-scale to the employer that was in some respects even higher than existing union scale. The instant that Mr. Baker refused the proposal, the men struck.[23] While the union did its best to distance itself from the events at Ferry-Baker, it was now

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[21]EH, June 14, 1904, p. 8.

[22]EH, June 15, 1904, p. 2.

[23]EH, June 25, 1904, p. 1.

clear that at least some weavers did not consider themselves bound by their leaders' patience. This small and isolated case of rank-and-file militance would have far greater significance, though, in years to come.

When June 27 arrived, all of Everett's shingle mills were shut down. Most were closed by their owners, with the intent of resuming operations after the Fourth of July holiday at reduced wages. A few, like the Carlson Brothers Mill, were unable to secure any workmen who would accept the new scale.[24] President William Reid of Everett Local No. 2, I.S.W.U.A., characterized the situation as a lockout, and appealed for public support of the union. His defense of the workers' position consisted of a well-reasoned and passionless account of the economics of shingle production on a region-by-region basis. While admitting the existence of a higher daily wage for most categories of shingle mill labor in Washington than in the East, California or British Columbia, the most elucidating portion of Mr. Reid's exposition was on the question of productivity. The average output of a ten-block sawyer in the East was 105 thousand shingles per day. In Washington State, this worker's daily yield was 180 thousand shingles. At $3.25 a day, the Eastern worker was paid three and one-tenth cents per thousand. At $4.50 a day, the Northwestern worker received two and-a-half cents per thousand.[25]

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[24]EH, June 27, 1904, p. 1.

[25]Ibid., pp. 1, 4; SW, July, 1904, pp. 1-2.

This statistical tidbit was in fact very telling of the hidden impact of labor's 1901 victory in the mills. With employers continually feeling the pressure of competition and workers determined to preserve their hard-earned gains, a mill-by-mill compromise had gradually been forged in the few years between 1901 and 1904 by which workers received a piece rate that, under conditions of high output, would yield the union wage. There were signs of dissatisfaction with this arrangement on both sides. One anonymous Everett shingle manufacturer—a party to the general wage reduction plan—put it this way:

> The tendency the past few years to pay men according to the amount of work they do, instead of so much per day, has had a deleterious effect on the quality of the work. As a result our shingles have been getting into bad repute, and this must stop or we will not have any market at all.[26]

The union, on the other hand, appears to have skirted this issue. Although President Reid was obviously aware of productivity increases and used this to defend his union members' relatively high per diem wages, he did not link work speed-ups to product quality, nor did he call for a halt to the deadening cadences of the saws. He remarked instead that:

> If the Puget Sound manufacturers will furnish us timber equal in quality to the timber used in the California and British Columbia mills, we can guarantee a shingle superior to those made in any other shingle district in the world. It is impossible to do so out of stumps and tops that have been logged over and over for the past ten years.[27]

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[26]EH, June 14, 1904, p. 8.

[27]EH, June 27, 1904, p. 4.

The absence of any specific advocacy on behalf of workers who were being expected to produce more and more for the same—and now lower— wages was perhaps one of the causes of the wildcat strike at the Ferry-Baker Mill. Although the men's motives in this strike unfortunately remain unrecorded in the official annals of their union, one might assume that demands for higher pay in the face of threatened wage reductions could ensue from the fact that substantial increases in productivity in effect then rendered the union scale meaningless. Workers might rightly wonder who was really setting the wage.

As the union and the manufacturers came to terms with an agreement in mid-July, the "hidden" matter of individual output was once again apparent. Notably, it was Everett's Eclipse Mill that initiated the march back to business as usual, just as it had in 1901. Eclipse publicly justified its acceptance of pre-lockout union wages by stating its agreement to reinstate old employees in exchange for the workers' commitment to produce a better quality of goods. The Shingle Weavers' Union, eager for a return to work at their own established scale, cooperated with the management in identifying two weavers who were accused of incompetence and held to blame for defects in the mill's product. They were fired and replaced by "competent" men. Although individuals certainly vary in the quality of their workmanship, reasonable persons may doubt that the industry's ills were thus forever resolved. Having secured

an agreement with Eclipse, the Weavers' Union then apologized for the men at Ferry-Baker and promised that no further trouble would occur there.[28]

The causes and impact of the Eclipse Lumber Company's decision to settle with the union cannot be underestimated. Twice in three years this company had set the pace for its competitors and concurred in what were apparent union victories. Why? As Everett's largest shingle producer, Eclipse certainly had a stake in preserving its market share. Since lockouts or shutdowns were a common prescription for market saturation, and strikes such as this one ultimately delivered the same result, the company was not eager to sit idly through a longer strike than required as the demand for its product improved in relation to supply. Eclipse and other large mills were also sufficiently well capitalized to afford moderate wage increases if this became necessary to maintain labor peace and steady output. And since the Eclipse Lumber Company had repeatedly accepted union scale for the weavers and operated a regular lumber mill as well, it might have been possible to effect labor cost savings in lumber production—which was not unionized—to compensate for increased costs in shingle manufacturing. By and large, Eclipse's output per wage dollar compared very favorably with other mills in Everett. The company sawed out twice the lumber and four times the shingles of Wheeler and Osgood for only two and one half times the labor cost. But the real key to Eclipse's apparent concessions and to the acquiescence of

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[28]EH, July 14, 1904, pp. 1, 5.

Everett's other mills was once again productivity. All of the large mills in Everett were better equipped to produce large volumes of lumber and shingles at acceptable cost than smaller and more marginal operations in smaller towns and cities. In contrast to the manufacturer who at the onset of the 1901 strike claimed a labor cost of forty-five cents per thousand shingles, the average cost of labor to the twelve leading manufacturers of Everett was thirty-six cents per thousand.[29] By 1904, even further advances in productivity had been made through progress in mechanization and speed. And as I.S.W.U.A. Local No. 2 President Reid had already noted, Western workers were far more productive than their Eastern counterparts. Consequently, although the Eclipse Lumber Company's repeated willingness to reach agreement with the Shingle Weavers' Union was received at the time as a blessing for labor, a closer examination of the circumstances attendant to these agreements reveal certain weaknesses in the union's position. First and foremost, Eclipse and its large competitors were getting more and more output per wage dollar while holding daily wages constant at best, in effect eroding whatever concept might have existed of a "fair day's pay for a fair day's work." Since the union never addressed this matter directly, it left open the prospect of dissension in the ranks. Secondly, Eclipse ran a combination mill, and may have been able to offset wage increases among its shingle workers with wage savings in its

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[29]This figure is derived from production and payroll information released to EH by the Everett Chamber of Commerce and reprinted on February 22, 1901, p. 1.

lumber mill. Other companies had this capacity as well. Since the I.S.W.U.A. represented only their own, this left other timber workers alone to confront the problem of higher production in the face of non-union wages, an even more gruesome combination. In the event of future strikes by shingle workers, employers might find a ready pool of strikebreakers among these other laborers, since no effort was being made by the union to recognize their plight. And finally, within the industry there were obviously some economies of scale. As a result of this, large manufacturers like Eclipse had somewhat greater financial flexibility than the smaller mills. In a competitive business environment, a union settlement with Eclipse went a long way toward speeding agreements with other companies that could not afford to stand idle while Eclipse produced. But this meant that the success of the Shingle Weavers' Union in accomplishing its goals and satisfying its rank-and-file was much too dependent on the acquiescence of the large employers, who were also in the best position to destroy the union if they so chose. So the victories of 1901 and 1904 were important and bound many workers to their union all the more. But what was not entirely apparent to most weavers at the time was that the seeds of future and far more difficult confrontations were being sown.

The first of these unexpectedly hard-fought contests began in April 1906 at Ballard, with a strike against that city's fifteen shingle mills to press for union wages. One could hardly have chosen a more perfect setting as a testing ground for the methods and principles of the Shingle Weavers' Union. At the turn of the century, Ballard was a company town owned and operated by the

Stimson Mill.[30] In 1903, it became the first home of the headquarters of the International Shingle Weavers' Union of America, although the city itself could boast only fifty organized weavers in that year.[31] By 1906, Stimson and at least a dozen competitors had secured Ballard's position as a true capital of cedar shingle production. And while soon to receive a substantial influx of immigrants from Scandinavia, Ballard was still a very American town in the first few years of the twentieth century.[32] In the spring of 1906, the course of action that Ballard weavers would pursue must have appeared clearly before them—to organize skilled American men laboring in American mills in an American town to achieve American justice on the job, meaning a wage commensurate with the strong market for wood products enjoyed by their employers. The I.S.W.U.A. was prepared to assist the Ballard men in achieving these goals.

On New Year's Day 1906 the International Shingle Weavers' Union of America met in convention at Hoquiam. The principal topic of discussion was the enforcement of the International's minimum scale throughout the state of Washington. Ballard mill owners had for some time resisted such an imposition and consequently served as a continual thorn in the union's side.

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[30]Roger Sale, Seattle Past to Present (Seattle: University of Washington, 1976), p. 61.

[31]Washington State Bureau of Labor, 4th Biennial Report, 1903-04 (Olympia, 1904), p. 153.

[32]Sale, p. 61.

Whenever wages became an issue of contention in other parts of the state, shingle manufacturers would raise the bogey of competition from Ballard mills. With over half of Ballard's more than four hundred shingle weavers laboring without union affiliation, little could be done to enforce the International scale there. The decision was therefore made to send I.S.W.U.A. President Joseph Bolger and State Organizer Young to Ballard on March 8 to lead an organizing drive that would boost the membership of Ballard Local No. 12 as a prelude to demanding union scale. By March 19, one hundred sixty-three new members had joined the union, which now represented most of the shingle weavers in the city. On April 2, Local No. 12 made its demand for union wages in all the mills, backed by a strike threat. The Stimson Lumber Company and the Acme Shingle Company acceded to the demand, while the owners of Ballard's thirteen other mills signed an agreement to lockout their employees until the weavers agreed to return to work at the millmen's scale, which was twenty-five cents to one dollar a day lower.[33] By all appearances this was to be a conventional struggle on the model of '01 or '04, with the union's hopes for a quick victory based on the failure of cooperation between the operators.

> The situation at present is as follows: The weavers are and feel stronger than ever, and are ready to stay out all summer if necessary. The mill men are quarreling among themselves, and the longer we stay out the harder they quarrel. So it is only a matter of a few weeks before they will all be running.[34]

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[33]SW, April 1906, p. 8; May 1906, p. 1-2.

[34]SW, May 1906, p. 1.

The few weeks were to turn to many months, as the Shingle Mills Bureau—first established to limit price competition—sought to build that solidarity of mill men that had been clearly absent in earlier strikes. Ballard's Stimson Mill Company might have played the same role here as had Everett's Eclipse in '01 and '04, but this did not occur. What the operators had learned was the need to distribute the burdens of their disputes with labor more evenly.

On April 25 representatives of forty-seven of Washington's over four hundred straight and combination shingle mills met in Seattle to plan their strategy. These forty-seven concerns were integral to any strike settlement as they produced over sixty percent of the state's output of shingles. They approved the following resolution:

> A fund shall be created and maintained by each shingle manufacturer in the state of Washington contributing thereto at the rate of two (2) cents per M. shingles of each day's cut until and amount of $50,000 has been accumulated . . . . Said fund shall be placed in trust with a committee of three . . . selected by the Trustees of the Shingle Mills Bureau. The committee shall . . . disburse the fund in support of any contributing manufacturer against whom an unfair strike may be declared.[35]

The Stimson Mill soon thereafter rescinded its union agreement. In May, the call for an extended shutdown was accompanied by a reiteration of the need for an employers' strike fund: "Strike insurance is a matter of vital importance!

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[35]SW, July 1906, p. 1; SUR, July 16, 1906, p. 4.

Manufacturers must cooperate for mutual protection against the abuses of organized labor. Contribute to the Defense Fund and do it now!"[36]

What were the abuses of organized labor? To the manufacturers, a union victory at Ballard would apparently have signified a permanent state of thralldom in which millmen would be subject to the whims and dictates of a "labor trust." Employers were looking beyond the wage issue, and accused the union of planning to force all shingle manufacturers to accept the eight-hour day, the closed shop, and the closed union. The union, for its part, was put on the defensive, compelled to argue that its aims were narrow and limited to "fair" wages. The men of Ballard formed a union "not to enforce union rules; not to insist on the closed shop; not to interfere with the business of their employers—but simply to get fair wages."[37]

While both parties to the dispute had their self-interested motives for overstating or understating the issues at hand, as the case may have been, the fact remained that Ballard was to become the first battleground in a war over much more than wages. If the workers won in Ballard, the preeminence of the International as an arbiter in the workplaces of Washington would be secured. If all shingle manufacturers conceded to the union the right to establish a universal scale of wages, might this not pave the way for further infringements on employers' prerogatives? And if the workers lost in Ballard,

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[36]SUR, June 16, 1906, p. 4.

[37]SUR, May 5, 1906, p. 1.

how could the I.S.W.U.A. presume to exercise any authority superior to that of the individual locals created in 1901? The International's utility and viability might be called into question and several years of organizational progress by and on behalf of shingle weavers would have been for naught. The fates and fortunes of mill operators and shingle workers alike depended on the outcome of the "Battle of Ballard."

The Ballard shingle manufacturers decided that their only option under the circumstances was to operate on a non-union basis. As of May 1 one company, for example, required its employees to sign the following:

> On reentering the employment of the Seattle Cedar Lumber Company I hereby state that I am reemployed by said company on my individual application for a position, with the distinct understanding that I do not in any way represent the Shingle Weavers' Union.[38]

Since few if any union weavers showed any willingness to swear such an oath, many strikebreakers were recruited from the lumber yards and mills instead. These were not the sort of scabs that worried the weavers: "They have green hands all around from the lumber yards . . . and the shingles they manufacture at a cost of from $3.00 to $5.00 per M. are not fit to be placed on sale on the market."[39] Attempts by the mills to gather crews of skilled weavers from Portland were easily foiled by the I.S.W.U.A.'s men in the field.

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[38]Ibid.

[39]SW, May 1906, p. 1.

As a result of the inefficiency or unavailability of local labor, the Ballard mill owners sent an emissary, George Taylor, to the South to recruit skilled shingle workers who would not have heard of the northwestern strike. On May 15, nineteen men were enlisted in Jonesboro, Arkansas and Memphis, Tennessee as a result of an advertisement in a Memphis paper, the Commercial Appeal. A barbed wire stockade was built in Ballard to house the newcomers and "protect" them from intimidation by striking workers. But even this tactic failed, as the potential strikebreakers arrived in Washington four days later. The Southerners stated their case in a letter reprinted in the union papers and in the Seattle Daily Star:

> We asked Mr. Taylor if there was a strike on. He replied . . . that it had been settled and that many of the men had gone to British Columbia to work, leaving a scarcity of shingle weavers. We learned at Spokane that a big strike was on in the shingle mills at Ballard for wages. Two of our number left the train before we got to Ballard. When we arrived in Ballard, Mr. [William] Battley [of the Phoenix Shingle Mill Company] tried to hurry us into the "bullpen"—a cook and bunkhouse erected by the Seattle Cedar Lumber Manufacturing company for the housing of the strikebreakers . . . . We are here, away from our home; some of us left our families and all that is dear to us . . . . In the meantime, we wish to procure work at any honest employment but not as strikebreakers . . . . We claim to be honorable men and come here to cast our lot with the Western people, but not to break down the conditions of our fellowmen.[40]

The second party to arrive from the South on May 29 also refused to scab. The solidarity of skilled American men—the pillar of the union's strength—was working.

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[40]SW, June 1906, pp. 1-2; SUR, May 26, 1906, p. 4.

If the employers' decision to seek out scabs far and wide and to turn weaver against weaver met with little success in rekindling flagging production, it did result in a barrage of ideological volleys by the union, praising the "American spirit" of the workers and impugning the patriotism of their bosses. The ideology of Americanism versus despotism—a hallmark of the skilled workers' struggles in this period—was to be hoisted to the fore. Referring to the weavers of the South, The Shingle Weaver remarked:

> But the American spirit was in these Southern men and women and lo and behold, when the mill men had the G.N.R.R. overland stop in front of the Seattle Cedar Co.'s plant in order to get these people into the bullpen, they instead went with the shingle weavers . . . .

And on the matter of injunctions against the strike, the paper stated:

> Government injunction has added another laurel to its crown by securing a permanent injunction against the striking shingle weavers of McMurray . . . . The prosecution absolutely failed to prove charges of physical violence . . . and their witnesses on the stand were so mixed up in their testimony apparently as not to know whether they were American citizens or Chinese mandarins . . . . As long as the red blood of patriotic American citizenship flows in our veins [government by injunction is doomed to fail].

In reference to the manufacturers, Organizer Young had this to say: "When these . . . mill men tried to take those women and children into that damnable bull-pen, would you call that American?"[41] And while the war of the true patriots raged on, editorials began to address a broader range of tactics by which workers might achieve their goals—from the union label to the ballot

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[41]SW, June 1906, p. 4.

box, where votes should be cast only for the man who carried a union card.[42] The stakes were being raised.

Three months into the unexpectedly long strike against the Ballard mills, it became apparent to the weavers that the old method of fighting their battles on the local level was going to be markedly ineffective in this case. Despite the solidarity and discipline of the Ballard shingle workers and their ability to win over most skilled replacements to their cause, their employers' resolve to resist the union was not weakening. The '01 and '04 conflicts were brought to a relatively rapid conclusion as the mills undermined each other in their competition for workers and markets. But now in 1906 the Shingle Mills Bureau was clearly keeping the Ballard operators afloat for a potentially long and drawn-out struggle on which the future of the industry was seen to rest. Consequently, in a convention on June 17 at which all but one local was represented, the I.S.W.U.A. authorized the formation of a committee to seek a settlement of the strike. Failing this, a general strike would be called against all Washington state mills affiliated with the Bureau. Compared to the virtual concessional stampede of employers in earlier years, the reaction of the mill-men in '06 was revealing. Not only did the Shingle Mills Bureau refuse to confer with the union committee, but not a single Ballard manufacturer, all of

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[42]SUR, June 2, 1906, p. 1.

whom were approached individually by the committee, would agree to any terms of settlement. The general strike began on the morning of June 21.[43]

The response of the rank-and-file shingle workers to the strike order was at first very good. Even crews who were on good terms with their employers and satisfied with their conditions of labor heeded the advice of the International.[44] The union tried to use this to its advantage by calling upon the small mill owners to put pressure on the tiny clique of "union-hating plutocrats" who had "seized control" of the Shingle Mills Bureau. If the smaller manufacturers could be convinced that their interests were at odds with the Bureau bigwigs perhaps the strike could be settled in favor of the weavers.

> If the small manufacturers of the state understood the true purpose of the conflict being carried on at Ballard against the Shingle Weavers' Union . . . the bureau would have to go out of business as a result of the withdrawal of ninety per cent of its membership . . . . The few individuals running the bureau . . . want the mills . . . . They expect to buy them at their own price. Those they cannot buy they will discriminate against. These schemers do not expect to destroy the union. They expect to run their mills with union weavers—that is, all the mills in the state after they have bought them.[45]

Although few mill operators seem to have been receptive to this conspiracy theory, equally few were eager to lose their workers to a general strike. Supporting Ballard manufacturers through their "defense fund" contributions was tolerable and perhaps even necessary, but a general shut-down

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[43]SUR, June 23, 1906, p. 1; SW, July 1906, pp. 1-2.

[44]SW, July 1906, p. 3.

[45]Ibid.

was not. So while the Bureau claimed with some legitimacy to represent ninety percent of the state's mills, union men looking to strike against Bureau mills discovered that no more than twenty percent avowed their affiliation.[46] The I.S.W.U.A. responded by initiating a union label campaign in all shingle centers but Ballard, in an effort to distinguish labor's friends from its enemies.[47] With the stakes in the struggle thereby raised once again, it was only a matter of days before the mill operators declared themselves in pursuit of the open shop.[48] It would now be a matter of all-out war.

At a general meeting of Skagit County mills on July 6, owners decided to resume work on an open-shop basis on Monday, July 9.[49] A similar meeting of Snohomish County manufacturers in Everett yielded the same result. Thirty-eight percent of Snohomish County mills, including all the largest manufacturers, signed an open-shop agreement at the Hotel Mitchell in Everett on July 7. One mill man in attendance felt unjustly attacked by the union:

> Several of the local plants, which have fallen under the ban, are in no wise responsible for conditions considered unfair by the work men. We have no right to approach the Ballard mills with a demand that they discharge their non-union men.[50]

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[46]SW, August 1906, p. 1; SUR, July 28, 1906, p. 1.

[47]Ibid; Ibid.

[48]EH, July 7, 1906, p. 1; July 16, 1906, p. 4.

[49]EH, July 7, 1906, p. 1.

[50]EH, July 9, 1906, p. 1.

Bellingham mills as well prepared to implement the open shop system sometime during the week. By July 11, Everett manufacturers had also explicitly stated their refusal to adopt the union label.[51]

One hundred fifty-one shingle manufacturers met in convention at Seattle on July 15 to render official and general what had already occurred locally and informally over the last week. The mill owners, representing seventy-five percent of the output of the State, with all the large mills but one in attendance, unanimously signed an agreement refusing to consider the union label and any contract offered by the union. All agreed to operate on an open-shop basis exclusively. A proposal was also made to seek injunctions against any mill signing a union contract on the principle that such employers were aiding the I.S.W.U.A. boycott and acting in restraint of trade. Several mill owners who had accepted union contracts soon backed down and joined the open shop movement.[52]

This was to prove a turning point in the strike. Despite union claims that seventy-five mills in Washington had signed union contracts and more were to follow,[53] most shingle manufacturers would not accept a contract mandating use of the union label. Union secretary Ernest Marsh admitted the difficulty of the struggle at hand.

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[51]EH, July 12, 1906, p. 1.

[52]EH, July 16, 1906, p. 4.

[53]EH, July 18, 1906, p. 1.

> The hardest fight we are having is in Everett, Whatcom county, Aberdeen and Hoquiam. In these places the mills are pretty generally standing pat, but we have brought about a decided break in all other quarters. This struggle is hard on the weavers and equally hard on the owners.[54]

The "other quarters" cited by Marsh, however, would not have provided a union victory, as the counties in which employer resistance was the greatest were the combined producers of two-thirds of the State's shingles.[55] Unwilling to put rank-and-file cohesion at risk in a long and fruitless struggle, the I.S.W.U.A. called off the general strike on July 31, suggesting that its members return to work wherever their union cards and union scale could be retained.[56] The "Battle of Ballard" was lost.

While the International denied any internal pressure to end the strike, it is clear from many of the comments made by its officers that such pressure existed. The earlier solidarity of the Ballard men could not be reproduced indefinitely on the state-wide level. Secretary Marsh noted: "It appeared to many of the weavers to be an injustice to wage a fight on non-union bureau mills through the use of the label."[57] President Bolger remarked that, "there is far less grumbling heard in Ballard than from the outside,"[58] suggesting

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[54]EH, July 27, 1906, p. 5.

[55]See Chapter 1, p. 27.

[56]EH, July 31, 1906, p. 1; SW, August 1906, p. 1; SUR, August 11, 1906, p. 1.

[57]EDH, July 31, 1906, p. 1.

[58]SW, August 1906, p. 1.

that some weavers in other parts were losing their interest in making sacrifices for their Ballard brothers. And President Bolger as well made a plea for continued solidarity in the face of hardship that implied that all was not well in the ranks:

> Tenacity and grit are qualities not found in all individuals, although many flatter themselves over the possession of what they call backbone. It frequently happens that those who make the loudest boast are found woefully lacking when the test comes. Remember that our burdens just at present are very heavy and our duties manifold. We stand for "equal rights to all, special privileges to none," and it is upon these principles that the fight at Ballard is based . . . . Therefore, if you stand for those principles, then stay with your union.[59]

Employers of course sought to take advantage of any disarray among their workers that may have been caused by the lockouts and strikes and the return-to-work order issued by the International. The mill operators of Everett, for example, issued a declaration that began ominously as follows:

> This is strictly an open shop. There shall be no steward in this mill. We retain the inalienable right to hire and discharge any man we see fit. We decline to confer with any committee or representative of any organization whatever regarding the conduct of our business . . . .[60]

C.E. Russell of the Russell Shingle Company added his own sentiments in an interview with the press: "Everett has always been the hot bed of labor struggles, and we are resolved to clean it out,"[61] —portents of 1916.

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[59]SUR, August 11, 1906, p. 1.

[60]EH, July 31, 1906, p. 8.

[61]Ibid.

The "Battle of Ballard" and the ensuing general strike were lost because of the power exerted by the largest producers organized in the Shingle Mills Bureau. Many of these large shingle manufacturers did an extensive brokerage business and handled a great deal of the state's output beyond the confines of their own mills.[62] This gave them substantial influence over the industry at large. Ernest Marsh commented on this in his appraisal of the strike on the eve of its conclusion:

> Eighty-two mills had signed the label agreement [and] a great many more were apparently willing to sign, but appeared to be tied up in some way with their brokers . . . . We also find that owing to his breaking away from his agreement with the bureau, Mike Earles of Bellingham is being boycotted by Mississippi line dealers in lumber as well as in shingles, brought about by the bureau, and that an enforced demand by us for the use of the label on his product bids fair to work serious injury to his business . . . .[63]

Remarkably, oligopolistic tendencies had emerged in the timber industry by 1906 that no one would have predicted, given the highly competitive reputation of the business and its continued competitive appearance due to the existence of significant numbers of small and marginal enterprises. But the small had clearly become more marginal, as larger companies absorbed greater market shares and greater market power on account of their productive capacities and of their control of distribution networks.

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[62]SW, August 1906, p. 1.

[63]EH, July 31, 1906, p. 1.

Since the larger producers had increased their share of the market by 1906 and also controlled many of their smaller competitors' sales through brokerage arrangements, the opportunity to make a concerted effort to defeat the union was stronger in 1906 that it had been earlier. The decision of the Shingle Mills Bureau to stake the considerable economic clout of the major manufacturers on a struggle against the union in Ballard paid off. And the I. S.W.U.A. and its members, as determined as they may have been, were far less prepared to endure the economic hardships of a long strike. The cut-throat competition between employers that had served the workers well in 1901 and 1904 was not to be, and the bitterness generated by this revelation was profound.

In light of the failure of the I.S.W.U.A.'s struggle, the shingle weavers of Washington responded as would any persons embroiled in a crisis of faith. Most union weavers appear to have stuck loyally with their organization, at least in sentiment, but the pressing need for employment and the responsibility of family and home made adherence to principle a difficult and costly venture. Enough shingle workers seem to have broken ranks to cause the union to unleash a venomous assault against scabbery the likes of which was unheard of in earlier years.

> The Lytle Mill Company has pressed into service . . . one Jens Butler . . . . Butler left a job of $75.00 per month to accept a petty bossship in this mill for $100.00. In other words, this degenerate who once disgraced the Union by carrying a membership card therein, is so completely in sympathy with the aims

> of scabbery that $25.00 per month can buy him body, soul, and reputation.[64]

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> Some weavers seem to think that our only thought should be for our employers. They seem to think that these men are images and that we should fall on our knees and worship them. All through the general strike these fellows were whining, crying and roaring about the injustice that was being worked upon his employer. These yellow-streaked, spineless, unprincipled specimens of humanity were what prolonged the strike. If they had kept away from the mill men and boosted for the union as much as they howled against it, the mill men would have seen fit to have gotten busy and settled.[65]

The Shingle Weaver also published an editorial by President Bolger that stood in stark contrast to a similar discussion from 1903.[66]

> The scab is he who takes an active part in the fight against the workers of his own trade. He is simply a traitor in the army of human labor, a miserable, cowardly renegade . . . . Of scabs there is only one kind . . . . They are not fit to associate with or even talk to. They have betrayed you, stolen your rights, robbed you, your wife and children . . . . Let us show no mercy to the traitors and scabs . . . .[67]

Nor did employers emerge from the strike of '06 in a very favorable light. Their aims were described as the "whims and prejudices of labor-hating, profit-thirsty mill men." The Shingle Weaver sarcastically remarked that "it is too bad for the benefit of these blood-sucking leeches that chattel slavery was ever

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[64]SW, August 1906, p. 2.

[65]SW, September 1906, p. 4.

[66]See this chapter, p. 76.

[67]SW, October 1906, p. 2.

abolished.[68] Gone was any talk of conciliation, compromise, or the certainty that right would prevail.

