Fred Thompson

Speeches and discussion taped by the Canadian Student Federation of Waterloo, Ontario

Total time - 10 hours

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Elizabeth Balanoff
Director, Oral History Project

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The following transcript was made from copies of tapes made by the Canadian Student Federation of lectures given by Fred Thompson of the I.W.W. in March 1970 at Waterloo, Ontario. The tapes include some of the questions and discussion which followed each lecture,

The Function of Labor Solidarity in a World Market

First of all I'll introduce myself. My name is Fred Thompson and I'm a Wobbly. They asked me to come up here and discuss a few things each day here. Today I want you to think about some ideas that have become, I believe, more or less commonplace and put them together and see if you don't come to the sort of a conclusion I do in that outline on the blackboard. And I regret its very far from commonplace. I think that all I'm doing in the argument I'm presenting there is to take the premises that I think are rather widely agreed upon, and come to a conclusion about what has been the trouble in the past. Given the 1970's, given this year, 1970, facing the problems we do, what can we hope
that a world labor movement will do? What is a workable way for it to proceed in doing that? I'm thinking not simply of what we people, who are more or less radical, will want to do but I think I tend to take for granted that even a conservative labor movement does plan to do what circumstances require it to do to fulfill its basic original purpose. So I'm visualizing, when I'm talking about the labor movement in this outline, not necessarily the sort of a movement I would prefer to see a strong, militant, class conscious revolutionary labor movement. I'm speaking of the kind of labor movements you actually will find, in the various countries, quite different from each other.

Now, I don't think I need elaborate on some of these primary points which I consider rather common place. Union action across boundary lines has, for a long time, been felt to be necessary. But normally it is completely frustrated. I can think of only a very few examples of much successful union action across national boundaries. I think that it's rather apparant what the frustrating machinery is.
The union movement has grown up in the same period of history that gave us our set of a series of national states. It has been molded, like most other institutions, in that framework, has taken the shape of this system of national states. It grew up at a time when even the national states themselves were substantially expressions of the fact of a more or less national market. Your national states express a certain basic economic unity that tends to prevail, for reasons of economic geography and one thing or another.

Now in that framework the unions did develop. The chief reason why any union ever existed was to stop people from being used against each other. That's the basic reason why there is a union. You and I are on a job: the boss tries to speed you against me, He tells you that if you, work I real hard you can have my job, which pays 5 cents more an hour. He tells me perhaps the opposite, Regularly, the management, even, when they don't behave in that petty small peanuts way, they are using labor one against the other.
Today on the world market, they're using the workers of one continent against the workers of another continent. If you look at the picket line around Marshall Fields in Chicago they say, "Please don't buy clothes made in Hong Kong because they get only something like seven bucks a week". People complain about the Rio Grande dividing the U.S. from Mexico. On one side the minimum wage for radio, electronic, that kind of factory work, is $1.60 an hour. Across the Rio Grande it's 29 cents an hour. There are American owned plants on the other side of the Rio Grande with special provisions that all the product in those plants is to come to the United States and not enter the Mexican Market. People who are doing that kind of work certainly do find that Mexican workers are being used against us, they say, and tend to forget they are being used against Mexican workers, in reverse. You find a whole lot of griping about this situation. You find people sometimes urging boycotts against certain foreign goods. You find them saying there should be high tariffs to keep those foreign goods out. But none of those things have worked or are likely to work.
I still think in United States terms. I just came from there, and I find myself at odds. For example, I see a piece in your paper, The Chevron, about the menace of Americanization. And my ears are still tuned to this thing that Americanization is a real good work, you know, and here I find it's a real bad word. It reminds me of St. John, New Brunswick and how Yankees are so shocked when they come up there and see a plaque on the courthouse in honor of Benedict Arnold. They can't quite understand which side he was on. I still think in United States terms. I hope you'll go along with me because I have no first hand familiarity with the Canadian situation. I understand there was this special session on how to avoid or fight Americanization.

The main story in the newspapers today is that President Nixon is very concerned to make sure that the people between those two boundary lines will have the hog's share of the world's resources for decades and decades to come. It is an alarming picture for more reasons than one. I'm just thinking that the United States bans trade with certain countries. Does that stop
a worker in the United States from being pitted against a country where trade is completely banned? In the United States you're not allowed to have a product from Cuba. You're not allowed to have a product of Red China, for example. I don't think it stops us from being pitted against each other because the worker in that other country, if he's manufacturing something for export, is under pressure to work harder and for less than he would otherwise have to work in order that that product can compete with an American product on some third market--France, Germany--so that it can replace us there so that he, too, can have a job, so that his country will have something that it can exchange on the world market for something that it cannot very readily make itself. Even where trade with another country is completely banned, there's competition between workers still in this indirect way. Certainly putting up tariff walls has never stopped us--being used against each other.

All the time you need this action across boundary lines. The thing that started me writing a pamphlet on world labor, however, was in 1967 when there was this big copper strike in the
United States. It lasted ten months. It was the first time that all of the copper mines in the United States were in the same union and that certainly gave it a big advantage. Steel workers had gobbled up Mine, Mill, Smelter Workers there, so all the copper miners were in the one union which was a bargaining advantage, but we had to fight for ten months. Why? Because copper is a product where the price per pound is high enough to make it a global market item. It pays to ship it from almost any place to any place, at the price for which copper sells. It goes on a world market. For the copper miners. In the United States, by staying away from their work, by refusing to mine any copper, to create the necessary pressure on Anaconda, and other, copper companies, they had to reduce the world supply of copper down to the point where Anaconda's major customers, Western Electric, Westinghouse, General Electric were saying, "For goodness sake, settle with those boys, because the price of copper is going up".

But all during the time that they were striking, copper was being produced all around the world, being produced in Chile, where all
you have to do is slide it down a mountain. You don't have to dig a hole in the ground to go after it. The only place it wasn't being produced was down in Katanga, in the Congo. They weren't producing much because of all kinds of internal turmoil that was occurring at the time. It wasn't through any co-ordinated union action that it was stopped. They had to wait ten months until somehow the stoppage of copper production in the United States had made a significant shortage of copper on the world market, despite the stockpiles that different governments and different corporations had built up, Then, eventually when that happened, the customers said, "For goodness sakes settle with them". You see the cost that was involved to win a strike?

Now, had there been co-ordinated action of copper miners who are getting an even worse gyp than American copper miners,: all over the world-- had they synchronized their collective bargaining in some way, had they all struck at one time, things would have been different. Over the years I've been watching this thing. I used to dig copper myself. Maybe that's why I like to follow; this thing pretty closely.
Two days after this strike was settled, the miners in Chile went out. Had they gone out while it was on how much easier it would have been to win the strike. And while I'm looking at it almost unavoidably from the perspective of a worker in the United States, I'm sure of the converse, it would have been much easier to win a strike down there in Chile if they'd been out at the same time the United States Miners were out. Why not co-ordinate these things? All these efforts are frustrated--have been right along.

I don't think I need give you the history of the efforts to build international unions. You surely know them. It was over a century ago that they formed the first international organization in 1864. They did practical union work. Many people think that because of Marx and Bakunin and people like that it was primarily a radical organization, But its primary business was practical union purposes, It did such things as collect funds in Europe to buy rice and bacon for Chinese workers who were on strike in California against a railroad construction job, which I think is a very good example of
international economic union action. They did such things as that until the old nationalism business cropped up. The rulers of France and the rulers of Prussia had a falling out and I suppose you've all heard the stories of misleading telegrams and this, that and the other; anyway, there was a falling out, between the Master classes of the two countries. At the end of it the workers of Paris, who got their wives to donate their kitchen kettles to provide the metal to make guns to defend themselves as good patriotic Frenchman, were told they'd have to surrender those guns. They said, "The hell with surrendering these guns. We're going to keep them". Consequently you had complete unity, The two warring sections of the upper classes of Prussia and France turned all their forces against the embattled workers of Paris, crushing them eventually, killing thousands, deporting thousands, lining them up to be shot. It was a horrible story of how they crushed these Paris workers in 1871. The press of England told such big lies about what the workers were doing that the British Labor Movement, which had been the backbone of this First International,
was rather horror stricken at what it was allledged their brothers in this international were doing in Paris, and particularly since Marx, the secretary of the International, was writing things in defense of what the Parisian workers were doing. The British unions were in an awful fix at that time. Their right to have a treasury was at stake. If the treasurer ran away with the money, the courts were saying, "We cannot prosecute the union treasurer because unions are illegal in the first place". At that time they were very concerned to get official recognition so they could protect their own union funds. They thought they had to withdraw from this horrible thing that was being denounced in the press. All in all this propaganda in the press made things hard.

In 1889, anniversary of the great French revolution, a vigorous labor movement had risen in France from this breakdown. To celebrate that revolution, they invited workers to come there and try and start an international labor organization again, a second international. Sam Gompers, who's usually thought of as the champion of conservatives in the American Labor Movement.
for very practical reasons to pull some chestnuts out of the fires, sent somebody over there to urge that it set aside the 1st of May each year as a labor festival, to urge for the 8-hour day, the shorter work day and things like that. As a result Way day became Labor Day almost everywhere in the world except the United States, Australia, and Canada.

That International fell apart, 1914 came. There had been anticipation that Europe might go to war, it wasn't a surprise. Socialists and others had been saying, "This damn thing's going to happen", for a long time in advance. And there was talk what should you do to prevent it then? The thing that I wished had happened, was what many people had been talking about and many people expected would happen. You can look up the newspapers of that time. The expectation was that there would not be any war in Europe because the unions of Europe would not allow it. They would all go on a general-strike to make a war impossible. I'm sorry they didn't have that general strike.

The idea was that all the workers in all the involved, countries would all go on strike and
make it impossible for their governments to have this kind of a war. The sentiment, even of conservative union men, at that time was against war. Even Sam Gompers, who is our standard for reaction and conservatism in the labor movement, in 1913 was over in Europe and wrote a book about it. And I remember one thing that he said that I liked. He says he cannot understand why the workers in France are put into gray uniforms, and why the workers in Germany are put into brown uniforms, and then are told to go out and shoot holes in each other, and they do. He could not see why workers should allow themselves to be used in this way. This is a union man. It is in violation of union solidarity to scab in your strike. Surely it's a violation of union solidarity to go bomb your children or to shoot holes in each other. Right-along workers have been used against each other in these wars, and they didn't like the idea.

There was this talk of a general strike, but when it came up it didn't happen. I have
read books and books about why it didn't happen, but I think the gist of them boils down to this: The union heads said in these various countries that stopping the war was a political business and the various socialist and similar parties should take action on that. And the heads of all these parties said, "No, calling a strike is strictly a union function. It would be against all of our ethics for a political party to call a strike. The unions should do it."

Meanwhile the governments in Germany and France in particular made sure that distrust was built up as to what their counterparts would do in the other country, and there was no possible exchange of information between them. I'm sure it would have been technically feasible even with the technology and communications available then, certainly much easier today, to find some way, a supra-national way of having this misunderstanding worked out. But it didn't happen. So we had war and all the things that flowed from that war. I can't help think history would have been a much better history to study, if they'd
only had that general strike in 1914 instead of World War I, but they didn't. It fell apart that way,

Prior to 1913 in most countries you would find that ordinarily the union official, the union movement, the union papers were running contrary to the foreign policy of their governments. They ordinarily didn't approve of the foreign policy of their governments. That was the normal relationship between labor and foreign policy.

During the war all countries except Russia (Maybe the Czar later on wished that he had), but in all other countries the governments tended to incorporate labor movements into the machinery of governments, even including radical labor leaders, They were given these honorific positions in government, geared into the machinery of administration.

The character of the movement was substantially, changed by that, Complete cooperation of the unions in furthering the purposes of the government was achieved. Union membership grew quite a bit in England, America, Canada, all
these places, it did mean that you have had a labor union since then. That was only occasionally at loggerheads with the foreign policy of their government. It has been the exception since then, rather than the customary thing.

After the war you find some reconstructions of efforts at international unionism again. Also, out of the war came the fact of the Bolshevik revolution. And the International of unions centered at Amsterdam felt that it should expend a great deal of time and energy fighting with this new International Union that the communists had built up, the Red Trade Union International, to project the Bolshevik Revolution abroad to the labor movement. I think it can safely be said that the major activity of both Internationals was to fight each other.

There was very little action on any practical union basis, very little effort to practice unionism across boundary lines. About the only outstanding instance I can think of that sort in that period was the British General Strike of 1926, which was basically a coal miners strike. The coal miners suffered a big wage cut because
government subsidy for mines was going to be ended. They had a strike to support the miners, all British workers out for ten days. You couldn't expect them to strike indefinitely to carry out the original purpose of that general strike. An effort was made to stop coal from coming into England. The Transport Workers Federation, the Amsterdam, International supported that. The Red Trade Union international provided funds that were rejected, but it showed their hearts were in the right place. Yet coal came into England, some of it through Rotterdam which happened to be a poorly organized port that year. But most of the American coal miners were so glad to have a chance to produce enough coal to break the British General Strike. It gave them a job to do and they didn't have one, And seamen liked hauling that coal over there.

They didn't crack any picket lines. Nobody called them scabs, except. I think it was pointed out that the increase in employment was to break the strike in Britain. Wobbly papers and a few others pointed that out. It was strike, breaking on a global scale by just getting a job
and being glad to find one. In this world market you don't have to cross a picket line to break your fellow worker's strike halfway across the earth. You can do it without even knowing you're doing it, especially in these days when very rapidly in recent years the old style business mechanism has been replaced with multinational corporations, with these mass Mulligan stews of all kinds of companies welded together. You have a very different picture. You have essentially a world-managerial class, acting as capitalists, acting as agents for national states, in some cases confronting a world-wide working class with the same sort of a thing.

I know we tend to think that this is a Cold War world where you have entirely different economies that in no way impinge on each other. I think that anybody that follows business news will see, for example, that the pipe for this new British Columbia hydro-electric project is to come from Yugoslavia which underbid Japan 13% despite the much greater charges of hauling pipe to Vancouver from Yugoslavia than from Japan. That is the kind of a market into which you're
going to work. That's the kind of market the unemployed people face.

Today the multinational corporation has tremendous financial assets to work with. It can play games that ordinary business can not play. It can fill an order from Calcutta, either from its plants in Sweden or its plants in South America. If they can fill it better from a plant it does not own, it can probably arrange to own that plant by the time it's time to undertake filling the order. It can figure how to finance itself in all kinds of ways that ordinary businesses can't. It can play with your dollars in a way that a local business cannot. It can pay the debts that it incurs in one country from its production in another. It can hide the fact that it is doing this by selling goods produced in one country to one of its branches at a price quite different than it would sell on the open market. There's all kinds of things that these corporations can do to dodge all the regulations that any kind of national economy may set to control them. It can circumvent them all very readily. In that
kind of a thing, Fortune has pointed out, the managers are given computers to play with, the great new computer technology for managerial purposes. They can really run the range of not only what facilities and assets they have around the world, but what facilities and assets they might conceivably acquire, what sources of finance they might get, what the expectations are as to currency changes in certain countries, what the weather is, what the population curve is, or any damn thing that may have any bearing on it. Out of all this the computer can say, "Have your baby carriages produced in Calcutta instead of in Timbuctu", or something like that. Every workers job the world over today, I think, is at the mercy of what the hell that computer comes up with as an answer. That's about the picture.

In this situation, it is very urgent, surely, that there be far more action across boundary lines than there was say in 1926. We had World War 1 and after that we had one body, the World Federation of Trade Unions, representing labor in both communist and capitalist nations. And then when the Kremlin and Pentagon fell out, then
the unions did the corresponding thing and split from the World Federation-of Trade Unions.

The ICFTU, The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, is the one that represents the workers in the United States, most of the workers in Canada, and also by and large most of the workers in free enterprise economies or whatever you want to call-it. There isn't any free enterprise left in the free enterprise, but the world uses that name, largely the workers there, not entirely. The largest unions in France, for example, the largest unions. in Italy happen to be with the World Federation of Trade Unions, which is essentially a communist oriented organization.

Besides that there is a rather sizeable Catholic International. It used to be called the Christian, but now calls itself the World Labor Congress. It is incidentally rather neutral to the two, very active in Latin America. The greater part of good union action that I have heard of in Latin America in the last two years has been largely from the Catholic; oriented labor groups. They've done some excellent
things there in Latin America.

You have this split up thing, It is true that it may seem regrettable that you have three major Internationals and a lot of bodies not affiliated with any International. But, 'even if you did have them all in one International, you still would have the same basic problem, and a marriage, a wedding of these internationals, would be no solution to the problem we face. Even within that you would find chat building an assembly of national union movements would not provide the machinery for doing what—we copper miners, for example, need to do about deciding what we're going to do about copper mining. It wouldn't do many of the other things that I want to bring up.

My third point--This kind of action across boundaries is very necessary today, but it requires the independence of unions from their national power structures. I don't think I need to take up any time on that. Surely you can see that is, as is the case today, unions are very largely, in their international relations, tools that the national power structures are
using, they are not free to engage in world
solidarity. You can not have people who do not
control their own actions agreeing what they are
going to do collectively, when they are manipulated
by people whose interest is to stop them from
acting on this solidarity. Increasingly since
World War II you found, for example--well, there's
a book you may find in that display of Communist
literature, a book on the CIA, to show to what
extent the AFL-CIO unions acted as catspaws
for the CIA. For example, in Latin America for
years the AFL projection has been to fight any-
thing radical, communist or otherwise, wore
then it was to fight the employing class in
Latin America, I don't think anyone will disagree
with that.