The general strike of 1906 did not destroy the I.S.W.U.A., but it dealt a serious blow to the shingle weavers' notions of the effectiveness of "American" solidarity, "American" justice on the job, and the invincibility of the brotherhood of skilled American men. This proud lament from Grays Harbor said it all:

> While the mill men here may be able to run their mills with scabs, may be able to get as good a crew of non-union men as union men, may be able to transport from other localities standing armies of strike breakers, may build bull-pens and flood the town with their hireling detectives to insult our citizens and stir up strife among our people—they may, with their unlimited means and vast, far spreading commercial machinery, do all this, but one thing they can't do: They can never smash the Hoquiam union. They may fill our places with Chinamen or Japs or free-born American scabs, but we'll go down with our faces to the foe . . . . The Hoquiam union stands as strong today with its empty treasury and unemployed members as on the initial hour of its struggle.[69]

Yet empty treasuries and the prospect of unemployment did not endear the union to all shingle workers, especially since most mills would now refuse to recognize the union stewart or enter into any union contract. Just as some turned to scabbing, others began to heed more radical voices than were prevalent in the halls of power at the International. President Bolger and his associates were fully aware of this consequence of the general strike:

> The I.W.W. is still trying to disrupt the unions throughout the United States, but it is hoped that the unionists will give them a

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[68]SW, August 1906, p. 2.

[69]SW, September 1906, p. 4.

> wide berth. No organization with the interests of the working people at heart will go among members of another organization during the time of strife and strikes and tell them that they belong to the wrong kind of union.[70]

The influence of I.W.W. orators, syndicalists, industrial unionists, and the like, on and among the rank and file of the I.S.W.U.A., was dealt with as follows:

> A certain part of our membership seems to think that all that is needed of a leader is to have the "gift of gab." Hot air and oration does not make a man a thinker, neither does it amount to much in conducting the business of an organization. We cannot understand why a certain element takes pleasure at all times in "knocking" the International officers and trying to down and belittle the Union . . . . Brothers, beware of the false prophets.[71]

But the prophets remained.

Much to their dismay, Washington's shingle weavers learned a number of important lessons from the "Battle of Ballard." They learned that their employers, under the direction of the Shingle Mills Bureau, had become far more powerful and intransigent than in the past. They understood that even lesser millmen who had once accepted the union would succumb to or welcome the Bureau's militance. They came to realize that although the International was a far superior organizational form to the earlier system of independent locals, it was still no match for the economic staying power of the large mills in a long strike. The weavers also learned that union men were not as indispensable as had been believed. And finally, they had the opportunity to see what they were made of. Scabs, craft union loyalists, nascent syndical-

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[70]Ibid, p. 1.

[71]SW, October 1906, p. 2.

ists—all had their chance to make what meaning they would of this valiantly fought but ultimately lost struggle. It remained to be seen how these lessons would shape their perceptions and actions in future battles as shingle weavers and as timber workers.

CHAPTER FOUR

REDS, WHITES AND GREEKS: THE GRAYS HARBOR STRIKE OF 1912

On April 18, 1906 the great city of San Francisco was reduced to rubble and ash by a whim of nature. It was ironically this great cataclysm—the San Francisco earthquake and fire—that spared shingle weavers and their families from the worst economic consequences of their failed struggle with their bosses. While employers remained steadfast in their determination to banish the union from their shops, they could not banish union men without operating short-handed. San Francisco's reconstruction was the impetus for steady employment and steady wages throughout the timber industry for months beyond the disaster. But such prosperity was, as in the past, to be short-lived.

By February 1908, Shingle Weavers' Union local 12 at Seattle-Ballard was once again locked in combat with the mill operators over a proposed wage reduction. As in 1906, the large operators proved their ability to keep their competitors in line. This fact was not lost on the union, which blamed Vice-President Ives of the Stimson Mill Company for the obstinacy, or perhaps the cowardice, of mill owners at large.

> He is the man who belabors the other mill men of Ballard in line for the purpose of carrying his destructive and inhuman policy into effect. He is the man who always claims to have all his

> local competitors by the nose, and is thus able to use them as a continuous cat's paw to save his chestnuts from the burning.[1]
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> As previously pointed out, the entire industry was being hogged by a few large wholesalers like Ives, McKewan and Balcolm of Ballard. They try to keep shingles high in the East, where they sell, low in the West, where they buy, and thus reap large profits, put the small producer out of business, and crush the shingle weavers into the ground all by one patent process.[2]

The I.S.W.U.A. was especially concerned about wage-cutting tactics which threatened to fracture the weavers' traditional solidarity.

> One of the plans possessing the above referred to employers is to shave the wages down to a bare trifle below the union scale on some particular branch of the work—like packing, for instance. They will insist on cutting wages for packers down to ½ cent below the scale and try to convince the balance of the workmen in the other branches that it is not worth fighting for. Suppose the crew or the local fail to stand by the packers, it is but natural that this would offend them. Exactly what mill men want. They will next try the plan on knotsawyers, and work it in the same way. The packers do not feel like fighting for the knot-sawyers when they could not get assistance in their case. So it goes on, and before long not only are the wages of all branches reduced but a strong ill-feeling exists among the workers in the different branches of the craft. Then, of course, no solidity exists, and the workers are divided against themselves. This point having been reached, the hideous purpose of the mill men is in full blossom, and the workers find themselves helpless, their resistance effective and powerful when united, now merely a negative quantity.[3]

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[1]SW, March 1908, p. 1.

[2]SW, April, 1908, p. 1.

[3]Ibid., p. 2.

By July, with no resolution in sight, the mill men's "hideous purpose" had in fact blossomed and borne fruit. The union failed to restore wages, and mills continued to operate with non-union and many exhausted union men.

The struggles of 1906 and 1908 did not serve the ordinary weaver in good stead, but did bring union activists a heightened awareness of the fragility of solidarity in the face of powerful employer onslaughts. It was perhaps for this reason that the I.S.W.U.A. addressed for the first time in 1908 the plight of common labor. On the heels of a compromise wage reduction plan reached between Mr. Ives and the other mill men, the union commented:

> Of course the mill men's meeting did not take up the wages of any of the workmen in town except those of the shingle weavers. This left him free to use his own judgement as to what should be done with the common laborers. No one knew better than the bullet-headed front of the Stimson Mill Company, that the labor market presented rare opportunities for the man bent on getting his pound of flesh to the last ounce, and without needless delay he proceeded to cut his men down till they were working for the sum of $1.20 per day, out of which those who boarded at the company boarding house were obliged to pay $1.00 of the $1.20 for their board.[4]

Why this sudden interest in the unskilled and non-unionized workmen? In all likelihood, the successful anti-unionism of the mill owners, many of whom ran "combination" mills, was having an impact on union tactics. There were those in the I.S.W.U.A. who would now, after two demoralizing defeats, begin to see industrial unionism as a necessary counter-measure to industrial combination and manufacturers' associations. And in ideological terms, the two "Battles of

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[4]SW, March 1908, p. 1.

Ballard" did some degree of damage to the old notion of the brotherhood of American craftsmen. If some skilled men might "join hands with the autocratic and plutocratic mill men" and act in a fashion "untrue to their fellows,"[5] was it not possible that some of the unskilled might see the benefit of union and even stand by it in its days of distress. Much that had once been taken for granted had over the last few years been called into question, and as union leaders made their rhetorical forays into the unknown, they were drawing their tentative battle plans for the future. The future made its unexpected appearance on Grays Harbor in 1912, and it did not speak English.

On March 14, 1912 the non-unionized unskilled workers of the Hoquiam Lumber and Shingle Company and the North Western Lumber Company went on strike for higher wages. This was the first concerted labor action on the part of the new immigrants of Hoquiam. Greeks, Slavs, and Finns whose arrival since 1905 had been giving Grays Harbor towns an increasingly foreign flavor would now prove their mettle at what had once been thought of as a purely American activity—union. While many American-born workers, the A.F.L., the Shingle Weavers' Union, the middle class and the mill owners all appear to have been caught off guard by the so-called "Greek strike," the Industrial Workers of the World successfully organized all of the striking workers into its ranks within days, and may have played a role in encouraging

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[5]Ibid.

the workers' wage demands in the first place. Common laborers who had been paid $1.75 per day now demanded from $2.50 to $3.50.[6]

The backdrop to the strike and the reaction of the I.S.W.U.A., which was after all the only union of timber workers at the time, were most interesting. R.F. Lytle, president of the Hoquiam Lumber and Shingle Company, was one of the Shingle Weavers' Union's principal foes. He was, along with Ives of Ballard, a villain of the great strike of 1906, and a tireless advocate of the open shop. In early October 1911 Lytle fired all his union workers, and on November 1 he announced a general wage reduction of ten percent for all categories of labor. Since the I.S.W.U.A. had been fighting a wage struggle with Lytle since 1910, his actions were taken as a warning to all workers as to the consequences of organization and obstinacy.[7] Enter the I.W.W., which launched an organizing drive and free speech fight in neighboring Aberdeen from November on into early 1912. It was here that they established their tenuous and tumultuously received foothold on Grays Harbor.[8] By February of 1912, the I.S.W.U.A. had taken up the cause of the unorganized in the mills, at least rhetorically—pushed, perhaps, by the presence of the Wobblies.[9]

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[6]Aberdeen Herald, March 18, 1912, p. 1. Hereafter referred to as AH.

[7]SW, February 22, 1912, p. 1.

[8]Jensen, p. 121; AH, January 8, 1912, p. 1, and January 11, 1912, p. 1.

[9]SW, February 22, 1912, p. 1.

Several other developments now converged to suggest a new tactical path. It will be recalled that the weavers' International headquarters was already beginning to pay verbal homage to the plight of the unskilled in the second Ballard fight of 1908. And in 1906, the Hoquiam local had been one of the hardest hit by the Shingle Bureau's open-shop drive, paving the way for dissension, disillusionment, and radicalization.[10] By 1912 this radicalization had taken a couple of forms. J.G. Brown, a socialist and veteran of the Hoquiam weavers' 1906 defeat, was now president of the International. He and many other socialist unionists were far more predisposed to industrial unionism than their predecessors of the Ernest Marsh school. Furthermore, socialism had become the predominant working class political movement of the northwestern timber lands, with the establishment of sixteen local organizations of the Socialist Party around the Puget Sound mill towns by 1911. The Shingle Weavers' Union was a principal contributor to Socialist electoral campaigns.[11] To the "left," so to speak, of the Socialists, were the direct-actionist Wobblies, who as of 1912 had made only slight headway among the bulk of native-born "radicals," who were typically ballot-box Socialists.[12] But the Wobblies might always stand to benefit from a failure of the political approach to labor's woes; and they maintained a low dues system and policy of open

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[10]See Chapter 3, pp. 105, 110-1.

[11]Clark, Mill Town, p. 116.

[12]See Chapter 2, pp. 64-5.

membership that offered a viable alternative to the A.F.L. for workers too poor, too mobile, or insufficiently skilled to partake of the benefits of older existing organizations.

In the Aberdeen free-speech fights of the winter of 1911/12, the Socialists stood by the I.W.W.'s constitutionally protected right of free speech, but parted company with them on the issue of direct action. On January 7, 1912, Adam Schubert, a tailor, addressed a large Socialist demonstration at Aberdeen's Finn Hall on this subject.

> He declared that the I.W.W. was the advance guard and was the first to be attacked in the downfall of organized labor, and when the I.W.W. members made a mistake, they parted roads with the socialists, but in spirit the fight for the cause remained.[13]

Likewise, in February 1912 the Shingle Weavers' Union mirrored the I.W.W.'s concern for the unskilled, but did not share the Wobblies' eagerness to recognize foreigners as "class comrades" of the American-born.

> Lytle wishes it understood among the unorganized that he will punish anybody who dares to oppose his will. He gives the unorganized to understand that he has punished them for the audacity of the Shingle Weavers in daring to show him up and fight back . . . . To punish the Four Hundred employees in the Lumber Mill because he is mad at the few Shingle Weavers who defy his attempts to destroy their Union, will only drive the Four Hundred themselves to organize in self-protection . . . . And that is what is happening. Many of the old employees in the Lytle Mill refused to accept the 10 per cent cut and left. Their places have been filled by Greeks . . . . Does R.F. Lytle encourage ["family-men"] when he drives them away and imports Greeks to take their places? What does The Washingtonian, silent since

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[13]AH, January 8, 1912, p. 1.

> October on this Shingle Weavers' fight on Robber Lytle, think of the importation of low-priced labor?[14]

And thus did the weavers' union propose to meet the challenge of the future. A combative strategy based on the brotherhood of craftsmen was giving way to a broader definition of class struggle, but one from which the foreign-born were still excluded.

On February 28, a delegation formed by the Hoquiam Central Labor Council sought to bring their grievances against Mr. Lytle to the attention of the city's Commercial Club. Representatives of the plumbers, shingle weavers, tailors, typographers, and carpenters signed a letter requesting a ten-minute audience before the businessmen of Hoquiam to address matters whose resolution might avert a big strike. The letter was presented to C. D. McClure, secretary of the Commercial Club and news editor of The Washingtonian. McClure consulted with club President Brewer, who was also Lytle's attorney; and they advised the labor delegates that no political, religious, or labor matters would be discussed at the meeting. The union men took their seats in the hall nonetheless, only to be ignored for over one hour and to find the meeting adjourned with no consideration given to their grievances.[15] Apparently the businessmen of Hoquiam did not deem their skilled workmen to be of great consequence. With hopes for a peaceful settlement dashed, the

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[14]SW, February 22, 1912, p. 1.

[15]SW, March 2, 1912, p. 4.

I.S.W.U.A. predicted an "impending class war in Hoquiam."[16] It is doubtful that they knew how total a war this would be.

The strike of common laborers, none of whom had attended the Commercial Club snub, began on Thursday morning, March 14. The North Western Lumber Company was the first affected by the walkout, and was the scene of a shoving match between I.W.W. organizer W. A. Thorne and yard foreman Quinn over the loyalty of an eighteen-year old teamster. Thorne was arrested and tried for technical assault. Undaunted, workers from North Western marched on the Lytle mill, calling out all the men there, and proceeded onward to downtown Hoquiam. That night at the Finn Hall striking workers signed up with the I.W.W. and appointed a strike committee of two Greeks, two Finns, two Scandinavians, and two English-speakers. The shingle weavers contributed two prominent speakers. One was J.G. Brown, I.S.W.U.A. president. The other was Dr. Herman Titus, a former Socialist Party leader who had been called to Hoquiam in February by the weavers to help settle the lockout against them.[17] As we shall see, the participation of the weavers' union in the strike of the unskilled would have a profound effect on the future of the labor movement on Grays Harbor.

Aside from unity, Hoquiam workers had one other small advantage at the outset—Reverend Harry Ferguson, a clerical advocate of social harmony.

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[16]Ibid., p. 1.

[17]Daily Washingtonian, March 15, 1912, p. 1. Hereafter cited as DW.

As mayor of Hoquiam, Ferguson was roundly criticized by employers for his apparent pro-labor sympathies. Superintendent Al Kuhn of the Lytle mill summed up the bosses' perception of the situation as follows:

> Had Hoquiam been possessed of a mayor of executive ability and determination, the strike would have been nipped in the bud at that very moment when the men arrived at the mill. I called upon him to keep the band from coming into the plant and from trespassing on the mill property, but he declared he could do nothing. Further than that, a telegram was sent to Sheriff Payette at Montesano, telling him of what had occurred and the danger of further trouble, and when he talked to Mayor Ferguson that official informed the sheriff the situation was in hand here and that the police had everything under control. I called upon the chief of police to protect our property and keep the strikers from interfering with our men, but he also refused to act.[18]

Faced with a surprising degree of cooperation between the A.F.L. and I.W.W., the skilled and the unskilled, the foreign and native-born, the Greeks and the Finns, the Finns and the Swedes, the Swedes and the Slavs, and labor and the mayor, the mill operators' first resort was to make nationality the focus of the conflict. The biggest employer of until-now cheap foreign-born labor, the Lytle mill, refused to meet with the strike committee on the preposterous grounds that the Hoquiam Lumber and Shingle Company would have nothing to do with anyone save Americans and American citizens.[19] The Aberdeen Herald reported that "it seems certain that the foreigners will be replaced in the mills by American men of families . . . [and possibly at] an

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[18]DW, March 16, 1912, p. 2.

[19]Ibid.

increase in wages."[20] This organ of the middle class also demonstrated the tendency of the old-stock natives to lump all of the new immigrants into a general category of "other" as it described the events on the Harbor as "the strike of Greek and other Slavic laborers."[21] With mainstream press reports such as these, one might consider the relatively low literacy rates among new immigrants as an asset rather than a liability.

On Monday, March 18, the strike was carried from Hoquiam to neighboring Aberdeen with the closure of the Slade Lumber Mill following a walkout by its 125 employees. Hoquiam Mayor Ferguson attended a meeting of striking workers that afternoon at which they clearly stated their position on ethnicity. "In the event of a settlement of this matter, all men are to be reinstated in their former positions. No men are to be discriminated against for reasons of color, nationality or union affiliations."[22] By March 20, strikers shut down two more Aberdeen mills and forced many others to operate shorthanded.[23] Roving pickets closed the Western mill as well as the Eureka Cedar Lumber and Shingle Company, where the entire crew walked out to join a demonstration of two hundred men outside the plant. The mills of the E.K. Wood Lumber Company and the Grays Harbor Lumber Company continued

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[20]AH, March 18, 1912, p. 1.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Ibid., p. 4.

[23]DW, March 20, 1912, p. 1.

to operate as they promptly granted the wage scale demanded by their workers.[24]

On March 22, the longshoremen of Grays Harbor struck as well, virtually paralyzing the area's timber industry. As the strike spread, so did acts of violence and intimidation. Mill managers furnished grocers with lists of workers and put pressure on them to cease extending credit to those on strike.[25] Jesse Lewis, manager of Hoquiam's Coats Shingle Mill, held off strikers at gunpoint, while an I.W.W. man at Aberdeen's Anderson and Middleton mill was attacked with a wrench.[26] The worst violence occurred at the North Western mill in Hoquiam as a result of the company's decision to appoint some of its foremen and yard bosses as a "special" police force. During a scuffle between mill police and Greek strikers on March 18, one Greek suffered a serious head wound at the hands of yard boss Lewis Miller, who cracked the worker's skull with a brick. Five Greeks were arrested as a result of the fracas, but City Attorney Callahan refused to issue a warrant for

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[24]AH, March 21, 1912, p. 1.

[25]Herbert Gutman pointed out that merchants and shopkeepers often played pivotal roles in the labor/capital struggles of nineteenth-century industrial communities. Both workers and industrialists vied for the allegiance of this segment of the middle class, and its loyalty to "big capital" was by no means assured. See for example Gutman's "Trouble on the Railroads in 1873-1874" and "Two Lockouts in Pennsylvania, 1873-74," in Work, Culture & Society in Industrializing America, especially pp. 311, 328, 340-1. See also pp. 126-7, in this chapter, for the shingle weavers' views on this subject; p. 138 on the pro-labor barber, Mrs. Carrie Walker; and pp. 165-9 on the municipal elections.

[26]DW, March 21, 1912, p. 1.

the arrest of Miller, asserting that he would have done the same himself.[27] The Hoquiam Trades and Labor Council immediately petitioned the city commission for Callahan's removal, but to no avail. In fact, labor's only friend on the commission was Mayor Ferguson, who was repeatedly outvoted by commissioners Ogden and Willis. Ferguson had opposed the creation of the mill police but his opinion was overridden on this issue as well. These officers were appointed by Chief of Police Quinn upon company recommendation and served on company payroll, but required confirmation by the city commission. On March 20, despite or perhaps on account of the events of March 18, the commission ignored the mayor and confirmed the appointments of seven special officers, all directly answerable to Superintendent Hutchinson of the North Western Lumber Company.[28] The counter attack was beginning to take shape.

As the sides in the conflict became clearly drawn, and as the mill operators and their friends in government undertook their task of breaking the "Greek strike," the Shingle Weavers' Union began to play a larger and larger supportive role. On March 23 they announced "the Blazing Rebellion has come."[29] But this rebellion was not of their making nor under their control. How would they interpret it? The I.S.W.U.A. decided to take some credit for

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[27]DW, March 19, 1912, p. 1, and March 21, 1912, p. 1.

[28]DW, March 21, 1912, p. 6; SW, March 23, 1912, p. 4.

[29]SW, March 23, 1912, p. 1.

the strike, although this conflict was clearly not the result of their tutelage of the unskilled. Without further explanation, the union described the walkout of common laborers as "indirectly due to the lockout against the shingle weavers in Hoquiam." The I.S.W.U.A. blamed, as it had in the past, "a few business men," in this case, members of the Hoquiam Commercial Club.[30] Most early interpretations of the strike criticized the bulk of Hoquiam's businessmen for their foolish unwillingness to support wage increases which would stimulate consumption in town. According to the union, three social classes existed in Hoquiam, and merchants were failing to perceive their true relations to one another. First, "the mill owners, the very rich and their immediate dependents, their superintendents, bosses, clerks, lawyers, journalists . . . . They want large profits and low wages and consequently less money to be spent in Hoquiam." Second, "the small business men, the storekeepers and all those dependent on them. They must sell their goods or go to the wall . . . It is the thousands and thousands of men employed by the Lumber Industries . . . who keep the stores prosperous." Third, "the wage class—practically the only class in this city, 80 per cent of all the population . . . THEY ARE THE RULING CLASS OF HOQUIAM . . . . They are the city."[31] I.S.W.U.A. propaganda was therefore aimed at splitting the middle class from the rich along lines of economic self-interest and also at raising awareness of working class political power, or

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[30]Ibid., p. 2.

[31]Ibid., p. 1.

at the very least invoking a democratic sense of justice based on the numerical superiority of the wage earners.

The I.S.W.U.A. also made great efforts to emphasize the unity of labor in this struggle, a circumstance that they clearly had not anticipated.

> The most astonishing and gratifying feature of this uprising is the hearty cooperation among the different unions. The Central Labor Council, composed of delegates from the various unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor . . . enthusiastically endorsed this great Lumber Workers' strike, which is being conducted by the organizers of the Industrial Workers of the World . . . . The I.W.W. has now enrolled several hundred Lumber Workers, BOTH SKILLED AND UNSKILLED, into one Industrial Union . . . . One of the best organizers in the I.W.W. advised the longshoremen in the ranks of the I.W.W. to join the I.L.A. . . . so as to have no divisions in the ranks of strikers. The representatives of the Shingle Weavers' Union, the Longshoremen's Union and I.W.W. have met in common conference and have practically joined forces to win this strike.[32]

As far as the Greeks were concerned, the shingle weavers were now prepared to accept them as fellow workers.

> What was the real complaint against the Greeks when they came here five years ago . . . . Why they lowered wages . . . . They made "white men" work for less . . . . But THESE VERY GREEKS ARE LEADING THE FIGHT FOR HIGHER WAGES AND BETTER CONDITIONS . . . . And business men blindly take up the old cry when the occasion of the old cry is gone and when the Greeks have learned enough to demand better conditions for themselves and their fellow workers . . . . The Greeks are fighting for the best interests of Hoquiam.[33]

This was a notable clarification of the union's position. Race and nationality were not significant as such, but only mattered insofar as they affected the

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[32]Ibid.

[33]Ibid.

general welfare of workers as a class. Foreign scabs were to be despised, but immigrants struggling to improve the conditions of the class had "learned enough" to gain acceptance to it.

The lumber barons, for their part, hoped that racial loyalties would supersede those of class among the workers of Hoquiam. Agents of R.F. Lytle circulated among the strikers on March 21, offering an increase in wages to $2.25 per day, with no employment of Greeks or Wobblies. The local press remarked that:

> . . . as near as can be learned now the strike has resolved itself into a question of the kind of labor to be employed. Indications are that the mill operators are willing to pay an increased scale to good men but are determined not to use Greeks again.[34]

In other words, the chief employer of foreign labor cynically planned to make nationality the central issue of the strike. The I.S.W.U.A. responded with a vehement call for solidarity.

> This means the I.W.W. have won but shall be punished for winning. It means really that Lytle is desperate and trying this last resort to bribe his skilled workers back until he has them in his power again, without any organization to protect themselves, when he will again treat then as he always has. For men to go to work for Lytle, one by one, as individuals, is simply to lose everything they struck for. Only by united action . . . . can improved conditions and higher wages be maintained.[35]

While the I. S.W.U.A. stood by the I.W.W. in Hoquiam, Albert Johnson, editor of the city's Daily Washingtonian, propagandized against the alliance.

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[34]DW, March 22, 1912, p. 1.

[35]SW, March 23, 1912, p. 1.

> The I.W.W. organization is not in harmony with the American Federation of Labor . . . . The I.W.W. charges the Federation with settling strikes, and with making contracts to prevent strikes. They charge the Federation leaders with living well, spending money for luxuriés and buying wine . . . . They are socialists of the Marx brand . . . but they are out of tune with socialist leaders.[36]

All such attempts to split the unions, especially those on strike, were futile. It is true that on March 24, ten days after the strike began, the Aberdeen Trades Council, affiliated with the A.F.L., refused to endorse it.[37] This decision was not unusual, given the national A.F.L.'s hostility to the I.W.W., and was perhaps driven by recent experience as well. Aberdeen trade unionists could well remember the intimidating anti-labor backlash which followed I.W.W. free speech campaigning in that city only a few months earlier. But the Aberdeen Council was devoid of timber workers as a result of the 1906 fusion of the Hoquiam and Aberdeen locals of the I.S.W.U.A. and the location of their new headquarters in Hoquiam.[38] A timber-town Labor Council without shingle weavers cannot be viewed as a broadly representative body, especially since by 1912 these councils already represented only a small minority of all working people. No doubt the Aberdeen Council's position would have been different had the weavers remained. Clearly, though, the Shingle Weavers' Union was far more prepared to ally itself with the I.W.W., and less fearful of the

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[36]DW, March 15, 1912, p. 2.

[37]See Chapter 1, p. 31-2.

[38]SW, November 1906, p. 2.

costs of such an alliance, than other A.F.L. unions. By March 24, the I.S.W.U.A. shingle weavers, the I.L.A. and I.W.W. longshoremen, and timber workers represented by the I.W.W. had formed a unified general strike committee operating out of Hoquiam headquarters. After a week and a half the strike was holding firm.

By March 27, every mill in Aberdeen was closed and the strike had spread to Raymond and South Bend on Willapa Harbor.[39] The leadership role played by unskilled and non-union labor was especially evident there, with a walkout by three thousand sawmill employees and no strike or lockout in progress at the shingle mills. The Case Mill Company of Raymond erected a bull-pen, but was unable to secure strikebreakers to populate it.[40] And while the strike of common laborers gained numerical and geographic momentum, more radical utterances issued from some quarters in the I.S.W.U.A.

The shingle weavers' organizer in Hoquiam, Dr. Herman Titus, espoused the cause of industrial unionism:

> Instead of allowing you [employers] to keep us in subjection with wages at $1.80 because your mill owners on the Sound can keep their wage-earners down to that level, we propose to assist them, our brother-slaves, to raise their wages along with ours. . . . We perceive there is a need of . . . an organization of all Lumber Workers as labor is seeking to effect all along the coast.[41]

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[39]DW, March 27, 1912, p. 1.

[40]SW, March 30, 1912, p. 1.

[41]Ibid., p. 4.

In addition to the adoption of "One Big Union" rhetoric, union weavers in 1912 were less likely to blame their troubles on a "certain small coterie of shingle manufacturers"[42] as in the past, and more apt to perceive pervasive flaws in the economic and political system within which they labored. Harry Call, First Vice President of the Bellingham shingle weavers, made some of the most notable departures from the ideology of 1906 and 1908:

> The most wonderful thing in the world today is the Class Struggle; it is the most wonderful, the most terrible. The system has forced labor into a fight that can never be stopped. In this industrial war women and children are not spared; there are no rules, no truce that either side are bound to respect. As long as that terrible fear for future existence remains there can be no peace; as long as children are torn from the mother's breast and ground into their graves by the "machine" there can be no rest. But there is a future; men and women are becoming class conscious; the red peril is here for the capitalist and he will stop at nothing to gain his selfish ends.[43]

How very fine was the line between these words and those of any good Wobbly! And these were printed in the organ of an A.F.L. union in the midst of a veritable labor conflagration. One can readily imagine the impact of this language and these events on middle-class sensibilities. An organized and ultimately violent middle-class "counter-revolution" was in the offing.

On March 26, the small businessmen of Aberdeen formed a citizens' committee to inform themselves of the status of the strike. Upon inquiry, the mill men of Grays Harbor, comprising nineteen concerns, issued this

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[42]SW, April 1908, p. 1.

[43]SW, March 30, 1912, p. 1.

statement: "It is impossible under present conditions of the lumber market to raise the wages of either skilled or unskilled labor."[44] Meanwhile, and without substantiation, rumors held that the Greeks were arming themselves with revolvers.[45] On March 28, at six o'clock in the morning, 250 strikers massed at the Lytle mill to prevent the entry of a few scabs escorted by Hoquiam Police Chief Quinn, Sergeant Hardwick, and Patrolman Thomas. The patrolman and scabs were seized and turned back. Chief Quinn drew his gun, but the crowd refused to disperse and held its ground. No shots were fired. No one was harmed.[46]

Later on the twenty-eighth, the middle class of Hoquiam formed its own citizens' committee to demand that Mayor Ferguson call upon Sheriff Payette of Montesano to intervene in the strike. Failing this, the businessmen hoped to prevail on Governor Hay to provide state militia to "restore order" on Grays Harbor.[47] As demanded, the mayor conferred with the sheriff but apparently did not convince him that outside intervention was warranted. The following day, the citizens' committee, a self-convened group of about one hundred persons, enrolled about half its number in a voluntary "committee of public safety." The mayor, who had opposed the confirmation of the mill police, and

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[44]DW, March 28, 1912, p. 1; AH, March 28, 1912, p. 1.

[45]DW, March 27, 1912, p. 1.

[46]DW, March 29, 1912, p. 1.

[47]Ibid.; SW, April 6, 1912, p. 1.

had thus far appeared as a friend of labor, surprisingly gave his approval to this new "special police" force. His support was linked to concerns about "outside agitators."

> Often at a time when a city is having difference of opinion between employers and employees, evil disposed men come long distances with the purpose of profiting from the troubles existing. When large numbers of [these] appear it may be difficult for the usually small police force to give the necessary protection to the property and lives of the citizens because of the increased need for police protection. Therefore, I ask as a favor to the city that all able-bodied citizens that are willing to serve the city as special policemen without pay in a time of emergency . . . to please call at the police station and see the chief or phone to him their name, that a record be made in his office."[48]

It is not certain whether the mayor had finally come to fear retribution at the hands of the middle class electorate, whether he genuinely wished to create a police force that was beholden to neither worker nor boss, or whether he wished to exert some municipal control over a middle-class response to the strike that he viewed as inevitable. The result of his actions, however, was that within two days the original force of fifty special police had grown to one hundred.[49] These concerned citizens were not, though, to behave as Hoquiam's police, but as middle-class vigilantes whose object was the forcible reopening of the Lytle mill on Monday morning, April 1.

It became clear at this point that Mayor Ferguson stood alone as a voice of moderation in the city government, and that he was losing ground.

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[48]DW, March 30, 1912, p. 1.

[49]DW, March 31, 1912, p. 1.

The mayor was committed, it appears, to serving the interests of Hoquiam as he understood them, and not to its particular social classes. His personal sympathies were, and would remain with, the aggrieved and least powerful of the city's inhabitants; but his mission was to mitigate class antagonisms through a policy of moral suasion and with the aim of social peace.[50] What trying times for him indeed! Commissioners Ogden and Willis, City Attorney Callahan and Police Chief Quinn were all arrayed against him in alliance with the Commercial Club. How had this happened? Why were so many apparent "enemies of labor" presiding over a mostly working class town?

Hoquiam filled all its elected positions in at-large rather than district elections. There was no ward-based council system to reflect the diversity of its people. Aside from the middle class' high degree of political participation, which gave them a disproportionate voice in the city's affairs,[51] the at-large system encouraged a lowest common denominator approach to politics. In times of social peace, what greater goal could all of the people have aspired to than prosperity? Business-oriented candidates often seemed in a position to deliver precisely that. It was only in a crisis such as this one, with a virtual class war taking shape in the city, that the class loyalties of elected officials would be forced into clear focus. By the end of March, the Reverend mayor

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[50]See pp. 153-5.

[51]See pp. 165-9.

was the sole official proponent of social harmony, and even he had yielded to the pressure for special police.

P.J. Mourant, ex-mayor, Commercial Club officer, and chairman of the "committee of public safety," now appealed for the arrests of the strike leaders. City Attorney Callahan happily complied with the issuance of warrants against I.S.W.U.A. organizer Dr. Titus and I.W.W. organizers Anderson, Newell, and Yager.[52] Chief Quinn and Sergeant Hardwick arrested the four on the evening of March 30 and locked them in the city jail. Titus was held on $100 bail. When Mrs. Titus appeared with the bail money it was refused, prompting her to seek an explicit court order forcing its acceptance. It was now nine o'clock at night. While Callahan occupied Mrs. Titus in a side office, six police officers entered the strike leaders' cells, handcuffed them in pairs, and hurried them out the back way through the fire house and into waiting automobiles. They were thus spirited to the county jail in Montesano, where the Hoquiam officers informed Sheriff Payette that the prisoners were likely to be rescued from the city jail by a mob of workmen, and therefore required his safekeeping. At Hoquiam, Mrs. Titus was later told that the prisoners had been removed to spare them from a mob of enraged "citizens."[53]

The next day at noon, Mrs. Titus successfully retrieved her husband from Montesano, allowing him to address an open-air meeting of thousands

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[52]Ibid.; SW, April 6, 1912, p. 1.

[53]SW, April 6, 1912, p. 1.

of workers at Electric Park in Hoquiam that evening, an event that the authorities had wished to prevent him from attending. The demonstration took place without incident, but at ten o'clock on that Sunday night, just hours before the vigilantes planned to open the Lytle mill, Titus was awakened by Quinn and Hardwick, who arrested him once again. This time, the warrant had been prepared by one of Lytle's attorney's—who happened to be a squad commander of the citizens' police—and issued by a federal judge.[54] Judge Warren signed the dubious subpoena, which claimed that Titus had violated the constitutional rights of a strike-breaker by intimidating him from going to work. Warren bound Titus over to appear before a federal grand jury in May under ten thousand dollars bond. And so, Titus was transported to jail in Tacoma, far from the Grays Harbor strike, to await grand jury proceedings over a month away. Luckily for the doctor, U.S. District Attorney Todd in Seattle moved to throw the complaint out of court, and was so accommodated by Judge Hanford, who presided in that city.[55]

At dawn on April 1, over one hundred businessmen armed with shotguns, rifles, revolvers and clubs began to congregate at the Lytle mill in Hoquiam. They wore the white ribbon badges of the "special police." As workers approached the mill along Monroe Street, each was halted and asked "Going to work?" If one said "No," he was arrested and held in a big "stable"

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[54]DW, March 31, 1912, p. 1.

[55]SW, April 6, 1912, p. 1.

opposite the "bull-pen" constructed for scab labor.[56] The vigilantes warned the detainees "that any attempt to break out would result fatally."[57] Two hundred fifty strikers were rounded up in this way and then herded onto box cars waiting on the Northern Pacific tracks—

> . . . eighty in one car, sixty-four in another, and so on, till they were packed like sardines, the doors shut tight and spiked, with only cracks for air, and run down the main line ready to be shipped out of town.[58]

Only the intervention of Sheriff Payette secured their release and prevented a wholesale deportation. Having successfully forced the reopening of the Lytle mill, albeit short-handed, the citizens' police proceeded to the North Western mill, which was started up that afternoon under similar circumstances.[59]

Meanwhile in Aberdeen, fifty special police and a dozen mill guards opened the Slade mill with a show of weaponry as daunting as that in Hoquiam. Strikers who resisted orders to move on were promptly arrested. Aberdeen Chief of Police Templeman sent out a dragnet for the I.W.W. leaders, resulting in the arrests of organizers W.A. Thorne, John Roderick and Carl Conrad. A "mechanized division" of middle-class vigilantes combed the streets of the city by car, sweeping up "all others who appeared disposed to in any way incite riot or a breach of peace. At noon there were twenty-six of

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[56]Ibid.; AH, April 1, 1912, p. 1.

[57]AH, April 1, 1912, p. 1.

[58]SW, April 6, 1912, p. 1.

[59]DW, April 2, 1912, p. 1.

them in the city jail, including Mrs. Carrie Walker, the lady barber, who was charged with standing in front of her place, and "trying to incite the strikers to riot."[60] There may have been a few such defectors from the ranks of the small proprietors, since on the night of April 1, the Hoquiam citizens' committee called for the unquestioning loyalty of the business community:

> Today an opportunity to join the Citizens' Law and Order League of Hoquiam will be given to all business men in the city who are not now members. Many have joined. All should join. He who is not for law and order is against it.[61]

This "riot of middle class subservience to Big Capital"[62] extended beyond the Grays Harbor cities. On March 30, one hundred citizens' police in Raymond swept through the Finnish boarding houses and the Greek settlement there, rounding up fifty Finns and one hundred Greeks who had refused to report for work. All were deported—the Finns by boat and Greeks by rail —with transportation arranged and paid for by the Raymond citizens' committee.[63] In Bellingham, where the I.W.W. had by now joined forces with the I.S.W.U.A. in a long-standing shingle weavers' strike, workers were under attack as well. On the same day as the Raymond deportations occurred, the trustees of the Bellingham Chamber of Commerce called upon the mayor to swear in three hundred special officers to support "the cause of law and

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[60]AH, April 1, 1912, p. 4.

[61]DW, April 2, 1912, p. 1.

[62]SW, April 6, 1912, p. 1.

[63]DW, March 31, 1912, p. 1; AH, April 1912, pp. 1, 4.

order." Mayor Cleary was the co-owner of the Earles-Cleary Lumber Company, against whom the shingle weavers' strike was in effect.[64]

It is not surprising that such an intimidating display of force, death threats, deportations and arrests, compounded by press reports of a broken strike, should have succeeded in reopening the mills. It is remarkable, however, that the lumber concerns were unable for many more weeks to secure full or efficient crews. Despite the absence of pickets, workers were scarce for the Grays Harbor mills, and plant manager McGlauflin of the North Western Company estimated that "the laborers he had been engaging were only 60 per cent efficient."[65] The solidarity of the striking organizations and of most of the men was still holding strong.

The Hoquiam Trades and Labor Council met to discuss the April Fool's Day debacle on the following night. Mayor Ferguson addressed the crowd, and inveighed against mill men, businessmen, and the Commercial Club: "Now my brothers, the citizens' committee has had their fling at this strike matter, and I will leave it to you if they haven't made a failure of it?"[66] Claiming that his power had been usurped by the citizens' committee and their special police, the mayor vowed to regain control of the reins of government. When questioned by Ben Philbrick of the longshoremen as to the condition of two

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[64]SW, April 6, 1912, pp. 1, 4.

[65]AH, April 4, 1912, p. 1.

[66]DW, April 3, 1912, p. 1.

I.W.W. prisoners in the city jail, Ferguson roundly criticized Chief of Police Quinn for failing to give them tobacco and for refusing to send for their lawyers. I.S.W.U.A. President Brown spoke out in support of Ferguson as the only man in office anywhere that he knew who didn't want labor to crawl on its hands and knees. At the conclusion of all the speeches, the Trades Council appointed a committee to appear before the city commission and demand the disbanding of the special police force and the investigation of the city police. If the city refused, the Trades Council planned to launch a recall drive against Commissioners Ogden and Willis, the mayor's and labor's political nemeses.[67]

The citizens' committee met on the next day to call for the resignation of Mayor Ferguson, labor's "friend," who now felt compelled to recant his criticism of Chief Quinn from the night before. It should be remembered that the mayor had also behaved inconsistently at the outset of the strike on the issue of a special police force. P. J. Mourant read the following resolution, which was approved by acclamation:

> Whereas, For more than two weeks past the city of Hoquiam has been in constant turmoil and trouble arising from the efforts of certain leaders of the I.W.W. to close manufacturing concerns in our city; and Whereas a great number of American citizens were deprived of their constitutional rights and have been caused great inconvenience; and
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> Whereas, conditions were such that the law abiding citizens felt it incumbent upon themselves to investigate, and if necessary, organize themselves for the purpose of protection of our

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[67]Ibid.; AH, April 4, 1912, pp. 1, 8.

> city, its citizens, their personal liberty, their property and their property rights; and
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> Whereas, at one of the meetings of the citizens the mayor of the city of Hoquiam, Harry Ferguson, was present and addressed the citizens and stated that he had done all in his power to properly handle the situation, and further stated that serious trouble had barely been averted and that the situation was such that he was unable to preserve order and protect citizens in their personal rights and liberties; and
>
> Whereas, it is the belief of the loyal and law abiding citizens . . . that the city of Hoquiam should have a mayor able, competent and willing to manage and control the affairs of the city, in order that all classes of citizens be given proper protection, and that order be restored and the prosperity of our city continued;
>
> Resolved, . . . that we do request the present mayor of our city, Harry Ferguson, to forthwith tender his resignation as mayor to the commission of this city, to take effect immediately.[68]

Meanwhile, a small crack in the edifice of labor unity emerged in the form of a statement by the Aberdeen and Hoquiam Building Trades Council, disavowing any connection to the I.W.W., and affirming its members' commitment to law and order.[69] The carpenters and their allied trades had not, however, been parties to the big strike. On April 4 and 5, the citizens' executive committee and committees organized by the Central Trades Council and striking workers met frequently with the mill operators in order to achieve an agreement that would allow work to resume. The mill owners' "compromise" proposal appeared in the Daily Washingtonian on Saturday, April 6 emblazoned with the headline, "HOQUIAM IS TO BE A WHITE MAN'S TOWN." The proposal, authored jointly by the executive officers of the citizens'

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[68]DW, April 4, 1912, p. 1.

[69]DW, April 4, 1912, p. 1.

committee and of the big mills, provided for the exclusion of the I.W.W. and any of its members from the mills, non-discrimination against members of other unions, the creation of a Citizens' Labor Bureau with exclusive control over the recruitment and screening of workers for positions on Grays Harbor, and a minimum wage of $2.25 per day to white labor as of April 1, 1912.[70]

The day after this proclamation was made, about five hundred strikers met at Hoquiam's Finn Hall to hear former prisoners Titus, Anderson and Yager appeal for continued unity. Dr. Titus exclaimed: "I read the head lines in the afternoon paper. The mills are ready to start up. Yes, so they are. They've been ready for a week. But the working men are not ready!" He went on to vow that he would give his services to the I.W.W. if the shingle weavers lost their will to fight. "If any one weakens may he go down to the deepest, blackest hell that the devil can devise!"[71] To make the return to work less tempting, pickets would be barring the entrances of the Lytle, Eureka and North Western mills at six o'clock Monday morning, April 8. In fact, hundreds of strikers, with several women among them, heeded Titus's call—only to be dispersed by police with fire hoses.

Over the course of the following week, demonstrations continued in earnest, with hundreds of women, some with baby buggies, now joining their husbands, brothers, and fathers in attempts to discourage a return to work. If the

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[70]DW, April 6, 1912, p. 1.

[71]DW, April 7, 1912, p. 1.

workers had believed that the police would be less likely to apply force against female pickets, they were wrong.

> About 150 women, almost all the wives of "Red" Finns, gathered at the Slade mill Tuesday [April 9] were dispersed by the application of the water cure, via a fire hose. A number of them were accompanied by baby buggies.[72]

Women pickets played such a prominent role in the strike after the partial reopening of the mills as to cause great consternation among the forces of "law and order."

> The insults of this bunch of unsexed women is becoming unbearable, ... several were arrested Tuesday evening, and Mrs. Nemi was convicted of provoking an assault yesterday in Judge Tucker's court and fined $50 . . . .
>
> The police, realizing the impracticability of imprisoning the whole crowd of women at once, will select a few each day, giving preference to those known to be able to pay a fine and to such as have babies in tow.[73]

On April 10, Hoquiam City Clerk Harry Kress, a shingle weaver, secretary of the Trades Council, and a strike supporter, was removed from office by Commissioners Ogden and Willis over Mayor Ferguson's objections.[74] This first governmental purge would later be followed by the mayor's removal as well.[75] The proposed citizens' labor bureau was also established to recruit workers from outside the Grays Harbor area to man the lumber operations.

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[72]AH, April 11, 1912, p. 1.

[73]Ibid., p. 8

[74]DW, April 11, 1912, p. 1.

[75]See pp. 151.

By mid-April, the lumber barons of Grays Harbor had discovered the means to reopen their mills, but had not yet succeeded in restoring order and business-as-usual. A goodly proportion of the middle class had come to their rescue in a common struggle against "foreignism, revolutionism, and anarchism," but lawyers and insurance salesmen, although well-armed, could not make the mills run. The task remained to bring full crews to the saws and social peace to the streets. This would require isolating a large majority of workers from their union leaders and from a dispensible few of their fellows who could be blamed for the entire debacle on the harbor. The Greeks, and especially the I.W.W., were the most obvious and appealing scapegoats. So the mainstream press unleashed a barrage of propaganda in the hopes of achieving a split in labor's ranks. "I.W.W. HAS NO CONCERN WITH RIGHT AND WRONG . . . . the order is revolutionary in character and has for its chief purpose the overthrow of the government."[76]

> The aims and intentions of the I.W.W. revolutionists . . . present matter for serious thought by the workingmen who have been deluded into joining this organization in the belief that its purpose was the betterment of their condition . . . . It does not require a great intelligence for the workingman to see that the tactics advocated will quickly result in no work at any wage. . . . Aberdeen has prohibited the congregation of those treason preachers anywhere in the city, but Hoquiam not only tolerates street corner agitation of revolution . . . . but the mayor of that city appears to favor the trouble breeders . . . . Credit is due the two commissioners, Ogden and Willis, who refuse to be

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[76]DW, April 7, 1912, p. 1.

bulldozed by the Trades Council of that city—which organization seems to have become a sort of first aid to the revolutionists.[77]

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The I.W.W. agitators' . . . purpose is to OBSTRUCT and DESTROY . . . . Every hour these anarchists become more insolent and insulting, yet put a few in jail and they become martyrs. If they "rough house" the jail and are restrained, are they entitled to the sympathy of any one? If they can shut that mill down so that 800 to 1000 men who want to work will be forced to remain idle [,] who is entitled to police protection, the 800 working men, or the I.W.W. hordes? Have they the right to demand that the flag of the United States shall protect them when they do all that they can to tear down that flag?[78]

The flag of the United States became in fact a symbol of great importance in the opinion-makers' war of words.

Grand Army men of Grays Harbor who fought for and under the stars and stripes fifty years ago, are worked up considerably over the insults hurled at the flag by the bunch of nomadic revolutionists that are attempting to throttle industry on Grays Harbor . . . . [They are] asking congress to enact a law making it a felony to display the red flag of anarchy or to insult the stars and stripes.[79]

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Chief Examiner John Speed Smith, of the U.S. naturalization bureau . . . and the different judges before whom the applicants [for citizenship] come have decided that the recent outbreaks both on the part of the socialists and the Industrial Workers of the World demand a stringent test on the part of Uncle Sam before new voters are admitted in the future. "The courts and our bureau have agreed that any man who would countenance the supplanting of the star-spangled banner by the red or any

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[77]AH, April 8, 1912, p. 4.

[78]DW, April 9, 1912, p. 1.

[79]AH, April 11, 1912, p. 1.

> other flag should not be allowed to become a citizen," said Examiner Smith. "Further, it is possible that persons who are citizens and who make seditious utterances will lose their citizenship rights."[80]

Were the Grays Harbor Socialists intimidated by these judicial threats? Apparently not. The Hoquiam local organization of the Socialist Party proceeded to expel one of its members, O.C. Fenlason, and to deprive him of his position as a state committeeman. Mr. Fenlason's offense had been to demand the display of the American flag at a recent party convention in Seattle. The red flag would stand alone.[81]

Albert Johnson, editor of Hoquiam's Daily Washingtonian, was a prominent middle-class propagandist who saw an opportunity in the Fenlason issue to score points for the anti-strike position on the harbor. Said Mr. Johnson, in a page 1 article on April 18:

> Inasmuch as one of our Hoquiam socialist citizens, O. C. Fenlason, was kicked out of the state socialist convention and out of the party because he wanted to display the Stars and Stripes in that convention, it is quite proper that Hoquiam should show to all its people . . . that there is no place in the whole of the United States for socialism . . . . Honest labor will never get a show if socialism continues to stand the claims of revolution . . . . The American Federation of Labor has prevented much headway toward a general strike thus far, and if it can check the great revolutionary peril, it will deserve thanks and the gratitude of every man who owns a home or hopes to own a home, and every man who has a family or hopes to have a family . . . . With [the Church, the Farm, and the A.F.L.] standing as a bulwark, every I.W.W. leader who fans himself into a fury and calls unsophisticated working men out of jobs will not see his cherished

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[80]DW, April 6, 1912, p. 1.

[81]AH, April 8, 1912, p. 8.

> revolution in the United States . . . . There is no place in the whole United States for socialism, . . . anarchy, free love, atheism and the I.W.W.[82]

Despite the physical and then verbal assaults, splitting the unions proved more difficult than expected. Albert Johnson's view of the A.F.L. as a conservative bulwark, although justified by the actions of the union's national leadership and many of its constituent organizations, was a theory sorely tested at the local level by a number of prominent weavers who certainly sounded like revolutionary socialists. Harry Call of the Bellingham local commented scathingly on the course of the Grays Harbor strike:

> The strike at Hoquiam has so embittered the shingle weavers that they are more determined than ever to win. Recent reports in the daily papers tell of the clubbing of unoffending strikers, innocent women and children in the city of Hoquiam. It ill-becomes the American people to point the finger of scorn at the Czar of Russia . . . . In Russia there is no pretense of liberty; in America there is a haunting farce . . . . The wealthy non-producing class . . . have enslaved the large, but very poor, producing class . . . So before there can be any semblance of TRUE SOCIAL FREEDOM there must be complete INDUSTRIAL FREEDOM . . . . They say we are not loyal. Is there any good reason why the workingman who has no property, no chance to get any, should be loyal to a government that is founded on property rights? . . . . The struggle must go on until the working class shall rule.[83]

Could it be that the shingle weavers, who had at one time lived on the verge of "middle class" status, would now be receptive to such "proletarian" appeals? Could it be that Albert Johnson's ideal workers, who had homes

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[82]DW, April 18, 1912, p. 1.

[83]DW, April 13, 1912, p. 1.

and families or hoped to, could no longer hope to with any real likelihood of gratification? Certainly something fundamental had changed. After years of strikes and lockouts and layoffs, after years of non-recognition of a once-great union, after years of recessions for which workers were punished and of brief economic booms for which they were not commensurately rewarded, perhaps the average shingle weaver had, after all, become a mere "proletarian." The prospects of the fathers were definitely not those of the sons. And maybe this is why in mid-April 1912 the weavers were still identifying themselves with the Wobblies. On April 13, the official organ of the I.S.W.U.A. printed the following remarks:

> The Shingle Weavers, the Longshoremen and the Central Labor Council are all "identified" with the I.W.W. in this strike in spite of strenuous efforts by the capitalist press to split them up into rival factions. LABOR IS UNITED IN HOQUIAM. The only settlement which can be permanent is a settlement with organized labor, INCLUDING THE I.W.W. . . . . All branches of wage workers are standing together in this strike . . . . They all recognize that the next battle to be won is THE RECOGNITION OF THE UNIONS BY THE MILL OWNERS, not of one union by itself, but of all unions . . . . CONSOLIDATED LABOR IN HOQUIAM WILL WIN THIS SECOND BATTLE FOR DIRECT RECOGNITION AS IT HAS WON ITS FIRST BATTLE FOR ADVANCED WAGES, EVEN IF IT TAKES ALL SUMMER AND FALL.[84]

"ALL SUMMER AND FALL"—this was the problem. As in other strikes, time was on the employers' side, and economic pressures would drive more and more workers back to their jobs over the next few weeks. But it must be remembered, as the union pointed out, that the wage struggle was won. How

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[84]SW, April 13, 1912, pp. 1, 4.

much might men, and in some cases their families, be expected to sacrifice over the issue of union recognition? This "SECOND BATTLE" would have to be put off by the rank-and-file for some future day. The conflict on Grays Harbor, though, was not over yet.

Since the use of police force and the payment of a higher wage was succeeding in bringing at least partial crews into the mills, some in the I.W.W. apparently began to fear that the other issues of the strike might be lost. Despite the inter-organizational effort that had thus far taken place, the Wobblies made the mistake of upstaging the principal spokesman for labor unity, Dr. Titus, by sending the "ultra-left" Bruce Rogers and George Speed into Grays Harbor to try to keep a head of steam on the conflict. These two men denounced not only the flag, government, church and schools, but quite unnecessarily, the trade unions. They declared that the I.W.W. would "soon make the unionized crafts crawl on their bellies and beg for food."[85] One need not belabor the folly of such remarks in a situation such as this one, where a major trade union, and in fact an entire A.F.L. trades council, had stuck tenaciously with the I.W.W. through thick and thin. It is remarkable that Rogers's and Speed's incendiary orations were not more disruptive than they were, but the I.S.W.U.A. kept up the fight, and the audiences drawn by the "ultras" were rather small. Actually, local I.W.W. leaders, including Chairman George Holmes, Secretary Fred Isler, and Aberdeen organizer Joseph Biscay,

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[85]AH, April 11, 1912, p. 1; DW, April 11, 1912, p. 1.

spent several days distancing themselves ideologically from Rogers and Speed, and even apologizing for their remarks.[86]

It appears that the Grays Harbor Wobblies were as far from the ultra-leftists in their national organization as the Grays Harbor shingle weavers were from the conservatives in the national A.F.L. It was their convergence on the "middle ground" of industrial unionism, socialism, and practical struggle that allowed for the durability of their marriage there. This convergence, which was not anticipated by labor organizations on the eve of the Grays Harbor "class war," rested on the willing cooperation of ordinary workers of all sorts. Hence the urgency of the counterattack. Employers needed to pry apart skilled workers from the unskilled, A.F.L. loyalists from Wobblies, Wobblies from Socialist Party members, Americans from foreigners, and so on, and they encountered great difficulty doing so given the amount of coercion applied.

The instruments of government, however, generally favored the mill owners and their middle class supporters. In Aberdeen, Mayor Parks and Chief of Police Templeman forcibly closed the Finn Hall to prevent strike meetings at which I.W.W. speakers were heard. The Finnish Socialist club then sought a restraining order against the Aberdeen authorities. On April 24, Judge Irwin in the superior court at Montesano refused to grant such an order on the grounds that "the courts are always cautious about interfering with police power . . . . the doctrine as taught by that society known as the

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[86]DW, April 14, 1912, p. 1.

Industrial Workers of the World can't be too strongly condemned."[87] The judge did, however, offer the Socialists a temporary reopening of the hall on the condition that I.W.W. speakers be barred from it.

At a special meeting that night, the Finnish Socialists accepted the judge's conditions in a letter to the Aberdeen police chief signed by Charles Kauppi and John Likkanen, president and secretary of the club. Kauppi, Likkanen and their supporters could not risk their own organizational demise on behalf of the I.W.W. This says little, however, about their attitudes toward the strike or toward the unity of the rank-and-file. Finnish strikers and Wobblies would simply find other accommodations for their meetings in the days to come. The day after the court ruling, though, the Aberdeen Herald, never friendly toward socialism, sought to take advantage of the situation by distinguishing at great lengths between this former movement and the I.W.W.

> The syndicalist has no clear idea of what he hopes to accomplish. Syndicalism and Socialism are deadly enemies . . . . Between Syndicalism and Socialism there can be no final agreement. To teach workers that their only line of advance is by the strike is bad teaching—the ballot box can do more than the bullet.[88]

In the meantime, on April 17, the law-and-order forces filed a recall petition against Hoquiam's Mayor Ferguson in anticipation of placing the businessmen firmly in control of the city. It was precisely at the ballot box that the

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[87]DW, April 15, 1912, p. 1; AH, April 25, 1912, p. 1.

[88]AH, April 25, 1912, p. 2.

middle class was strong, and disproportionately so in relation to its numbers.[89] A primary date for the selection of Ferguson's opponent was set at May 20, with the recall election slated for June 3. The I.S.W.U.A., headed by International President J. G. Brown, a ballot-box socialist, threw itself vigorously into the campaign on Ferguson's behalf and confidently predicted a political victory for labor. One week later, Washington Post No. 52, Grand Army of the Republic, a veterans' organization committed to the Ferguson recall, resolved:

> . . . that we now organize a Loyal Legion of Loyalists, praying that every lover of the flag and his country will unite with us in frowning down every sign of treason or disloyalty to our country and the flag, and we earnestly request that every loyal man, woman and child wear in some conspicuous place upon their person a miniature flag of our country.[90]

As in the case of the strike itself, Americanism and the flag were to be used to fabricate straw men for the political campaign ahead. "Law and order" men tarred Ferguson and his supporters with the brush of syndicalism and treason.

Amid the flurry of political activity, the I.W.W. called off their strike on April 27.[91] With the mill operators acceding to their workers' wage demands, most of the unskilled laborers had returned to work by the end of the month. It now seemed unfeasible to pursue any further the goal of union recognition. The weavers and the longshoremen, however, remained away from their jobs,

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[89]See Chapter 2, pp. 65-8.