The AFL helped build a conservative labor
movement in France because the communists, as a
result of the war time resistance, had much of
the carpet laid for them to control the major
labor movement. You had that and in reverse,
unions: on the other side play a sort of a
mirror image action to what the unions do for
the state department, CIA, and so forth here.
The World Federation of Trade Unions seems to be in the pocket of the Kremlin.

Maybe I'm overstating the fact, but there's a very intimate association between them I'm sure. If in one country the folks in Moscow are having a lot of trouble with the government and can't make any deal with it, but the unions there are within the WFTU, it becomes expedient to have them raise all the hell they possibly can and go after improvements, living standards, all kinds of things that I think are very commendable:

If the Moscow government is getting along with the local government quite nicely, the same kind of people come around and say that in a developing economy it's very essential that wage rates be kept down to a reasonable level to permit capital accumulation so that the capital can build up and this, that and the other, according to how the relationship is between the local government and Moscow. Now, that does not serve the purpose of a world wide working class, 'any more than the CIA controlled unions serve us. You need a working class union that looks out for working people, that doesn't look out for any kind of politician, or any brand of philosophy or anything else.
To get back to fundamental union purposes, the chief thing that unions aim at is wage-increases. We do a lot of other things. We also want to make the job safe and we want to make the job more pleasant. From now on out I think it may be far more urgent to make the jobs safe and congenial than it will be even to go after wage increases, particularly in the economies like the United States or Canada, where at least in the better paying jobs a reasonably adequate level of consumption is possible. I think that making the job a good place to put in the six hours of the six hour day, (I think you should have six rather than the eight) things like that are probably more important than a quarter more an hour.

In most parts of the world, though, the major union issue is—we want more, and that's what the unions are there for—to get it.

My contention is that real wage increases for any large number require a re-allocation of men and resources to supply the goods on which the workers' increase is to be spent. I think the mechanics of that is fairly evident. If
I'm talking just about one worker I don't think I can make that contention. If someone gave me more money I could go down the street and buy something I couldn't buy if I wasn't given that extra money. But if the working class of Canada is given 10% more money to spend, and there is no increase in the supply of the goods and services on which it wants to spend that money, it will find it is offered for $11 the same item it used to get for $10 and that the prices will go up. The economics are just about that simple.

In order to make any increase in wages for large numbers of people it does require that unemployed people and unemployed resources be used to provide the things we want to spend that money on. Or in what I think is ordinarily the case where there are no large numbers of unemployed, we're asking that workers be shifted from doing work we don't want, such as producing bombers and palaces, a large number of things that don't do us any good TV commercials, or billboards on highways, or things that we surely don't want to buy. We want to take labor and
material that was being spent on that and change it over. You do this instead of you do that in some way. It's important, it's imperative, if we're to have an increase in real wages. Some years back this sort of thing was attended to more or less by the automatic price system. If workers had some more money to spend and they were likely to buy ice cream with it, it would be good business management to build more ice cream factories. We are today in an almost controlled economy. I would like to point out that a large part of the world's economy is almost completely controlled. For example the Soviet economy. Outside of the complete control you'll certainly find, say in the Scandinavian countries, an attempt at general national priority as to what should be done this year and so on. Where you don't have that you have these multinational corporations. You have these monopolies and near monopolies, oligopolies and whatever. Apart from that, just a plain understanding among businessmen, I think, works to about same result.

None of these mechanisms in this highly controlled world economy is likely to make
those adjustments. Let's make sure that real profits are reduced and real-wages are increased. Now the boys managing, I think, don't design their controls for that purpose. So consequently I expect, in this controlled economy, unions will have to start in the near future doing something that they have never done before, start to negotiate that re-allocation of men and resources,

That is not a traditional union function, But if unions are to aim at their traditional objective of getting more for their members, not just more green paper, but more ice cream, more furniture, more of the various things that workers need, they will have to arrange that that re-allocation of manpower and resources is made. And if it doesn't come about automatically it will have to be planned and negotiated.

It will have to be done on a global scale for the simple reason that in almost any country quite a part of things on which workers do want to spend their increase, the things they do want to add to their standard of living, are imports. You want to make sure that those things get
produced. The world's economy is so interwoven that you're asking not just a specific industry to produce more ice cream cones, and fewer supersonic planes, you're asking a world, a global economic mechanism, to provide more ice cream and fewer supersonic planes.

For quite a variety of reasons that I imagine are fairly obvious, the re-allocation of men and resources necessary to raise the standard of living of the working class of the world is something that will have to be planned and negotiated and not left to happen. For instance, for that to be done requires that the labor movement in capitalist countries; in communist countries, in fascist countries, in little out of the way countries regardless of the philosophies that prevail there, and for other union reasons, too, find some way to undertake a giant research to make this re-allocation possible.

Just temporarily reverting back to that copper strike situation I was talking about, I tried to emphasize that the thing that concerns the striking copper miner in the United States
is the quantity of copper on the world market. That's the one thing that is against him. The things we produce are standing there to beat us down. It was the copper the copper miners had produced, existing on the world market, that said how long their families had to go hungry before they could win their strike. It was quite alienated copper that was there on the world market. It was just the quantity, not where it was produced or even the wages that the-workers got where it was produced and certainly not the political philosophy that prevailed where it was produced--just the quantity of copper. That's the only thing that counted. To win out in this kind of global economy, workers, whether they are in a capitalist economy-or something that considers itself non-capitalistic, have to think in such terms as, that. Fortunately, despite all the arguments and the, justifications and the words that make my ears weary from the groups that justify whatever they're doing the world over, arithmetic is the same In Chicago and Kitchener and Prague and Moscow and Paris. It's the same the world
over. It does make it technically possible for people. if they see the need, regardless of political philosophy, if only they can establish the channels of communication, to undertake the job that needs to be done. That is to translate demands for an improved standard of living into almost engineering terms regarding the re-allocation of men and resources.

Q: How are you going to get American workers to do anything with Russian workers?

A: The only way I can see to do that is to get enough people in the union movement--not a great majority but an effective minority within the different unions in the different countries--in communication with each other. This is something that can be done and this is something that should be done. If you can't get that done I think there's no sense in planning any grandchildren. If you can get it done I think you can have a good world. The thing I think really important is to get an intelligent discussion on the problem I'm dealing with. Maybe my
approach to it is wrong. But at least the problem is real and there is no extensive intelligent discussion I find anywhere of this kind of a problem. It is a problem some of the engineering students should take quite an interest in because some of their expertise should be very helpful in coping with it. Anybody looking will see this isn't a fantasy. It's a real problem.

Some method of communication has to be built up. I want to emphasize this communication. I don't see class society simply as a layer cake, though there are ways in which the layer cake model corresponds to social reality. I rather think of my own experience on any job I've worked on. I see a pyramid of communication channels, information going up and up to the pyramid of power, directors' orders, decisions coming down. That is the way it goes in a corporation where I work in Chicago, I think if I landed in a corporation in the Soviet Union I'd find about the same thing. If I went to Red China I expect I'd find the same thing, No matter where you work you'll find that the mass of people are getting information in that so and so wants ten
of these things produced, and they should be red, or whatever. That goes in to somebody else who says that we can buy so much of this at such and such a price and that goes in to where a decision is reached.

Nowadays they find that if you can buy a computer you get a more valid decision than some of the people might have been making, Whether it's a man or a computer scabbing on the president of the corporation, the decision is made at the apex of the pyramid and the directives come down.

It's not only in a company. The whole social mechanism is designed in that way, It seems to me that the behavior of class society can be interpreted rather largely in this pyramidal pattern of communication channels. There is very little horizontal communication. I haven't been asking any of my fellow workers in Moscow how the price of eggs is or anything like that. It would be interesting but there is very little of that horizontal level of communication.

The labor movement essentially is a
replacement of a pyramidal pattern with a horizontal. Here is a factory where the bosses decided everything. You and I are working there, You say that this just doesn't go--let's reach an understanding about how many of these things we're going to make an hour. Let's have some understanding about how much fresh air we should let into this factory when the boss says he has to burn extra fuel to keep the windows open. Let's do such and such in ways that are safer so we don't smash our arms and fingers. We reach understandings that way, Maybe we even formally construct a union and communication that used to be, "Please Mr. Boss can I open a window", becomes the union health and safety committee deciding the regulation amongst themselves. You are replacing the pyramidal pattern with a horizontal one whenever you have unionism where there wasn't any union before, And even informally the self-protective devices non-union workers build up on their own behalf is this same matter of building up horizontal communication. The need for doing this same thing on a global scale can almost
let us disregard all these philosophical and political differences. I don't think they amount to a damn myself. I expect that the lot of the worker is so fundamentally alike in all of them that if you wandered from one country to another you'd forget which kind of an economy you were working in. I don't think there is such a vast difference.

Certainly the idea that we are separated, isolated economies—no they are putting their products out on this same global market. They are drawing their sustenance from this same global market. They are a part of the global economic mechanism no matter what their philosophy may be. We have to deal with them. Now then—I'm saying that in order to negotiate the traditional thing that a labor movement is after, more for its members, you have to aim at this re-allocation of men and resources. And to do that you have to translate the wants of your members into feasible engineering terms. How that re-allocation is to occur, what to produce, when and where it goes, in a very substantial sense, that's what the revolution is all about.
I don't like the way that the guy that's been riding me the 70 years I've been around, has been deciding what's produced and where it goes. That's why the world is 'in the mess it's in and I think the hope of a better world is to let the people who do the work of the world decide what's produced and where it's going. How they can negotiate about that? I can't help but think that there's nobody to negotiate with. But I've noticed that the pattern of collective bargaining is a historical development in all countries. This process of building unions has developed alongside of it the necessary bargaining entities as the bargaining area was extended.

If you want industry wide bargaining, you not only have to have industry-wide unions, you'll have an industry-wide employer set-up too and so on. But I expect that if, you extend that to a world bargaining process with the world's millions of organized workers, if they cannot find a master class, or a managerial Class or whatever you want to call it, a decision maker's class with which to negotiate, they could say,
"What the hell, we make it and we move it together. We'll make what we want and we'll move it where we want".

I think that might be a healthy attitude when I see all these oil spills and tankers that we should never have built that large. I think anybody who knows that you shouldn't build oil tankers as long as they do build them, they have a whole lot of ecological problems from doing so. There's a whole lot of things that I think workers should take rather direct action on.

I think this idea—we make it and—we move it is perhaps our ace card. It's our ace in the hole. It may be expedient to try negotiations as an approach to social change. It may be that we can work out some "revolution by general consent". I have some doubts about whether that is possible, but certainly no objections to it.

Maybe my talk, and my outline seem that I am insisting that a certain research should be undertaken. I hope that my proposition isn’t misleading you. I'm talking about this research
as a doable, undertakeable thing, Out of a host of things that need to be done, I'm saying that this research has a big advantage in many ways. For one thing, I think it can give us a very clear view of a good and-workable future. When radicals like me talk about how good the world can be, most people say, "Pie-in-the sky", I think instead of me talking about what standard, of living is attainable, your engineering department should have a practical course in seeing what levels of consumption are' possible from present available technology. I would much rather get a picture of what level of consumption is possible from people who are obviously qualified to say so than from people who like dreams such as myself. I think it would be very good to have that, and when you come to consider these ecological problems, I expect that to cope with the problem of ecology we may have to quit thinking that the Ideal future is one where 3-1/2 billion people each have a Cadillac car. That isn't really an attainable future. If they all have them you couldn't breathe the air any longer and we'd.
soon run out of petrol to run them on. We should try to visualize a workable future so that we all can work toward it.

I'm thinking that the effort to build that kind of a communication system would likewise be doing what the Wobbly preamble says when it says that we want to build the structure of a new society in the shell of the old. It's talking about something that is inescapable, that if there is to be a better world, and the labor unions or the working class have anything substantial to do about creating that, it'll have to be developed within its present structure.

The only place what is to be can come from is from what is. There's no other place it can come from. It has to be generated by the forces that have been brought into being. There has to be continuity, of some sort even in a revolution. Even if somehow or another, as of July 1st it was understood that socialism will happen and that we'll have a new world at dawn July 1st, I think you'd find that the face-to-face operations of people, the routine of daily
life, the matter of what your appropriate role in that situation is, in what role you should expect other people to behave, in the folkways that are essential to the operation of any kind of a social order, these things wouldn't change as the sun got up on July 1st. Those are things that are essential to the operation of any functioning system that has to be built up. Unless you build up a movement of workers, for workers, by workers, making decisions democratically within their own organization within this capitalist system there will be no capacity of workers to make that good world. I don't think that just out of chaos something good is going to arise. Maybe it would, but I think it's a heck of a way to plan it. I think it's better that we struggle for making a working class movement that is more anxious for a good world and more of what is possible, more and more aware of the hazards that it faces and more and more insistent on having its say-so more confident, more competent to exert its capacities. That is essentially the process whereby capitalism is replaced by something better. I think that this building a communication structure within, this torn-up,
cold war, capitalist society is essential for the 3-1/2 billion people in the past capitalist world to make good use of this round ball and the various resources nature has made. I think there aye a lot of other things that could be done. One thing you could do is avoid Czechoslovakia; now I don't mean to say I know what happened and why it happened in Czechoslovakia. I know that something very unpleasant and unfortunate happened there, I am aware that many people in Moscow and, other parts of the iron curtain, were alarmed at items in certain journals. Reactionary papers said, "We should take back the Sudetenland", many things like that. There were grounds for them to be afraid that the upsurge in Czechoslovakia was an effort to make a capitalist grab there. There were grounds for that kind of a fear. I don't think that the grounds were real, but people did have that kind of a fear. Czechoslovakia occurred because they did have that kind of a fear. And Czechoslovakia occurred likewise because the workers in Czechoslovakia were not at all happy with their existing economic
and social arrangements. They wanted to move toward a freer society. They wanted to enjoy things that they were not-getting. Certainly, if we had an effective exchange of information with workers in the communist countries and the capitalist countries, even though I don't think I can say that you never would have something like that, you would certainly be a damn sight less likely to have it. And I think that you would have a capacity there to make reportage on it that would be credible reportage. If unions on both sides of the Iron Curtain could set up joint commissions to investigate and report on such places as Viet Nam an? Czecho- slovakia, any report they could jointly Issue would be highly credible and could help prevent such tragedies. I don't think you can look to the United Nations or any mechanism like that to do it, but I think the labor movement can do that for Itself and avoid a heck of a lot of heartaches and bloodshed just by having some such a facility. Another benefit of this is in ordinary collective bargaining. If you go to work some-
where next summer, the boys go on strike, the boss will probably say, "I'd just love to give you that increase because you're nice boys, but we just can't afford it. This is the very best we can possibly do". Your job is somehow to make him change his mind. But better than that could be done; I'm just wondering, that if this was not '71 but '72 and if by that time, sizeable progress has been made, the people's competence recognized, to say that if workers ran the world, this is the level of progress, this is the number of hospitals to be built, this is what can be done about the water supply, this is what can be done about the ordinary levels of domestic consumption and so forth, that there is a fairly workable and realistic picture of what is possible--I think the boss would maybe squeeze an extra dime into his best offer and maybe even more than a dime.

I think that you would find a thing like that adding greatly to the collective bargaining power of unions. Now I know a great many unions throughout the world have said that they have eschewed any political entanglement, They say
that a lot of what I'm talking about here is not a union function, I won't argue with them. If what I'm proposing does help them bargain collectively, then I think that it's a legitimate union undertaking, whether they agree that changing the world is part of their union business or not. Anything that enhances their collective bargaining capacity is something they should be in favor of.

The last thing I've jotted down there under that head is the advantage of undertaking such research. We get new problems, For example, I don't think any of us in the union movement felt that unions should be primarily or very much concerned with ecological problems. Some of us had heard about it, but most people didn't even know the word five years ago. But—it has become a major issue today, For my own part, and I think others may share this view, that a large part of it is what you do with waste. There's a certain amount of waste to be disposed of. I know most companies try to figure out how can we get this thing so people will throw it away in one year and buy a new one--planned obsolescence. Can I expect the company, the
management, whose function is to make sure things don't last, can I expect that man to minimize waste? Can I expect the people who get on the TV and tell all the wives what they ought 'to wash their clothes with, can I expect that management to say, "Avoid detergents as much as you possibly can because they put too much phosphate into the water?" I don't think I can. Can I expect the General Motors Company and the Standard Oil Company to say, "We must avoid the use of petroleum in automobiles as much as we possibly can?" Likewise, can I expect the United Auto Workers as things go now to say, "Let's try to avoid making more automobiles until we minimize the carbon dioxide in the air". I don't think they can, I 'know Mr. Nixon talks about how many billions of dollars he's willing to spend to get clean air and clean water. There isn't much you can do with all those billions. There's only one thing I think they can do that. maybe would help. You can distribute money so that the guy who is laid off of his job isn't at any relative
disadvantage over being deprived of his job. I think a heck of a bunch of people will have to be deprived of their jobs and set to doing something different if you are to solve that ecological problem. That's an issue for another day. I'm just pointing out the motivation political and economic management have. In America decisions are ordinarily based upon nepotism or maximum profits.

If you have a government running things I'm pretty sure decisions are based upon what will most enable it to retain its power and expand its power. You can't solve an ecological crisis on either of those premises. The only premise to solve it on is what is best for man and his fellow critters. I think you have to include them if you're ever going to, get the problem solved. Labor must have a movement that is organized so that it isn't afraid of losing its job. A labor movement that thinks the best thing in the world is much work to do can't solve that kind of a crisis either. A situation in which it seems that to lose a job is the greatest misfortune that can happen
to a man—in order to cope with this ecological crisis I think you likewise have to cope with this—that it isn't the greatest misfortune to lose a job. It involves far more than simply the directly technical factors in ecology. I think the labor movement can; it is consistent with the work of union men to solve the ecological crisis. It is not consistent with the motives that control corporations to solve that crisis. So I figure it's a union job for that very reason. The union movement, as it is organized, motivated as it is, disorganized, dismembered globally, is unsuited to the task. It is a global problem. We're talking about an envelope of air that goes around the world. We're talking about an ocean that laps all shores. It isn't a national problem; it's an international one.