[90]DW, April 25, 1912, p. 1.

[91]DW, May 3, 1912, p. 4.

and the I.S.W.U.A. chose to link the strike and the election just as did Hoquiam's middle class. The weavers' union described Ferguson as:

> . . . a child in politics, but plainly sincere and also in sympathy with the working class, . . . [and went on to state that] this political contest will be a continuation and "reflex" of the industrial contest which has been waged the last two months by all organized Labor and for the last two years by the Shingle Weavers Union.[92]

The mayor further endeared himself to the labor leaders in a proclamation on free speech during the fourth week of April. City Attorney Callahan had prevented a strike meeting at the Hoquiam Theater on Saturday night, April 20, despite the fact that the building had already been rented for that purpose. Callahan threatened to close the Finn Hall as well if Dr. Titus persisted in his attempt to speak, and convinced the theater owner to cancel his contract with the strike committee. Titus and President Brown of the I.S.W.U.A. spoke nonetheless to a crowd of one thousand outside the theater that night, and marched on the Scandinavian Hall, which opened its doors for the event. The mayor responded to the theater episode by stating that:

> Commissioners Ogden and Willis have peremptorily and without authority ordered the chief of police . . . to close the Hoquiam theater . . . to prevent Dr. H. F. Titus, a citizen of Hoquiam, from delivering a lecture and . . . . I therefore do emphatically protest against such actions and denounce it as unwarranted, unlawful, disloyal to the flag and subversive of the peace and safety of the city of Hoquiam and to the principles of true democracy, also that it is an infringement of property rights

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[92]SW, April 20, 1912, p. 1.

> and an annulment of the sacred inalienable constitutional right of lawful free speech and peaceful public assemblage.[93]

As noble as the mayor's pronouncement was, it was unclear whether it would be sufficient to return him to his post on June 3. Though his character was assailed by middle class "Upholders of Good Government," who described the preacher-mayor as a friend of the "I.W.W. anarchists ,"[94] Mayor Ferguson was very much a man of the political center. He was perhaps too even-handed, and occasionally too inconsistent to satisfy either faction in a city that had become drastically polarized by the ferocity of its class antagonisms. Prior to the recall campaign, the mayor's refusal to resign at the request of the citizens' committee was a case in point—fair, but unlikely to please a radicalized populace:

> May I respectfully draw your attention to the fact that I could not prevent the strike in Hoquiam, and that certain citizens in Hoquiam could have done so by saying two months ago that they would, if possible, raise wages a little, April or May first. . . . I claim that I am broad enough to look upon the humanitarian side as well as the money side of the question, in proof of which statement, that while I honestly sought by moral suasion to bring the strikers to an early settlement of the strike, I at the same time acted as a policeman in front of the mill, the most rigorously opposed, staying there alone an hour or two, . . . I [was] ready to strike, if necessary, as an officer of the city for the preservation of the property of the mill company and in defense of other laborers differing with the strikers about work . . . . I was told by the chief of police that he could not hire policemen to increase the regular force from among the citizens of Hoquiam (as I believe because they were too much in sympathy with the striking workmen to serve), and being opposed as I am, to hiring

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[93]DW, April. 27, 1912, p. 1.

[94]DW, June 2, 1912, pp. 1, 8.

> armed men from outside cities to serve as policemen in our city, I told you that I could not promise with the small police force at my command to keep the street open to the mills . . . . I told you that eight or ten special policemen at the mill, and on the street, could keep the way open . . . . I believe that the course you followed has been . . . prejudicial to the city's fair name, and that it will for years, I fear, prevent that feeling of fellowship that should exist between citizens, and especially between employers and employees . . . . I have labored incessantly in a gentle, manly, Christian way to sustain the city's good name and credit, and give every man a right before the law.[95]

It was in a sense understandable that Reverend Ferguson wished for a feeling of fellowship to prevail in his city, and his words should therefore not be taken as mere politicking. But he was right in remarking that sentiments of good will were now likely to be in short supply. The political polarization which would soon be his undoing extended even to the rural reaches of Chehalis County, as evidenced by this astounding resolution:

> We, the members of Elma Grange No. 26, of Elma, Washington, condemn the action of the parasite mill owners and exploiters of labor and their vassals, the police force, in their barbaric and anarchistic treatment of our comrades, the working class of Grays Harbor . . . We extend our sympathies and fraternal greetings to the striking comrades of Grays Harbor.[96]

To which the Elma Commercial Club responded:

> We strongly deplore the action of the Grange . . . . we condemn absolutely the . . . aims of the I.W.W. . . . . Our sympathies in the recent strike are for our fellow citizens in Aberdeen and Hoquiam . . . . we commend them in the action and stand they have taken in settling the strike.[97]

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[95]DW, April 6, 1912, pp. 1, 2.

[96]SW, May 4, 1912, p. 2; Elma Chronicle, April 27, 1912, p. 1.

[97]DW, May 1, 1912, p. 1.

Even the I.S.W.U.A., which supported Ferguson's reelection, was far more scathing in its rhetoric than the good mayor ever would have allowed himself to be. The union lashed out at the mayor's "Good Government" enemies, or "Goo-Goos" as they preferred to call them, describing the middle class movement as "Good Government for Big Capital in the oppression of Labor."

> On the heads of the people of this country who shout for "Good Government" rests the responsibility for the lives of the eight young girls who were blown to pieces in the Chehalis powder mill explosion last winter. They are responsible for the murder of the 146 shirtwaist workers that were killed in the Triangle fire in New York. They must bear the blame for the hundreds of miners killed every year in explosions and other "accidents" because human life is cheaper than safeguards. They should answer for the condition which is slowly murdering two million child workers in the factories of the East and South. To their account must be charged the 600,000 or more women who have been compelled to live a life worse than death, because the department stores and other establishments refused to pay living wages. More people are killed and maimed in the industries of this country every year than were in the entire casualty list of the civil war, in order to satisfy the spirit of greed of the "Goo-Goos" of the United States.[98]

Union activists would clearly not be casting their votes for the citizens' committee candidates, and in the inflamed atmosphere that prevailed on the harbor, it was extremely doubtful that any significant number of workingmen and women would. But would that necessarily mean a vote for the moderate Ferguson? The I.S.W.U.A. hoped so, but its own verbal fury hinted that

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[98]SW, May 4,1912, p. 1.

matters had gone too far for many workers to see the mild-mannered reverend as one of their own.

On the night of May 1, International Workers' Day, the political campaign was overshadowed by an event that demonstrated that the street war had not been totally subsumed by the electoral contest. Four armed men in an automobile kidnapped I.W.W. Secretary Thorne and organizer Biscay. Amid cries of, "Help! Murder! Call the police!," the two were sped out of Hoquiam. By Thorne's telling, here is what transpired:

> About 10:30 last night in my rooms at the Queen Hotel in Hoquiam a knock came at the door. When it was opened four men appeared, two of whom I recognized as among the imported thugs who had been employed by the police force in Aberdeen. Upon demanding to know their business one of the thugs stated that I and Biscay were under arrest. I asked if they had a warrant. When told they had no warrant I refused to go with them. I was then seized and dragged down the stairs, head foremost, and started, as I supposed, to the police station. But when we came to the city hall I was suddenly forced to a side street where an automobile was waiting. I have been taken out of Aberdeen several times, and seeing the automobile I felt sure I was to be deported from Hoquiam. In an effort to get help against what I feared was an attempt on my life, I shouted as loudly as I could to attract attention. In response to my outcries Sergeant Hardwick of the Hoquiam police force came to the police station entrance in his shirt sleeves and laughed. Though I resisted as strongly as possible I was thrown into the automobile and driven rapidly to nearby Aberdeen Junction. When the automobile stopped I was blindfolded and yanked to the ground. In this condition I was ordered to hold up one of my hands and one of the specials struck me viciously in the ribs with his fist. After giving me a terrible beating, we were both told in unprintable language never to return on penalty of death.

The Daily Washingtonian, which had repeatedly criticized the strike, the I.W.W., and the mayor, engaged in deliberate distortion in its description of the

event. The paper acknowledged that Thorne's cries for help could be heard for six to eight blocks, and that he was dragged three blocks through the central business district of Hoquiam. The route chosen by his abductors took them all directly past the police station, a fact never mentioned in the press reports, and yet no police arrived on the scene until it was too late. Rather than address this issue, Albert Johnson's editorial of May 3 insinuated that the Wobblies had concocted their own abduction: "Many persons were heard to express the opinion that the whole affair was a careful planned I.W.W. move, to create sympathy . . . . The whole thing had the earmarks of a built-up plot."[99] On the other hand, in the event that the abduction had been actual and not fabricated, Johnson assured his readers that no one in Hoquiam could have been responsible for it.[100]

Organized labor's response to the kidnapping was swift. The Shingle Weaver attacked the establishment press for its bias, and dubbed Mr. Johnson an "ignorant, uncultured, vain glorious ass."[101] The Hoquiam Central Trades and Labor Council convened at the calling of Z.E. Archer, president of the local weavers' union, and condemned the city authorities for their inaction:

> Whereas, On the night of May 1st, outside imported thugs, until recently, and probably at present employed in Aberdeen as special policemen, forcibly removed from their rooms at the Queen lodging house W.A. Thorne and Joseph Biscay, residents

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[99]Ibid.

[100]DW, May 3, 1912, p. 4.

[101]SW, May 4, 1912, p. 1.

> of Hoquiam, took them out of the city in an automobile, beat them and brutally handled them, left them on the road between Aberdeen and Montesano stripped of their clothing; and
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> Whereas, Thorne and Biscay have reported from Seattle that armed thugs, probably Thiel detectives, are watching every station along the road to prevent their return to Grays Harbor; and
>
> Whereas, The city authorities, with the one splendid exception of our mayor, Harry Ferguson, have displayed no such vigilance as was shown during weeks past in the aid of the mill owners, in their effort to oppose the working men of this city;
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> Therefore be it
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> Resolved, By the Hoquiam Trades and Labor Council and working men and women in meeting assembled, that we denounce and condemn in the strongest terms, this highhanded outrage, and also severely criticize the lack of vigilance shown by the regularly constituted authorities.[102]

And so did the A.F.L. Council defend the much-maligned I.W.W. men. When the meeting adjourned, a dozen workingmen formed a street patrol to secure the safety of downtown Hoquiam. Mayor Ferguson, Ben Philbrick of the I.L.A., ex-City Clerk Harry Kress, and Z. E. Archer of the I.S.W.U.A. were all in that number. Archer also chaired an overflowing mass meeting at the Scandinavian Hall on Friday May 3 to publicize the disturbing events of the week.

On May 14, Chehalis County Sheriff Payette made his first arrest in the case. S. D. Llewellyn, chief of the Llewellyn Detective Bureau of Aberdeen, was charged with deathly injury, assault and burglary and released on a $1,500 bond. The personal backgrounds of his bondsmen suggest a conspiracy at work. One was William Mack, manager of the Slade mill, a bitter enemy of organized labor, and architect of "Fort Mack," a heavily armed and flag-

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[102]DW, May 3, 1912, p. 1.

bedecked garrison which served as a shelter for scabs in the most recent strike. Aberdeen City Councilman Newell was another. Newell was an insurance salesman who had been very active in the middle-class anti-free speech campaign in the fall of 1911 and who served as chairman of the "special police" committee during the strike. Dan Bowes, a real estate man, was the third. A "special officer" of the citizen's police, he engineered several deportations from Aberdeen. Llewellyn himself was a former Aberdeen police officer, a friend and associate of Police Chief Templeman, and both men had previous or current connections to the Thiel agency, a notorious organization of experienced strike-breakers.[103] On June 7, Deputy Sheriff Fitzgerald arrested W. H. Wiedemann in connection with the abduction as well. He was charged with burglary and assault and held on $5,000 bond. For whatever reason—perhaps because he was merely a bartender—no one came through with the security for his release.[104]

From the time of Llewellyn's arrest, the established press of Grays Harbor fell silent about the whole affair, preferring to give front-page coverage to the upcoming election, to the perfidy of socialists and Wobblies, and to the noble efforts of flag-loving patriots in stemming the tide of revolutionism. Even in the immediate aftermath of the abduction itself, middle class opinion-makers

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[103]SW, May 18, 1912, p. 1.

[104]SW, June 8, 1912, p. 1.

fanned the flames of "counter-revolution." From the Daily Washingtonian of May 3 we have the following:

> Federal Judge C.H. Hanford took under advisement Wednesday an action to withdraw citizenship from Leonard Oleson, a member of the Industrial Workers of the World and the Socialist-Labor party . . . . The government sought to show that he had voiced and admitted seditious beliefs, that these were held by him at the time he was naturalized, and therefore his citizenship was obtained by fraud. It is said the case will set a precedent.[105]

On May 6, the Aberdeen Herald reported that:

> Two I.W.W. agitators who have been trying to make trouble in the camps near Shelton are now in jail here . . . . The businessmen gathered downtown . . . . and hustled them to jail, where they were booked on general principles. Tomorrow a big American flag will be stretched across the main street as a warning to I.W.W. men to keep out of Shelton.[106]

On May 7 it was reported that the Aberdeen Socialists had called off their May Day parade as a result of violent threats by veterans of the Spanish-American war. One prominent Socialist had a red flag pin torn off the lapel of his coat.[107] On May 8 the Grays Harbor Commercial Club met jointly with the Grand Army of the Republic and the Spanish War Veterans to discuss the formation of a Loyal Legion of Loyalists, which would promote patriotism and love of the flag. Sixty-seven year old Zachary Smith received a gold-headed cane to replace the walking stick he broke over the head of one Mr. Johansen,

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[105]DW, May 3, 1912, p. 4.

[106]AH, May 6, 1912, p. 1.

[107]DW, May 7, 1912, p. 1.

who had "spoken against the flag"[108] on May Day. On May 10, Judge Hanford ordered the cancellation of Leonard Oleson's citizenship on the grounds that "those who believe in and propagate crude theories hostile to the constitution are barred."[109] On the same day, Spanish War veterans erased the red flag painted on the windows of the Aberdeen Socialist Party headquarters and replaced it with the Stars and Stripes.

On May 11 some new fissures in Grays Harbor's labor alliance appeared as the Pacific district of the International Longshoremen's Association voted to bar I.W.W.s from membership in the I.L.A. In the Harbor strike, the Aberdeen local withdrew its connection with the I.W.W., but the Hoquiam local retained its Wobbly affiliation.[110] By May 19, the Grays Harbor Stevedore Company still refused in any event to operate on any other basis than the open shop, and to grant recognition to any union or to hire any union men.[111] This was on the eve of the primary in the Ferguson recall campaign, which was to dominate the news for the next week or so.

Despite the intensity of the onslaught against organized labor, and especially against its more radical proponents, President Brown of the Shingle

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[108]DW, May 8, 1912, p. 1; and May 9, 1912, p. 1.

[109]DW, May 11, 1912, p. 1.

[110]DW, May 12, 1912, p. 1.

[111]DW, May 19, 1912, p. 1.

Weavers continued steadfastly to defend the A.F.L.-I.W.W. alliance on the Harbor.

> When the Industrial Workers of the World enrolled a vast majority of the strikers under its banner it was but the dictates of wisdom that all the organizations fighting the lumber combine should join forces. This was done with the sanction and approval of the different leaders, and with the endorsement of the Hoquiam Trades and Labor Council . . . . That all the organizations would have won a speedy victory is certain had not the henchmen of the lumbermen organized their shotgun brigades and arrested, deported and kidnapped the men who were conducting the strike for the mill workers.[112]

And despite the fact that the middle class and their institutions were all arrayed against Mayor Ferguson, Brown also showed a good deal of optimism over the results of the coming election.

> While the ranks of the businessmen and mill owners are to a great extent divided in their mad desire for office, the workers are well organized and perfectly united on their programme. It is one of the early probabilities that the official complexion of the city of Hoquiam will undergo a most healthy change.[113]

Chris Knoell, a retired butcher, won the primary election, and received pledges of support from the other eight candidates who had hoped to fill Ferguson's seat. Knoell had no experience whatever in politics or public life, but committed himself to a platform framed by the citizens' committee. Its most notable elements were a ringing condemnation of the current mayor and

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[112]SW, May 11, 1912, p. 1.

[113]Ibid., p. 4.

"his intimate association with dangerous and seditious characters, who are and have been his chief advisors," and a pledge "to stamp out by every means . . . riot and sedition in whatever guise or form."[114] With Knoell's election as the businessmen's candidate, labor forces zealously began their pro-Ferguson campaign. The Shingle Weavers' Union wielded a great deal of influence in this and helped to set up a Trades Council committee for fund-raising and propaganda. Union workers published a pro-Ferguson daily called Labor's Political Pilot and conducted a systematic house-to-house canvass to get out the vote. The Shingle Weaver, echoing President Brown's earlier optimism, stated that:

> There is absolutely no doubt of the outcome. Labor is bent on giving Mayor Ferguson a return to office with a majority of at least 500 votes . . . . Labor's platform is: 'Ferguson and Prosperity vs. Knoell and $1.80 a day.'"[115]

This sentiment was repeated in the paper's last pre-election issue: "As election day draws near the toilers of Hoquiam are becoming more and more enthusiastic. And on Monday night when the ballots are counted they feel they will be well repaid for the energy expended in the fight."[116]

Monday June 3 came and went. The final vote count was Knoell, 1363, Ferguson, 870—it was a Knoell victory by almost five hundred votes.[117]

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[114]DW, May 26, 1912, p. 1.

[115]SW, May 25, 1912, p. 1.

[116]SW, June 1, 1912, p. 1.

[117]DW, June 4, 1912, p. 1.

Labor's political campaign had gone down to defeat. Why, in a city that was seventy-five percent wage earners, did this happen? How could working people have elected the candidate of their implacable foes, especially in light of the middle-class vigilantism of only weeks before? Or did they elect this man? Who voted?

"Who voted?," or "who might be expected to vote?," or in fact, "who could vote?," were not, interestingly enough, questions that the A.F.L. Trades Council or the I.S.W.U.A. bothered to ask themselves on the eve of the election. The I.S.W.U.A.'s commitment to a political resolution of labor's problems was based on certain assumptions regarding the working class that proved to be inaccurate. The Shingle Weavers' Union never fully broke free of its "Americanism" despite its radicalization by 1912. It had been taken by surprise by the "Greek strike" and had honorably given support to their cause. But because the I.S.W.U.A. remained a union of native-born workers, many of the new immigrants in the timber labor force may have been, like the Greeks, almost invisible to them. I do not mean here to suggest a physical invisibility, since the sheer numbers of immigrants after 1905 made this impossible, but perhaps a tactical or social invisibility. The I.S.W.U.A. clearly did not fully fathom the implications of a labor force in Hoquiam which by 1912 was almost seventy percent immigrants and their children. Nor was the union's ideology able to respond fluidly to this monumental change. For example, the acceptance accorded to the Greeks after their "surprise" struggle was launched did

not prevent the weavers' union from exploiting the national issue altogether. On May 8 the union's official organ commented:

> The American flag is being used just now for all it is worth. . . . the national emblem was used to hide the perfidy of the mill-men. For though it was announced that only American men with families would be given employment, many of the mills began hiring Hindus and Italians, while flags and signs reading "I.W.W. Keep Out" acted as a warning to any one wanting living wages.[118]

That the weavers' union, which had converted to socialism, and was seemingly even learning industrial unionism, still spoke largely to Americans in 1912 is significant. It explains the organization's optimistic view of electoral politics. Yet the power of the working class in the political arena was quite limited, as the election results demonstrated. Since the union believed in political process and knew that they and their fellows were the majority class, Ferguson's defeat was blamed on propaganda, strong-arming and subterfuge. Labor officials said that the churches had defamed Ferguson, the pimps had financed Knoell, and that the lumber barons had threatened to fire workers who opposed their candidate.[119]

While all of this may very well have been true, some important and less sinister factors were overlooked. There were at least 6,000 voting-age persons in Hoquiam. At least one-third of these were unnaturalized immigrants who certainly had a stake in the political contest, but whose ability to exercise

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[118]SW, May 11, 1912, p. 1.

[119]SW, June 8, 1912, p. 1.

political power was nil. This left 4,000 or so potential voters. Only 2,600 of these registered. Was this by reason of disinterest, despair, or simple lack of durable residency? We do not know. But we do know that this reduced substantially the pool of actual voters, and that almost all of the nonregistrants were workers. Voter registration levels in the two distinctly middle class wards was so high as to include virtually every adult man and woman. Although registered workers turned out to vote with almost the same regularity as their middle class counterparts, they were at best half as likely to register in the first place. In fact, more native-born and naturalized workers did not vote in this municipal contest than did. With an eighty percent turnout on election day and sixty percent of the vote going to Knoell, one should point out that at least 4,500 voting-age adults could not, or did not, cast their votes for Knoell, as opposed to 1,363 who did. Knoell did, however, carry every ward. In the predominantly middle-class districts, he did so by landslides in excess of two to one.

It is important, though, that a minority of middle-class voters still did not accept the Commercial Club's portrayal of Ferguson as either an incompetent or a dangerous radical. In the predominantly working-class wards, Knoell won simple majorities. This reveals a split vote among eligible and participating workers. One in seven adult members of Hoquiam's working class voted for Knoell, and they may have done so out of distaste for the I.W.W. or out of fear of losing their jobs should businessmen find Hoquiam's political climate impropitious. But most workers could not or did not take part in the election. The

core of Knoell's constituency was middle class, and he carried more than two in three middle class adults. Ferguson, on the other hand, received at best luke-warm support from the workers he needed in order to win.

WARD ANALYSIS
Election for Mayor of Hoquiam, 1912[120]

Ward	Ward Characteristics	1910 Popul.	1912 Regis.	% Regis.	Vote				% of Regis. Who Voted
					Knoell	%	Ferguson	%	
1	Mostly Workers	1143	317	27.7	143	57.9	104	42.1	77.9
2	Mixed Class; Many Foreign	1875	483	25.7	276	68.5	127	31.5	83.4
3	Mostly Middle Class	1061	451	42.5	271	68.6	124	31.4	87.6
4	Mostly Middle Class	1174	511	43.5	291	60.4	191	39.6	94.3
5	Mostly Workers	1384	440	31.7	173	52.6	156	47.4	74.8
6	Mostly Workers	1534	423	27.5	209	55.4	168	44.6	89.1

Ferguson chose not to campaign on class lines, and it would not have been consistent with his character to do so. Had he done so, and had he been successful in mobilizing a larger working class constituency as a result, many of his supporters would nonetheless have been barred from the polls by virtue of foreign birth or lack of permanent residency. In all likelihood, he would also have lost what little middle class support he had. One may see, in light of

[120]Election data are drawn from DW, May 19, 1912, p. 1, and June 4, 1912, p. 1. Population statistics are drawn from the closest census to the election, 13th Census, U.S. 1910, vol. III, pp. 969-1009. Since all indications in this analysis are of an increase in both population and immigration between 1910 and 1912, the point made in this chapter would be strengthened by 1912 demographic information.

this, the potential appeal of the Wobblies' direct-actionist philosophy. For workers, politics rarely produced class-cohesive results.

To what life, then, did the people of Hoquiam return in the aftermath of the elections? The conduct of business returned essentially to normal for the lumber mills and their laborers. The shingle weavers remained locked out and on strike. No mills of any sort agreed to recognize unions of any sort. The citizens' committee had their preferred mayor and their favored city commission. The I.W.W., which had planned to locate its regional headquarters in Hoquiam, walked away from Grays Harbor in disappointment and chose Centralia as its northwestern hub.[121] The lumber barons felt themselves to be masters of their mills, having beaten back the threat of union prerogatives. The middle class felt themselves to be masters of their city, having forcibly driven off the "revolutionary hordes." The American flag was everywhere in evidence, and the "traitors' mayor" had gone down to an ignominious defeat.

But something else had happened as well. Wages were higher for all categories of labor. The unskilled majority had won their economic struggle. This was no small feat, considering the seeds of division their enemies wished to sow among them. Americans, Swedes, Norwegians, Slavs and Finns had lived together in Hoquiam, and still did. They had labored together, and still did. They had for the first time fought together, and won at least a partial victory. Their middle-class antagonists had perhaps hoped to "Americanize"

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[121]DW, June 7, 1912, p. 1.

Hoquiam, but this was more easily accomplished in rhetoric than in fact. The vigilantes did not deport or even seek to deport all of the foreigners in town. How could they have? How would business have functioned? No, the immigrants were now a fact of daily life. The mills needed them, as did the grocers, doctors and publicans. By 1912 they had become indispensable to the city's very existence. The Greeks, of course, suffered, but they were the sacrificial lambs of the whole affair. A hundred of them were driven from, or chose to leave, a city of over eight thousand persons. In the entire state, southern Europeans made up no more than seven percent of the labor force in timber.[122] Consequently the Greeks' departure cost no one but themselves. And luckily for them, there were at least other mills and other towns that would accept them if the need for labor arose. The middle class glorified the Stars and Stripes at the poor souls' expense, but neither the mills nor the other workers suffered economically for it. And despite the tragic sacrifice of the Greeks, which in any case their fellow workers could have done little to prevent, the solidarity of the workers had held.

National differences did not fuel an ethnic free-for-all competition in the return to work. All was as it had been, but better. Of course the I.W.W. had been driven off, but what was meant by this was the leaders—men like Thorne and Biscay, who came, organized and went. As we have learned, the citizens' committees put great emphasis on leaders, "rabble-rousers, anarchist

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[122]Washington State Bureau of Labor, 9th Biennial Report, 1913-14, (Olympia, 1914), p. 50.

subversives"—pollutants that could be extirpated from the mass and cast out in the hopes of sanitizing the body politic. What was more difficult to discern were the currents of change that made men like Thorne and Biscay even momentarily popular. These currents had not been diverted—the timber workers of Grays Harbor overcame their differences, acted as a body, and would not forget it. The common laborers had even found willing allies among the skilled elite of their class—the shingle weavers.

Significantly, the weavers and the lumber hands were brought together by more than just a common enemy. By 1912 shingle weavers were becoming a smaller and smaller minority of timber workers. Skilled jobs were shrinking in proportion to the total number of jobs in the industry and new technologies reshaped the shop floor. As more dangerous "upright" machines replaced the old "ten-blocks," more and more shingle sawyers were disabled or maimed, and entire categories of labor were eroded. The old ten-block machines were operated by a sawyer, four packers, and five knot sawyers;[123] the new uprights by a sole sawyer. Consequently, the men were separated from one another, teamwork diminished, the union weakened, and jobs that might have been filled by the sawyers' sons faded from view. Where did these sons go? If they remained in the communities of their parents, they went into the sawmills and labored alongside the Finns and the Greeks for

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[123]SW. March 2, 1912, p. 1.

wages that would never allow them to achieve even the modest stature of their parents.[124] And so, slowly, a new alliance was built.

One should not then, in retrospect, be quite as surprised at the conflagration of 1912 as were some of its participants. Skilled workers had fought and were continuing to fight a struggle for greater control of their work places. They wanted their union recognized so that it in turn would be able to establish fair rates of remuneration for their labors. They wished as well to control the application of technologies that threatened either their jobs or their solidarity. They were not very successful thus far at achieving these goals, but they were not giving up. These skilled workers were not entirely isolated from the unskilled—many of their children labored among the latter. And more importantly, given the industrial consolidation of the past few years, the skilled workers increasingly needed the help of the less skilled to beat their bosses. Nor could American craftsmen be isolated from the foreign-born. They may not have sought them out, but immigrants were too numerous and mill town geography too restricted for any group to keep entirely to itself.

As for the immigrants, what had they to lose? $1.80 per day was a miserable wage, whatever their ambitions. They stood together because there was nothing to be gained by not doing so. Of course, the Finns had their Finn Halls, their cultural associations, "their" Socialist Party, the Scandinavians their respective national clubs, the Slavs their drustvos, the Greeks their

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[124]See Chapter 2, pp. 68-70.

rooming houses and pool halls, and of course these various ethnic loyalties must have come into play during the strike.[125] Each of the nationalities held together in struggle, as one might have expected, given the strength of family and village bonds. But more important was the fact that all held together, and that by and large, the "Americans" stood with them. Grays Harbor was undoubtedly not the birthplace of an enduring love between all of God's children, but it was the site of an important practical fighting alliance the likes of which had not often been seen in the past. For a moment the working class became something bigger than it had been, something that surpassed other loyalties, although it of course never eliminated them. In this new and relatively complicated world of capitalists and wage-earners, Americans and foreigners, trade unionists and industrial unionists, Republicans and Socialists, I.W.W.ists and A.F.L.ers, shingle weavers and millhands, homeowners and nomads, Finns and Swedes and Slovenes and Greeks, a bunch of ordinary people imposed at least a tentative order on their lives. In so doing they won the comforts that could be purchased with a higher wage, and they gave themselves the gift of community. How durable would these gains be? Would a permanent edifice of "class" be built upon them? They themselves did not know, and most of them probably did not care. Things were better now.

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[125]See Chapter 2.

CHAPTER FIVE

FROM CLASS WAR TO WORLD WAR: THE HEYDAY OF THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD

In contrast to Hoquiam, Everett in 1912 was at least momentarily a model of social harmony. While the people of Grays Harbor launched themselves into a furious class war, the middle-class citizens of Everett chose to merge the Businessmen's Association and Chamber of Commerce of their city into the new and far more broadly based Everett Commercial Club. Although businessmen figured heavily in its membership, the Commercial Club was a cross-class association that included numerous trade unionists and their representatives and which, it was hoped, would serve as an agent of social peace and economic growth. The predicted opening of the Panama Canal did much to fuel Everett's hopes that a lucrative European market for American timber would soon fill and exceed the gap left by waning demand from San Francisco.

The Weyerhaeuser Company sustained the community's dreams as it prepared to build Mill B, an all-electric sawmill with the astounding capacity of 400,000 feet of lumber in eight hours. The West Coast Lumber Manufacturers Association successfully brought an end to the price wars and cutthroat competition of 1911, helped steer favorable tariff legislation through Congress, and garnered enough political support for a cost-saving industrial insurance

law. The lumber barons even managed to turn the conservation movement—which by limiting logging created higher prices, to the advantage of the larger companies.[1] Prosperity, it seemed, was right around the corner. This propitious economic climate encouraged Everett's capitalists and the shingle weavers to enter into general trade agreements for the very first time. Clough-Hartley led the way for the timber manufacturers, swearing to respect a fixed schedule of wages and hours until 1914. Ernest Marsh of the local union and International President J. G. Brown signed for the weavers, offering a no-strike pledge for the duration of the agreement. No one chose to raise the more controversial issues of union recognition and the closed shop.[2] Perhaps Ernest Marsh's dream of peaceful progress for the working man would come true after all.

Sadly, 1913 was a year of depression. All around the country, sullen unemployed men and women stood on bread lines or rode the rails in search of work. What to many "respectable" citizens must have seemed like a human effluent drained into Everett from logging camps where donkey-engines now stood silent. The fallers and buckers of the woods brought with them the revolutionary rhetoric of the Industrial Workers of the World, and much of it would fall on receptive ears. The depression shattered expectations of harmony and prosperity on both sides of the class divide. Brown and Marsh, in

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[1]Clark, Mill Town, p. 129.

[2]Clark, Ibid., pp. 124-6.

an overt attempt to undercut the appeal of the I.W.W. to desperate men, sought jurisdiction over the entire timber industry. The A.F.L. complied by chartering the International Union of Shingle Weavers, Sawmill Workers, and Woodsmen, later renamed International Timber Workers.[3] In 1914 the union issued a thousand cards in Everett alone, as Ernest Marsh occupied a new post as President of the Washington State Federation of Labor.[4]

But the popularity of the new union was not necessarily a rank-and-file endorsement of Marsh's moderate trade unionism or of Brown's ballot-box socialism. The 1912 trade agreements had expired, employers were once again hardened in their determination not to negotiate with unions at all, and workers were eager for some solution to their miserable predicament. Older workers, married men, and homeowners probably agreed with Marsh's assessment that the trade agreements represented a pinnacle of union activity. They may have hoped to restore this great achievement through a broader and stronger union. But the younger generation of workers, shingle weavers included, had not shared in the modest successes of their fathers, nor were they likely to. Younger radicals thought little of union contracts that bound workers to stable wages while profits rose, and bound employers to nothing when skilled men were forced to tramp in search of work. Contracts, it appeared, allowed capitalists to relish the lion's share of prosperity while

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[3]Tyler, p. 64.

[4]Clark, Mill Town, p. 145.

workers suffered disproportionately the brunt of depression. In this setting, the new Timber Workers' Union was replete with men who carried their union cards, Socialist cards, and I.W.W. cards in the same pocket.[5] The union was a powder keg, and Marsh and Brown knew it. It was only a matter of time before rank-and-file militants or some open-shop industrialist would strike a match.

The 1913-1915 depression hit the lumber industry particularly hard. During those years even Weyerhaeuser found that the cost of producing lumber exceeded the market value. Mills closed by the hundreds, turning the economic hopes of 1912 into despair compounded by disillusionment.[6] In all quarters, moderation fell victim to economic tragedy. Political progressives found the middle road crumbling beneath their feet. Many of the same industrialists who had committed to trade agreements now once again saw unions as unacceptable threats to the very survival of their businesses. And workers increasingly turned to radical leadership as the disappearance of their jobs seemed to lend more credence to revolutionary critiques than to the business-unionism of the moderates.

In February 1914 a radical majority in the Timber Workers' Union announced that May first would usher in the eight-hour day. If employers refused to concede this, the union would strike the entire industry—mills and

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[5]Ibid., p. 143.

[6]Ibid., pp. 131-2.

camps alike. Employer reaction was swift—twenty-five union sawmill workers were fired from Everett's Robinson Mill. Rank-and-file response was equally swift—all two hundred mill hands at Robinson's walked off their jobs. At this point the manufacturers rallied, shutting down all of Everett's mills, locking out their employees, and announcing that the mills would reopen only on the condition that there be no suggestion of wage and hour negotiations with any worker or labor union, no resumption of trade agreements, no union buttons or union activity in the mills, and no May first strike.

David Clough, leading the lumber barons to war as he had once led them to trade agreements, threw down the gauntlet. Eight thousand working men, the bulk of Everett's wage-earners, turned out in Clark Park to hear Jay Olinger, the socialist leader of the electrical workers, call for a general strike in support of the timber workers. How might more moderate leaders like Marsh and Brown back the union down from the brink of certain destruction? Marsh, in his capacity as State Federation president, effected a compromise. To appease union radicals, trade agreements would be abandoned. To bridge the widening gap between the radicals and conservatives, Marsh pledged to employ Washington's new initiative law to put the eight-hour issue before the voters in November. Almost miraculously, Marsh's conciliatory proposal worked; and he and the Federation labored tirelessly for months to bring about the passage of an eight-hour law. Employers' associations and the established press worked equally hard to discourage voter support on the premise that passage would ruin many mills and deepen the unemployment

crisis. November came, the law failed; and faith in the Federation, Marsh, moderation and political action went down with it. More and more workers came to feel that their misery was best explained and could best be alleviated by leaders who shared in the syndicalists' and revolutionary socialists' disdain for electoral politics.

The Federation's failure was aggravated by yet another piece of bad economic news. Those workers and manufacturers who had been inclined to hold onto some degree of optimism had hoped against hope that the opening of the Panama Canal would finally pull them all up out of the crisis of the previous year. Their patience seemed vindicated for a brief moment after the canal opened in the summer of 1914. But in August, with the advent of war, the government closed the Canal to civilian shipping. This, along with high rail shipping rates and a growing preference on the part of builders for "modern" composition shingles, dealt a further devastating blow to the lumber industry and its workers.[7] In Everett, every month hundreds of unemployed men took shelter in the city jail for want of food and lodging. The situation was humanly untenable, and conspired to drive more and more lumber workers into the ranks of the radicals. And as the timber industry which was Everett's life blood collapsed, so too did the remainder of the city's industries, causing a chain reaction of unemployment, hopelessness, and a rising tide of working class militancy.

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[7]Ibid., p. 132.

In the Timber Workers' Union the older ballot-box socialists were driven out in favor of young men who organized an armed military auxiliary in preparation for an all-out class war. By early 1915 the Trades Council had changed hands and named Jay Olinger as chairman of a strategic board of control. This board replaced Ernest Marsh as editor of the Labor Journal, turning its stewardship over to the revolutionary socialist Maynard Shipley—who hated Samuel Gompers and the entire A.F.L. to which the council was presumably affiliated. The turning of the tide was perhaps best illustrated by Ernest Marsh's loss of influence over the union's delegates.

When in February 1915 David Clough led Everett's shingle manufacturers in announcing a twenty percent wage reduction, Marsh tried to reason before the union that the lower wholesale prices for shingles might offer some justification for the cut. Without argument, the assembled delegates rejected Marsh's position by a vote of 274 to 7.[8] An angry and violent strike ensued from February to May, replete with professional thugs, mass arrests, and scab-pens shielded with barbed wire, search lights and armed guards.[9] By May, Clough-Hartley was offering five dollars for a ten-hour day to any worker who had played no role in the strike. In the midst of depression, which in the

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[8]Ibid., pp. 146-151. The story of the 1914-15 events recounted here is drawn from Norman Clark's Mill Town and corroborated by press reports from the Timber Worker, the Everett Daily Herald (EH), and the Seattle Union Record (SUR) for February 1914 through February 1915.

[9]Washington State Bureau of Labor, 10th Biennial Report, 1915-16 (Olympia, 1916), pp. 237-44.

timber industry endured until late fall, the offer eventually had its intended effect. Desperate men gradually returned to work, and more than half stopped paying dues to the Timber Workers' Union. Many of those who still refused to work pledged exclusive allegiance to the Industrial Workers of the World. The Timber Workers' Union collapsed with the failure of the strike, leaving in its wake no organization but the I.W.W. in the sawmills, shingle mills and lumber camps, and leaving as well a wellspring of profound bitterness between the lumber barons and their men. The workers were driven back to their jobs only by the exigencies of survival, but they would not long tolerate the terms dictated by their employers if a chance presented itself to restore their wages and their dignity.

In early spring 1916, Marsh and Brown saw an opportunity to revive their leadership and to help the weavers at least regain their earlier economic and organizational footing. In April the I.S.W.U.A. was reconstituted in Seattle, restricting itself to the shingle mills but opening its doors to mill engineers and firemen, as well as to the habitual sawyers, packers and filers. The union now appeared as more of an industrial than a craft organization, and its constitution pledged its members to the promotion of "working class solidarity."[10] Virtually all shingle mill workers in Aberdeen and Everett heeded the call of the union, which set May first as the deadline for the restoration of the pre-depression wage scale.

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[10]Clark, Mill Town, pp. 172-3.

When the first starting whistles of May blew over Everett, the shop stewards presented their demands. To a man the owners refused, and Everett was once again a city on strike. In the relative calm and discipline of the first week, no one could have predicted with certainty what was in store. Everett was not Grays Harbor. It was an American and old-stock immigrant town. It was a town of families and homeowners and well-attended public schools. Very many middle-class residents and skilled workers alike wished to believe that the events of 1915 had been an unfortunate aberration in the history of a relatively stable community. No one foresaw that a renewed assault against the workers of Everett would bring the I.W.W.'s tramping army into town. No one yet knew that the presence of the Wobblies would serve to some as an excuse to terrorize all the workers and labor organizations in Everett. Even more importantly, the moderates among the leaders and followers of the Shingle Weavers' Union were the last to envision a situation in which they would feel compelled to come to the defense of the revolutionary rabble rousers in the I.W.W. In short, few people foresaw the extent of impending class polarization in Everett. The people of that city were poised on the brink of a great tragedy that would give their once optimistic community an infamous place in history—the Everett Massacre of 1916.

The story of the Everett Massacre is already so well and thoroughly told, and so little disagreement exists as to its details, that I will not repeat it at

length here.[11] It will suffice to outline in brief the course of events that transformed many of Everett's timber workers from pillars of a community they thought was theirs into bitter outsiders in their own home.

In late May, a committee of the Commercial Club blamed the shingle weavers' strike on professional agitators, and even went so far as to blame the 1914-15 depression on the union trade agreements. By mid-June, the Club's determination to isolate the weavers and break the strike was so clear that the Club's union men and many merchants who served union customers had resigned their membership. Over one hundred businessmen abandoned the Club in June alone. In July, sensing the potential for recruitment in Everett, the I.W.W. sent their organizer James Rowan to that city to test the waters. Rowan's prompt arrest for street-speaking led to the establishment of an I.W.W. office in Everett, headed by Levi Remick. Remick developed a strong personal rapport with many striking weavers, who appreciated the Industrial Worker's broad and detailed coverage of their strike. The workers also enjoyed the I.W.W. paper's overt attacks on the lumber barons, who were unduly sanctified by the established press.

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[11]The tale that follows is not original, but derives largely from Norman Clark's accounting, which in my estimation is superior because of the author's emphasis on Everett history rather than I.W.W. history. The facts are, however, reported similarly, if with different degrees of depth in Walker Smith's The Everett Massacre; Melvyn Dubofsky's We Shall Be All; Robert Tyler's Rebels of the Woods; and Philip Foner's History of the Labor Movement in the United States, among others.

For several weeks, picketing continued while the Wobblies befriended the strikers. On August 19, Neil Jamison of the Jamison mill personally led a band of thugs in a brutal assault on peaceful pickets outside his mill. One of the most severely beaten was the weavers' business agent, Robert Mills, who was singled out for special treatment. That same night, one hundred fifty club-bearing union men tried to even the score. Police opened fire, and one striker was wounded in the charge.

On August 22, the I.W.W. thought it wise to step up their organizing drive. James Thompson, veteran of the 1909 Spokane free speech fight, appeared in Everett to pledge his support for the striking weavers. He was arrested for street-speaking along with James Rowan, Everett native Mrs. Letelsia Fye, and Everett Trades Council representative Jake Michel, who had simply been trying to control the assembled crowd's anger at the police. About a week later, on August 29, with no I.W.W. involvement, bat-wielding shingle weavers attacked a detachment of Jamison's scabs, who were on a theater trip downtown. Thompson, incidentally, responded to the event by deploring the use of violence by either side in the on-going dispute.

Sensing the potential for continued violence, the Trades Council on August 30 proposed to create a labor peace-keeping force to ensure a safe Labor Day weekend. While the city commission refused the unionists' offer, the Commercial Club, led by David Clough of Clough-Hartley, convinced Sheriff McRae, a one-time shingle weaver, to deputize a force of several hundred club members. The flood of volunteers were organized into companies

of fifty men each. Thereafter the Commercial Club housed their military drills every night of the week. Those club members who were shocked by these proceedings—many ministers, attorneys and businessmen among them—resigned in disgust. Store owners began to display signs in their windows disavowing any affiliation with the Commercial Club. Left to their own devices, Clough and associates appropriated funds for clubs, guns and ammunition. Everett was determined to repeat the experience of Hoquiam, but at shockingly greater cost.

September saw nightly terror and beatings directed at any unfamiliar man in workmen's clothes. Incensed by these middle-class abuses of civil rights, the Trades Council's secretary Jake Michel became increasingly attached to the cause of free speech. On one occasion he served as an escort to Wobbly free-speech fighters Harry Feinberg and William Roberts, but to no avail. Both of Michel's wards were beaten and dragged away by vigilantes, as were John Ovist—an Everett resident and recent I.W.W. recruit—and Frank Henig, a disinterested bystander and Everett shingle weaver.

As the terror spread, more and more Everett working class families shared Jake Michel's conclusions that what was taking place was an unconscionable attack against their rights and their safety, and not merely a war against outsiders. On September 22, fifteen thousand turned out at Clark Park to hear union leaders, socialists and I.W.W.s rail against the violent minority of businessmen who had made Everett's streets unsafe for working people. City officials and Sheriff McRae were grilled by angry questioners as to the

role they were playing in these gruesome events. Pressured by the crowd, the authorities promised not to harm anyone who abided by the law. By October, class loyalty subsumed workers' organizational ties as the Trades Council and Labor Journal came out as frank defenders of the Wobbly cause in Everett.

By the end of October, despite strong sentiments of working-class solidarity, the shingle weavers' strike was waning. This was not for lack of public support, but the result of economic pressure. Scabs were eating while union men stood hungry vigil in the rain. The lumber barons would not give in, forcing many weavers to seek employment elsewhere. While the shingle weavers' union could do little under the circumstances to boost the morale of its men, the I.W.W. was determined not to let the strike—or the Everett class war—fizzle into a humiliating defeat for the workers.

On October 30, forty-one I.W.W. men docked in Everett to shore up the waning struggle. They were greeted by Sheriff McRae and two hundred deputies. After a brief but rude exchange of words, the new arrivals were herded off to remote Beverly Park, stripped, and viciously beaten in the head, back, gut and testicles with ax handles, rifles, clubs and boots. The forty-one survived, but barely. On October 31 an appalled Ernest Marsh toured the site. Knowing the level of terror and escalation of violence that could ensue, Marsh, Jake Michel and others planned to hold a mass meeting to assuage community fears and hopefully to bring some calm and order to Everett. The I.W.W.s, who were invited, upstaged their hosts by unilaterally setting the date at

Sunday, November 5. The Everett Socialists followed with an active campaign of advertisement for the event.

It was on that fateful day that the steamer Verona pulled into Everett's harbor carrying two hundred fifty I.W.W. men from Seattle. The steamer was met at dock by Sheriff McRae and a force of over one hundred armed deputies—mill owners, college boys, foremen, clerks, dentists, lawyers. On a hillside above the waterfront thousands of citizens had gathered to watch. Within moments, someone, somewhere, fired a gun. In the panic and confusion, more shots were fired, and again and again. In two minutes—the time it took the Verona to break free of its moorings and retreat into the bay—two deputies were dead and twenty wounded. Four Wobblies were dead, one dying, and twenty-seven wounded, many critically. An additional number of I.W.W.s—up to a dozen—may have drowned at sea. The crowd of spectators that had gathered above the scene descended to jeer at and threaten the deputies as they removed their dead and wounded. Governor Lister called the National Guard into Everett to keep the peace.

Seventy-four Wobblies were held to stand trial for the murder of the citizen deputies. Even a moderate man like Ernest Marsh could not be convinced of their guilt:

> I am convinced in my own mind that these men had not the slightest intention of coming to Everett to attack life or property . . . . They calculated to come in force, march up the streets in broad daylight, and figured that the sympathy of the larger proportion of the city's population would prevent physical attack upon their forces such as they had hitherto experienced.

Five months later a jury agreed.[12]

Although middle-class zealots justified the entire sequence of frightful events that took place that fall of 1916 as a battle to protect Everett from pillaging hordes of outsiders, the effect of the massacre on Everett's own working class was profound. In early December David Clough addressed the shingle weavers with an offer to raise sawyers' wages by one cent per thousand, and packers' wages by half a cent. Since shingle prices had risen forty cents per thousand since the onset of the strike, the union called out the pickets once again. The Commercial Club responded by hiring professional gunmen to escort strikebreakers through the picket lines. By mid-December, Everett's craft unionists had run out of patience. The greatest testament to the I.W.W.'s vision that capitalism would spawn inevitable class warfare was the spectacle of the A.F.L. Trades Council's announcement to Governor Lister that it had voted to purchase five hundred rifles.[13] Did the Northwest now stand on the verge of civil war?

As radicalizing as the events in Everett were, there were sound reasons to believe that the animosities of 1915-16 would not degenerate into civil war. First, although moderate labor leaders like Marsh and Brown were temporarily overshadowed by more militant men responding to brutally harsh circumstances, Marsh remained State Federation President and Brown remained

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[12]Clark, Mill Town, p. 210.

[13]Ibid., p. 221, quoted from Everett Labor Journal, December 15, 1916.

President of the I.S.W.U.A. In other words, the situation in Everett did not yield sufficiently wide repercussions as to radicalize all the weavers' locals or all the craft unions to the same degree. Workers were greatly influenced by local conditions, and the workers of Everett were understandably the most deeply embittered in 1916. Such had been the case as well in Bellingham and on Grays Harbor in 1912, where Harry Call and J.G. Brown had stood in their time and in their localities at the head of rank-and-file workers seething with anger, while Everett remained comparatively placid.

Second, when the Everett Trades Council chose to purchase arms for its members in 1916, it could justifiably claim the right to self-defense. This need not be interpreted as a revolutionary act so much as a statement of desperation, in light of the indignities workers had been made to suffer at the hands of vigilantes. Tactically speaking, the purchase of arms also stood between the options of rifle distribution and turning the other cheek. Given the situation, this might have been a sensible maneuver for binding together the moderate and radical unionists—something that Marsh and Brown had some experience with themselves. Revolutionaries would have seen no value in advertising their arsenal to the governor as the Trades Council did. The council was sending out two implicit messages at one stroke—to its membership: "We will defend ourselves by any means necessary if attacked," and to the governor: "You know we are typically law-abiding men, and look what we are driven to do . . . . Please act."

Finally, the apparent sympathy that Everett workers and union officials exhibited toward the I.W.W. in the aftermath of the Beverly Park beatings and the Everett Massacre did not suggest, nor did it yield, a permanent alliance between the A.F.L. and I.W.W. unions in timber. Even the relatively cordial and congenial relations between those two organizations in the 1912 Grays Harbor strike did not lead to a permanent bond of friendship. In fact workers in the various branches of the timber industry may have shared more in common than did their two organizational alternatives. With momentary exceptions, I.W.W. leaders generally held their A.F.L. counterparts in utter contempt, while A.F.L. leaders feared the repercussions of I.W.W. revolutionism. The sympathy accorded the I.W.W. men in Everett had more to do with general outrage at the abuses committed by middle-class deputies than with a point-by-point identification with the Wobbly program. Everett workers held to the clearly class-conscious position that an injury to one worker was an injury to all, a view from which the Commercial Club allowed no deviation. But class consciousness and class solidarity were never really synonymous with I.W.W.ism or with A.F.L.ism. It should also be noted that a sufficient number of middle-class citizens defected from the Commercial Club in revulsion at the brutal plans the Club was concocting so as to mitigate a permanent and total rupture of Everett's social fabric. The bitter memories, the suspicions and the hard lessons of 1916 would remain for some time to come, but they might not lead to an escalation of bloody class conflict.

In short, the experiences of timber workers in various parts of Washington between 1912 and 1916 had been generally radicalizing but not revolutionizing. Workers in the camps, lumber mills and shingle mills were impatient for progress. They were longing for a working day that would make room for life beyond the saws. They were longing for wages that would afford them the necessary comforts of life. They wanted to live in peace and dignity, but were repeatedly frustrated by the intransigence of their employers and the brutality of their "genteel" neighbors. They were willing to accept the leadership of several different kinds of men if such leadership seemed congenial to achieving their goals. But these leaders had sadly offered little of enduring value. By the end of 1916, the average timber worker was seething—not with blood lust, but impatience. Then in July 1917, three months after the United States entered World War I, the flood gates swung open. The timber workers of the Pacific Northwest threw themselves headlong into the greatest lumber strike this country had ever seen.

Both the A.F.L. and the I.W.W. conducted vigorous organizing campaigns in the months that preceded the great strike, but their total membership was relatively low. The I.W.W. Lumber Workers' Industrial Union had about 3,000 members. The Shingle Weavers and the Timber Workers—which was the A.F.L.'s reconstituted union for mill hands—shared 2,500 members between them.[14] But these union men represented only the tip of an iceberg.

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[14]Jensen, p. 125.

At the strike's peak, 40,000 to 50,000 men—eighty percent of the labor force in the strike-affected areas—stayed away from their jobs.[15]

The United States' entry into the international war created the economic conditions that fueled workers' demands and promised unions some prospect of success. Timber prices rose rapidly, and labor shortages forced more and more employers to pay union scale. By June, even union scale was insufficient to attract enough workers to the mills.[16] These were opportune times that labor organizers could not afford to ignore.

The I.W.W. focused its attention on the Inland Empire of eastern Washington, while the A.F.L. concentrated on the fir region of the west. On March 5 and 6, 1917, the Lumber Workers' Industrial Union No. 500, I.W.W., met in Spokane and issued its demands, along with a strike call for July 1. The workers' demands included an eight-hour day in the camps and mills, no Sunday work for loggers, double-time pay for Sunday work in the mills, a minimum wage of $60 a month for loggers and $3.50 a day for mill men, free hospital service, and twice monthly paydays, by bank check or cash. Aside from these financial considerations, the union concerned itself as well with the dignity and comfort of the men. Employers were asked to provide wholesome food on porcelain dishes at uncrowded tables, single beds consisting of spring mattresses and clean bedding, roomy, well-lit houses with reading

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[15]Ibid., p. 126.

[16]Clark, Mill Town, 223-4.

tables and shower baths. Child labor and piece work were to be abolished. Finally, all hiring was to be done on the job or at the union hall, with no discrimination against I.W.W. members.[17]

In May, the Shingle Weavers' Union authorized their executive board to secure the eight-hour workday in the shingle mills by conference. When the employers refused, the union set a strike date at July 16. In June, the International Union of Timber Workers, the "dual" union with which the A.F.L. had intended to undermine the I.W.W. in the logging camps and lumber mills, issued its demands.[18] These included a minimum wage of $3 for eight hours in the mills and $3.50 for nine hours in the camps, better and more sanitary conditions, union recognition and the closed shop.[19] Failing agreement on these points by July 12, the union would strike in concord with the weavers on July 16. The I.U.T.'s demands very closely paralleled those of the I.W.W. Lumber Workers, with the important difference that the A.F.L. union established a distinction between the hours of labor for mill hands and loggers, choosing not to include the latter in what was becoming a general drive for the eight-hour day.

On July 9, one hundred fifty representatives of the various branches of the lumber industry met in Seattle to form the Lumbermen's Protective

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[17]Industrial Worker, July 14, 1917, p. 1. Hereafter cited as IW.

[18]Jensen, p. 125.

[19]Aberdeen Daily World, July 6, 1917, p. 1. Hereafter cited as AW.

Association, which committed itself to fighting the workers' demands. The lumber operators declared their determination to raise a half-million-dollar war chest and to "pledge themselves unequivocally to maintain a ten-hour day for the purpose of maintaining production in the lumber industry."[20] Immediately thereafter the Shingle Weavers and Timber Workers issued a joint declaration:

> . . . that in view of the hostile and unyielding attitude assumed by the joint lumber interests . . . we, the executive officers of the International Shingle Weavers' Union of America and the International Union of Timber Workers, hereby declare common cause in a common fight . . . . We desire again to remind the public of our efforts to bring about conferences for the settlement of the disputed questions . . . but the declarations of the lumber interests seem to preclude any possibility of a peaceful solution of the problem.[21]

The resolution was signed by J.G. Brown and I.U.T. President E. E. Weiland, who also happened to be the Socialist city councilman for Aberdeen's second ward.[22]

The I.W.W., whose Inland Empire strike had already been in effect for over a week by the time of the A.F.L. declaration, chose not to spread their strike into western Washington. Lumber Workers No. 500 at first came out against the A.F.L. strike call, prompting an angry response from I.S.W.U.A. President Brown, who no doubt was pleased to have the opportunity to score points for his own organization. Brown commented:

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[20]Jensen, p. 125; DW, July 10, 1917, p. 1.

[21]SW, July 14, 1917, p. 1.

[22]DW, July 7, 1917, p. 1; AW, July 6,1917, p. 1.

> We understand that the members of the I.W.W. have taken the same position with regard to our demands as have the lumber barons. Some of our former members have been misled into joining this disruptive conglomeration. Those who have been so misled will now see the I.W.W. in its true light and will line up with our two organizations. Those who, in the face of this latest slap in the face from the ungrateful I.W.W. still cling to the doctrine of destruction and despair, are neither asked nor expected to assist us in this greatest fight we have ever made. Indeed we want it clearly understood that there is not and cannot be any connection between our organization and the I.W.W. Those who are not with us are against us, be they mill owners or I.W.W.[23]

Aside from the habitual hostility between the two national organizations—A.F.L. and I.W.W.—there was some value to be gained by stressing the latter's refusal to endorse the strike at that time. As William Reid of the Everett weavers noted, "the I.W.W.'s strength among the weavers here is an unknown quantity."[24] The I.W.W.'s popularity among the weavers could not be measured, but was known to exist. The situation that prevailed in the first two weeks of July offered some hope of reverse defections to the A.F.L. leadership.

It was not long before Lumber Workers No. 500 realized its error and its gross underestimation of the impatience of the men in the fir region. The I.W.W. had notified all of its members on July 9 that no strike was under way.[25] On July 12, four days before the A.F.L. strike was to take place, two

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[23]SW, July 14 ,1917, p. 1.

[24]Ibid.