To pursue these traditional union aims, then in a global economy such as we have now, it pushes unionism toward a general global planning and demands a control of what gets produced and where it goes. I think, this is a very good thing. I think likewise it's rather willy
nilly, I don't expect that George Meany would be likely to agree with a thing I've said today, At the same time I don't think he can seriously say any of it wasn't so. I think that even the George Meanys can be made 60 worry about that kind of thing. There are a sizeable number of intelligent people I know in the American Labor Movement who are worried about this kind of a thing. I think that through these people, no matter how conservative the union is, there is some possibility of creating these communication channels and that's what strikes me as important.

Why shouldn't those of us who are in the labor movement anywhere, urge the establishment of some rather neutral labor facility? I don't mean neutral as to labor and capitol, but I mean neutral in regard to the various ways the world labor movement is dismantled. The structure could be as neutral as possible, just someplace to exchange gripes and data. It may not be much more, than an international letter box, to start with people participating in it, giving information in, getting what they need out of it.
It could be useful to other people, not just with the labor movement, about civil rights and the like.

Latin America—I think there are about fifteen hundred people in jail from union causes just in Latin America alone. I may offend some peoples' feeling, but my understanding is that in the communist world there are people who are in jail for expressing their honest opinions; and I just don't feel they ought to be in jail anywhere for expressing their honest opinion. I don't think the Klux Klan should be in jail for saying—what makes them a Ku Klux, Klan. I don't like the Klu Klux Klan, but I think the good world has to be created out of a situation in which people can say what the hell they want to.

If for example, prior to this copper strike I mentioned, there had been an international letter box, there was some discussion of copper supply, the-world market and so forth, if there had been something like Reuther is urging the automobile industry to organize, a common exploration thing, so that at least our, contracts
permit us to strike at the same time if we deem it advisable, it would help. You can co-ordinate strike actions, boycotts, a tremendous good, and I think that a very practical thing could be served almost independent of whether my argument is valid or not. But I do believe my argument is valid, and I think that if we should, for any reason, manage to set up such a neutral labor facility as that, we can more likely bring about the good world. Well, I've talked to you too long. In fact there's one of the books here that says Fred Thompson has raised loquacity to a new level of meaning. Is this at all relevant to you?

You talked about taking a political stand and you talked about monopolies and the people who run capitalist states who don't use any political standard, do you think it's better to be in a position to control the allocation and the distribution of goods? You should address yourself to the overthrow of the capitalists.

A: Well, I suspect that what I've been talking about might be described as good procedure for the overthrow of the capitalist system and the replacement of the capitalist system with an alternative economic arrangement.
Q: I agree that's what you've been talking about, but it seems to me that the unions end up propagating materialism. Everything you said was what the unions want. Are unions out for themselves or are unions out for all people? What do union's do for the people on welfare or for the unemployed?

A: Maybe I've been talking about materialism. That is, if in our union we win an increase for people so they can buy something, and some woman wants to spend her husband's paycheck on putting fourteen floorlamps in her living room, obviously that is an example of gross materialism. But she'd like to have lots of floorlamps and I can understand how, as part of our social pathology, people tend to want so many floorlamps just to show that they have them. That would be an example of, materialism. But yet I do think that the primary function of a union is to let these people have the wherewithal to buy the silly fourteen floorlamps, without me tel-
ling them, "You shouldn't spend your money on that". I think it is a part of our function to educate them to have better judgement.

Q: If you did a breakdown of what happens to the average working man's salary to find out what he actually spends his money on, you'd find that a hell of a lot of what he spends it on isn't really necessary. Yet he complains that he can't get the basic necessities of life. He thinks he has to buy a case of whiskey, you know.

A: I don't think there's any doubt about it that part of the mechanism to keep the capitalistic system going is that a massive consumer cult appropriate to mass production methods is generated. Otherwise I don't think you'd have the capitalist system running, The preferences are, infiltrated into people. You've seen TV commercials. I had the flu for two weeks in February and I had never looked at TV much - before that, and I'm still amazed at what I saw there. I had never realized before how 100% the, contempt toward, the women of America is by
the manufacturers on TV, I don't see how the
guys who write those commercials dare go home
and talk to their wives. I suppose their wives
say, "That was fine. You sell lots of that
stuff and we like to prosper". But those com-
mercials are insulting. I think that some future
historian will wonder, why did the working
class put up with capitalism for so long? And
they can look at the commercials on TV and say,
"I think I have an inkling of why they did put
up with capitalism for so long". What they do
to people's heads in this capitalist society
is even worse than what they do to their mer-
chandise.

In regards to your question--I expect that
this desire of people to change the world is
going to be expressed in many many ways, I'm
thinking only of what union people can do through
union channels. If church groups, or somebody
through co-operative stores, or somebody through
popular novels can somehow change the world or
change our values that would be fine and dandy.
I'm Just expressing what I feel the unions can
do. I think the basic reaction of the working
class is to organize unions and bargain col-
lectively. What can we expect of this basic reaction? This is a thing I'd like to see the union movement doing. The union movement has tended, I think, to accommodate itself more and more to the situation in which it finds itself, to accommodate itself to the capitalist society, to accommodate itself in a state-run economy through the state mechanism and so forth. That is what goes on in the policies of accommodation. I don't like it, I think it's very desirable to try to get workers to say, "We, the people, who do the actual work of the world, whether by handy or brain, whether with little training or Ph. D. degrees, we people should put our heads together and see that the work is done for the good of us, instead of for any other thing".

Q: I have yet to see an example; of a union that does things for the unemployed or the people on welfare. What union addresses itself to these?

A: Not enough is being done that way but I can give examples. I'm no proponent of Walter
Reuther's UAW, I think largely as a result of his personal philosophy, it has been doing quite a bit in Chicago and other places on that community level to enable unemployed people and people on relief and so forth to take collective action. He did finance S.D.S. there on the north side of Chicago. You will find a certain amount of that being done, not enough. I think the unions should do that simply for enlightened self interest.

There are going to be a lot of strikes this coming summer, I do wish that the unemployed people and the people that are up against it realize that they, cannot solve their problems by scabbing in those strikes. I think there would be practical unionism for the people in the unions to provide the funds, the personnel at least to organize the people who are up against it, so that they are very little tempted to scab in these strikes. I think it's a matter of self interest for them to do that.
Q: The thing that bothers me is that in a situation like that the union philosophy is that all men are equal and that all men should be treated equally, but when it comes down to practice, they're not doing anything real good. All the union is doing is pushing for more wages, better working conditions, more wages leading more toward materialism, moving away from the oppressed classes. And when the oppressed classes go and scab, they get up tight about it,

A: That's about 75% true. I'm thinking of it in terms of trend. That would hardly have been true of the labor movement of 1910, partly true, but much less true of the labor movement of 1910, There was far more concern with what happened to the working class in Canadian and American labor movements before World War I than there is at the present time. I'm thinking of the same question now in regard to the role in the building trades in Chicago where blacks do get an awful dirty deal. In all these things I think you'll find a union, any entity like that, is going to be true to the law of oligarchy.
I don't think the law of oligarchy always has to apply, but I think it will apply wherever people will tolerate being trampled on. That is true of the union as well as any place else. The power structures in the building trades union of Chicago utilized the same damn ignorant race prejudices that landlords use, that are used to manipulate real estate values. They're used by the power structure and we're doing everything we can to help our poor black brothers get jobs in the building trade, It goes on and I expect will end only by making it damn near impossible. Some of the things that Negroes did in Chicago this year forced the issue and something is coming of it.

I think they'll have to force the issue even more to get some more out of it.

This situation of the union becoming strictly a business thing--it's true, probably 75% true but not completely true, The union is still the basic reaction of the working class. Again this process of, alienation that has happened to the working class in other things, applies to its own union officialdom.
World War II, I could watch a change in the use of the English language. Workers who in 1938 would ordinarily have spoken of their union as "we" by 1945 ordinarily spoke of their union as "it". Just that change in the use of language indicated, largely because of war time regulations, that there were things you couldn't settle face to face on the shop floor. They had to be settled by the business agent down town. That was largely what changed the union from "we" to "it". That process goes on, an alienation of the union from it's own members. I think it's a reversible process. Sometimes I've seen it reversed.

Q: I think a lot of us tend to buy the kind of myth that the-bourgeois press puts across, that unionised workers are extremely well paid, living in luxury and comfort, but I think we have to remember that over one-half of the people in this country are making less than $5,000-a year. The average income is still around $3,000 or $4,000 and that's the condition of unionized
people. I think we have to remember that a lot of the wage demands are for fairly basic needs. Most of the people in that $5,000 or below category their money is going into housing and, if they've got kids, an awful lot of the rest is going into food and clothes, and there isn't very much left over to buy fourteen floorlamps or even washing machines. A lot of the workers are living in suburbia now. You could generalize that and say if most of the unionized workers are living in that kind of situation, therefore, their wage demands are no longer a valid thing. Where the wage demands come in, again, a lot of the workers spend a lot of money paying for cars and in some cases they don't have to. But there are lots of factories here in Kitchener that employ large numbers of workers where there's no buses. You have to have a car to get a job there. They won't be hired unless they say they have arrangements for transportation. And so again, maybe a car is a need in, the same basic way that food and shelter is. In a lot of cases it's a condition of getting a job.
A: It's cheaper to put in a highway than street cars or a bus line. So it isn't all a matter of conditioning. You're forcing people to own cars.

Q: How do you educate the worker so they're not afraid of communists, so that they don't threaten to shoot a fellow worker?

A: Well, you're asking how do you go from here to there essentially and the only way I know to go is head from here and head for there, It usually works out. I get asked a lot of these process questions. How does the process go on? Makes me think--here you've made a pan of jello, put it in the refrigerator,. Some, of it's set and some of it hasn't. That's about the kind of a condition that someone will say oh the jello is set, and someone will say no the jello is not set. You can argue both cases of the matter. I'm not the only person saying these things. I think there are people who can understand the argument does have merit and who could construct,
the argument better than I can here, but I think that by what efforts we make we do tend to cause more efforts in that direction to be made. By being silent and saying someone else ought to decide these questions and not even wanting to think about it we just prevent the solution to this type of a problem. That's about the only way I can answer that type of a question, Everything that you do in that direction makes it somewhat easier to do the next step, You just have to take the next step.
Tomorrow we will be discussing organization. Fred has been saying to you that there were a number of theories on how do you move from capitalism to socialism. Now the people Who believed in industrial unionism, the traditional meaning of industrial unionism, believed that unionism was the transformational agency for social change, rather than understanding unions as today, as complete bargaining agents, a different kind of unionism was intended. There were times when there were at least a dozen ways of how do you go from here to there and people who say unions as a transformational agency believed in the syndicalist notion of a producers world as opposed to a capitalist notion of a consumers world. Now the French had most of the theories and the American Wobblies picked up a significant number of these ideas and Americanized them, if you will. These people we mention in theory sound very remote, Perhaps, Fred, you can tell them more about what Haywood and people like that did.
Perhaps here may be a starting point, I have here a partial display of some of the more recent books that have been published on the I.W.W. Most of these books are written by part time university workers. It's rather obvious that there is an increasing frequency with which a book gets printed about the I.W.W. There have been about eight, Books come out in the last four or five years. This increasing interest in the I.W.W. is just a part of an increasing growth in publications about the labor movement.

When I was a lad first getting interested in the labor movement back around 1916 visiting libraries in St. John, Halifax, Edmonton, Vancouver, I could only find a small shelf of all the books about the labor movement. And that included all the sermons preachers had written about the labor movement, that they shouldn't be so materialistic as to want a wage Increase. They could all be put in one small shelf. Now the libraries have aisle after aisle of books, a bewildering array of all
aspects of the labor movement. You find special publications. In the United States we have a scholarly magazine on labor history. Several other countries have parallel publications. I look at the various regional history journals and in almost every issue I'll find an article about the labor movement. If I look up law journals or sociology journals or any of that sort, I find ordinarily each issue has one or two items that deal with some function of the labor movement. This growth of printed matter about the labor movement is such a contrast. I could hardly find anything much to read in 1920. If you'd spend a few months you could read what there was. Today one man can't hope to keep up with what is written—that much of a change! While I'm on the subject, I'd like to point out what I think is the significance of this.

I used to be connected with the old Socialist Party of Canada. It still, I think, exists in some way. And there used to be arguments going on there about what was called the class struggle and the commodity struggle and the
difference between them. Some Socialists said a worker trying to get a dime more an hour was simply on the par with a grocer trying to sell sugar for more and did not involve any social transitions. The other socialists thought the situation of the working class, whether it had revolutionary hopes or not, was much like the chicken in the shell. In order to live it has to struggle against the restrictions and inhibitions around it and break through that shell. I'm still watching for the proletariat chicken to smash the capitalist shell. I do notice though that continuously even the most conservative union does find that it has to resist capitalism or it'll lose its members, The reason for unions to exist is something more than getting a few cents more an hour. It evidently is perceived to be a factor tending to change the social order in some respect. Otherwise, why are they writing all these books, writing millions and millions of words per year about the labor movement if all of it is only to do for plumbers and carpenters what storekeepers try to do, find a place in a more
favorable market, I think it is this recognition that the labor movement is potentially something that may help us solve problems that face us today. Certainly if you figured the I.W.W. numerically as a percentage of organized labor a very few small books would be quite adequate, but we are getting a lot more books written about us. Some of these books criticize some of the others.

A number of people are trying to write phases of the I.W.W. that have never been adequately described to the present time. And I think some of the experiences I have had, either with these people who have written some of these books or the people that are writing books to be published, may be helpful, particularly to many of you who are specializing in history and even apart from that, If you want to find out what has happened and write something about it.

Here's this book that the university of Utah has issued about Joe Hill. Now this, of course, is far from being any history of the
I.W.W. I think most of you know who Joe Hill was. He was a Swedish lad who came over in, I think, about 1902, and worked as a longshore man. He loved to write parodies on songs, and he wrote sixteen parodies on popular tunes of the day. Some of them were religious tunes, Salvation Army, etc.—mostly comical. These songs so hit working people of America as saying what they wanted to say about the world as they found it that in 1915 when he was executed on a framed up charge for bumping off a grocer whom he didn't bump off, his funeral in Chicago drew such crowds they blocked the streets for blocks and blocks. It was a surprise to everybody and one newspaper said, "Who is this man at whose funeral revolutionary songs are sung and who has more mourners than any prince or potentate?" They were surprised. It isn't that Joe Hill is really in any programatic way an essential part of the I.W.W. story, but he's a great part of the I.W.W. image. He did a little bit to help organize, but I think it's his songs that helped the most. When we bad
strikes, he wrote songs appropriate for the strikers to sing in the picket lines, things like that.

This book is simply telling the story of one man's life—and it wasn't a long life—and the difficulty of getting the facts to tell is. Some of the "facts" involve myth and legend and hearsay. Some can readily be disproved, particularly some by those who have documentitis. That is an occupational disease, a tendency to build up history relying primarily on documents and you can find that the documents can give you a very distorted impression quite remote from reality. I'm very glad in that same connection that the man who wrote this book approached the I.W.W. to ask us if we could help and I was fortunate in being able to get three old timers who could correct a lot of history. There was Bill Chance, who's been our janitor in the old Wobbley headquarters on West Madison Street in Chicago; there was Louie Moreau, who had been organizing in British Columbia when they were building the Grand Trunk Railroad in 1912 and had a strike. Joe came up there
and didn't work on the job ahead of the strike, but he hung around and made a number of songs, one of which still lives on. There was Dick Brazier, who also had been working a lot on the little Wobbly song book of those days and who's been active in the Spokane Free Speech fight. These people were able to correct a lot. If he hadn't interviewed these people when he I did, he would have missed at least one of them, Louis Moreau, who died last summer. Bill Chance is still alive, Dick is alive. Their recollections have been taken down on tape recorders. Universities increasingly are using this contribution of modern technology to do a lot of work that historians used to do very laboriously, taking notes from conversations. They're going down and seeing the old timers in the labor movement or old timers in other movements about which they want to write something and getting their recollections down. Now I know how untrustworthy our memories are.

I've done a lot of interviewing old people myself. I know that frequently in our memories
B comes ahead of A instead of after, The events of two years get merged together in the first place, but even allowing for all these tricks of memory, the recollections of these old people are almost invaluable. Neither the recollections or documents make a good basis for history by themselves, but I think the combination of them makes about the best basis there is for the writing of history.

Let me give a few examples. There have been several depictions of Joe Hill. I think some of you saw the television show--what is it up here? CBS? They put on "The Man That Never Died", beautiful television show about five years ago. There've been plays written about him. I understand this folk song about Joe Hill is now a very popular song, much used among the younger people today. The image is there, and the legend was there before much was written. A lot of it had been based on an account Ralph Chaplin picked up. somewhere about 1916, talking with a drunk in a tavern who said that, he had been Joe Hill's cousin.
It was far from the actual facts. Here was a man who was actually Joe's brother, but for some reason or other didn't want to say so, who gave the wrong name, who gave the story when he'd had quite a few drinks, and he gave it to a poet who didn't write it down until about five years afterwards. That is a rather shaky foundation for writing a biography. But that was the basis of practically everything that was written about Joe Hill until rather recently.

A few years ago some Swedish people, since Joe was a Swede, started hunting around and found that his name was Joel Haggslund, and they resurrected the story of his youth, hospital records, all kinds of things. They even found where he came across on the Saxony in 1902 and played the fiddle at a concert. A few facts were actually gotten from documents, postcards he sent home at the time, things like that.

The Chaplin account was the basis for a pleasing legend that Joe Hill came to America as a Swede with no radical ideas, who stayed around a seamans mission in San Pedro and played
the piano a bit and during the Southern Pacific strike wrote a parody on the popular song, "Casey Jones", and that this parody about Casey scabbing on that strike as an engineer became so popular it got widely circulated. Some Wobbly heard about it and told him with ideas like that he ought to join the I.W.W., so Joe Hill joined the I.W.W. That's been Part of the myth. It's not a fact, of course. It has been an enduring part of the myth. I'm not going to go into the myth making process that usually makes dramatic stories out of widely held wishes. It is a process that disturbs the gathering of facts and it was going on with the bits of information about this man Joe Hill.

Not-so long ago Roosevelt College published a songbook, *Songs of Work and Freedom*, Joe Glazier, who does a lot of singing of labor songs and other folk songs, and Edith Fowke, one of the leading Canadian authorities on folk songs, edited it. They were trying to find out about this "Casey Jones", which was one of the popular labor songs over the years, how it came to be written. They were trying
to find out about this strike on the "S.P."
These historians said they looked it up and said they couldn't find anything about an S.P. strike that year, so probably the whole thing was just fabrication.

Again, there is documentitus I guess you'd have to call it, or being slip shod. If they would have called up the Wobbley Hall and asked them the facts anyone there could have told them the reference to the "S-P. Line was this. In 1911 the shop crafts, the people who repaired locomotives, all the way from the Illinois Central to the Southern Pacific over all lines that were owned by the Harriman system, they wanted to bargain as a federation. The company said, "No, we'll only bargain with you as separate crafts". The strike was over the right to bargain as a federation. That strike was from 1911 to 1915, one of the longest strikes in the United States. These people who were experts in labor history, teaching courses in labor, couldn't find out about a strike on the S-P Line!
And the reason was when you look it up in any index, it's never indexed that way. They could have found thousands of words about it in various labor histories, for instance the Commission on Industrial Relations research into Industrial Disputes, had they simply looked under Harriman system federation strike, but they wouldn't find that under S. The fact that this strike occurred in 1911 certainly demolished this notion of Joe Hill doing this in 1910.

I think likewise even the understanding of the song, what it's all about--the song is an argument for industrial structure, for organizing industry wide instead of craft wide. In that strike the people who move the trains all kept working and the people who repaired the trains all went on strike. The engineers, of course, have to make minor repairs from time to time if an engine breaks down on its run to get it at least to the next division point. The people who run the trains were helping
break the strike of the others. That was why it was called "Casey Jones, The Union Scab". It wasn't that he as an individual was scabbing. It was that the structure of unionism was such that one set of unions was being used to help break the strike of another set of unions. And that's exactly what the I.W.W. has tried to correct. To understand that either from the viewpoint of what significance this myth has for the development of union structure or anything like that, to understand about the man Joe Hill, the myth was entirely wrong and it has been corrected.

There again I think the simple point is that these scholarly works--I'm sorry Foner didn't let me see the manuscript on his just little things are wrong. For example, he says there that the workers at Lawrence, in the big strike they had in 1912, went around singing "Solidarity Forever". It fits in very nice, but "Solidarity Forever" didn't get written till 1915 and that strike was In 1912. All kinds of little things like that.
The Wobblies have always been willing to set somebody familiar with the situation to look over the manuscripts. Lately I'm glad to say people are getting one or another old time Wobbly to look them over. Probably we'll try to get them to say nicer things out us than they're saying. But I think a great deal that they do say can be objectively verified and we'd like to help the historians that write books about us.

Another thing that has come up in these books and reports, particularly one book in Swedish, *Joe Hill Martyr or Murderer* Several accounts that had been circulated around this country including this play, The Man Who Never Died, had a 100 page preface on the life of Joe Hill (came out a few years ago-'51 I think). All carried a set of hearsay notions that Joe Hill had landed in New York flat broke, and had played the piano in bars and saloons and so forth. Then he went here and there and worked in factories and pulled the workers all out on the strike in different towns and so on.
Somehow this myth got started that a Wobbly is a guy who goes into a town where workers are all happy and contented and finds himself a soap-box and he'd put it in front of a factory and he'd make a speech denouncing capitalism and the boss, and the workers would all go on strike. Then he'd grab a freight train and go out of town. It doesn't quite work that way. In most factories I don't think you can make a speech and cause a strike. The workers make their minds up about that.

A lot of it was mixed with this strange mythical image of the I.W.W. as wonder workers who could do that and as the most irresponsible kind of people you could possibly find. I find that the Wobblies I've encountered over my membership in the I.W.W. since 1922 all have had a very strong sense of personal responsibility.

This myth was that Joe Hill was very active in the Fresno fight, in the free speech fight in Spokane, where hundreds of workers were thrown in jail for just getting up and trying to make a stab at the right to make speeches.
The employment sharks were hiring people for different jobs and the Wobblies wanted to fight the employment shark who was getting workers to pay two or three dollars for a job, 30 to work for a week or so and then they get laid off. The employment shark would split the couple of bucks with the foreman who fired him, Then he could sell the job to another worker and so forth, This was very much to the disadvantage of the worker. We were fighting that kind of a thing by making speeches around in the area of the employment offices. Had a big fight there in Spokane.

From whatever old people I've run into who had any personal knowledge of him, they said Hill was a very reticent man, that he liked to sit down quiet in a corner and take an old envelope or two, and if some ideas presented themselves that he could make fit in with some song hit of the day, fine. He wasn't the kind of a guy to get up and make speeches or any thing of that sort. He was a quiet man. His urge was to make parodies
for songs. That's what he liked to do and he did it damn well.

I've checked around and I find that these histories are documented. Historians do document everything they say whether it's so or not. They could document this thing. They had all used the one same article. Just before Joe Hill was to be executed there was a protest meeting over in London and a number of people got up and made speeches as you would expect at that kind of an occasion. It was an International protest, In fact the execution was almost stopped by protest from Sweden. The Swedish Minister--they all tried to stop it, so did the Mexican but it didn't work. Anyway this protest went on. A number of fiery speeches were made and one or two people, according to this one report, said they had been in America and had some personal knowledge and that Joe Hill had been fighting in the great free speech fights. You know you have to find material to make these speeches. The only basis is a report that was written summarizing this meeting and a few words of
what these orators had to say.

I know conjecture isn't a good historical technique, but I think it helps at times to weigh things a little bit. I've seen so often where a meeting is held, and at the end of the meeting someone says, "I hope someone writes this thing up for such and such a paper", Someone says, "yeah, I'll write it up. I remember so and so said this and that and so forth". In fact, I can prove that I was all kinds of places I wasn't right from the front page of last weeks *Chevron* here, That kind of a thing can happen. From reading the article, I don't think these people would have said quite what the article says they said. The credible thing to me, though it does involve conjecture, is just the typical situation I've so often seen. After the meeting is over someone will say "Who's going to write this up and send it into the Wobbly paper?" I've seen that happen. again and again and very likely it happened there, somebody making a mish mash out of these things, of people who were not a good authority in the first place, whether they said
it or they didn't say it. And that was put down in an article printed in *Solidarity* somewhere about January 9, 1915.

I think I've found about seven scholarly works dealing with Joe Hill, all citing this article back there as proof that Joe Hill participated in such and such free speech fights that participants in those fights who knew Joe Hill said no he wasn't there. That is the kind of a thing; I think, one reason why the documents need to be checked, The I editor of the paper at the time, he probably had no knowledge whether the statements were right--in this same connection I might mention the use of papers, Foner in his history makes a very extensive use of newspaper accounts at the time of the various strikes. It has been my wide experience, particularly in earlier years, that the newspapers weren't telling quite the truth about us. While I think that any historian should consult the newspaper files of the time, because ordinarily some part of the report does correspond to the
event, particularly in earlier years. I am happy to say that as the years pass by reporting does tend to become more and more accurate.

Likewise with our own movement press—put yourself in this situation. Maybe it's a strange ethical question, but if I am active in a strike and writing a report on it for publication in the paper, my thought about this is it should give essential news to other people who are interested in the strike. It should report it in such a way that solidarity will be maintained, that people will keep a stiff upper lip. Even if I feel that maybe we have a chance of losing a strike, I'm certainly not going to say so in the report in a labor paper I'm writing for. If we had been accused of somebody punching a scab right in the nose I'd say that it must have been some of his neighbors because I'm sure none of our union men would do anything like that. In other words, there's a certain amount of well justified slight deviation from the complete truth in reporting strikes for a labor paper.
I think a quite different ethic does apply. I rather like what Lissagary, a man who participated in that great struggle in France in 1871, wrote in the preface to his history of the Paris Commune. He says that the man who would try to glamorize the event simply to make all of his companions greater heroes than they were, to have to denounce the enemy most forcefully, he is like a man who draws a map of a coast and leaves out the shoals. A map without reefs and shoals is no good. And where the labor movement does something that didn't work well, in retrospect it's always best to tell the truth about it. But at the time it might not be quite unethical not to be 100% truthful.

I think a person, looking in the files of labor papers for their material, should recognize that ordinary people feel that way at two different times about the same thing, and some of the alleged inconsistencies come from the different purposes to be served while a strike is on and when you're looking at it later on, in retrospect. They're two
quite different things.

If somebody's interested about the facts of the trial I think they can be satisfied that in order for Joe Hill to have killed this man he was accused of he would have had to leave the grocery store, go 4.9 miles to a doctor's office, wind up with a bullet going completely through his jacket and his body four inches lower in his jacket than his body, the position you have when your hands are up, but not going through his overcoat, This is a hard thing to do. Walk 4.9 miles with fresh wounds, so fresh. In fact that while "your shirt is all full of blood, there's hardly any on your pants. The whole conviction rested on the fact that he was shot. The police said "You have an unexplained wound". And they jumped at the conclusion that to have an unexplained wound the grocer must have shot at the assailant that killed the grocer.

This word "bias" sometimes enters into things. This historian Jensen, wrote a very friendly book about Wobblies, Labor and Lumber, in 1945. In 1950 he wrote a book about copper-
mining, Heritage of Conflict, that had such distortion of fact that I couldn't imagine how it occurred, except that somebody had a very obvious bias, an antipathy to the I.W.W. I was wondering, why does a man so friendly to the I.W.W. in 1945 go out of his way to be so damned unfriendly to the I.W.W. in 1950? Later on I found what I thought might be a clue. I asked him and he said that he felt that we were doing a good job with the lumber industry, but that our policies were entirely wrong in coppermining, that that was his reason for doing it.

I did find out later on that in April, 1951, he published an article in Industrial and Labor Relations Review about Joe Hill and disclosed for the first time that in 1946 he had a conversation with Dr. McHugh, the man to whom Joe Hill had gone to have his wound fixed, and that in 1946, very belatedly, even though McHugh was a witness in the trial, he said that Hill came there; said he needed a wound dressed, didn't say how he got the wound, that it was just a personal matter and he didn't want to
prosecute anybody for shooting him. That's all he said, described the wound, things like that, professional job. Said nothing at all about the story he came up with. At least Jensen says that McHugh told him in 1946 that all these years he'd been worried that Joe Hill had confessed to him that he did kill that grocer, Morrison. Of course, that caused a whole lot of things to be written saying Joe Hill was going around shooting people, stealing things, this and that and the other.

All the evidence the police gathered indicated that this grocer, Morrison, was shot for revenge. These two men—came in the shop, didn't try to steal anything, said, "We've got you now", shot him and went out. At the time the whole thing was very much reconstructed as to the situation in the shop. It was just about closing time. The old man, Morrison, was hauling a sack of potatoes across the middle of the floor. Dr. McHugh's story to Jensen ran along just fine, but McHugh said that after he treated Joe and got him back, to where he was boarding he told him to stay
in bed and that from drugs he had given him, and so forth, he was slightly erratic. The doctor had to go out of town--had a difficult labor Case.

It kept him up all that day so he came back that night and saw the newspapers all full of this grocer, Morrison. He wants to see Hill. He comes in and he says, "Well, Joe, did you kill Morrison?" Joe says, "Sure I did. I needed some money so I shot him and took this money from the cash register". All the details of what he said were entirely incongruous with the technical details of what had happened in the shop. I would take it simply as the ironic response of a man to that kind of a question. Here the doctor was holding that all these years, as a guilt feeling that the man had confessed to him/without checking it against the details. How incredible a confession it was. Whether or not this accounts for Jensen's perspective on the I.W.W. being so different in 1950 than in 1945, I wouldn't know.

As an example, as I was speaking of bias in Jensen's book regarding 1914 when most of the
miners in Butte were very indignant at their union. They figured their union had sold them out. June 13th is miners' day, public holiday traditionally since 1870 with a big miners parade, A bunch of miners go down in the mine, get some dynamite and blow up the old union hall there. They did blow it up because they had to get rid of the old union hierarchy. Blowing up the union hall did not get the load off their shoulders. It had to be done other ways.

This Jensen, on the grounds that one Wobbly had written to another in Butte, "I'm writing this letter in care of such and such a barber-shop where I know you go because I'm afraid that the hall may not be there by the time this letter reaches you". Jensen takes this letter as fore-knowledge that the federation hall is going to be blown up.

Now at that time the relations of the I.W.W. to the Western Federation were such that he would not get his mail at the Western Federation Hall. It would be about the same thing
as a draft dodger having his mail sent to a recruiting station. They had the same kind of relationship. I can't understand how Jensen could jump to this conclusion. I asked Jensen about it, how in the world he'd get that kind of a meaning out of it, when surely what the man meant was that the Wobblies would have run out of money for rent for their present hall and have to give it up. That was the obvious meaning.

I'm just using this as an example of what you can do if you want, if your aim is to show how bad an influence the I.W.W. was having on the copper mining unions, He felt that was the case. at this point. When the Western Federation of miners split from the I.W.W. the basic reason for this division was that there was a difference of opinion: Should we continue our old tradition of battling it out with the bosses, or should we try to achieve the kind of relationship many a union back east is achieving? And Mayer seemed to favor that, "Let's quit acting radical; let's quit antagonizing corporations; let's see if we can't find a new work-
able way of getting along with these corporations". The trouble with that, no matter how hard they tried, is that corporations didn't feel they needed any unionism no matter how tame and housebroken it might be. That maneuver could not work whether it was desirable or not. But that divergence was over this kind, of an issue, The thesis, by and large, of Jensen's book is that the Mayer position was right, that we should cease to be antagonistic to the corporations and that the old Western Federation position, which the Wobblies continued, was inappropriate. Given that as his argument, you could see how he interpreted what he found.

This problem of how people see the world has come to interest me more and more. I'm sure that the great difference in the radical and the non-radical is that even though they are looking at the same stoves, the same buildings, the same stores, they do not see the same thing. They perceive it quite dif-
ferently. This isn't a problem of what methods do you apply to the data as you perceive it, but rather what is it that distorts perception in the first place so much as it does. And I'm sure that there's a great deal of distorted primary perception that stops history from doing Its job as well as it might.

There's one other thing in connection with this book, Joe Hill by Gibbs Smith I'd like to mention. I think it's a wonderful book. I'm very glad It was written. "There are a few minor things I have to Carp at, a couple of minor errors, The last chapter Is on the Joe Hill legend, the literature about Joe Hill, the impact upon fiction, poetry, all kinds of different things. There he writes that in such and such a year this man wrote this article or this man wrote this poem, or somebody wrote this play. And the interest in Joe Hill somehow flashes a different way from Hill to Hill, from this event in literary history to that event In literary history. I'm mentioning that because this is so typical of much that I read in labor history. It
makes you suspect some of the historians, if they went to a baseball game, they would print that the changes that are made on the scoreboard are what cause the events on the field to happen. I think that is a fairly common problem.

I would like to just give a brief rundown on the merits and demerits of some of these books as they're listed. This 1913 book of Brissenden's—he was a very young man going to Columbia University, did a lot of research work. It's largely based on documents, he did run around and see a few officials of the union. It's a good book, nothing seriously wrong with it, but just about how the I.W.W. got started. Most of the data and ideas are incorporated in the big book he issued in 1919.

His 1919 book has stood up through these years and is very worth while reading today, I think very largely because after having made a thorough study of all the documents and sources he could, he did a large amount of field work. He went around and talked to
people who were involved. Be did get around where there was a strike or two. He did see this thing on the ground floor. Brissenden does have that big advantage of having that familiarity with what the documents were about and he makes far better use of the documents for that reason.

In 1932, another Columbia University publication, *The Decline of the I.W.W.*, by Gumbs came out. This guy was doing his job, but he certainly lacked a personal familiarity with this. If someone wants to get acquainted with the I.W.W., I would suggest that this Perlman and Taft volume, *History of Labor in the U.S.*, vol. 4, 1932, is an excellent place to start, because Taft had a first hand familiarity with the I.W.W. He had acted as secretary for a lodge for a while and later became an eminent historian and had likewise looked into the general background of American Unions. This book by Eldridge Foster Dowell, *History of Criminal Syndicalism Legislation in the United States*, came out in 1939. It is the first to study the attempts to repress the I.W.W. Did
a beautiful job on it. It is one of the great myths, about the I.W.W., that bombing, killing people etc. was advocated. He made a mammoth survey, analyzing court records, a survey much larger than he could ever incorporate into his book, trying to find any case where the I.W.W. was ever even charged, let alone convicted, charged with having committed any of these types of acts. And nowhere in the United States could he find any evidence that any Wobbly had ever been charged with things like that. He did find charges, where they couldn't run them in for anything else, of speaking where you're not allowed to speak, picket line disturbances and things like that, but nothing about burning up property or destroying machinery, throwing bombs at people or anything like that.