[25]Jensen, p. 126.

of several spontaneous strikes occurred that would press the I.W.W. leaders into action. In the Grays Harbor region, one of the Anderson and Middleton Company's logging camps on North river was shut down as a result of a wage dispute. On July 11, the chokermen and buckers demanded a raise from $3.75 to $4.25 a day. This was granted to the buckers, but the chokermen and others (aside from kitchen help) were raised only twenty-five cents. The price of board was also increased by fifteen cents, reducing the effective wage increases to ten cents for chokermen, thirty-five cents for buckers, and cutting the wages of other workers. On the morning of July 12 the entire crew refused to work. The camp was consequently shut down on orders from the company offices in Aberdeen.[26] On the same day, seventy-five workers at the Aberdeen Ship Yard plant walked out in protest against the company's refusal to comply with a request for a fifty-cent-per-day wage increase. Common laborers and ship carpenters walked out together, some claiming allegiance to the ship carpenters' union and others to the I.W.W. No union strike order had been given.[27]

The spontaneity of these walkouts and the solidarity of the workers involved forced the I.W.W.'s hand. I.W.W. organizers in Hoquiam and Aberdeen wired the Seattle district of the Lumber Workers' Union informing them that it was impossible to hold the workers back any longer. The

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[26]DW, July 13, 1917, p. 1.

[27]AW, July 12, 1917, p. 1.

message headquarters returned over the wires was "if you can't hold them, let her go."[28] On July 13, the same job delegates who had declared against a strike on July 9 rushed back to the camps to announce that a strike was under way.

On Monday, July 16, the Seattle office issued a formal strike call. By the end of the week in the Grays Harbor region alone workers had effectively closed down the camps of the Polson, Humptulips, Bales, Carlisle, Aloha, and Sternsville Lumber Companies, and the Donovan and West Mills, and had curtailed most operations at the Aberdeen Lumber and Shingle Company and the Anderson and Middleton Company. Tacoma was shut down tight, and in Everett fifteen hundred mill hands struck Weyerhaeuser, and the mill was closed.[29] The I.W.W., which had only one week earlier called upon the timber workers not to fall for the "bunk" of an A.F.L. strike, fell in line with the rank and file, and called for a concerted attack on the lumber barons.

> The Lumber Trust, secure in their power in the past, are now up against a new condition. They are learning that the power of the "Bums" is a power greater than their own. Any worker in the strike area, who is not on strike is a traitor to his class. The line is distinct. Either a worker stands for his own interests or he stands for the interests of his industrial overlord.[30]

The strike was at first most effective at the high and low ends of the industry. By July 16, many shingle weavers and loggers had already jumped

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[28]IW, July 21, 1917, p. 1.

[29]AW, July 14, 1917, p. 1; IW, July 21, 1917, p. 1.

[30]IW, July 21, 1917, p. 1.

the gun on their unions. With the union strike calls in effect on that date, the shutdown of shingle mills on the one hand and logging camps on the other was nearly total, especially in Chehalis County. The lumber mills suffered partial losses among their crews, but very often these were sufficient to halt the entire operation of the mills. It was in the lumber mills that the I.W.W. and the A.F.L. timber workers' union found themselves most often in contest. The effectiveness of the I.U.T. was questionable, though. The headquarters they opened in Aberdeen on July 17 was poorly attended; and if any affiliation was cited by pickets at the mills, it was I.W.W.[31]

It should be noted that although the I.W.W. at first resisted the strike, it had at least an on-going organizational presence among the workers, while the I.U.T. was truly a late-starter in the timber wars. The I.U.T. had no historic membership or base of loyalty, and was clearly and explicitly established as a dual union to "oppose the organization work of the I.W.W. in the mills and camps."[32] Its dual union stature was certainly resented more deeply by I.W.W. men than by the bulk of workers, but the fact remained that the bulk of workers had no particular motivation to attach themselves to the I.U.T.

The Grays Harbor press noted the tactical impact of the Wobblies even when their numerical presence was small.

> The larger part of the industrial workers are leaving, only a sufficient number remaining to carry on the strike and maintain

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[31]DW, July 18, 1917, p. 1; AW, July 16, 1917, p. 1.

[32]EH, July 16, 1917, p. 5.

> the picketing . . . . It was noticeable yesterday that the forces of pickets at the various mills were being increased. Where the number of pickets were small the first days of the strike, yesterday they were considerably larger. It appeared the strikers were concentrating their forces at certain points with the object of forcing the men out there and then intending to shift their operations to other points. This is a system similar to that adopted in the industrial worker strike here five years ago.[33]

This suggests either substantial authority on the part of I.W.W. organizers over the pickets, or some degree of tactical continuity on the part of workers themselves with experiences drawn from the 1912 strike, or both. In any case the tactic was effective in spreading the strike. More logging camps and lumber mills closed every day, as I.W.W. "jungles"—as their strike camps were called —sprang up on the outskirts of the timber centers.[34]

On July 19, Ernest Marsh put some distance between the A.F.L. and the I.W.W., and asked as well for government intervention.

> Two distinct organizations are making this fight among mills and logging camps, the American Federation of Labor and the Industrial Workers of the World, and no love is lost between them. It is a struggle not only to obtain the eight-hour day . . . but a struggle on our part against the encroachment of the I.W.W. . . . . Employers must face two propositions, either to deal with our business like organization, or have constant trouble with the 'wabblies' . . . . If the mill owners and strikers are unable to settle their present differences, then the federal government will be compelled to intervene . . . . Unless the strike is settled here then federal authority must step in and strike a fair balance between employers and employees.[35]

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[33]DW, July 18, 1917, p. 1.

[34]AW, July 17, 1917, p. 1.

[35]EH, July 19, 1917, p. 3.

Marsh was a member of the State Council of Defense, which sought to bring both sides in the dispute to the bargaining table in the interests of maintaining war production. For several weeks, lumber operators refused all efforts to convene a conference, despite pleas from U.S. Labor Commissioner Harry White and Washington's Governor Lister, who also headed the defense council. The employers insisted that they would be willing to negotiate with legitimate unions, but that in this case there was no one to talk to. While this position was treated as a subterfuge by the A.F.L. leadership,[36] and in fact it was, there was also reasonable doubt that the A.F.L. could deliver the goods, so to speak, since it could not claim or prove the allegiance of most of the men on strike. The combination of typically obstinate employers and several tens of thousands of unbridled rank-and-file strikers made the likelihood of early settlement remote indeed.

Significantly, though, this strike was to be remarkably peaceful when measured against the backdrop of 1912, 1915 or 1916. The established newspapers in the fir region, all of whose editors would have been more than happy to report any breaches of the social peace, were hard pressed to uncover even the most minor frays. But despite the orderly nature of the strike, the Washington State Supreme Court issued an injunction against all forms of picketing on July 17; yet the workers remained calm.[37]

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[36]SUR, July 28, 1917, p. 1.

[37]AW, July 18, 1917, p. 1; EH, July 16, 1917, p. 1.

Another notable feature of this conflict was the total absence of inter-ethnic strife. Wartime labor shortages and the cut-off in the supply of new immigrants complicated employers' attempts to turn poor immigrants into strikebreakers. In Everett, Greek workers were approached by the Pacific Coast Lumbermen's Association and offered $50,000 to scab. The Greeks unanimously voted to stay out with the I.W.W. until the strike was won. Italian workers shipped from Tacoma to Arlington as strike-breakers turned back and headed home when they discovered what was expected of them. Italians and Greeks sent from Tacoma to Danahers Logging Camp in Darrington refused to scab, and went home with red buttons on their coats.[38] Japanese mill hands walked out of the Schwager-Nettleton mill alongside their "white brothers declaring they would stick it out to the finish."[39] On July 28, the Shingle Weaver reported that:

> . . . no discrimination because of creed, color or nationality is no longer a mockery but a reality, [as] evidenced by the unity of purpose and action of the Caucasian, Chinese, Japanese and Hindu employees in the mills and camps of British Columbia, who are now on strike to enforce demands similar to those made by the Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana operatives. Truly, the star of industrial freedom, the star of universal brotherhood of man, never shined so bright as it does today.[40]

No serious infractions could even be laid at the door of the I.W.W., from whom the authorities habitually expected violence, and whom (of course) they

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[38]IW, August 15, 1917, p. 1.

[39]SUR, July 21, 1917, p. 1.

[40]SW, July 28, 1917, p. 1.

frequently tried to provoke to violence. On July 24, five men were arrested at the I.W.W. jungle camp near the Lester logging works east of Montesano and charged with unlawful assembly. Warrants were served on Messrs. Dupree, Bicknell, Harte, Quint and Helms for violating the anti-picketing injunction. When the five were loaded on the truck to be taken to jail, the entire camp piled on, claiming that they were all equally guilty. I.W.W. instructions to men serving picket duty were "If they arrest you all right. Go along. Others will take your places and they can keep on arresting until the jails run over."[41] As regards the A.F.L., the Grays Harbor local of the Ship Carpenters' Union voted on July 27 to refuse to handle non-union, ten-hour lumber, a move that threatened the imminent closure of the shipyards. And by the time of the carpenters' decision, both the Aberdeen and Hoquiam Central Labor Councils had come out in support of the timber workers' strike without making an issue of the striking workers' organizational preferences.[42]

The relatively peaceful and determined behavior of the strikers must have encouraged government arbitration efforts, but it was difficult to convince most employers of the value of mediation. W. B. Mack of Hoquiam's National Mill did not even consider government intervention likely.

> In my judgment there does not appear anything to indicate such a move. We hear a great deal about the wants of the government for lumber to build the cantonments at American Lake and elsewhere, but as a matter of fact the saw mills of

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[41]AW, July 14, 1917, p. 1.

[42]AW, July 28, 1917, p. 1; DW, July 19, 1917, p. 1.

> Washington alone could cut in two days all of the lumber that will be needed at American Lake . . . . The same with wooden ship building . . . . If every camp and mill in the state was closed down tight the nation could still secure all the lumber that was absolutely needed to carry on its business.[43]

Mr. Mack's calculations ignored two important factors. The first of these was the federal government's specific need for Northwestern spruce, the only wood adequate for aircraft construction and the supply of which was cut off by the strike. The second concern was the I.W.W. Was the government likely to abandon a significant section of the nation to an avowedly revolutionary organization in the midst of an international war? Granted that the I.W.W. was itself small, but its influence was felt beyond the ranks of its permanent members. The government must have understood this, because the A.F.L. certainly did.

> The growing menace of the I.W.W. lies as a responsibility on the shoulders of the lumber owners. The average workman thinks of this thing as a fight the employer is waging on his employee to deny the right to humanize conditions of labor. And the average worker thinks that if it is to be a fight then he will join an organization whose whole program is fight without quarter and without cessation. The statements that the I.W.W. make about the employer, the employer hastens to prove immediately by his actions.[44]

During the first two weeks of August, the Washington State Council of Defense undertook to bring the striking A.F.L. unions and the lumbermen together for an arbitrated agreement. The pressure to achieve a settlement

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[43]AW, July 30, 1917, p. 2.

[44]SUR, July 28, 1917, p. 1.

was intensified by a sympathetic strike of Grays Harbor shipyard workers which began on August 1.[45] The shipyard strike raised the anxieties of public officials while encouraging an escalation of I.W.W. picketing.

> I.W.W. pickets are putting forth every possible effort to close the mills now operating and are gathering by the scores at the operating mills at the morning starting hour and at the noon and evening quitting hour. Workers are stopped and asked to quit . . . . Generally there is a hope that someone will start a movement to secure a settlement between the strikers, especially the less radical element, and the operators.[46]

On August 7, an all-day conference was convened consisting of lumbermen, striking workers, the State Council of Defense, and a neutral public committee. E. S. Grammer of the Lumbermen's Protective Association declared that an eight-hour day for Washington timber workers would put the state's industry at a disadvantage with the rest of the nation, where a ten-hour day still prevailed. He also argued that wages in the Northwest were already unreasonably high, and that any further increase would bankrupt the employers. Finally, Grammer blamed the I.W.W. for intimidating a supposed majority of loyal men who would otherwise have been willing to work. J. G. Brown and E. E. Weiland, representing the I.S.W.U.A. and the I.U.T., argued that they had made every effort to confer with the employers prior to the strike but had been rebuffed. The union leaders also cited the precedent of other industries that

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[45]SUR, July 28, 1917, p. 1.

[46]SUR, August 1, 1917, p. 1.

had successfully converted to an eight-hour day despite similar economic arguments against it. Finally, they disavowed any connection to the I.W.W.[47]

Dr. Henry Suzzallo, President of the University of Washington and chair of the State Council of Defense, proposed a plan that the men be granted an eight-hour day on January 1, 1918, provided those working on that date supported such a move in a secret ballot taken by the defense council. The lumbermen accepted this idea and the unions rejected it. The plan in effect would have had the minority of workers who continued to work ten hours during the strike determine the length of the workday for all workers. Alternately, it might have encouraged a general return to work pending a January referendum, but would have given employers a five-month respite during which to mobilize against a positive vote. The union leaders consequently made a counteroffer which consisted of the establishment of the eight-hour day and the waving of all other demands, or the granting of all other demands, including the closed shop, and waiver of the eight-hour day. The lumbermen refused.

On August 10, mediation efforts came to an unsuccessful conclusion. Dr. Suzzallo and associates issued the following statement:

> The conferences of the representatives of employers and employees of the lumber industry with a committee of neutral parties and the state council of defense terminated . . . without effecting any settlement of the existing strike.[48]

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[47]EH, August 8, 1917, p. 3.

[48]EH, August 11, 1917, p. 5.

On August 11, the A.F.L. unions called for an extension of the strike into Oregon. On the same day, E. C. Miller, one of the conferees and a lumber operator from Grays Harbor, offered his opinion that the conference had failed because the employers concluded that the labor leaders present did not represent the bulk of the workers on strike. He advanced the notion that no agreement made with Brown and Weiland could be held binding on the workers on account of the influence of the I.W.W.[49] While it was convenient for an employer to play up the radicalism of the strike as an excuse for his own intransigence, Mr. Miller was on to something. There was no proof that the appeal of the I.S.W.U.A. and the I.U.T. reached very deeply into the ranks. There was no certainty that a settlement with these unions would have fully satisfied the tens of thousands of striking workers who were not seeking A.F.L. affiliation. What sort of agreement would it take to get them all back to work? To the lumber barons the spontaneity of the strike smacked of Wobblyism, and any more profound analysis of its causes was irrelevant to them. Whether the I.W.W. was in actuality the head or tail of this movement mattered little. What mattered was that the bosses' habitual unwillingness to negotiate was bolstered by rank-and-file militancy that seemed beyond Brown's and Weiland's abilities to rein in. No settlement would be sought.

The failure of the state council's efforts caused mounting concern at the federal level. Already on August 2, the day after the shipyard strike began, Dr.

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[49]AW, August 11, 1917, p. 1.

Carleton Parker, federal investigator of labor troubles for the War Department, and Captain J. F. Blain, representative of the federal shipping board, indicated the likelihood of government intervention in the lumber strike.

On August 3, federal mediator Edgar C. Snyder arrived in Aberdeen from Seattle to secure an agreement in the shipyards. Mr. Snyder noted, however, that he represented the conciliation bureau of the Department of Labor, and would in no way seek to force a settlement of the dispute.[50] By August 11, with news of the failed defense council negotiations, Grays Harbor shipyard workers began to make plans to request a sympathy action on the part of their fellows in Seattle and Tacoma.[51]

That very night, Secretary of War Newton Baker announced his support for an eight-hour day in the lumber industry of the Pacific Northwest. He framed his appeal in patriotic terms:

> Democracy and freedom are at stake in the winning of the present war. A foreign autocrat has wantonly destroyed the lives of our people . . . . Our first duty as patriotic American citizens . . . is to compose our personal and industrial difficulties as to enable us to use the highest efficiency of man power for the national defense. Every foot of lumber that can be produced is necessary for the preparation for the contest . . . . The United States has established an eight-hour day for mechanics and laborers engaged in work done for or by the government. The President is authorized to waive the eight-hour day when an emergency exists. The law requires time and one-half to be paid for overtime, in order that there be no inducement to work more than eight hours. When the emergency is over, a large portion of the timber produced on the Pacific Coast will be needed by

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[50]AW, August 3, 1917, pp. 1, 2.

[51]AW, August 11, 1917, p. 1.

> the government for shipbuilding and airplane purposes. The legal workday might then be very properly adopted. We would urge that basis of adjustment as a solution of the problem.[52]

The lumber operators promptly reiterated their opposition to a shorter workday. Since their unwillingness to respond positively to the government's patriotic appeals obviously required some explanation, the lumbermen sought to deflect attention from themselves onto the I.W.W. Throughout the months of August and September, the industry placed ads such as this one in northwestern newspapers:

> The lumber industry of Washington is unwilling that the men at the front should pay the price of any further delay in aircraft and ship lumber production. The lumber industry is ready to give our own and Allied Nations quick service. To a certain extent it is prevented in this by a strike seemingly controlled by an organization which preaches sedition, the slowing down of industry and disorganization.[53]

On August 15, Washington's Governor Lister joined Secretary Baker in calling for an eight-hour workday. Ernest Lister had come to Tacoma from England in 1884 at age fourteen. The son of a skilled and successful iron molder who eventually owned his own foundry, Lister was a progressive Democrat with Populist antecedents. He presented himself as a foe of monopolies and a friend to both the urban middle class and organized labor.[54] His origins no doubt fostered in him a dream similar to Ernest Marsh's—that of a

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[52]AW, August 13, 1917, pp. 1, 2; EH, August 15, 1917, p. 1.

[53]DW, August 1, 1917, p. 4.

[54]Norman Clark, Washington, (New York: W. W. Norton, 1976), pp. 109, 114-5.

society of moderate, ambitious, hard-working men who, through the application of reason and social conscience, might achieve a harmonious and prosperous industrial order. Governor Lister drew from this vision when he proclaimed:

> The time has come when the gravity of the industrial situation in this state must be recognized. It seriously jeopardizes local and national welfare at an hour when every resource is needed . . . . I am convinced that peace and efficiency cannot come to the industrial life of the state of Washington until the principle of the eight-hour day is established, and with this principle I am in full accord. If such a change in hours of labor be made in the lumber industry it seems fair that, for a transitional period, a concession should be made by the workers, and with the hope of opening the industry I ask that the workers return to the camps and mills on an eight hour basis with nine hours' pay.[55]

The chairman of the Lumbermen's Protective Association, E. S. Grammer, wired a rejection of the Governor's proposal on the following day, claiming that timber workers were already being paid extraordinarily high wages and that the strike was nothing more nor less than an I.W.W. insurrection.[56] On August 17, the governor replied that, in his opinion, price inflation had robbed workers of the true value of their higher wages, that the eight-hour day was becoming a common industrial standard and should apply in timber as well, and that the I.W.W. problem could best be dealt with if employers would only agree:

> . . . to concede to those employed . . . the points for which they ask and which in justice ought to be granted, and thus alienate

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[55]EH, August 16, 1917, pp. 1, 5.

[56]AW, August 17, 1917, p. 5.

> from their leaders . . . thousands of followers who are only followers for the reason they have felt that the only way to obtain these concessions was to affiliate with this organization.[57]

Industry spokesmen answered the governor with increasingly inflammatory public statements regarding the revolutionary nature of the strike, as evidenced by ads headlined "Shall the State's Greatest Industry Surrender to I.W.W.?"[58] The unions offered mixed reactions to the war of words between the lumber barons and the state and federal governments. Sensing the prospects of partial victory under government auspices, the A.F.L. Central Labor Council of Seattle called upon the government of the United States to commandeer the State's lumber industry and operate the plants itself on an eight-hour basis.[59] The I.W.W., on the other hand, issued a general strike call on August 18 to take effect Monday, August 20 unless its "class war prisoners were all released from jail by that date."[60] The I.W.W. understood that the workers were gaining ground, but wanted the spoils of victory to translate into organizational success as well. Thomas Tracy, I.W.W. job delegate at Port Angeles, summed up the situation as he saw it:

> The great majority of the companies from Port Townshend to Clallam Bay are ready to grant the eight-hour day right now but they are afraid of Wobbleyism. They would like to have the government step in right now and help them establish the eight-

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[57]Ibid., p. 2; EH, August 17, 1917, p. 14.

[58]EH, August 20,1917, p. 5.

[59]SUR, August 25, 1917, p. 1.

[60]DW, August 16, 1917, p. 1.

> hour day and have the thing over with, but they do not like to have it said that the I.W.W. gained the victory. In all that country the strike is a complete success, and the companies can't get away from it. They are ready to give us everything we have demanded, but they want the government to have the credit instead of giving it to the I.W.W.[61]

If Tracy's claim that employers were weakening seems somehow at odds with the positions taken by the Lumbermen's Protective Association, it must be remembered that at other times in the previous decade, employers' associations did not represent all or even most employers. The associations tended rather to be organized by some of the more powerful lumber barons with the aim of imposing discipline on the remainder of the industry. It was not inconsistent, therefore, that many millmen may have wished for a settlement at the same time as the L.P.A. took an unyielding stance.

As far as the actual conduct of the striking workers was concerned, the various machinations of Secretary Baker, Governor Lister, the L.P.A., the I.S.W.U.A., the I.U.T. and the I.W.W. were bringing no substantial change by mid-to late-August. The I.W.W. general strike failed to materialize (all their loyalists were already on strike), nor was there any sign of a general return to work. In Grays Harbor, for example, August was a busy month of continued picketing and arrests on a variety of petty charges. Hearings were held in Montesano on the 13th for four defendants in I.W.W.-related vagrancy cases. Lawton Henderson, Herman Orvangi, J. H. Wilson and Fred Meischke were all

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[61] IW, August 25, 1917, p. 1.

arrested by "special police" and held for trial.[62] On the 14th, Ed Smulter and E. L. Taber were tried before Judge Martin Smith in Hoquiam as a result of a dispute between them which followed Smulter's calling Taber a "scab." Seventy Wobblies showed up to hear the trial, and as no witnesses appeared to testify against Smulter, his case was dismissed. The court subsequently dropped the case against Taber. Deputy Sheriff McKenney promptly rearrested Smulter, however, on a warrant charging violation of an anti-picketing injunction.[63] The Montesano defendants were all released later that day, having been found not guilty. Tom Waldron, a logger, took their places on the court calendar under an accusation of picketing.[64]

On August 16, at least two hundred men and twenty-five women turned out to picket the Blagen mill in Hoquiam at closing time. Ten minutes before the final whistle sounded, Mayor McKee ordered the crowd to disperse, upon which the police pushed the pickets down the street, well out of the way of the plant. The press reported that "some of the women stood their ground and greeted those who came [out] in words unintelligible to an American."[65] These all-too-familiar nativist slurs were making their reappearance. But immigrants, largely Finns, were certainly not alone on the picket lines. On

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[62]DW, August 11, 1917, p. 4.

[63]DW, August 14, 1917, p. 2.

[64]DW, August 15, 1917, p. 5.

[65]DW, August 17, 1917, p. 1.

August 21 an American woman by the name of Mrs. Lane was arrested by Hoquiam police for "using language calculated to incite trouble." The dangerous verbiage in question was the word "scab."

On the same day in Montesano, I.W.W. William Hughes was sentenced to one day in jail for picketing. Five additional I.W.W. pickets from the Lester logging camp were brought in that morning.[66] On August 23, a manufacturers' meeting in Aberdeen revived its "Americans First" campaign of 1912 in hopes of weakening the strike and making a show of their own—now questionable—patriotism. The employers resolved to:

> . . . give preference in every instance to Americans applying for work . . . , to encourage American . . . families to settle in Grays Harbor . . . , to sell [vacant lands] at very reasonable prices [to American men], and [to] petition our federal government to intern . . . and deport [those foreigners interfering production].[67]

There was no sign, however, that nativist appeals had any effect on the workers' behavior in the ensuing weeks. In fact, there may not have been any very realistic lines along which to encourage divisiveness. The southern Europeans, who had taken the brunt of previous anti-immigrant campaigns, had proven to be quite transient to the timber industry. By the time of the world war, they made up only six percent of the labor force.[68] The largest recent

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[66]DW, August 22, 1917, p. 1.

[67]DW, August 24, 1917, p. 1.

[68]Washington State Bureau of Labor, 9th Biennial Report, 1913-14 (Olympia, 1914), p. 50.

northern European immigrant group was the Finns, and by 1917 a very significant proportion of them were naturalized and well integrated into the political and social life of working class timber towns. Ethnic conflict was not a feature of the 1917 strike. A dozen I.W.W. pickets arrested by the Chehalis County sheriff on August 23 and 24 and imprisoned at Montesano represented a good cross-section of the men in the woods: E. Roy, Finn, 36 years old; I. Harding, American, 26; W. D. Edmonson, American, 33; A. M. Stanley, American, 40; A. Beckman, Swede, 27; H. Loury, Finn, 40; Joel Holman, Russian, 24; Lee Bright, American, 19; Emil Johnson, Finn, 26; Gus Soyring, Finn, 34; J. McNally, Irish, 30; John Jackson, Finn, 23.[69]

The workers of Grays Harbor also enjoyed the sympathy of a good many local merchants, who became targets of a timber industry publicity campaign. The ads read:

> Mr. Merchant, you are displaying cards in your windows stating: We Favor the Eight-Hour Work Day . . . . Why not add this: For Everybody in the United States by Act of Congress?"[70]
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> * * *
>
> As a businessman, would you be willing to conduct your business on an eight-hour day or less, while your competitor, located next door and seeking the same trade, kept his place of business open ten or eleven hours? There are employed in the lumbering industry of the Grays Harbor district . . . approximately 10,000 men. For every restriction of market put on your mills you see the number of men reduced . . . . Will you lose trade if

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[69]DW, August 25, 1917, p. 2.

[70]DW, August 31, 1917, p. 3.

> men and their families are forced to move away because there is no work for them?[71]

There is no indication that these ads had any substantial effect.

On August 27, Chehalis Sheriff Jeff Bartell considered an employer proposal to build a stockade where prisoners might be put to work:

> Our jail is nearly full now. Anyway it is no punishment to put a Wabbly in jail. That's where they want to be. It is costing the county considerable money. I believe it would be a good thing if the commissioners will authorize building a stockade and put the sentenced prisoners to work . . . . Feed those that work well and let those who refuse to work or shirk get a little less.[72]

On the following day, frustrated by six weeks of picketing, Mayor Sargent of Aberdeen turned the situation over to federal troops that had been stationed in his city since July 19. Secretary of War Baker had telegraphed Governor Lister on July 18 to grant him authority to use federal troops to protect mills supplying lumber for army cantonments. Lister complied by sending a detachment to Grays Harbor as a precautionary measure against I.W.W. sabotage.[73] The soldiers were now put into action. The strikers offered no resistance to the soldiers, and picketing practically ceased as the troops surrounded the mills and the city's employment office. The soldiers made no arrests. Socialist Councilmen John Strommer and Anton Pista criticized the mayor's decision to cede his authority to the federal forces, and argued that

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[71]DW, August 25, 1917, p. 3.

[72]DW, August 28, 1917, p. 4.

[73]AW, July 18, 1917, pp. 1, 2; and July 19, 1917, pp. 1, 2; DW, July 20, 1917, p. 1.

there was no law against peaceful picketing. The two socialists recommended that the city council petition the federal authorities to remove the troops, but the council ignored the proposal. Mayor Sargent argued in favor of military action on the grounds that the pickets were all I.W.W.s, whom he disdainfully described as "a few tramps leading a bunch of Finns around."[74]

July had seen not only the arrival of soldiers in Aberdeen, but numerous pleas for federal action by local U.S. attorneys in areas rocked by I.W.W. strikes. The Justice Department was bombarded with such requests during the summer of 1917. But Attorney General Gregory was no more determined to use force as a first resort in the labor disputes of the West than was Secretary of War Baker. Both men at first tended to prefer Labor Secretary Wilson's goal of mediation. By late July, however, federal troops patrolled the mining districts of Arizona and Montana, the farms of eastern Washington, and the timber regions of Washington and Oregon. Their presence was intended to serve the war effort and guard against espionage and sabotage, but in practice the line between national security and strike-breaking was very vague. The A.F.L.'s professions of loyalty to the government, its cooperation with mediation efforts, and its friends in the Labor Department spared member unions the full wrath of the government in Washington, D.C. But federal troops, once dispatched, followed a logic of their own. They broke A.F.L. strikes as well as I.W.W. strikes, and did the bidding of local businessmen and

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[74]DW, August 30, 1917, p. 3; AW, August 29, 1917, pp. 1, 4; AW, August 30, 1917, pp. 1, 5.

politicians even to the extent of acting unlawfully and without the explicit approval of their commanders in the national capital. By late August, military action was compounded by a sudden aggressive determination on the part of the Justice Department to launch a national offensive against the I.W.W. The Justice Department intended to prove that the I.W.W. strikes were criminal conspiracies to interfere with the war effort and with the constitutional rights of employers on government contract. The I.W.W. was to be destroyed.[75]

The introduction of troops into the timber strike had an unsettling effect on the strikers, especially in light of events in Spokane only ten days before the Aberdeen episode. On August 18, Spokane city officials expressed increasing alarm at the harvest and timber strikes in their region, and called upon Governor Lister to request federal troops in anticipation of the I.W.W.'s planned general strike on August 20. The petition to the governor insisted, interestingly enough, that the troops were necessary precisely because the I.W.W. strikers were not guilty of violating any state or local law. Since the striking workers were technically remaining within the bounds of the law, insofar as their actions were aimed at their employers, it would be necessary to redefine their behavior as subversion against the government of the United States.[76]

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[75]Dubofsky, pp. 378-82, 396, 398-414.