I have commented on Vernon Jensen's book, Labor and Lumber, a very simple and I think honest account of the I.W.W. and other unions, too, in the lumber industry. This book, Aliens and Dissenters, by William Preston, 1963, is not the most readable book. It's one of
the hardest books to read, but for anyone doing a thorough study on the techniques of repression, this is the book. It's largely a matter of going through government files, finding that the various agencies of the immigration department, the Department of Justice, etc. were reporting back, finding out what are the pressures of business, etc. on government heads. "You've got to get after those Wobblies and stop them from going hysterical out here". Very tough reading, but it's one of the most important books ever written.

Since I haven't investigated these files myself I'm in no first hand position to comment on It, but there's something that I like about it--again my bias, no doubt. After doing all this hard work, searching into the government files, doing really a detective job, he comes to the same conclusion we Wobblies did years ago, that the government had become really an agent, violating its own laws in order to serve capital, to, do illegal acts against us. We didn't have the sources to pick it up, but we knew it first hand. He confirms our biases.
Maybe that's why I'm very partial to the book.

There is a book here, Rebel Voices, by Joyce Kornbluh, a wonderful buy for $4.95. It's an anthology and what I like about it is not only that it's a good book--the introduction to the chapters gives you a rather quick and easy knowledge of Wobbly history--but I think one has almost the experience going through, such a book, spending a few hours with a book like that, that you would get from a week's work plowing through the old original publications. By the way they're on microfilm, but I find it much more pleasant to read this book than to hurt my eyes reading a lot of microfilm. And by a process of judicious selection, she has made a very interesting book out of these things selected from the Wobbly papers and enough historic comment so that it's understandable. I think it's a wonderful job.

Phil Foner's The Industrial Workers of the World is a very thorough book. It has a bias. I don't know whether Foner is a communist or not, but the publisher has published
a large number of communist things. But this is a history of the I.W.W. as seen by the communist party. My own preference as a reader of history books is that an author state at the beginning of the book, "It is from this standpoint that I write the book". I think it is much better to do that than to try to say. "I have no standpoint at all. I'm trying to be strictly objective". The same is true for some of these other viewpoints. It does create difficulties for a historian.

One thing I like about this book, Bread and Roses Too, by Joseph Conlon, the first chapter takes in all the various meanings that have been assigned to syndicalism and the myth that the I.W.W. is antipolitical. In it Conlon discusses how Foner has to show that William Foster was right, no matter how often he changed his mind. There were years when he was saying that the labor movement must seek its aims through politics. There were times when he was saying, which the I.W.W. never did contend, that workers must stay away completely from politics because it's all a snare and a delusion. A
lot of Wobblies feel that way, but it was never our official position. We leave it up to each individual member to decide whether he wants to do anything. We, as a union, don't try to dismember our solidarity between these who prefer this candidate and those who prefer that. But there were years when Foster, as head of the Syndicalist League of North America, was opposed completely to even electing a coal miner as sheriff.

Biases of that sort, or questions of Wobbly history, such as when people became eminent later on, left the I.W.W. and went to the Communist Party like Elizabeth Gurly Flynn. Apart from that I think Foner has done his home work very thoroughly and has given us a very informative book about the I.W.W. When you come to matters on which the Communists disagree with the I.W.W., I think you should say it is from this viewpoint that the book was written. It does make quite a few difficulties, having to do a thing like that.

One thing most authors try to do is make their books seem more extensive than they actually are. They tend to deal with the
Wobblies before World War I. They seen to have the idea that we ain't here anymore. The myth has been that the government repressed us so badly in 1917, seized leaders, arrested hundreds of our members, seized documents, etc. That makes some difficulty in reconstructing our history, naturally. The government seized five tons of I.W.W. documents, papers, etc. They eventually destroyed them when labor historians were asking to have them placed in universities.

The facts are, though, that we do have a record of how much dues were paid, etc. Financial statements were issued to each convention for the period from one convention to another. The figure is often given that we had 100,600 members at the time we went to trial in Chicago in World War I. I expect that that is a very generous figure. For September, 1916 to March, 1919, that's from one convention to the other, it works out to an average of 33,500 for that period of two and a half years. No doubt there are peaks within that period, but the average was never that big. I think that 75,000 is probably the peak figure. I do find that in
the summer of 1923, we had about 50 odd thou-
sand. If you take into consideration the people a little behind in dues, our striking capacity was probably not far from 70,000 people that either were in good standing or not far from it and would work with us. So I'm inclined to think that our real effective peak, so far as anything in industry was concerned, was the summer of 1923 after we were all supposed to be exhausted.

We started a quarrel amongst ourselves then and I think there's a moral there somewhere, too. The radical movement can do far more damage quarreling with itself than any of it's enemies can ever do it. We've had a good many instances of that.

This book, The Wobblies, by Renshaw takes a British perspective of the I.W.W. as far as the American phase of a world movement, a series of movements around the world, that thought they should really rely on the institutions labor builds for itself, rather than on the parliamentary institutions somebody hands to them. It is about the most readable
thing I've ever seen on the I.W.W. There's a paperback edition in which he corrected a lot of the things I found fault with in his first book. The paperback edition came out in 1969, the original came out in 1967.

This big book, *We Shall Be All*, by Melvin Dubofsky, (he's over in England now, teaching) is essentially a history up to World War I. This sort of a thing that I think is my fundamental critique of the way academic historians have looked at us, that the sensational is a far better topic to write about than the routine. He gives, I think, 48 pages to telling us once more that we lost the Patterson strike and less than a paragraph to the fact that we had job control on the docks in Philadelphia from 1913 to 1925. Where we tried, to start someplace and we didn't win It he wrote 48 pages about that. We had complete control of the docks of Philadelphia before the war, through the war, after the war, things that tend to be forgotten about the I.W.W. It had to perform all the practical functions of a
union, He had a fact there that was entirely contrary to the traditional myth of the Wobbly blowing into town, making a little speech, and blowing out again.

We have had a lot of instabilities but it hasn't been because we wanted it that way. We always tried hard to avoid it, I think that you can write a book and not make one incorrect statement but, just by proportion, give an entirely incorrect image of what you're talking about. I'd say that's a pretty good example of that. And I don't think it is malicious intent, It's just that the Patterson strike is interesting to write about, and the matter of processing grievances, the entirely routine peaceful strikes, a few people got bumped off, There were about seven people that had been bumped off in the course of our obtaining job control, not that we bumped off anybody. It was the cops bumped off people.

Incidently, in this age where race relations are so important, that was one of the first
thrusts through on race relations. Speed went into Philadelphia there, soap boxing about Marxian economics and a few longshoremen came up to him and said, "This is the kind of trouble we're having", explaining to him that we had docks here. "These are assigned to the Polacks, these to the Niggers and these to the white men, The way they treated us is that if anyone gripes they cay, they'll give your dock to the Niggers or your dock to the Poles". They got a few men from each group and talked it over, They put It to them, "The only damn way you're ever going to get anything going here for yourselves is all together and sit in the union meeting all together". It was almost like lightning, the launching of unionism in there when it got going.

When the Bolshevik Revolution came, all the Wobblies were as enthusiastic as I was. I thought a beautiful new world was being born here. I didn't think that in 1970 there would still be capitalism. I was very optimistic in those days. And I think almost every-
body was very happy about this Bolshevik Revolution. Later on they had reasons to disagree. They didn't like the shooting down of striking street car workers and the other things of that sort. They hoped to get control over the World Federation of Unions they were building and things like that. So we had our disagreements. Some people said, "Let's play along with the Bolsheviks"; others said, "No, that's not the way to organize the American working class". You'll find a lot of words about that at this time.

The Communists didn't like our practical job control in Philadelphia, so they accused us of loading ammunition to go there to overthrow the Russian Revolution, which was a bunch of bullshit. They weren't loading any ammunition for anybody. We hadn't been loading any ammunition since the war was over. It was nonsense.

I went to Philadelphia in the early '30's, and talked to Polly Baker and Ben Fletcher and the other people who had been in that union and were still around and asked them was that the
reason they left. Well, they didn't like that kind of thing, but that wasn't the reason why. They said It was because they liked to eat. That's why they dropped out. There wasn't very much shipping. There were alternative port facilities so that the ships coming into Philadelphia could have gone to various other places, and there was a connected drive telling the boys "If you insist on striking we're going to arrange that all these ships go to these other ports and you guys won't eat". The reason we lost them was because we weren't in the position to protect them against that kind of a threat. And yet the things the historians will practically all say, it was the quarrels, only peripheral things. when the actual thing was this practical bread and butter issue.

This concern for the sensational, I think, accounts for this disproportion, You take most of the stories about the I.W.W., they talk about the Lawrence strike; they talk about the Free Speech fight in Spokane. These are all great labor stories, but can you account for the continued existence of a union by just such
things as that? No, the union has its continued existence because it does something about job conditions and pay. It does something about giving you some protection against discharge by some foreman who doesn't like you. That's what keeps unions together, not these sensational high spots in history books. I think most historians forget that. If they'd go to work on a job I think it might help them to evaluate it, too.

I don't know if you've read a book, The Rocky Mountain Revolution, by Stewart Holbrook. It's about the Western Federation, how they were blowing everything up, and this Orchard, the stool pigeon. He confessed and I landed in jail. This Holbrook, who is not an official historian but who has written a history of American railroads, and has written a lot of books that are thought of rather highly as very competent research and so on, he wrote this completely impossible book. I asked him one day how he could write such a book. There's all kinds of things in here that could not possibly happen. He said he had a contract to produce that book and he was awfully busy doing
something else so he got a copy of this alleged confession! "I gave it to my kids, and said, you write the book". That could be used as documentation. You can document any damn thing you want to.

In this book, Bread and Roses Too, the title's rather interesting, During the Lawrence Strike, some girls went down on a big mass picket line. One made a sign that said, "We want Bread and Roses Too," which I think was a fairly good slogan, There was so much talk about how these women were being cheated out, of a few loaves of bread. Their wages were being cut and they needed that extra loaf of bread. Conlon does clear up a lot of myths about the I.W.W., myths that we were violent and always urging violence or that we relied on sabotage or that we tried to assure that the workers never voted in any election, Some anarchists came from Boston and I don't know if it was very judicious on their part, they came to this strike and tried to rally a lot of people, all of whom were good church going people, and put up a big sign, "No God, No Master". I don't
know why the I.W.W. didn't say, "Get that sign out of here," or something like that. Anyway it was in the picket line long enough for photographers to take picture of it. That thing circulated all over the press. I don't know how many illustrated articles about the I.W.W. I've seen with that picture that said that was the typical thing about the I.W.W. They go around preaching, "No God, No Master." I think quite a few Wobblies are not very good church goers. They had in earlier years particularly -- some of them had a strong religious inclination, but felt that the church was very much serving the capitalist class, telling us we should look for pie in the sky and not for things here on earth.

I'm very happy to see how much in many countries, especially Latin America, the struggle is by church connected labor unions. Not that I think that should be left to the church to do, but I'm glad to see the church is doing what I'd like. In those days I think there was a great deal of antipathy amongst most unions to the intervention of the church in labor disputes.
They were usually not on the side of the worker, That may account for some of this. This is a very nice book but I don't like his last chapter too well, chiefly because of one thing he said. But it's the truth, you're aware of it now. I couldn't deny it's the, truth. He says that Fred Thompson is too loquacious. He says It's a pity that the I.W.U. isn't already dead. Why didn't it go with a nice big bang some time? Quite a few historians—have had a somewhat similar sentiment. I think I know—the reason. I've never studied any psychology, but I think by the time the fellow has collected the data and written, it and rewritten it and found errors and rewritten passages again and he comes to the last chapter he's kind of weary and he thinks it would be real nice to say, "The I.U.W. ended on July 15, 1969." Then it's all tied up and wound up.

I think the reason we won't die is the thing we set out to do: A working class organized so it could fend for itself, and fending for itself would eventually mean running the industries of the world by a democratically organized work-
ing class, by the working class, for the working class. I disagree with this notion that the I.W.W. is dead or dying. I'm around and I think others are still around because the thing we set out to do is something that needs very desperately to be done. I don't think that the boys in the Pentagon or the Kremlin are going to fix this world up for your grandchildren to live in at all. I think that you've got to find some way that the working class of the world reaches an understanding among themselves to get rid of these capitalists and these commissars and say, "This is what we want to do with the resources on this round ball".

I would like to mention in conclusion that there are some great untold stories about the I.W.W. and I hope historians will get at it while they're still available and while some of the participants are still around. This Philadelphia story, for one thing, or the Ohio story. There again is a case of stability. We organized a bunch of factories from 1934 and held them till 1950. We engaged in collective bargaining and incidently had contracts. Most
books will tell you that the I.W.W. won't sign any contracts. We had contracts all the time, even though most of the books will tell you that the I.W.W. won't sign any contracts. The fact of the matter is that there is written in the constitution a provision that, "No contract entered into by any component part of the I.W.W. shall provide for a check-off of union dues or shall obligate the members covered by it to do any work that would aid in breaking strike". We have contracted with people on the basis of our constitutional rules.

I think the Ohio story, there's a fellow working very extensively on that, and there's a bunch of participants he can deal with. There are some people working on the anti-war movement which was very extensive in Rockford, Illinois, 1916, 1917, and even through the war. Some people are working to get other phases of how did the I.W.W. negotiate.

I've read things actually saying that the nature of the I.W.W. as one big union would mean that they would confront the owner of a small shop and tell them, "The only settlement you can make is, not with these guys that work in your shop but with this whole big union of the work-
ing class that we want to organize". You can't do any practical negotiations on that basis and we certainly never attempted to. We always thought that if it's a shop wide nature you negotiate it in the shop, if it's several shops that constitute a local industry you try to negotiate on that basis. If it's shops scattered across the country all making the same product, if you can possibly work it so you negotiate industry wide, so much the better. You build up your negotiating entities according to what the situation is. There was a great deal of practical negotiation happening all through the years, particularly through the old Non-partison League and so on. These are some of the untold stories that historians are working on and I think they'll add quite a bit to what we have. Now I've been talking way-too much and I'd like to have some feed back from you, either questions or comments maybe.

I: What problems did the Wobblies have during the McCarthy years?
During the McCarthy era, 1949, the Attorney General added us to a subversive list. It was a list of people that can't have government jobs. And that list was used for a number of other things. People were told they couldn't have any government subsidized housing. Unemployed people had this attached to their employment applications. It said, "Are you a member or have you been a member of any of the organizations attached to this list?" There were a lot of indirect uses of that thing. When that happened, at the same time a number of unions started to raid the I.W.W. I should mention that the Taft-Hartly Act was still in effect, which required at that time these non-communist affidavits signed by your officers that none of your officers were members of the Communist Party. We hadn't 'signed that, not because we had any Communist members, but we thought the government had na damn business telling us who we could have for officers. The ITU and the UMW took the same stand. It meant that we couldn't have our name on the election ballot. If we were raided, the only way we could cope
with the raid was to get all the people in the shop to vote they didn't want any union at all. It's a little bit difficult, especially when they speak 16 different languages, to get them to understand it's a matter of tactics to say we don't want any union. Vote the unions all out and then say, "We're still here, boss, and we want a better contract than we had before this election yesterday. We want you to officially recognize this bunch of people."

Given these circumstances one UAW organizer in Cleveland confronted our people and said? If you insist on fighting this thing, we're going to go there and put out leaflets. explaining what it is to be on the subversive list and tell about this fellow who had visited his grandmother, an old Communist, when he was a child and was now denied a simple government job, and we will tell them that the same thing will apply to them if they vote I.W.W.". We realized what a difficult thing we would have, and we wanted to retain the job solidarity, the face to face relationships there, so we eased then into some new union. For that reason for some years we
didn't aim at all on putting ourselves into collective bargaining.

Currently we have decided that the temper of the times has so changed, and there's quite a few places where folks, if they're told that those boys are on the subversive list, they'll say, "Well what the hell, we like them all the better". That isn't the typical thing, but there are places where we feel a sizeable portion of the labor force has that kind of an attitude, to make it possible for us to build our kind of a union openly and frankly. Meanwhile we have been working chiefly through our members paying their dues to other unions, trying to be good union men in these other unions and carrying on Wobbly education. That was the major damage done to us. Any other questions?

I: I've noticed in a couple of books that the chief reason wrong with the I.W.W. was that they tried to include in one organization a vanguard party and radical leadership and practical unionism.
That is a viewpoint that I think has been projected in a large number of books. We aim at trying to do the things today that need to be done to make jobs cleaner, safer, more pleasant and better paying. Those are the things that unionism necessarily has as its primary concerns. At the same time, quite frankly, we say that there can be no peace between the working class and the employing class until the working class organizes to take over the machinery and runs it.

Quite a few people—notice that it's so unusual for a union to take that latter position. They say that that inhibits us from being successful in the other. And I'd say that certain instances back in '41 can be used to support that position. But over the years I don't think that is so. If you take the older unions, practically all the pioneers of unionism are people who have some vision of a cooperative common market and better social order and things like that. I don't know of any union built by people who were conservatives.