[76]EH, August 18, 1917, pp. 1, 2.

On the eve of the day on which the general strike was to occur, Major Clement Wilkins led a National Guard raid on I.W.W. headquarters in Spokane, arresting district secretary James Rowan—a veteran of the Everett Massacre —and twenty-six others. E. H. Blaine, Chairman of the State Public Service Commission, was present for the arrests as a representative of the State Council of Defense. The I.W.W. men were held as military prisoners, and were refused visitors or legal counsel. The city commission subsequently issued a ban on all street meetings, and it was enforced by the same guardsmen who had arrested the Wobblies.[77] The Everett Herald predicted that Rowan would face a court martial for harboring enemy aliens and draft resisters.[78]

The Central Labor Council of Spokane responded to the arrests on August 20 with a strong resolution of condemnation directed against the city officials who had sponsored the troops' actions:

> Whereas, twenty-six workingmen of this city were . . . arrested by the military forces of the United States, and
> Whereas, at the time of their arrest . . . were not violating any law, and
> Whereas, Charles R. Howard, county commissioner; J. S. Bishop, county commissioner; George L. Reid, sheriff; John B. White, prosecuting attorney; Charles A. Fleming, mayor; F. K. McBroom, city commissioner; and J. C. Argall, city commissioner, in a signed statement sent to Governor Lister . . . stated that these men were not committing any offenses against city or state law . . . and

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[77]Troops were also deployed in Idaho's Coeur d'Alene mining districts; and the commanding officer in Lewiston, Idaho proclaimed his right to use whatever force necessary to prevent strikers from interfering with the men at work. Reported in EH, August 20, 1917, p. 1.

[78]EH, August 21, 1917, p. 1.

> Whereas the military forces were brought here and these men arrested . . . because of the cowardly and criminal action of the city and county officials herein named,
>
> Therefore be it . . .
>
> Resolved That we go on record as declaring in view of the lawless element occupying the seats of authority, and in view of the dethronement of justice by the very men sworn to uphold its sacredness, that we believe the I.W.W. were justified in resorting to the only weapon legally at their command—the strike—and that since we hold that the right to strike is a right sacred to all who toil, we denounce this unwarranted and unlawful interference of this right by the military arm of the government as worthy of Russia in her darkest days, but absolutely intolerable in America, and be it
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> Resolved . . . that we denounce the . . . pernicious meddling of E.H. Blaine . . . whose fossilized ideas . . . have made him a pliant tool in the hands of the agents of the predatory profit patriots; and that we demand of Governor Lister that [Blaine] be removed, . . . that all men representing labor on any and all boards immediately resign, and particularly Ernest Marsh from the state council of defense . . . and be it
>
> Resolved, That we demand of E.P. Marsh, president of the state federation of labor, and Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor, that a general strike of all industries be called.[79]

As in Hoquiam in 1912, the A.F.L. and I.W.W. were thrown together by the implacable hostility of businessmen and business-oriented public officials to all that was dear to organized labor.

Ernest Marsh was quite taken aback by demands for his resignation from the defense council, and instead led the council's labor committee in an investigation of the Spokane affair. Of particular concern were rumors of a conference purported to have been held on August 17 between Governor Lister, the state attorney general, and representatives of the Justice

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[79]IW, August 25, 1917, p. 1.

Department. It was at that meeting that a reported agreement had been reached to summarily arrest the I.W.W. strike leaders on the day the strike was to become effective. Justice Department officials declined to comment on this.[80] The Marsh committee vindicated Governor Lister, but accused Spokane businessmen, journalists, and officials of irrational and bitter opposition to organized labor. While not explicitly addressing the question of whether Lister had been directly complicitous in the military maneuvers at Spokane, the committee approved of Lister's general collaboration with federal forces in Washington State on the grounds that the I.W.W. was a treasonous menace that needed to be dealt with. The Marsh committee stated its own disapproval of the I.W.W.'s teachings and practices, but concluded that:

> . . . in large measure society is to blame for the growth of the I.W.W. movement in that it stood aloof while responsible unions sought against bitter odds to better the conditions of the toilers. The I.W.W. movement is the result of conditions for which society is largely responsible and society is now reaping the seeds long since sown.[81]

By September, the growing involvement of troops was forcing the I.W.W. to reappraise its tactics. The organization's most active leaders were being arrested, pickets intimidated, and on September 5, a federal grand jury in Chicago began its investigation of alleged Wobbly involvement in a

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[80]EH, August 18, 1917, p. 2.

[81]EH, August 31, 1917, p. 11.

German-funded conspiracy to sabotage the war effort of the United States.[82] The I.W.W.'s future did not look rosy. The political attack against the I.W.W. converged with another factor that might conceivably have brought an end to the strike. A large number of mills that were not members of the Lumbermen's Protective Association conceded the eight hour day and resumed operations.[83] Although the I.W.W. held the position that no one should return to work until all the mills had conceded, this was an unrealistic expectation, given the long duration of the strike and the hardship it imposed on the workers. The employers' uneven response to the strike demands would probably lead to an uneven return to work, breaking the workers' ranks, and causing the strike to fizzle over time.

The I.W.W., after a referendum of the men, addressed these problems by transferring the struggle to a "strike on the job." The men would return to work, but would intentionally slow down production. To quote Vernon Jensen:

> Sometimes a crew would go out to a job, work a few days on a ten-hour basis, and after the boss had gone to some expense in provisioning his mess house and getting started, the men would quit at the end of eight hours. Usually the whole crew would be fired. A new crew might repeat the performance—a foreman thought he had the worst crew in the world until he got the next. In other cases, an operator would have a full crew except for fallers, of which, perhaps he had only half enough, and the I.W.W. would try to make sure that he did not get more. The employer thus was carrying practically a full crew but was

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[82]EH, September 7, 1917, p. 1.

[83]Jensen, p. 127.

getting only a restricted output. In addition, turnover was tremendous.[84]

Examples of this phenomenon abound. A small sampling follows.

Clear Lake, Wash.—At the Northern Coast Timber Company, camp 24, there were fourteen men shipped on the 18th, arriving at noon, and finding about fifteen scabs working. The men worked five hours on Tuesday, ten hours on Wednesday, and took the eight-hour day on Thursday. The boss . . . told them that they all knew it was a ten-hour camp and so they were all discharged. Five of the scabs quit with them.

Aberdeen, Wash.—Things on the harbor look good for the eight-hour day. The boss has a full crew today and tomorrow he hasn't a man. This happens a few times and he begins to see a great light.

Monohan, Wash.—Although the fallers and buckers work by contract in this camp, they sit down for two hours after they have worked eight hours.

Shafers Camp—After running three days there were not enough logs cut to make expenses. The whole crew was fired. The new crew is reported to have the same trouble. It is believed the trees are on strike and refuse to be cut on a ten-hour schedule.[85]

Tacoma, Wash.—At one of the St. Paul camps all the men in the crew came out on Monday after taking an eight-hour day. Three company pets are sticking on the job.

Malbron, Wash.—The Snohomish Logging Company got started with two sides running but on Thursday the steam went crazy with the heat and blew the whistle at 4 p.m. Sixty men rolled up and came out, leaving eight on the job waiting for the next shipment so the new crew can be instructed as to how the wobblies

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[84]Ibid., p. 128.

[85]IW, September 22, 1917, p. 1.

> get paid for striking. This is the second time this stunt has been pulled at the camp and soon it will be eight hours for ours.[86]

The success of these efforts was recognized even by the mainstream press, which had, since late August, exploited every opportunity to declare the strike dead.

> Activity by the Industrial Workers of the World in logging camps in carrying out, evidently, a plan of intermittent striking for an eight-hour day, is beginning to show itself rather prominently, though spasmodically, and has had the effect of reducing the working forces of several camps in the Grays Harbor district.[87]

Since the strike on the job continued unabated into the new year, one should note that these tactics required a remarkably broad agreement among substantial numbers of workers as to what constituted "proper" strike behavior. What the I.W.W. leadership had essentially done was to turn the entire conduct of the strike over to the rank and file. Spontaneous local "wildcat" actions were repeated by ordinary workers over and over again, from locality to locality, without the benefit of strict organizational discipline. This self-disciplined riot of informality was a remarkable accomplishment on the part of the timber workers themselves. Idaho's Senator Borah sensed this fact, although it seemed clearly to bewilder him:

> The I.W.W. are about as elusive a proposition as you ever ran up against . . . it is almost impossible to deal with them . . . . You cannot destroy the organization. That is an intangible proposition. It is something that you cannot get at. You cannot reach it. You do not know where it is, it is not in writing. It is

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[86]IW, September 29, 1917, p. 1.

[87]DW, September 25, 1917, p. 1.

> not in anything else. It is a simple understanding between men, and they act upon it without any evidence of existence whatever.[88]

Senator Borah's observations were a testament to the extent to which direct action had become ingrained in the tactical repertoire of the timber workers. In September, the strike had in a sense come full circle. What began spontaneously in July and was then harnessed and channeled by the I.W.W. was now again unchained. Workers would not know whether direct action on their part would bring greater or fewer gains than the disciplined strike of the past months, but their freedom to take aggressive action against the interests of their employers, under the auspices of the I.W.W., may have explained that organization's continued popularity among the strikers. The Wobblies advocated and supported a type of confrontational behavior which the A.F.L. leadership was bound by ideology, tradition, and organizational self-preservation to oppose. Not that the A.F.L. were not fighters, but they conceived the rules of struggle differently. By late summer 1917 it appeared that a very much larger number of men in the timber industry were playing by I.W.W. rules than by A.F.L. rules.

An important illustration of the relative importance of the I.W.W. itself or of tactics that could be associated with it came in the internal correspondence of the timber companies during the great strike. While timber concerns had every reason to play up I.W.W. involvement for public consumption, so as to

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[88]Jensen, p. 128, from Congressional Record, Vol. 56, Part 4, 65th Congress, 2nd Session, March 21, 1918, p. 3821.

put a subversive stamp on the strike, the lumber barons had no cause to play such games among themselves. Yet their correspondence tended to ignore the A.F.L. altogether. In a letter of July 30, Alex Polson wrote to Clark Ring of Merrill & Ring Company: "I wish we had an extra session of the legislature that would give us some laws with which to handle the 'Wabblies,' similar to what they have in Minnesota."[89] On July 28, Clark Ring penned the following from Saginaw, Michigan to Dwight Merrill in Seattle:

> The greatest mistake ever made in the history of the country was in the Republican convention of 1916, and now the man does not live who could pull the Republican party together again to win. Many good Republicans now belong to the I.W.W. and other socialistic organizations through the incompetency of the Republican party's management.

On August 10, Dwight Merrill addressed this comment to Clark Ring:

> My dear Clark:
> . . . the poor fellows were somewhat discouraged over the outlook of the spruce production inasmuch as the strike seems to be gaining strength every day . . . . The I.W.W.s are the ones responsible for the strike and, of course, it is impossible to confer with them.[90]

These employers clearly genuinely believed that it was the I.W.W. they were up against and no one else. If this was not the case in terms of card-carrying membership, then it was an image generated by the militancy of the workers.

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[89]Merrill & Ring Papers, University of Washington Library, Manuscripts Division, Accession No. 726, Box 26, file of July 16-31, 1917.

[90]Ibid., Accession No. 726-4, Box 61, general correspondence, Richard Merrill, 1917-18.

This militancy came through loud and clear a month after the above letters were written in the strike on the job.

On September 20, the A.F.L.'s I.U.T. responded to the same conditions that had led to the Wobblies' tactical shift. They too understood the financial pressures their members faced and chose to opt for a new direction. But the A.F.L.'s commitment to portraying itself as disciplined, sober and contractually-inclined precluded any possibility that the I.U.T. might join the strike on the job. Instead, the I.U.T. effectively wrote itself out of the remainder of the struggle by announcing that the strike was still on, but stated, "the most vital point in our new tactics is to maintain a condition of non-insistence on the strike . . . ."[91] The union continued to insist that it would accept nothing less than the general establishment of the eight-hour day, but it abandoned any realistic means of achieving this.

The A.F.L. union was caught between a rock and a hard place. Since its presumed jurisdiction was in I.W.W. strongholds, if it decided to carry on with conventional strike tactics, its members, unlike the Wobblies, would neither eat nor necessarily win the strike. If it adopted the strike on the job, it would be throwing in its lot with the I.W.W. and risking both its organizational integrity and its survival in the face of certain accusations of sedition. The union's stated concern for the fate of married men with families to support and for others who were financially pressed was understandable, but it was

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[91] AW, September 20, 1917, pp. 1, 2.

now hard, nonetheless, to imagine that workers who had held out so long and paid dearly for the promise of eight hours would see viable leadership in the I.U.T. How would the shorter day be achieved unless enough workers made the ten-hour day untenable? After September 20, the strike on the job was the only show in town. The abdication of the International Union of Timberworkers made A.F.L. criticisms of the new Wobbly tactic ring hollow. A short column in the Shingle Weaver read: "Take out a card in the I.W.W. They will give anyone doing this a permit to scab (striking on the job, they call it). Easy, isn't it, when once you know how?"[92] Although it did not make very good sense to hold up the dogma of "non-insistence on the strike" as a superior tactic to Wobbly "scabbing," what no doubt irked the A.F.L. locals was the troublesome extension of the strike on the job to the shingle mills. The I.S.W.U.A. was not calling off its strike, and was insisting instead that its members seek work in eight-hour industries until a settlement in timber could be reached. Some I.S.W.U.A. men chose to adopt the Wobbly tactic instead. One I.S.W.U.A. loyalist commented:

> Oh, yes, I know these men will tell you they are I.W.W.s and are striking on the job . . . . I think each local union should get the names of every one of them on the "we don't work with" list; a new variety—the spineless rat.[93]

Even Harry Call, the Bellingham "class warrior" of 1912, was profoundly critical of the Wobbly tactic.

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[92]SW, October 6, 1917, p. 8.

[93]SW, October 13, 1917, p. 8.

> These noble radicals choose to cover up their scabbing by "striking on the job." That is a line of bunk . . . . The I.W.W. and the manufacturers are in league to destroy not only our organization, but any union of the American Federation of Labor that they can lay their dirty hands on . . . . Our patriotism has stood the acid test; we have not defied the government; we have made every fair offer that could be made . . . . Join up and carry on for the eight hours.[94]

Where, then, did matters stand by October? The I.S.W.U.A. strike was still on. Individual shingle weavers had either taken work in eight-hour day war industries, such as shipbuilding, or in eight-hour shingle mills, or returned to strike on the job, or in some cases simply returned to work altogether. The I.U.T. strike was for all intents and purposes over, and mill hands either went back to the mills or sought employment elsewhere as laborers. Some were lucky enough to return to eight-hour mills and some struck on the job. The I.W.W. strike was still on insofar as workers were willing to carry on their campaign of passive resistance. This was most effective and most widespread in the logging camps. Lumberjacks and mill hands together constituted a huge majority of timber workers. Since these men also formed a very large pool of unskilled or semi-skilled labor, they were not as readily able to exercise the shingle weavers' option of transferring a valuable skill to another industry. A shingle sawyer, for example, practiced greater precision than a faller in the woods. And aside from the issue of marketability, the mill hands and loggers were too numerous to accommodate elsewhere. So most often, the men in the camps and mills, generally less bound by family ties, voted with their feet

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[94]SW, October 20, 1917, p. 8.

and took their labor from place to place as more camps and mills began to accept the eight-hour day. The loggers also discovered that their power to tie up the rest of the industry was substantial, even as they continued to draw pay. In November, for example, the National mill in Hoquiam was forced to close for lack of logs, yet the camps were all running.[95]

The net effect of the strike by mid-autumn was to reduce shipments of spruce—needed by the United States government for airplane production—to less than half the required ten million feet per month.[96] One would have to say that, even with the partial return to work from late summer on, the strike was very successful in disrupting production and in demonstrating the urgent need for a fair settlement with labor. But how would such a settlement be accomplished with many of the more powerful firms refusing to negotiate? The answer came along with Colonel Bryce P. Disque, whom the War Department sent west in October to investigate the condition of the lumber industry. Colonel Disque, Secretary of War Baker, and several of the lumber magnates agreed to the creation of a patriotic organization that would enlist the timber workers to the government's cause. The plans were approved by the Secretary of Labor and by Samuel Gompers as well.[97]

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[95]IW. November 17, 1917, p. 4.

[96]Jensen, p. 129.

[97]Ibid.

On November 30, 1917, the first local of the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen was born. From the government's perspective, it was not a moment too soon. The strike on the job continued in Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana, demonstrating, in the official eye, the persistent strength of the "seditious" I.W.W. The strike was also counting some victories. In early December, the Spokane Loggers Club, a trade association, petitioned Congress for an industry-wide eight-hour law. At the same time, the Western Pine Manufacturers' Association voted by a two-thirds majority to grant the eight-hour day with no reduction in wages.[98] This latter development was particularly important, since the pine region had been the site of the earliest and most dogged I.W.W. efforts. The government hoped to accomplish two things of equal importance through the instrument of the 4L—to restore full production and to destroy the I.W.W. and isolate it from any of the gains its struggle had made possible. Both aims were accomplished, but only by granting the timber workers an eventual victory in regards to their material demands.

The 4L was not a union or a representative organization. Employers and employees were both expected to join, and all were sworn in writing to dedicate themselves to production, to the war effort, and to stamping out "sedition."[99] It was the War Department that imbued the 4L with authority, and membership grew substantially during the world war. By January 1918,

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[98]IW, December 15, 1917, p. 1.

[99]Jensen, p. 130, from 4L Monthly Bulletin, May 1918.

there were 10,000 Loyal Loggers. By April, their numbers had jumped to 70,000. By the end of 1918, membership stood at 100,000; and the lumber industry was divided into districts, each headed by a commissioned officer.

How might one explain the phenomenal success of the organization's recruitment efforts? It is true that intimidation sometimes played a role, especially in demonstrating the danger of continued association with the I.W.W.[100] But it is extremely unlikely that 100,000 workers could be forced to join reluctantly without a far greater level of military violence than was seen in the great strike. The Washington State Federation of Labor, which was legally free to continue membership activities in timber and elsewhere, publicly condemned the Loyal Legion as an enemy of independent labor, but to no avail.[101] This was a fair criticism, but it did not put a crimp in the 4L.

Whatever it was that attracted workers to the Loyal Legion, it was very likely not the organization's professed ideology. The 4L's emphasis on conveying its message through songs and slogans appeared as mimicry of the I.W.W.—but as such, it was largely poetry without a soul:

> Come all ye Loyal Legionnaires, hear what I have to say
> The Loyal Legion's growing fast—the Legion's come to stay;
> Let me tell you we are working on a cooperative plan,
> It's the only good incentive for the thinking, working man.

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[100]IW, January 5, 1918, p. 1, gives examples of military instigation of anti-I.W.W. vigilantism.

[101]Jensen, p. 133.

Its principles are sound and right; it always makes you feel
A great sight better when you know you're getting a square deal.[102]

If not less than rousing, 4L verse could be downright silly:

Gray mist along the hills in gentle drift;
A glimpse of tree tops, hiding in a cloud.
Bright golden sunbeams shining through a rift
And scents of budding life all round about.
White wisps of smoke arising far and near,
A stir of life around an open door;
A bell that's calling, jubilant and clear,
Are tokens that a day has come once more.
The dawn has lingered in the morning air,
Reviving, giving life and strength anew
And expectation makes the world more fair
To all the merry, jostling, sturdy crew.[103]

So why were so many "merry, jostling, sturdy crews" joining the Loyal Legion in enormous numbers after a very long, determined and definitely not "merry" strike? The answer is quite simple. In late February and early March 1918, Colonel Disque became in essence the supreme authority within the Loyal Legion. His executive orders required strict compliance on the part of both employers and employees. On February 27, Disque determined that the eight-hour day was essential to labor peace in the industry. Recalcitrant firms would be compelled to observe it. On March 10, Disque issued a set of industry-wide regulations which included the eight-hour day, time and one-half for over-time, a uniform board charge of $7.35 per week, and mandatory furnishing of

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[102]4L Monthly Bulletin, Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen (Portland, Oregon), vol. 1, no. 7, September 1919, p. 6.

[103]Ibid., vol. 1, no. 4, June 1919, p. 1.

clean bedding to all men at a charge of $1.00 per week.[104] The 4L also set minimum and maximum wages, with the maximum being generally the rule for the duration of the war. This amounted to fifty to fifty-five cents an hour for unskilled labor, or around $4.00 for an eight-hour day. This was more than either the A.F.L. or I.W.W. unions had demanded at the onset of the strike. Loyal Legion membership sky-rocketed after, and only after, Disque's program went into effect.

Within a year of the first walkouts that signaled the great lumber strike of 1917, the timber workers' unions were in shambles. The I.W.W. was treated as a renegade and outlaw organization. Its small coffers were drained by the government's judicial prosecutions. The I.S.W.U.A. disintegrated and merged into the I.U.T in March 1918. The new International Union of Timberworkers had only 203 shingle weavers and 2,324 timber workers in its ranks.[105] But most of the material demands of the strikers, and especially the most important of all—the eight-hour day—had been won. The workers had it all, except independent unionism, and this would be put inevitably on the back burner for some time to come. But an important victory of sorts could not be denied, and important lessons were certainly learned.

Timber workers had learned how to make their absence felt in every branch of the industry, and how to endure a long contest with some food in

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[104]Jensen, p. 132.

[105]Ibid., p. 136.

their bellies. They learned the importance of waging an industry-wide strike, even though they did not yet all have an industrial union. The men in the mills and camps both learned the significance of the "harvesters" of timber, even though the "processors" had been in the apparent forefront of the labor struggles of the prior twenty years. Had the "timber beasts" in the woods not held out so determinedly and for so long, had they not been such enthusiastic strikers on the job, there would have been logs for scabs to cut. The solidarity of the "tramps" helped win the strike in the mills.

What workers perhaps did not fathom so easily was the new and peculiar role of the government of the United States in imposing industrial peace as it did. If one sets aside the outspoken Wobbly job delegate or organizer, workers in general were not subjected to military brutality. In fact, their material demands aroused a good deal of sympathy at the highest reaches of government. In its dealings with the timber strikers, the government chose ultimately to deliver a general carrot and a selective stick. The war in Europe and the residues of Progressivism made this decision possible. The war had created an unprecedented demand for timber—especially spruce—in the form of government war orders. The war had also sapped the nation's labor supply to fill the trenches of northern France. In simple terms of supply and demand, workers were at a premium. Of course, choosing to exercise one's market power at a time of national emergency could well be viewed as unpatriotic, but as it was repeatedly pointed out at the time, the timber workers' demands were well in line with actual conditions in most industries serving the nation's

military needs. The United States consequently saw both the justice and practicality of having these demands granted, and the workers were certainly pleased by that. But the U.S. was not pleased with the I.W.W. The government therefore struck hard at the Wobblies to send a clear message regarding the danger of associating with "subversives," while granting the workers virtually all that they—Wobbly or not—had fought for. Perhaps some workers, even many, were uneasy at these attacks. There must certainly have been some concern at the collapse of their independent organizations, whether I.W.W. or I.U.T. or I.S.W.U.A. But the promised gains could not be rejected or ignored.

An interesting lesson that workers might have learned was that the I.W.W.'s professed revolutionism was a great liability, in fact too great to allow the organization to sustain itself as a durable day-to-day union. But the I.U.T.'s and I.S.W.U.A.'s professed patriotism was no asset, since it brought no employers to the bargaining table and no specific support or assistance from the government of the United States. What did matter was the workers' own behavior in their struggle for a decent life. The timber workers had held together in sufficient numbers, and employed tactics that were sufficiently disruptive without engaging in any violence or illegal activity as to tie up production, without offering any counter-offensive advantages to their enemies. And they were lucky enough to do all of this at a time when the federal government needed them on the job. The rank-and-file timber workers in the strike of 1917 mastered the tactical skills of direct action and passive

resistance, and consequently learned effective tools of struggle. They also learned that under some conditions they might find an ally of sorts in the state. This was important, since they were already aware of its power as an implacable foe. What they now needed was a new organizational vehicle of their own to make practical future use of their lessons—an independent and representative industrial union. This was probably not their immediate concern in the winter of 1918, but someday it would be; and as in the past, their own efforts and experimentation, or those of their children, would make a small piece of history.

CONCLUSION

In the years that followed the First World War, the 4L and the lumber industry were in decline. As the broad economic prospects and the narrow political exigencies of the war disappeared, employers and then workers lost their affection for the peacetime 4L, and membership dropped in the early twenties to about ten thousand. On the other hand, the Timber Workers and the I.W.W. experienced a revival, with a combined membership twice that of the 4L. Independent unionism was in partial resurgence. The industry itself, however, was increasingly beset by the same problems that had slowed its emergence from the depression of 1913-15—overproduction and builders' shift to new materials such as composition shingles, concrete and steel. From late 1920 on, the lumber industry and its workers fell on hard times.[1] Declining demand and high unemployment served as a great disincentive to the young workers who might have flocked to the timber districts in better years and this broke whatever intergenerational continuity might have existed among families who made their livelihood from the hewing of wood.

While industrial unionism was finally achieved in the timber industry in 1937 with the birth of the International Wood Workers of America-C.I.O., the path to that important accomplishment is beyond the scope of this study.

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[1]Jensen, pp. 136-7, 146-51.

However, it was the workers of the first two decades of the twentieth century who laid the groundwork for these future events. How did they do this? Was there in the timber industry a convergent struggle of skilled and unskilled workers—to paraphrase David Montgomery's generalization—that reshaped working class behavior and expectations? What does the organizational story of the timber workers tell us? Did timber workers as a group share a class experience prior to the First World War?

Between 1890 and 1915, the economic evolution of the Western timber industry created the material conditions under which wood workers could come to see themselves as a class. In that twenty-five year span, a technologically primitive industry pioneered by small proprietors who often labored alongside their hired hands was transformed into a much larger-scale mechanized operation controlled by established Midwestern lumber concerns and employing tens of thousands of wage workers. While oligopolization never occurred in timber in any way comparable to say, steel or petroleum, the large lumber concerns were able to exert tremendous influence over their smaller competitors. The minority of large firms that controlled the lion's share of the market for lumber and shingles strove repeatedly and with some success to establish cost and price control through organizations such as the West Coast Lumber Manufacturers' Association, the Shingle Mills' Bureau, and the Lumbermen's Protective Association.

The major economic problem faced by the industry was, ironically, the sheer natural abundance of the Pacific Northwest. The tens of millions of

acres of trees standing ready for harvest threatened a constant market glut and hence falling prices. Unable to control production, manufacturers concentrated on controlling costs, and the timber workers bore the brunt of this strategy. Employers attacked unions as dangerous infringements of their managerial prerogatives, since cost control required the freedom to manipulate wages, hours and productivity in the interests of the owners. Workers, whether unionized or not, found themselves frequently faced with either wage cuts or lockouts as their bosses pursued the two most obvious paths toward price control. And when measured against the larger national economy, the timber industry suffered the vagaries of the business cycle at least as severely as, and sometimes more severely than, the rest of the world of enterprise. Timber workers experienced the hardships of recession or depression five times in just over two decades—1893-97, 1903-04, 1907-08, 1910-11, and 1913-15. For a worker born in the 1870s who committed his life to timber, these hard times would have amounted to half his career up until the First World War. And by 1915, not only was the work year a mere 129 days, but an entire way of life appeared to be threatened by mill closures. Of the one thousand-some-odd mills in operation in Washington in 1909, fewer than four hundred remained in 1915.[2]

These hardships, it should be noted, were borne fairly evenly by different segments of the labor force and by workers with different skill levels. A

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[2]Clark, Mill Town, p. 132.

glut of shingles or lumber affected the camps as it did the mills; a glut of logs affected the mills as it did the camps—the whole industry rose and fell as a unit. And while in the early 1900s "combination" mills could sometimes shift the cost of a wage increase to skilled shingle weavers downward onto the backs of non-union lumber mill hands, shingle weavers were certainly not accorded unique privileges in hard times. As previous chapters have shown, the weavers, despite their command of a valuable skill and a higher-than-average wage, were subjected to repeated attacks on their standard of living, their control of their labor, the very existence of their jobs, their organizational freedom, and even on their very bodies when anti-labor vigilantism raised its ugly head. To the extent that capitalist development itself creates a working class, the evolution of the timber industry between 1890 and 1915 did so. Workers in camps and towns, producing logs, lumber and shingles came to share the common economic conditions of class during those years. The extent to which they came to see themselves as a unitary class, the ways in which they explained their economic experiences to themselves and the reasons behind the courses of action they took in response to their hardships all require further examination.