I think that today there is this advantage. I've done a certain amount of machine repair
and I've found that it's best not only to look at where is this broken and how did it break, but what's the over all purpose of this machine and by what principle does it work, to have a certain idea the whole picture as well as the specific detailed part that you have to do something about. I think you'll find from here on opt that hardly any problem the labor movement has to deal with can be dealt with as an isolated problem, that you're dealing with the whole package. I think it is better unionism to say, yes, this capitalist system is a transitory system, It isn't going to last forever; it can't last forever, It's impossible for it to keep on going. It's going to create situations in which life will be impossible. I think you should say so, We're happy to do so, And so union planning from here on out is both this immediate thing which we've got to do just as well and efficiently as we possibly can. The bread and butter issues today are the urgent thing to any man. We have to do them so you get the maximum results for the minimum sacrifice. Rut you can do that job better, just as you can do machine repair better,
by looking et the whole picture instead of just the point that happens to be giving you trouble,

I: When the I.W.W. sent their documents to Wayne State University did they give up rights to them? Do they control all the documents?

R: No, there is no condition on the documents, like they will be sealed up and opened in such and such a year. Our understanding is that those documents are there and are accessible to any person studying labor history that wants to use them.

I: Are they complete?

R: Well, I think they're as complete as you'll find anywhere. For example, our files of publications are on microfilm. They have a set there and you can get them other places too. The University of Wisconsin has some.
Respondent: Fred Thompson
Interviewer: Cyril Levitt
Tape I

I: Mr. Thompson, I understand you're out here this week visiting us from Chicago doing your stint for Integrated Studies, How do you like it up here?

R: I have enjoyed it very much here, both contact with the people at the university and particularly I've enjoyed your bracing atmosphere and your relatively clean air after the much fouled-up air that I have been breathing in Chicago,

I: Well, people here would dispute the fact that it's clean and pure. Speaking of pollution, which is, I 'think, the direction we're tending towards--do you see it as a problem? It's in the press and it's in the media in general. People are perhaps making a lot of smoke about it. What's your opinion of it?

R: I see this pollution and the total ecological crisis, of which pollution is only one aspect, as one of the major problems of our time. It is one that has concerned scholars, of course, for many years back, but has been something that the general public has been concerned with only very recently, and I think they're going to be concerned with it desperately in years to come, particularly because our present social arrangements almost make it impossible to cope with this problem. May I enlarge on that a little bit? I'm thinking basically this: as our total energy conversion system has developed, as we use more automobiles, more power plants, more electric lights, more of everything that uses up power, we are converting a large part of the fossil fuels that were laid down in
Fred Thompson

the earth millions of years ago, and in a very short space of time, turning them into gases to go into the atmosphere, some of which come back, of course, through the activity of green leaves, grass and so forth. But we are turning these fossil fuels into the air much faster than the plant life can make use of the gas, and so we are making a great change there. No matter how much may be done in the way of eliminating some of the particular annoyance of noxious exhausts from cars and so forth, we will still be doing that.

Now then, we are likewise living in an economy, that it is widely recognized is in good health, is in good tone, only if it is expanding, Without any argument as to the merits of capitalism, socialism, or what have you, assuredly, it should be plain that a social order, a set of economic arrangements that requires continuously to expand, cannot be expected to cut down the rate at which fuels are converted into sources of energy. That, of course, is only one aspect of it,

I'm thinking, likewise, especially any time I have the misfortune to look at the soap operas (I happened to have a flu attack a while ago and looked at TV much more and never in my life before had I realized with what contempt the manipulators view the women of this North American continent) how these soap opera commercials persuade women that they should use this and that, a detergent that adds a lot of phosphate, that is indirectly putting arsenic into our drinking water and certainly doing a great deal to the nutrients for making far too much weed growth in the lakes, I'm just asking, can we expect a set of arrangements that keeps people busy, keeps the wheels going by pressuring people to buy this or that sort
of detergent--can we expect that to do what it should? When instead the TV tube should be saying, "Women, please don't use any detergents unless you absolutely have to" But will Proctor and Gamble put that on? I don't think it's consistent with the motivations that determine the decisions of industrial processes today to do that

I: Well, your implication is that corporations can't or won't deal with that by their very nature. Do you think that unions, or the-labor movement as such, could deal with the problem any better?

R: I hope that the labor movement will so reconstitute itself that it could, but as it is now, I can hardly expect the United Auto Workers to conduct a vigorous campaign to induce us to use fewer and fewer cars. And yet there is no doubt in my mind that to cope with this pollution problem, we need to replace this practice of making people mobile by putting 150 pounds of flesh and bones into something like 3000 pounds of steel to make it move around.

We need a much more efficient urban transportation system, anything of that sort, and leave the individually operated cars to serve exclusively those purposes that could not readily be served by mass public transit. We need to have mass public transit systems that will induce people to leave their cars at home as far as they can and travel in a way so that it takes less fuel to make people mobile. I think it's possible to arrange a large part of industry so that we communicate instead of commute.

There are various things that can be done to cut down all the chaos and confusion of our present economic arrangements and get the world's work
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done far more orderly. But can I expect the United Auto Workers, for example, as a body, or can I expect the United Steel Workers, in regard to parallel questions, to say, OK, it’ll be in the public interest to shut down most of our jobs."? I believe that for many reasons, not only because of the need to make great industrial shifts, great industrial changes, to cope with this ecological crisis, but likewise to make an economy that is not allergic to the possibility that peace may break out -- for all these reasons we do need to make it so that workers will not be put at any great disadvantage if they lose their jobs, You will find the Labor movement far more able to cooperate and to promote those changes essential to having an inhabitable world and a heritage for our descendants if you do make it so that there is no great disadvantage in losing a job. That is an important thing that the Labor movement should plan on extensive occupational change; as part of progress and of any coping with the problems of war and pollution.

I: It seems to me the type of movement you're talking about was the type of movement that the IWW was instrumental in at least initially encouraging. However, we found that for one reason or another, the IWW failed in some ways to maintain the Leadership of the American labor movement. To what do you attribute this ostensible failure?

R: I don't like the word failure. When I was a kid in school I remember one of the copy books we had, "In Life's lexicon there is no such word as 'fail'." I wrote that over and over again and perhaps that's why I remembered. I don't believe that the IWW has failed. It just hasn't completed or even
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got very far with the big job they undertook in 1905. And I think that the reason for that is that the job was such a mammoth one, such a difficult one, even though it is an even more urgent job today than it was then. That job, essentially, is this: to get the working class to organize industrially so that their industrial unions add up to a class wide union, world-wide, democratically to take direction of the use of the earth's resources for the good of man,, I believe that such an organization as that will be indispensable to solve the crisis of our time, of which the ecological crisis is simply one aspect.

I don't see how you can expect, for example, reverting to ecology again, to anticipate that a management that hires experts to plan on obsolescence, can arrange for the minimization of waste--yet waste is a very large aspect of that ecological crisis. Even though there is a growing recognition from the troubles of America in Vietnam that capitalism cannot get along with war, it still remains true that capitalism cannot get along without war.

Working people, those who do the work of the world--no matter whether they do it with slide rules and test tubes or whether they do it with shovels--these people have an interest entirely separate from the interests that do make decisions. I don't think we can preach at people and expect them to make decisions contrary to their interests. It isn't that there are bad people running the world, but they function according to where they sit. I think you're finding quite a few instances of that today
because of the atomic age, ever since 1945, and the dire possibility, which we sometimes tend to forget is still with us, that we may all mutually blow each other up with overkill. There are such things as this ecological crisis, or the tremendous tensions that arise between people--actually a few million people can kill each other with their bare hands if they don’t have anything else to do it with,

I don’t like the prospect, but even if you got rid of all the implements of warfare and you still had a system in which millions of people consider that they’re being deprived of their fair life opportunity by a few who are hogging it, you are not going to have solved the problem. Many people realize that who are getting along nicely, sitting at the top of the pile, What I wanted to point out there is this: that up until say 1945, ordinarily the decisions a man had to make as top executive of a corporation fitted in very well with his own life interests. Since then increasingly, I think, you’ve run into examples where as a human being the man would prefer peace to war. As a human being he would prefer that, something be done other than build up the stockpiles in the capacity for overkill. As a human being, he would have liked to have used his advertising at least to warn people against buying a product that he was making, As a human being he would like to see perhaps, if he is head of US Steel, that they do use a substantial amount of their profits to correct their pollution of Lake Michigan, But in the capacity he had as a business executive, he will ordinarily recognize
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that he must adopt those policies that will maximize the profits of his corporation, and he will probably even feel that if he doesn’t adopt those policies his corporation will fade away and some corporation that does adopt such policies will be performing these functions instead. Consequently, you have a set of arrangements that guarantees that housewives will be told to use a bunch of detergents that they should almost refuse to buy. It guarantees that if you do go to the store to buy some soap you can hardly find any on account of the detergents. It guarantees that outside of every city there will be a great pile of automobiles that are scrap. You will find that even in packaging they will package and design materials to try to get us to buy as much packaging material, even though the disposition of that packaging material is very difficult, for example, where they’re using these plastic and similar containers for selling a dozen eggs. Very noxious gases are produced when these things are burned. There is complete social disregard there because the plan has to be for a profit. To summarize what I am saying there one change is that the interests of even corporate heads as human beings is to have a world that their grandchildren can live in and inherit. But the compulsions they are under as business executives, threatens the chance of the world being livable 30 years from now.

L: Well, here we are in the university and I’m just wondering how students fit into this. Over the last few years, students have been raising quite
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a ruckus on campus, particularly in America, the United States, but also to some extent in Canada. How does this student unrest fit in with your understanding of the nature of things?

R: I've been very much interested in this rumpus on the campus, this student unrest, this process of confrontation, demonstration, and the like, and I cannot but feel that it 'is a sound and fury that signifies a tremendous range of valid discontents, dissatisfactions, yet that it is accomplishing much less than it should be. I look at all this rather from the viewpoint of a union man, that is my background. I cannot help but notice the similarity between the things that went on in various industries before unionism was established and the things that have been going on on various campuses and are going on on such campuses even today. I think today, particularly in universities, most people are aware that before any bargaining techniques got established, you had a policy of confrontation, of people making the world aware that they were very unhappy--such things as the Luddites breaking up the original textile machinery, the harvest workers breaking down some of the early very primitive harvesting equipment. In general there was a rather violent set of activities in which the violence was more frequently arrayed against the working class than by workers.

But gradually, this whole process of confrontation gives way to some more or less routine way of collective bargaining. I'm thinking that even without going back a century, certainly through my own life and even
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today I hear of parallel instances of a plant where there is no union, and people are dissatisfied. Each one feels he's an individual, and if he goes and talks to management he'll be told, "If you don't like it you know what you can do about it." And they say, 'OK, let's all go in a body and tell the management what we don't like about what's going on." And that is a confrontation in industry very similar to some of the confrontations that you see on campus. Again, frequently, especially in the stages where management had not yet realized that it is necessary to recognize the desire of their workers to bargain collectively, you found the sit-it used, as in General Motors in 1937. There was more or less an epidemic of It for a while in '37, even in five and ten cent stores. This is something that comes to mind very much when I've noticed these occupations of premises by students dissatisfied with something. I notice a very obvious similarity there. I happened to be down in Florida a couple of winters ago and I noticed at one of the smaller colleges there, Atlantic College, the student body adopted a resolution that no person could start studying there unless he signed an affidavit that he was not a member of SDS or the Southern Students' Union, or whatever the name of it was, another rather militant body. The senate of the college and the administration of the college forthwith agreed to the thing. It was similar to the yellow dog contract many a coal miner had to sign in order to get a job, promising to join neither UMWA or IWW,
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I see many similar parallels between what has gone on in building unionism in industry and what has been happening on campuses recently. I would expect that necessarily the processes of negotiation be set up, They have been set up, but I think most of us feel they are like the earlier processes of negotiation that have been set up in industry, when you had company welfare plans, and company unions, rather than something the workers felt that they they themselves controlled. As it's recognized in the labor law of the United States and Canada, and most major countries, unionism is built on the premise that there is a conflict of interest between the worker and the employers, I think, likewise, wherever you find these confrontations, you find evidence that you are dealing with a conflict of interest, and that the one should not try to control the other. They are independent bodies and need to work out procedures for getting results, not merely for confrontation, for making their view known. That is very important but not enough for getting results to accomplish the ends that they want.

I'm not sure that the students are quite sure what their ends should be. There is a lot of argument, again making a parallel with industry, should the apprentices tell the master journeyman how to put plaster on a wall, or how to wire a building, such things as that. I don’t think that’s the situation here at all. But where people are putting 4, 5, sometimes 8 years of their lives into this educational industry, for education is an industry, I can understand they want to make sure that not
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only is this to their individual advantage, and done in a way that is agreeable to them, but that the output of the industry should not be something to serve the malignant, malicious purposes of corporations, but the life giving needs and desires of humanity.

I: That's all very interesting, but Specifically, how do you feel that we, as students, can relate to an organization like the IWW?

R: Basically, I say, for the simple reason that this is a factory, this is an industry. The work of the world has changed so that instead of people preparing themselves for the occupation of their life by serving an apprenticeship, they now have to come here. In knowledge factories of this sort, scattered across the landscape, an increasingly important part of the world's work is being done. It is important not only in giving men and women the training to do the new kinds of work, but because a large part of the change in the world grows from the reasearches and the thinking and studying that occurs at universities, So from the viewpoint of the IWW, as we discussed it at a convention two years ago, the students in the university are apprentices, only unfortunately, unpaid apprentices,, And we figured they should organize to control that work in their own interests, to make their working conditions better, and to assure, if possible, that the product of that kind of factory be a product that serves the general interest, just as shoemakers are working in the interest of the working class. A good union shoemaker wants to make good shoes and not bad shoes because he knows that making bad shoes is not the way to treat his fellow workmen who
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will have to wear them. We feel the same way about this,

Another angle I'd like to mention is that from Its inception, the IWW, which was launched in 1905, encouraged the cause of industrial unionism and complete solidarity of the working class. It has felt right along that while we wish to bargain and get everything that we can in the way of safer working conditions, more pleasant working conditions, more satisfactory wages, greater security for the worker in regard to his income, all such things as that, at the same time we have felt that our ultimate job is to so organize the working class that they will be competent to run the world in accordance with their motivations, since we do not believe that any other set of motivations would fit.,

By and large, you have three possible plans, so far as I can see, or as most union men can see it, upon which our world can be organized, One is the one we're accustomed to here; that decisions be made by the heads of corporations. The other, that applies over a large part of Eastern Europe, Asia and some other places, is that the decisions should be made by those who run the government. Neither of these plans works well, especially in dealing with the world's ecological crisis. Corporate controllers have to reach their decisions on the basis of what will give them the most profit; the political controllers have to reach their decisions on the basis of what will
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most favor their retention of power or their expansion of power; but the nature of these problems is such that the big decisions from here on out have to be in terms of what will be best for man. Neither governments nor corporations can be expected to do that. It is essential that you have democratic control from the bottom up, the people doing the world's work deciding what they should do. And that, of course, ties in very much with all the work being done by students, because this decision does require the special knowledge and so forth that is the function of such factories as this.

Personal Reminiscences

Friends, fellow workers, when Tom and Cyril asked me to come up this way, they suggested that one of these sessions be used for some reminiscences and that's why we have this session today. I don't know whether you will enjoy it, but I'm quite sure I will enjoy it anyway, for I'll admit I've approached that age at which I tend to do some reminiscing. You people, of course, will eventually be doing far more reminiscing than I'm doing, because I read not long ago that today a young man in good health at age 25 can reasonably expect to reach 115, 125. So by that time you'll be able to do a lot of that sort of thing, and I do think if you're going to live to 115, you might as well get rather active, try to make it a good world between now and then, instead
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of just letting it go by happenstance and be directed by people whose interests aren't quite the same as yours. There's so much I could reminisce about, and we want to keep it down to a reasonable time, maybe just indicate roughly what were the major segments of my life, and talk over them briefly, and if there are some aspects of it that arouses some curiosity in you, things I've seen, people I've seen, then we can go into that in some detail.

The first part of my life was back in the town where I was born, St. John, New Brunswick, 1900. Growing up as a rather solitary young radical, I happened to have come to my radical ideas from a certain amount of reading books. That in turn might be blamed on the fact that I got bronchial troubles the day I was born and couldn't go outdoors as much in winter time as I wanted to. So I probably spent more time looking in books and that may have gotten me into all kinds of troubles, I don't know. Maybe books are things to beware of.

I got interested in the Socialists when I was about 15 years of age, because I'd heard about them in books and didn't know there were any real, live Socialists. I just thought they were people like Louis Blanc and so forth, back in 1848. In a book of John Stuart Mills I read about the French Utopian Socialists, I thought some of their ideas were pretty good.

Then the war was on in 1914, and an agitator for the Socialist Party of Canada, Wilfrid Gribble, who pre-dated some of our modern life
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styles by having a very gorgeous beard, I recall, came to St. John, I didn't know about it; I read about it in the paper. He had made a speech down where there was a crowd, because a circus was in town. No, it wasn't a circus; it was a Provincial Fair that was there. We had big billboards all around town, urging recruiting, "Your king and country need you." This newspaper account said that they had charged him with sedition because he had said, "Your king and country bleed you." And it was further charged that he had alleged that the king was a parasite. And I had had that same suspicion for a long time, sort of a feeling it might be nicer to have a republic, or something like that. Later in my life I decided it didn't make very much difference whether you have republics or kings or what have you, that it seems that those who run the industry run the world. But at any rate, his arrest caused me to play hooky from school that day and go to the court house where he was being tried,

There, I encountered some real live Socialists, They actually breathed: They were kind of elderly people, but even so, they were still alive and warm, in fact, quite cordial to me, quite enthused to find some young person who had a keen interest in Socialism. And here every Sunday night they had a meeting up in the Trades and Labor Temple in town. I had never known. So I started going up to the Trades and Labor Temple every Sunday night, and pretty soon I was a member of the Socialist Party.
I became their organizer in town. It seems odd; this Little high school kid joined the Socialist Party and became an organizer. It happened just this way. I was the only person, I think, under forty in the Socialist Party and I was somewhere between fifteen and sixteen at the time, maybe a generation gap I was sensitive to or something, though actually I didn't mind that so much. I asked them, "Isn't there some way we can do something to get more people coming up here?" They said, "Well, we used to have more people before the war, but they've been a little leery of coming up here since the war is on." And they suggested, "Maybe you ought to go and talk to them and see if you can get them coming back." Fine and dandy, so that's why they called me organizer, gave me a bunch of names and addresses. That experience, going around to visit these people in their homes I can still recall. Most of them were Jewish people who had immigrated from Europe and brought a great deal of old-country ways with them. For the first time in my life I entered homes of that kind. I was hopeful of doing something in those homes, not only to get these people back in, but I saw that some of them did have younger members of their family. I thought it would be very nice to have some people somewhere around my own age in this Socialist movement, because by that time I had read a few Socialist pamphlets.

It seemed to me such a wonderful idea; it seemed to me so plain: the world goes bad because the workers do not control the means with
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which they work, And it is very important that they should somehow acquire the control of the means with which they work. I thought all we'd have to do is elect enough Socialists and pass a law saying, "From this day forward the workers shall control the means with which they work," and there wouldn't be any of the waste of capitalism; we'd just have the application of industrial efficiency to make sure everybody ate real well and had a good time, and ate strawberries and ice cream every day maybe. I thought that I'd just have to tell my friends and neighbors and everybody I ran into about what a wonderful, efficient, pleasant system--no wars, nothing like that and say, "fine". Well, I tried talking to my friends and neighbors and schoolmates about it, and they figured there was a catch in it somewhere. I didn't win any recruits.

But I went around to these homes of former members of the Socialist Party, I found that most of them were 40, 50, 60 and restricted by a terror such as I don't think I've met again until the days of the McCarthy regime in the United States. "We would like to be there; in our hearts we are Socialists; but there was some irregularity in my coming to this country." or some such thing as that. Or, "There are ways in which I might be considered an enemy alien, because I was born in a country that now is at war with Canada; my chances of making a living here might be imperiled." But there were people who'd say that I was critical of the capitalist system, and the wars that capitalist governments get into, simply because I am trying to hope that
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the other side wins. There were many occasions where they left rather afraid. It's the first time I'd run into any large-scale fear—a very unpleasant memory, one of the few unpleasant memories in my recollection. I was reminded of it again in later years, when people hesitated to subscribe to certain publications in the United States because of the trouble they might get into. An atmosphere of fear is a very unhealthy one. But at any rate, I went around, I did get a few of these people to come in, and I tried particularly to get some of the younger people in these families. I figured some of the Socialist ideas of their parents should have rubbed off on them, but they evidently hadn't. It took me a while to figure it out, but most of them felt, "Our fathers are from the old country; they have the speech of the old country; they talk about things that make me seem different than the people in this country. And the talk about Socialism is one of those things that they bring along and that marks me off, and that makes me a little bit unacceptable, in this world." I think that was the attitude. I didn't come to it just suddenly, it was just gradually this impression of why the young people didn't want to go along there. And it's odd, the Socialist and radical movement in which I grew up was predominantly one of old men with hardly any young people in it at all, something very different than the radicalism you're experiencing today.

Bit by bit I did eventually find two young people, as mentioned, one in the sugar refinery where I worked. I saw "Marx", "Bolshevik", and
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one thing like a cartoon of a big fat capitalist being hanged somewhere, that showed there was somebody around. I wasn't in favor of hanging a capitalist, but I took it that this is a man who has something in common with me, whoever drew this thing. And I did observe carefully the distribution of these things, and found that the center of them seemed to be the power plant. I got in there and finally found there was a young Russian lad who spoke very little English, and he'd been putting these things up. So I became friends with him, and he tried to teach me Russian and I tried to teach him English. He liked to play a violin too; he played well at it. The place where he was boarding he found a returned soldier, somewhere around our age, already back from the war because he had been gassed over in Flanders,

So the three of us constituted a sort of unholy trinity, and I felt much better, that we could undertake things that the more elderly Socialists, I think, frowned upon somewhat.

I don't know whether you've seen any of these things that the Wobblies had used--the sticker you wet with your tongue to put up some kind of propaganda slogan or some cartoon or something like that. We hadn't heard of anything like that, we invented them. Somewhere in anthropology I've run into this stuff that all cultures are diffused and the same thing is never invented twice. I know that isn't so, because the Wobblies and I quite independently invented the idea of the
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sticker. We used to write slogans on paper, put a lot of mucilage on the back, lick them, stick them up on some big plate glass window or some place like that. Our ideas of public relations, I think, were a little bit weird. We'd take nice quotations that stirred our hearts, warmed us, like, "Workers of the world unite; you have nothing to lose but your chains. You have a world to gain." It seemed as obvious to us as any axiom in a geometry book (and, I think, should be), and pasted this up here and there. There was some dissatisfaction with that. They suspected we three young obvious radicals were the people doing it, but they couldn't prove it, 'till somebody who was working in a veterans office got some nice fresh carbon. He was typing up this stuff to make stickers out of and somebody came in and put the carbon away. Somebody happened to look at the carbon, just out of curiosity, saw this slogan, and so that was the end of that.

The police had been bothering me a little bit. By that time I had become secretary of the Socialist local, and they used to come around to my house once in a while. I was thinking it was maybe time for me to leave the family nest because the rest of the family didn't see eye to eye with me at all, and I think they were rather embarrassed by police wanting to look over my Socialist records; which I told them I didn't have. I kept them in the family Bible, a nice big family Bible. I used to stuff them in there, because I didn't like the idea that they should find the names of the members, though it would have
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been so simple just to come up to our meeting any time and find us all there. There was really no point to subterfuge or any great secrecy, But it seemed that they might get this soldier for some reason or other, on account of he still had his military connections, and some of the stickers hadn't said entirely kind words about this idea that you cross oceans to shoot holes in your fellow workers. We didn't think that was a good idea, either. So we felt we had to get out of town, and that's where we got to Oromocto,

I'd met him a couple of times, one of the most interesting Socialists I ever met. He's still around, been rather active in the Communist movement. He became a rather famous agronomist, I believe, I know he's written several books on how you can cross this kind of a tree with that kind of a tree. He's made several trips to the Soviet Union to advise them on some of their problems. Millard Fillmore, his name was. He had started out to be a minister, graduated, had course in theology and so forth from Mt. Allison over there in New Brunswick. Another theological graduate from Mt. Allison that I know of, A. S, Embree, became an IWW organizer among coal and metal miners. A lot of ministers fall by the wayside and do that sort of thing. So we went up to Fillmore's place, I remember. He didn't own this place; he was managing a large nursery. You start young trees there, things of that sort; and he needed a lot of bull labor, so we went to work there. We enjoyed
ourselves up there, but it seemed to us we weren’t doing anything about Socialism.

‘We were reading, He was getting publications from the United States and the Socialist Party paper. They had to change the name of that so often. It had been the Western Clarion, and then they suppressed that, so they published the Indicator, and they suppressed that, and then they published the Red Flag, you know, the same thing coming out with a new name. Frequently the Socialist paper would come out with a big white chunk in it, deleted by the censors,, And ordinarily nothing very exciting. I’m sure, if a Liberation News Service or something like that got hold of a suppressed copy of those days, they’d say, “This is too dull to bother with“ But the military censors that looked it over in accordance with Orders in Council, which still applied at that time in-Canada, didn’t like what we were saying. We were getting all kinds of literature, leaflets and so forth, from different radicals around America and Canada.

I remember once a circus came to Frederickton 0romocto was just a few miles - oh, 20 miles south of Frederickton. Frederickton is, or was at that time, a city of beautiful shaded streets, big trees that arched overhead and so on and it’s a center likewise. Not only there was a university there, but a mining district not far from it, lumbering operation and so forth,, When the circus was in town all
these people came into town to the circus, and we thought we should pass them some literature. So we waited; we went to the circus; we wanted to see that, too, of course; and then came our chance when the show was all over and we stayed down in this shaded area passing out these leaflets. One of our fellows was to go off the street, and if ever the crowd, which had occasion to go only one direction, if ever they started coming back, he was to start whistling Kathleen Mavourneen. Whenever I hear Kathleen Mavoureen any time since I think of the same thing, that if the crowd started coming back, he was to whistle that. And we heard him whistle that tune about a block up. I had a cap and my partner had a hat, and we just changed those and went with the crowd. We spent all that night going with that crowd hunting for those damn Bolsheviki! It was an almost blood chilling experience. Later on I happened to read this book by a fellow that I think is considered very unscientific today—by LeBon, about the crowd. But somehow, what LeBon wrote did remind me very much of the feeling I had with that crowd that was going all night, hunting for those Bolsheviki. And I wonder what my own actions might have been had they found a victim. I actually have wondered whether I would have gone, simply as a hypnotised member of the crowd, to do what the crowd wanted or not. I don't believe I would have, but there certainly seemed to be a pressure in that direction. And I think a great deal of mob action does proceed
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in some process of interstimulation along that line,, What amused we most about that thing, though, was that a day afterward, the Fredericktog paper had a notice that the chief of police had urged everybody who got any of that literature to turn it into his office. A few days later, another little item that none had been turned in to his office, and he understood the reason was that everybody that got them was so ashamed of it they didn't want to show it. You know, we radicals are always optimists and we hoped that the chief of police request that everything like that be turned in. just made it all the more valued and interesting to people. I haven't heard of any social revolution occurring in New Brunswick yet, though I have heard that they have a Socialist mayor in Halifax at the present time.

Shortly after that, I went working around different jobs, more or less stayed away from home, worked at a saw mill, worked in building this big dry dock that they have, mixed around with workers-there through 1919, and tried to talk with people to interest them in these ideas. I could get some little feeling from some workers. But it was strange; I got more response that what I'm saying makes some sense from old people than I did from young. Young people seemed to be such conformists at the time. I do remember when I was working for the sugar refinery, my job once in a while made it necessary to see that certain cars of coal were moved from one place to another, and the man who could arrange that stayed in a little shanty right across from the sugar refinery, That man, sitting in that little shanty to do jobs
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like that was the president of the Trades and Labor Council of St, John. He wasn't a Socialist, he wasn't a radical; but I think he understood some of these things better than this young whippersnapper, myself. I remember with some embarrassment a time when my boss told me to tell him that we absolutely had to have those cars moved so that we could unload the coal right away; so I went over there with some of my boss's authoritarianism on my shoulders; and I told him, "We need those cars moved right away." He looked at me, and knew that I was secretary of the Socialist local and he said, "You say we need those cars right away and you call yourself a Socialist? You think that you and the company own those cars? You think I and the CPR own the railroad here? And you call yourself a Socialist?" I think I learned a little bit from this old non-socialist trade unionist on that occasion. I think I've tried to avoid that misuse of the word "we" ever since. I find that it's very frequently misused.

Around St, John in particular, about the only response was amongst these older people. We had a strike there in the dry dock and the young fellows would support that, but there was no interest in any of my ideas that I can recall at all. And that rather puzzled me. At that time I was receiving one copy each of a large number of publications that came to me from the United States. The Socialist Party of America had split into the Communist and the Communist Labor parties, and there were three or four other factions within those. Each one felt that they had their own particular divine light. I was getting all kinds of things from different parties,
magazines, leaflets, pamphlets, periodicals, all written as though revolution was right around the corner. This is the year 1919.

I remember some people in Boston in particular arguing that it's silly to bother with any trade union demands, that we have just one demand: we want the earth; and you gotta take it away from the, capitalists. Prepare for mass action of any sort that may be required, This idea of mass action included massive confrontation, the expectation that maybe if we buy a few little guns to fight that big army with, or something like that. The atmosphere of much of this left-wing literature that came to me from the United States was quite a bit like some of the leftist underground press I've run into, some of the Maoist type of publications I read in recent years. That's about the only thing I could compare it to for this time. I was puzzled by that, because the implication there is that every working man is ready for the revolution. It's just a few of those lawyer; and skypilots in the Socialist Party that stop the working class from getting rid of capitalism. This was sort of the implication I got from reading these papers.

There was one of my friends had occasion to come down to the United States, an old Socialist, he said, when he came back and I asked him about this, he mixed around with some of these people that were issuing these papers, dropped into their offices and things like that. And I remember that time and I've noticed it since, that frequently working people who haven't had the advantage of any extensive education occasionally like to take a nice choice collection of six-bit words, as we call them, and put them together. He spun one on me that time, I asked him, "Why is it that
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the papers down there say this, and here I can't find hardly any working men that are enthusiastically waiting for a revolution?" And he said, "Well, it's the same thing down there, but the people that issue these papers, they never talk with ordinary people. They just live," he said, "in the miasmata of their own effulgences."

I think I've seen a parallel situation today. I was a very lonely young radical, because I didn't find any other young radicals at the time,. And I think today, where you have the opposite situation, and find people talking only to those who share much the same outlook, the same opinion, there is a serious danger of getting a very wrong impression of what the world is like and what the attitudes of people are in it,. It's good to have people who share your ideas, or slightly different ideas. It is hard to have a serious discussion of your own thought with somebody who shares none of it whatever; it's impossible. But at the same time I think you have to have considerable conversation with those who share almost none of your thought, It's difficult to have such conversation, but you won't know what the world is like unless you force yourself to have it,. From there I dropped off in Amhurst, just for a speech or two. They set me up there speaking as a young man, I guess I was full of words then, as I have been ever since, and I thought I knew it all, too, I remember that I spoke on unemployment Two things I remember of that particular trip reading in a newspaper about Centralia, Washington and the IWW lumberjacks trying to shoot at a parade of legionaires, patriotically celebrating
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on November 11 the Armistice of the First World War. I didn’t believe it then. It was quite a long time after before I got all the full facts. These people had coils of rope in their hands and they were busting in the door and they were going to take these Wobblies out and lynch them. And these fellows had notified, way in advance, “If you come to lynch us, we’re going to protect our hall.” And that’s why the shooting occurred. I remember that rather stirring event while I was there.

One thing in particular kind of riled me up. I had given a speech there at a hall that the Labor Temple had secured for me; because the labor movement at that time, while not radical, was quite willing to let us radicals who were in it make speeches, use their premises and things like that. They felt that we were doing something that should get a hearing. And in my speech on unemployment, explaining the similarity between the wage worker’s status and the status of a serf or a slave, much as Karl Marx had explained it, I used the expression that we are essentially wage-slaves. I thought that was nice. The next couple of days afterwards, when I was getting on a train to go to Halifax, one railroad man had been up there and asked me, “Hell, good morning, wage-slave, how are you?” I thought it didn’t sit well with me at all, I didn’t like the idea that I was a slave. I knew that there is wage-slavery and it’s an awful thing, but to feel, myself, that I was one of them was most disturbing and uncomfortable. I think also it’s because throughout my life I’ve been told that this is just a slightly imperfect society of free men, not a class society; and
that despite its imperfections we do essentially chose who will run the countries, and that we even shape their decisions for them, and that they have to consult our will and so on. Yet I wasn’t asked, would we have World War I or World War II or the Korean War or the Viet Nam War or would we have a depression in 1921 or another one in 1931 and so on--none of these things that really have shaped the circumstances of my life, I wasn’t even asked about the Manhattan Project when we started building atomic bombs. And besides that, I haven’t known anybody who was asked. I’ve asked all my friends, did they know anybody who knew anybody who had been asked about these things. And I guess that my condition of not having anything really very effective to say about the formative matrix of the seventy years I’ve been around, this is a fairly widespread, you might almost say universal, condition. So I think that wage slavery does describe the facts.

Anyway, I went over to Halifax. There’d been a big explosion there. No, it wasn’t the Weathermen or anything like that. It was just one boat had run into another in Halifax Harbor. One of them was loaded with stuff to blow up some workers someplace else, and instead all the houses were shattered, their windows and so forth. So I thought I’d go there, you know. There should be some work. I found very little work. I had to take on all kinds of jobs I didn’t want, to make a living for myself the first few months in Halifax. I thought there’d be lots of work, but there wasn’t.

I did visit the Halifax Citizen office, a weekly labor paper, and that
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was my first journalistic experience. They were kind of pleased, too. Again, it was a bunch of middle-aged and elderly radicals I ran into there, active union people. Perhaps I shouldn’t call them completely radical. They were people who questioned the validity of the existing system, who felt that surely something better could be arranged, who were far from being sold on any radical dogma, but certainly very open-minded to the need for social change. I say that to characterize them rather than really calling them radicals of any sort. They were quite willing to have me write pieces in their paper, and I felt that it was very important, since I knew all the answers, that I should write pieces in their paper.

It led me to many interesting experiences* I’m thinking of the wonderful people I’ve run into in my life, like in that St. John local, There was a fellow who manufactured violins and taught violin lessons, and he got me acquainted with Frederick Engels and Karl Marx and things like that. We used to try to make a little music at the Socialist meetings. There was old John Blair, a coalheaver who played a mandolin. I remember one or two Jewish storekeepers who dared to come out, even though they were afraid that if it became known that they were Socialists their stores might be damaged in some way, or that they might lose all their customers. A real choice collection of old men, who had got an understanding that the world isn’t static, that it has to move ahead, and got some understanding that the direction in which it must move must be that of a conflict between the
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major social groupings or classes in it.

When I went to Halifax I found similar people. One such was old Donald Stuart. They were founding the Labor Party of Nova Scotia at the time and held a meeting in Halifax at which to elect delegates to a convention in Sidney. The leading spirits were some staunch trade unionists and one staunch Catholic advertising writer who believed strongly in people and the social gospel; he was their publicity man and chief resolution writer, but frequently I participated with my Marxian notions.