Workers interacted in several arenas—their communities, their political activities, their fraternal organizations and their workplaces. At the community level, the timber towns of the Pacific Northwest could not have offered a much more auspicious ground for the development of class sentiment. Hoquiam, Aberdeen, Everett, Bellingham and the like were small walking cities whose

landscape was dominated by the mills, working class hotels and small houses on twenty-five-foot lots. Wage laborers and their families comprised in excess of seventy-five percent of the population, and most of these were directly or indirectly dependent on the lumber companies for their livelihoods. While neighborhoods were demarcated fairly clearly along class lines, with each town possessing a middle-class preserve, working-class neighborhoods were not as ethnically divided as would have been the case in many large metropolitan areas. Nationality, which was the most obvious line of distinction between the workers, did not find a convenient geographic expression. Consequently, town-dwelling lumber workers lived in an environment where the spatial separation of social classes was common but where the mills, the native-born and the foreign-born workers together constituted a geographic entity of their own. Workers of many lands came into daily contact in their neighborhoods, on the way to work and at work. Especially if they lived in family units, contact and association with neighbors of different nationalities was inevitable. Families, which by their nature served as the most stable and enduring elements of any community, spoke in a variety of languages—English, Norwegian, Swedish and Finnish. Among the first generation of Northwesterners, the native-born English speakers often shared a common industrial experience in the Midwestern timber industry as well as a common experience of American citizenship. Both of these factors bred a certain sense of fraternity. For the others, bonds of kinship and ties to the European villages of their birth played a major role in shaping their identity. The variety of ethnically-based and cross-class

fraternal orders and churches spawned by the immigrants was a testament to that fact. But, at least for northern European immigrants, by the second and third generations one would find a comfortable coexistence between these groups within occupation, union, and—in the case of socialism—political party, that acted as a class-based counterweight to ethnic association. In Everett in 1910, for example, over half of the shingle weavers were native-born children of Irish, German, Norwegian, and Swedish immigrants.[3] All were thoroughly integrated into the shingle weavers' union, whose fraternal discipline has been noted. These particular ethnic lines consequently lost their divisive power.

Those workers least able to make this transition were often treated with suspicion by those who had. Greek and Slavic workers especially, and Italians and Hindus for that matter, posed a difficult problem for class formation at the community level, since they were largely young men transitory to both the timber industry and the United States. These young men held more dearly to the village loyalties that they carried with them to America and reproduced in the form of rooming-house arrangements and cooperative "drustvos," and which they hoped to carry home again some day. Their bonds with each other could serve as a formidable basis for their solidarity as workers, and even sometimes for their solidarity with <u>other</u> workers, as in the Grays Harbor strike of 1912,[4] but their residential and linguistic isolation and

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[3]See Chapter 2, p. 69.

[4]See Chapter 4.

their dreams of returning home made their assimilation to "American" working class norms an uncertain proposition.

The Finns offered an interesting and unique set of circumstances when it came to integration into the larger working class. While the Swedes and Norwegians had generally entered the class at a time of nativist ferment, and were able to make common cause with old-stock immigrants on the basis of a shared Anglo-Nordic Protestantism, the Finns arrived to greet the rise of American socialism and were able to use their own experiences with social democratic politics as a bond to American workers who had just entered a new ideological phase of their own.

As this study has pointed out, the political language of American timber workers changed rather dramatically in the first decade of the twentieth century. While native-born workers retained an image of themselves as citizens of the republic during the entire period, the nature of that republic came under scrutiny. The very important role played by socialism in Northwestern towns was a function of this change in perspective. American workers who had once said, "we are the ruling class" came instead to say, "we must become the ruling class." In 1901, for example, American timber workers felt that the republic was theirs, while by 1912 they were hoping to reclaim it as their own through class struggle. This important ideological shift within the concept of worker as citizen—from worker/citizen as insider to worker/citizen as outsider—served to broaden American workers' vision of class in the direction of worker as worker.

Union rhetoric in the timber districts by 1912 made this abundantly clear in its appeals to a universal brotherhood of labor irrespective of nationality —and this appeal was made not just by the I.W.W., but by A.F.L. locals that had been bastions of skilled American-born worker/citizens for some time. While the Finns could not, at least in the first generation, share any version of the worker/citizen identity, they could and did share in the idea of worker as worker. The Socialist Party served as the bridge or common denominator between the native and Finnish contingents of class struggle. And as Finns achieved naturalization or gave birth to Finish-American children, the shared commitment of old-stock and Finnish-American workers to the socialist cause provided a shared basis for class identity. The native-born workers came to socialism by way of citizenship and unionism. The Finnish workers came to citizenship and unionism by way of socialism. Both met on the common ground of class.

The Socialist Party became a major force in working-class electoral politics in the timber towns, frequently commanding majorities in working-class wards and at least one third of the total electorate in the timber towns.[5] The party also enjoyed support beyond its electoral base as a result of its appeal to large numbers of unnaturalized workers, especially the Finns. But politics itself did not become the principal vehicle of working class expression in the early twentieth century. Timber workers chose several different ways of inte-

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[5]See, for example, Chapter 2, pp. 64-5.

grating on the one hand, and segregating on the other, the politics of work and the politics of off-work. By 1912, the shingle weavers, expressing themselves through their union locals, had come to see themselves as victims of capitalist development at work and used the strike as their economic weapon. Off-work, this feeling of victimization found a parallel political voice in the electoral politics of socialism, which promised to turn the state over to the interests of the working class. There were, however, plenty of American worker/citizens who did not adhere to the socialist program. For some, the presence of moderate "friends of labor" in mainstream politics—leaders who promised advancement through harmonious class cooperation—such as Hoquiam's Mayor Ferguson or Washington's Governor Lister—offered a more palatable alternative. The economic power of the lumber barons, the uncertain role of the middle class, and the numerical weakness of workers as citizens all contributed as well to the lack of a cohesive working-class political presence.

The lumber barons and their middle-class supporters were often effective in convincing some number of workers that radical political programs would result in lost jobs as businesses migrated to safer ground. This forced workers as voters to choose between class politics and palliative politics. The latter often appeared as the only sensible choice. Another option available to the working class voter was to join with those members of the middle class who advocated moderation and abhorred the anti-labor vigilantism of some of their neighbors. In this case, a cross-class coalition might hope to elect a

candidate who was sensitive to the needs and rights of labor while hopefully not driving jobs away with anticapitalist rhetoric. Hoquiam's Mayor Ferguson was hoped to be such a candidate in 1912 but he failed to achieve re-election.

Finally, the numerical weakness of worker/citizens was perhaps the most important stumbling block to working class political action. Voter registration among workers was far lower than among members of the middle class. In the timber districts in the early decades of the twentieth century most workers were ineligible to vote as a consequence of either foreign birth or migratory status. The relatively lower-paid and lesser-skilled jobs in the industry were filled predominantly by foreign-born workers, most of whom had not sought or achieved naturalization by the time of the First World War, or native-born migratory workers, frequently of old stock, who were deprived of political rights because of their lack of residency. This large disfranchised mass shared a common experience, that of the work place as the only available battleground of class struggle. The I.W.W. eventually unified these two categories of workers because it was the organizational vehicle whose tactics and ideology most closely reflected their experiences.

So just as the Socialist Party served as a bridge between some foreign and native workers, the I.W.W. served as a bridge between a larger number of others. To timber workers, socialism and unionism were two doctrines so broadly interpreted and so frequently interconnected as to draw large numbers of disparate workers under their banners. The A.F.L. locals, for example, were actively involved in Socialist Party electoral politics, while the I.W.W. at times

exerted influence in and at others won support from the party's revolutionary wing. Socialist ideology was broad enough to encompass reformist/electoral (J. G. Brown), electoral/revolutionary (Harry Call), and revolutionary/syndicalist (I.W.W.) variants, providing workers with an expansive doctrinal umbrella. This, along with the A.F.L.'s and the I.W.W.'s common commitment to unionism, encouraged some workers to travel freely and comfortably between the A.F.L., S.P. and I.W.W., and established a good deal of potential and actual common ground between timber workers in different trades, locations, and of different nationalities.

What evidence do we have that these commonalities affected workers' behavior? From the time of the shingle weavers' second battle in Ballard in 1908, it does seem that skilled and unskilled timber workers were beginning to challenge their bosses on parallel tracks. In that year for the first time the shingle weavers' union displayed a new openness to the plight of the unskilled. This position may at first have served limited practical ends, as the weavers discovered that the lumber barons' power over the skilled men depended in part on the economic might they amassed by squeezing wealth from the non-unionized common laborers. But by 1912, as unskilled foreign-born workers who had once been the bane of the native unionists proved their mettle at strike and union, a genuine sympathy began to develop between the two groups. With industrial unionist-leaning socialists in positions of power within the A.F.L. locals at that time, the self-actuated awakening of the unskilled appeared to hold some promise for the future of the working

class. And by 1917, not only were the foreign and native unskilled or semi-skilled workers among the most active in the great strike, but the shingle weavers' erstwhile caution in reaching beyond the ideological bounds of the "American brotherhood of craft" had evolved into a vision of class solidarity that was non-national, non-racial, and not craft- or skill-specific. Nonetheless, the A.F.L. locals, historically based as they were in sedentary communities of worker/citizens, failed to build an organization that could effectively transform this ideological shift into action. The I.W.W. consequently filled the vacuum.

It was at the organizational level, the level of union, that class loyalties among timber workers were at once most evident and most obscured. The warm cooperation of A.F.L. and I.W.W. timber workers on Grays Harbor in 1912 offered one good example of class solidarity. The basis of local A.F.L./ I.W.W. cooperation was established in the free-speech fights of the winter of 1911-12. The Wobblies in effect challenged local authorities to take a stand on the civil rights of workers. Since all that the I.W.W. demanded was unequivocal protection of a constitutionally guaranteed right, and since many of the "people's representatives" and respectable members of the middle class responded unfavorably, this sorely tested the "worker as citizen" identity of the A.F.L. loyalists. In early 1912, the Socialist Party, of which the local A.F.L. shingle weavers' union was a cornerstone, came out in support of the Wobblies. The rights of workers as citizens of the republic served as their common ground. When a few months later large numbers of foreign-born workers conducted the so-called "Greek strike" under I.W.W. auspices, A.F.L.

men and I.W.W. men had already shared in several months of common struggle. While they parted ways on the ideology of direct action , this issue was not raised in the strike, which was conducted in a quite conventional manner. Nor did any jurisdictional disputes arise at that time, since the A.F.L. had as yet made no organizational overtures to the unskilled or foreign-born workers. Also, since Hoquiam's largest employer of timber workers was already at war with the shingle weavers, the broadened struggle offered greater chances of settling the grievances of all workers. In the course of the strike, the A.F.L. locals were pushed even further toward the realization of their political weakness as most public officials sided blatantly with the millmen.

All the timber workers of Hoquiam learned lessons in that strike that made class cohesion more possible than in the past. The unskilled learned that they could count on the the support of the weavers, despite employers' propagandistic attacks aimed at dividing them on ideological and racial lines. The weavers learned that unskilled immigrants could stand as union men. Not only did the mill hands and shingle weavers cooperate with each other, but their local I.W.W. and A.F.L. leaders treated each other with a remarkable degree of respect. The working-class harmony that had been built through months of common struggle at the local level was not to be disrupted even by the intrusion of two virulently anti-craft union emissaries from the national I.W.W., whose misplaced anti-A.F.L. agitation was disclaimed by better-known local men. It should also be added that the indiscriminate physical attacks on

workers by "citizen police" did much to heighten the fact that working class versus middle class was a more potent social distinction than most others.

Finally, the class identification of timber workers was perhaps most clearly revealed in the differences between the Hoquiam and Aberdeen Central Trades Councils. The Aberdeen Council, in which timber workers played no role, opposed the "Greek strike" of 1912 on nativist and anti-I.W.W. principle. In contrast, the Hoquiam Council, in which the shingle weavers played a major role, broke entirely with the traditional conservatism associated with A.F.L. unions. The Hoquiam Council chose to adopt a broader vision of class in its cooperation with the I.W.W., and between timber workers and longshoremen, skilled workers and unskilled workers, and Americans and foreigners in the strike.

From 1913 to 1916 several other events served to forge both a sense of class and an ideological and tactical convergence on the part of different types of timber workers. The first of these was a depression of great magnitude, already discussed in these pages. Generally, after the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, which gave the timber industry its last big boost until the World War, employment in all branches of the timber industry was so irregular, wages subject to such frequent fluctuation, the market for timber so variable, the industrial work year of such unpredictable duration, that all timber workers lived in a state of uncertainty. While loggers were necessarily migrants who followed the stands of trees, geographic mobility among millhands and weavers was exceedingly high. While loggers' and millhands'

wages could rarely afford them the comforts of home and family, shingle weavers felt themselves losing these prized opportunities with every economic downturn. The brief period of speculative expansion that was fueled by optimism over the impending opening of the Panama Canal simply made matters worse when it became clear that expectations of prosperity had been a mere pipe dream. While an older generation of shingle weavers could still remember the union victories of 1901 and 1904, an embittered younger generation of skilled men shared a history of more arduous struggle with fewer gains and frequent losses that put them more on a par with their cogenerationists in the lumber mills and logging camps.

In 1914 a younger generation of radicals gained majority control of the A.F.L. Timber Workers Union, maintained close ties with both the Socialist Party and the I.W.W., and adopted the rhetoric of revolutionary socialism. In November of that year, heightened radicalism in the workplace was compounded by further proof of labor's impotence in the realm of electoral politics. A well-publicized effort on the part of the State Federation of Labor to achieve the eight-hour day by initiative went down to defeat at the polls. Coming on the heels of a city-wide lockout of employees at Everett's shingle mills, this very severe blow to what remained of native-born craft unionists' worker/citizen identity drove the Everett shingle weavers to form an armed auxiliary of class warriors. In 1915, that city's entire Trades Council went over to the revolutionary socialist cause.

In 1916, despite a partial resurgence of moderate leadership, the rights and powers of workers as citizens were put to another extreme test by the events that led to the Everett Massacre. This middle-class counterattack against Wobbly agitation directed so much indiscriminate repression and violence at all workers that all came to fear for their personal freedom. Trades Council secretary Jake Michel, who was no revolutionist, represented the concerns of most ordinary Everett workers when he chose to guard the Wobblies' freedoms of speech and assembly. He was justly horrified at the violent extremes to which middle-class vigilantes would carry their fight against basic constitutional rights.

The free-speech fights and strike that led to the Massacre of 1916 bore a strong resemblance to the Grays Harbor events of 1911-12. In both cases, I.W.W. agitation put the rights of workers as citizens to the test. In both cases, employers, middle-class deputies, and officials sworn to uphold the interests of the people joined forces to demonstrate that workers, although a majority, exerted little power in their democracy. As the I.W.W. men struggled to define the republic's obligation to its workers, more moderate workers came to their defense. And as the moderates found the republic wanting, both factions joined in intensifying their struggles in the workplaces—which, after all, were the Wobblies' ultimate terrain of warfare.

The great strike of 1917 served as the period's last great test of both the timber workers' solidarity and of their leaders' ideological visions and tactical orientations. Although the pre-war years offered several examples of

unity among timber workers, the nature of which suggested a developing sense of class, in the 1917 strike the A.F.L. and I.W.W. unions representing those workers were for the most part at loggerheads with each other. Why was this? On the one hand it should be said that organizations, once set into place, take on a life of their own. On the other hand, there were some very real differences between the kinds of workers that the A.F.L. and I.W.W. unions attracted or recruited. But neither organization did much as a rule to mitigate the impact of these differences.

For example, the skilled workers in the shingle mills were the most likely to be married, home-owning, old-stock, native-born residents of established towns. The loggers were the most likely to be single and migratory, younger on the average than the weavers, non-voting on account of lack of residency, and multi-ethnic. The first category developed a history of A.F.L. affiliation, and the second, I.W.W. The ordinary mill hands stood in between as a mixture of married and single, older and younger men, some American, some foreign-born, occupants of towns but frequently mobile renters as a consequence of low wages and uncertain employment. In 1912 Grays Harbor, this last group joined the I.W.W., and in 1917 they were wooed by both organizations. These differences, however, were not immutable, nor were they always extreme.

As noted earlier, the fact that a younger generation of workers in all branches of the industry tread on more common ground than had their parents and grandparents offered some prospect of concerted action, or at the very least parallel struggle. The hostility between the A.F.L. and I.W.W. unions

in 1917 obscured this fact. The A.F.L. unions, older in history and membership, faced inter-generational conflict within their ranks, as occurred in 1914 and 1915, in a way that the young migrant membership of the I.W.W. did not have to confront. The A.F.L. unions consequently seemed more prone to shifting from moderate to radical stances and back again. But since youth in and of itself was not the crucial variable in determining worker militancy, but rather the generational experience of the workers, the differences between the A.F.L. and I.W.W. in timber may be in part explained as a reflection of diverse generational experiences.

In 1917, the A.F.L. unions were still led by veterans of the shingle weavers' early struggles. Formed as they were by the union battles of 1901, 1904, 1906, and 1908, they had adopted and retained two important notions of how the world of American labor/capital conflict worked. First, they believed that their value as hard-working citizens could and would be ultimately recognized. This reflected some faith in the responsiveness of American society and institutions to their needs. Second, they recognized that their enemies were powerful and implacable, and they responded to this by exercising a good deal of tactical caution where they believed caution was due. Consequently the brazen revolutionism and disruptive behavior of the I.W.W. was anathema to them.

On the other hand, the younger generation of A.F.L. timber workers stood somewhere in between their elders and their young co-generationists in the I.W.W. The young A.F.L. workers had demonstrated their impatience

with the tactics and ideas of their older brothers and fathers on at least two occasions, both of which occurred during the 1913-15 depression.[6] But the youthful insurgencies of 1914 and 1915, which usurped the power of the moderates and defied the authority of the State Federation, were temporary affairs. It took a deep economic crisis and a seemingly hopeless situation for such a shift in the weavers' union's distribution of power to take place. While it was the young A.F.L. men who were most likely to hold dual membership in the I.W.W. and not their elders, their affiliation with the A.F.L. nonetheless had some meaning. No doubt, the younger skilled workers were caught between the hope that their skills would be rewarded, as were those of their fathers, and the fear—justified by the union's apparent drift into impotence—that their fathers' tactics would not yield results. As a consequence, younger workers in the shingle mills were often tolerant of, or in fact practiced, I.W.W. tactics in the midst of the great wartime strike. Compared to the A.F.L.ers, I.W.W. men were almost uniformly young and unskilled or semi-skilled, and as has been noted, either migratory or foreign-born, disfranchised, and consequently deprived of the full range of oppositional possibilities afforded to sedentary, skilled citizen/workers. The I.W.W. became the only vehicle for expressing their dissent. Not only were these workers burning with the impatience of youth, and not only were they devoid of sobering family responsibilities, but they were genuinely and deeply aggrieved, and enjoyed virtually no means of

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[6]See Chapter 5, pp. 177-80.

redress. This does not mean that they shared the specifically revolutionary ideology of their Wobbly leaders. The permanent cadre of I.W.W. organizers was quite small. The men who fought under their banner in 1917-18 numbered in the tens of thousands. What attracted them so spontaneously to the I.W.W. was that it sought them out, as it always had; it challenged their enemies, as it always had; and it promised a good fight on the bosses' turf, with perhaps even some chance of material gains. In an industry whose ranks were largely filled, at all levels, by young men, the young men in the I.W.W. were probably not so far from the young men in the A.F.L. in terms of their ultimate hopes and dreams—they wanted a better life. Different means were at their disposal to achieve this.

The A.F.L.'s model worker took pride in work, home, family, union and nation. These were not aspirations so peculiar as to be beyond the imagination of the average worker, even the worker who accepted I.W.W. leadership. The I.W.W.'s model worker was a class warrior who would fight as relentlessly for industrial freedom as his bosses would for capitalist domination. In the routine, daily life of the human species, determined revolutionists are a rare breed; but who would not, given few choices, fight as hard as one might for physical comfort, security and dignity? In the timber industry between 1908 and 1919, the A.F.L. probably came closer than the I.W.W. in offering workers a vision of what was possible to achieve. The I.W.W. came closer than the A.F.L. to offering a method for its achievement.

The A.F.L.'s often cautious regard for middle-class standards of propriety was effective only as a defensive tactic. The prudence of its leaders stemmed at first from a faith in republican justice, and soon thereafter from an appreciation of the power of labor's enemies. While the A.F.L. promised workers that unionism would deliver security and comfort, an entire generation of workers faced capitalist and middle classes who displayed an astounding degree of hostility toward the achievement of union goals. In the face of such frequently violent antagonism, workers found, much to their dismay, that the A.F.L.'s insistence on sober, patriotic, business-like unionism was by 1917 not only insufficient to win their struggles, but did not offer full security against anti-labor attacks. There was more than a grain of truth to the A.F.L.'s argument that businessmen were driving workers to the I.W.W. The I.W.W., though, also made a more persistent effort to organize the unskilled, semi-skilled and migratory workers who filled the majority of the jobs in the timber industry. In the 1917 strike their roving picket lines, staffed by jungle campers, and their endorsement of the strike on the job served as aggressive, if unconventional tools of struggle.

The I.W.W.'s greatest liability was its professed revolutionism, which put it at odds with the government of the United States. Most of the tens of thousands of timber workers who joined and stuck with the organization in 1917 and 1918 until the creation of the 4L were drawn to the I.W.W. in the hopes that their tactics would bring them victory, but it is doubtful that many shared in their leaders' revolutionary professions. It was rather the practice of

aggressive industrial unionism that bound them together in struggle. Ultimately, the timber workers' disruption of production led to government intrusion and the creation of the 4L, which essentially satisfied all of their material demands in order to bring stability back to the industry and the region. The very same workers who had accepted the leadership of ballot-box socialists in the I.S.W.U.A. and I.U.T., and of revolutionists in the Lumberworkers No. 500, quite quickly and readily abandoned independent unionism for a time when offered some progress by the 4L.

All of this indicates that workers "used" organizations to attain fairly practical goals. It is here that one may begin to define what appears as American "syndicalism." First, although there were cores of loyalists to particular unions among the timber workers, organizational affiliation for most timber workers was fluid, and shifted to accommodate the terrain of class struggle. The frequent absence of unionism among large groups of workers and the equally rapid rise of unionism during key strikes demonstrated workers' interest in success, rather than in organizational permanence. Spontaneous direct action might sometimes have served as a prelude to affiliation as in 1912 and 1917, but sometimes also outlived the organizational approach to struggle as in the latter year's strike on the job. Second, in a climate of government repression and middle-class vigilantism such as frequently existed in the Northwest in the early twentieth century, the visibility of labor organizations made them vulnerable to attack and destruction. Consequently, those union leaders most wedded to the dream of organizational permanence, as in the

A.F.L., found themselves too often forced into positions that offered an inadequate challenge to the authority of their bosses. In 1917, for example, none of the dutiful patriotism of the I.S.W.U.A. and I.U.T. seemed to have rubbed off on the lumber barons. The barons ignored all patriotic appeals to negotiate with their workers, and only invoked patriotism when it seemed a convenient bludgeon to wield against their employees. The willingness of the A.F.L. unions to achieve a negotiated solution amounted to nothing. On the other hand, the I.W.W.'s revolutionism offered workers no hope of concrete short-term success. Conditions such as these left rank-and-file workers with "guerilla" anti-authoritarianism as their only really viable tactic. The I.W.W.'s revolutionism concealed this more general form of syndicalism without a revolutionary program.

Beyond this, the First World War may have played an important role in shaping timber workers' views of the state in a new way. By 1917, the A.F.L.'s and I.W.W.'s almost routine enmity no longer translated into an ignorance or abandonment of each other's traditional bases of support. The I.W.W. had successfully gained recruits from among the A.F.L. shingle weavers, many of whom held dual membership, while the A.F.L. was actively pursuing the loggers and millhands it had once ignored. And both unions conducted their organizing drives in the inclusive language of class, indicating a belief that their working-class audiences were prepared for or desirous of a vision that transcended skill and craft. However, these signs of class identity, forged at the point of production and perhaps even in community life, coexisted with two

divergent tactical/ideological predispositions that were forced into sharper focus by the war.

The war, as all wars, was portrayed by the government of the United States as a noble patriotic effort, a war for democracy, a war for the American way of life. Moderate native-born leaders within the A.F.L. saw this as a unique opportunity to prove their loyalty to their nation and to make progress on workplace issues. The proud vision of worker/citizen, though repeatedly challenged, had never died; and here was a chance to restore its full meaning. No doubt there were many rank-and-file workers who hoped for the same—a restoration of the worker/citizen to the status of insider, pillar of the republic. This vision, however, would necessarily have been limited to workers with strong identities as American citizens. What of the foreign-born, or even the first generation of American-born workers? What of the young native-born migrants—disfranchised, exploited, abused? To these latter groups the I.W.W. spoke the language of worker as worker, and citizenship be damned. Why put your faith in a republic of bosses, a constitution whose protections did not extend to workers, a state over which you could exercise no control?

These two competing visions of the state coexisted within the same working class during the years of war. And then the state acted. And when it acted it weakened both views. The creation of the 4L did not satisfy the worker/citizen aspirations of workers aligned with the A.F.L., for it ultimately deprived them of a viable independent voice, and rather presented them with a choice of failure or the benevolent despotism of Colonel Disque. Yet the 4L

served also to partially undermine the disdain of the state so prevalent among workers drawn to the I.W.W. Again, worker independence was sacrificed, but did not the state act favorably on the workers' material demands? In fact it was quite possible that workers' experiences during the First World War served to fuel a further convergence of sentiment and behavior into the 1920s and 1930s. Here was a state that defied earlier analyses—it did not belong to the workers, nor did it act to crush them. New perspectives and new tactics would have to be developed to exploit and enlarge upon the possibilities presented here.

To what extent then, had the timber workers of the Northwest made themselves into a working class by the end of the First World War? Did the parallel struggles of skilled and unskilled, sedentary and migratory, native-born and foreign-born timber workers reflect a sense of class experience? Did these workers see themselves as a unitary class? As we have seen, timber workers had their differences with each other, not the least of which related to ethnicity. But the northern Europeans and their descendants who made up the bulk of the labor force, including even the late arrivals from Finland, did develop a rapport over time, which allowed for cooperation in the workplace and on strike. Judging from the language of class struggle espoused by their leaders and to which they were drawn, these workers came to share a class mission, only to disagree at times on the details and methods of its fulfillment.

The southern Europeans—Greeks, Italians and South Slavs—aroused greater resentment because of their frequent involvement in strike-breaking,

but these immigrants could be loyal strike supporters as well. Their transience to America, though, gave them an impermanence in the industry that made hostility toward them of minor importance by 1917. In general, while workers did not abandon their ethnic affiliations, whether communal or organizational, they behaved increasingly in class ways. The same may be said of workers divided by skill or patterns of mobility. Skilled and unskilled, sedentary and migratory workers travelled in different social circles, were often geographically separated (town versus camp), but developed over time a common oppositional stance at work.

Another common feature of timber workers of all types was that they rarely turned to electoral politics to bolster their struggles in the workplace. That some voted and most did not reinforced the role of the workplace as the primary locus of class struggle. In addition, the too-frequent, vicious attacks on workers by middle-class vigilantes on the streets of class-segregated timber towns supported workers' sense of "otherness" in relation to their social "betters" at work, in politics, and in the communities in which they lived.

There is no doubt that timber workers carried within them a number of deeply felt and often conflicting attachments. The timber workers of the Northwest were from many lands, with different levels of skill, different occupations, enjoying various experiences of personal success and failure; but they were all brought together to create the wealth of others. It should not be surprising that loyalty to family, community, neighbor, fellow national or coreligionist and union should have sometimes set one against the other. Rather, it was

remarkable that, despite these profound emotional attachments, the timber workers were able to actively promote their class interests through parallel economic struggles in the work place. Over time, "tribal" hostilities were muted, enmity evolved into marriages of convenience, and marriages of convenience into class solidarity. While timber workers disagreed on the shape of union and the purpose of politics, their hard-fought contests in workplace and community allowed them to add "class" to the long list of passionate and contentious loyalties that made them human beings. It remained to be seen how their experiences of wartime and the post-war years would reshape yet again the evolving sense of class that would guide them down uncharted paths into the future.

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