-TAPE 2.

At this meeting, they heard that I could put notes together, and asked me to make a report of the meeting. I was listening to people and it was rather humdrum. You know how most of those meetings go, Who’ll we elect and what kind of position will we take on this thing and that? Then this old man who walked with a limp began to talk, It was Donald Stuart, He was very dirty. He had been a prospector, but at that time he was a storekeeper in the shipyards, took care of all the tools. If you needed tools you had to see him, Very well thought of, he’d been a champion of the co-operative movement this, that and the other, a man of great oratorical power, highly learned. He’d probably gone to school for one and a half days in his life, one of the best informed men I’d ever run into, However, he got up to speak and I was looking at his manner and the hush that fell as people saw him get up from his chair. He spoke and it made me think of my younger days going to Sunday School and church,, He said, “I would like to remind you that this is a time for old men to have dreams and young men to have visions.” He went on from there--that this
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hundrum thing isn't important, that the old way of the world had ended with World War I and that something entirely new, something good and clean and different should be built. The impact of that on the crowd was amazing. I wrote about how the whole character of the meeting was changed when this old man got up and spoke as he did,

I knew him very well afterwards, a very good orator. The reason for his limp might be of interest to you up here in Ontario. He'd been up here as a prospector I would judge sometime in the last century. He was such an old man he remembered the Chartist movement and the flickering out of chartism somewhere around 1847, He was in his 80's at the time that I knew him. He was missing toes on his foot. He'd been up here running a trap line and had an accident. He got water on his foot and had a long way to go and his feet were frozen by the time he got to his cabin. He tried to take care of them but gangrene set in and he figured he was miles from any place else and the only thing to do was to make an operation on himself. He didn't want to bleed to death so he had a red hot plate there. He cleaned his foot as good as he could and took an axe and chopped the toes off, then moved it up against the red hot plate and cauterized the wound. It took a lot of responsibility and independance. He was that way in life too.

There were several old people,, You know the Trades and Labor Council; Today it may seem odd that we think of unions tending to be rather conservative, and these unions I'd say professed about the same things as the
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craft unions. They asked me to teach a course in Marxian Economics in the Trades and Labor Hall there. I obliged and every week we’d have that, We bought copies of a little book that was published in Canada because you couldn’t get anything from the United States. So the Socialist Party had published the first 9 chapters and the famous 37th chapter of Vol. 1 in the little book. We used that as a text book. We spent our time trying to get some understanding of value and surplus value and the sale of labor power and all such things as that. We learned something from that but I’m sure I learned far more from the old men who constituted most of that body.

There were all types of labor people there,, This old chartist I mentioned was the oldest man who came around. There were people who’d been active in the building up of labor movements in other places and had settled in Halifax, I think I got a great deal of whatever these people felt was worthwhile in the tradition of the labor movements. I enjoyed talking with them very much. And again, looking back I remember that I was wishing that there were more people my age,, I think I was almost solitary in my generation amongst all those people,

I was working in a shipyard and they had a strike there. Since I was with the laborers, they elected me as delegate to the strike council from the laborers. The laborers were mostly young fellows like myself who had not acquired any trade. Regarding the strike they could see it and I was able to dig up some data. The dry dock said they could show their
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books to us but there wasn’t a penny possible to pay our wage demands. With the assistance of some other people I was able to show that what they had was a dry dock. They could show that they had no money on hand at all, but out of our work they had a dry dock and three ships pretty well under construction, and our work was of considerable value. When I showed the value incorporated in those was considerable no matter what system of value you used, these young fellows figured there must be something to all these books that I read. It does make an argument that made the company admit they were wrong in what they were saying, that they couldn’t pay us any more money. They could see that, but I couldn’t get them to see that we ought to alter the social system, I’ve had that puzzle for about 70 years now. There are more people, I’m happy, today, who do see that.

I left that country and took a train west, to Winnipeg, a bargain excursion to take in the harvest in 1920. Remarkable travel facilities, long cars with double deck bunks in them. At the end of every second car there was a place that you could do a little cooking. It was designed so poor people with very little money could take in the harvest from Winnipeg west. Twenty dollars from St, John to Winnipeg. I and Ivan Lasiuk, the Russian lad from the refinery power plant, with his fiddle along, went on the excursion. Tried to sing a few little radical songs that did go. I found one or two radical songs we’d picked up from the Socialist movement they like especially. It was a deplorable trip otherwise. Some of the fellows on the upper bunks had drunk way too much beer and didn’t go to
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the toilet. I remember that as being a very depressing situation. I didn’t
dare lie down in my bunk, I remember, for days after until they got sobered
up. We got west and that’s where I joined the OBU, I had planned to, I’d
been in correspondence. In the spring of 1919 there had been a general strike
in Winnipeg called by the AFL unions, and the people running that general
strike were charged with conspiring to overthrow the government.

They issued permits to distribute milk, bread, and things like that,
They were tried on the charge that they issued permits. That’s the govern-
ments job, so by doing that you tried to overthrow the government. Their
lawyers asked, “With whom have they been conspiring?” They listed a bunch
of people they’d been in correspondence with, I was listed as one of those
people they’d been conspiring with, It was simply that they were sending
me their publicity releases. I think I”d sent them a contribution for a
strike fund or something like that. They certainly weren’t asking me how
to run the strike or anything. Later many of these people were in the One
Big Union of Canada, Anyway I went out west to join the OBU and work at taking
in the harvest,

I found pretty soon that you could really make more money working on
the construction jobs that other people left to take in the harvest. so I
worked in several places like that. A very pleasant time, as I recall it,
One or two little things, I don’t know if they amount to much at that time,
I think like most young radicals, I had decided not only that there wasn’t
any Santa Claus and there wasn’t any good in the capitalist system, there
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wasn’t any God either. I think I was a rather militant athiest at the time. That got me into a rather embarrassing situation going out west. We’d had a discussion one place about how frogs got on a roof during a rain storm. I forget just which side I was taking, but anyway the lady who ran the house took the opposite side. Her son said that since I disagreed with her I was calling his mother a liar, I said I was doing no such thing. It made such an unpleasant situation I went on to the next town.

The next town, they were building a church there. I wanted to get a job building the church. They said fine and dandy but there’s no place to board here. Someone said, ‘Well, there’s an old couple in that house over there. I think they could put somebody up.’ This was late in the afternoon. This young Russian fellow and I were together. He never got into trouble over what he said because he didn’t know any English.

I went over there. I could smell homemade biscuits, fried potatoes, all kinds of things that activated my innards. I told them that I would very much like to help build their church there, but I couldn’t unless I could find a place to board. The old lady looked at the old man and said, “DO you suppose we could put these two young men up?” They thought we seemed nice young men. They said, “Would you people like supper?” We said that was exactly what we would like. They put it all on the table very nicely and then sat down.

They said, Would you mind saying grace?” I was wondering what to do. I didn’t want to head down the line with no supper and I did really want to work on that job and I did really have my principles. But I had read
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quite a bit of Omar Khayam and I took him very much to heart. I liked the Rubaiyat and I had some of the verses memorized. So I bowed my head quite nicely and said,

"O Thou Who didst with pitfall and with gin
Beset the path I was to wander in
Thou wilt not with predestination round
Enmesh me and impute my fall to sin."

And the old lady said, "It’s so nice to have a young man with a proper religious upbringing," The Rubaiyat stood me in good stead.

We wandered west after a while on that trip I remember. Some music once in a while brings things to mind, Not only this Kathleen Mavourneen tune for our little episode at the circus outside of Frederickton, but there’s a beautiful piece of music that Rubinstein wrote, supposed to relate to the time when Napoleon was in exile on St. Helena and so forth,

It brings to mind a beautiful recollection in my life, We’d been hoboing toward Edmonton, Lasiuk and I. He had his fiddle still with him. Once in a while he’d play a little tune. He wasn’t expert, but rather good at it. We stopped in this town; I think it’s called Meridian. It is a point at which time changes going west and there was a little bake shop in it,

We went up there to buy some doughnuts* One thing after another led to some little comment about what was going on in the world. We were just hoboing through there, riding boxcars. We talked with the baker, he rather liked some of our disagreement with the system. He was a Socialist actually, a member of the Socialist Party of Canada. He hadn’t
run into any people either for a while who liked to talk socialism, So he said, "You fellows hang around a while. I'll make you some coffee and you can eat your doughnuts here, and we'll go home and have dinner after a while." So we went home and had dinner. He not only had a nice dinner for us, but a very beautiful daughter. Not for us, of course, but he had a very beautiful daughter. She played that Komemoi Ostro piece on the piano; and whenever I hear it, I think of that very pleasant interlude in my hoboing. Several bits of music have recollections like that. But anyway we went on to Caldar.

I worked in the railroad shops in Caldar, We were active in the OBU there. Went on to Calgary later on. In all that time I was running into wonderful people, staunch trade unionists,, Quite a few of them were not members of the OBU because they didn't dare be members of the OBU. They'd lose their right to earn their bread and butter if they became members of the OBU. But they certainly were my guide and counsel., And somehow, I don't know why, so many of them were interested in the writings of Webb, Beatrice Potter, the earlier writings of Commons and particularly the institutional economics of people like Thorstein Veblin. They got me doing some reading like that. I found that western Canada place rather interesting.

One thinks it would never happen in the United States, I wonder if it could happen in Canada today, in 1921 we hit a lot of unemployment. I managed over the first winter quite nicely, working in the CPR railroad shop power plant at Ogden out of Calgary. The second winter was different
for I'd been rambling over the western provinces during the summer and that second winter I didn't have a job. Tremendous unemployment I remember. The premier of Canada came to town and made a speech, in the arena, Here, I guess you'd call him the head of state or is it the governor general who's head of state here? I don't know which it is. Anyway, he was making this speech in the arena full of people, mostly working men, which again is a different thing. In those days in any big social issue at a public meeting you'd find 90% of the audience was working men. I've gone to such meetings in recent years in the United States frequently, Ordinarily it’s professional people, lawyers, school teachers, and labor represented only by union officials or something of that sort. Very seldom rank and file members of unions are doing much at such meetings. But there were a lot of working people filling up this arena in Calgary where the premier was speaking about unemployment and what he was going to do about it. He was going to try to get people in Ottawa to raise the tariffs high enough so that nothing came into the country; we'd all have prosperity and good jobs and so on. It seemed it was quite customary in those days if anyone made a speech, and you disagreed: to get up and ask a question or two. So, I got up in my old dirty mackinaw there in the audience and asked the man, please, did he know anything about the tariffs down in the United States? Did they have high tariffs down there too? He said, "Those people are really keeping high tariff walls up." I didn't question that I asked, "But don't they have a lot of unemployment too? If high tariffs prevent unemployment,
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how is it the United States has so much unemployment?" The crowd was with me and insisted I go on up there and debate with him. They insisted that the premier and I debate up there on the platform., Here I am, a young fellow, 21 years old, I'd read most of the first volume of Marx anyway and I knew everything. Certainly I was prepared to go up there and debate him, He seemed to think maybe I could because he found that he had to go someplace else anyway. I made a speech on the causes of unemployment, what the working class ought to do about it and so forth.

A little while later a friend and I, we were both members of the Socialist Party and the One Big Union which used the same hall. Quite a few people in one were members of the other. There was no conflict between them. It struck us that since most of the unemployed came to this one government employment office about 6:30 every morning to see if anyone needed a man or two for the day, that we could reach the unemployed very easily and maybe talk some idea of forming a union amongst them to take some kind of action. We asked the members of the OBU if that was OK, They said, "Sure, go ahead. They probably can't pay an initiation fee,, They don't have much money." We discussed it, We'd charge 10 cents for membersh and 5 cents for dues and some special little card we'd issue, just so they could be organized, A Socialist Party member who had access to a mimeograph got us a few handbills explaining we could all do better organized than not organized and that we could get together and discuss this anytime that day in the OBU Hall,, We told people to come around and we could talk about what can be done,, The OBU Hall just faced the depot, We passed
out those handbills. Our hopes at the time were that maybe 3, 4, 5 people in the course of the day might come over and we’d try to find some individuals who’d co-operate with us.

We passed out the handbills in just a few minutes, dropped off at a restaurant to get a cup of coffee. It was a winter morning at 6:30 and you feel like coffee after passing out handbills. Then we went up to this hall. Another strange practice of that time: even though there was a library in that hall, ordinarily the door was open and a stove and fire. People could go in, get warm if they wanted to, I can’t remember anything ever being done to the hall.

When we came back, we found the place was full. Even the stairs up were crowded and people outside trying to get in. We’d never expected any such response to these leaflets. Neither one of us was prepared, We’d both served one way or another on a union committee or something like that. But we’d had no experience on how to organize something like this.

I think my innocence perhaps took us out of the quandry. It struck me that there was a socialist who ran a business college there. His name I think was Hollister. So I called him up and explained that here’s all these people we’d never expected. We hadn’t made any of the membership cards or anything like that. He said, “I’ll tell you what. There’s a lot of girls at my school that should get some kind of practical training, some training to use their own initiative. What you need is someone to make up cards.” I had to make up a name for it in a hurry. “It’ll be the Calgary Unemployed Association.” They made up a little thing that
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you could record if you paid dues, a thing for them to sign, index cards. These girls had a much better idea of what you'd have to do to form a union then I had, They came down there. The people were real happy cause they were good-looking girls,, Most of the unemployed at that time were still single men. Their eyesight, I think, is much better than married men's eyesight. These girls did a wonderful clerical job, We had so many people there we couldn't use that place and pretty soon this large arena was turned over for our use for meetings. A special office was given to us and so on.

One of the facilities in town for the unemployed was a woodlot, as they called it. It was a great big barracks kind of a place with a lot of beds in it. People could sleep there and you're supposed to saw a little bit of wood each day, sort of as a token. I guess, like a means test or something of that sort. They had meals there, such as they were Even though I had friends who would be happy to have me live with them where I was living at the time, I figured since I was going to be active in this unemployed thing, I'd better get down with my constituency. I'd become president of the unemployed at Calgary,,

One thing I remember, there was no such facility for the few unemployed girls around. We did arrange that facilities were set up, much better than for us. After we'd begun to organize, one big squawk came that this big sort of flop house that was provided for the unemployed men had no facility for delousing clothing, Some people had lice and they did
spread. Quite a few of the people were veterans and were quite familiar with the practices used for delousing equipment. By putting blankets and clothing at a high steam, it would kill the lice, kill the eggs. This was the practical military way to do it. We wanted facilities of that sort constructed and the mayor said he didn't have any money for anything like that. He was willing to listen to committees. We went back there day after day to urge this. This was really something that hit these people. They needed this kind of facility where clothing and blankets could be suspended and steamed at a high temperature.

One day he sent a call down there to get Fred Thompson to the phone. I went and he said, "We have got an appropriation for that delousing cabinet you want." I said, "Thank you, that's very nice," I didn't know at the time what it was all about. It seems that some fellow from our group that was in the committee, I don't know who else would have had access to the essential materials, had gotten a little bottle that people keep toothache drops in, things like that. He collected a little sample of these lice, He kept them in this bottle and when the mayor definitely said no, we were sitting in these nicely upholstered chairs. I understand he let some samples loose. I have heard that that was the reason for the sudden budgetary change in the city council. I have only indirect knowledge of anything like that.

Well, I stayed along there for some time, The newspapers had a message for me one morning when I got up that a tunnel had caved in near
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Banff, British Columbia. I’ve forgotten the exact wording. My recollection runs that 3 men and 2 hoboes were killed or something like that. That struck me that if there’s a cave-in there, well, there’s a job for me, I was running completely out of spending money. I talked it over with the folks there. The only thing afoot there at that time was that we’d just talked the people at the government unemployment office into providing us with a library and recreation facilities in the big basement under the unemployment office to start a forum.

We didn’t want to get the idea across that we radicals wanted to agitate at the public forum there everyday. At that time the Blue Laws did keep us agitating, you couldn’t hold motion pictures on Sunday. So we had the theaters. The Calgary Forum ran it in the afternoon and the Socialist Party in the evening. There were two forums in the biggest theater in town. This was to be a forum for everyday of the week. We didn’t want to imply that so I had asked—there were probably people in the community who had made a success of their life, who felt that they could tell these down-and-outers how to succeed in life and we would like it very much if they would come around and tell us what to do with our lives so we didn’t land in the predicament we were in that winter.

We invited a large number of lawyers, successful business men, to come around and talk with us. Of course, it was always followed by questions and discussion. After the first two we couldn’t get anyone else to come and tell us how to succeed with life, They liked telling us, but they didn’t
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like the questions and discussions afterwards it seemed. That had just been started. This council was elected, There was a vice-president there and he took over. So I was quite free to head out there.

I remember something of that trip to Banff that maybe explains why I still don’t feel like calling cops pigs. A cop can do a decent thing. At that time there was a Chinook in Calgary, warm winds from over the mountains in the middle of winter,. So I set out for Banff riding the blind on a passenger train. I put on all the clothes I owned. I think it made 3-1/2 layers of them, fastened them on and got on the back end of this engine on this passenger train going out. The weather changed; the Chinook stopped. It was way below zero when we got up to Banff, I was so chilly I practically had to lock myself on the iron to hold on. I don’t remember too distinctly getting off. My only recollection was sitting in a railroad depot and a cop pouring whiskey down my throat bringing me to. I recovered quite nicely and went to work that day where the tunnel accident was. I worked there for some time and then took a freight train out to Vancouver.

This would be the spring of 22 by that time,. Not the spring but late winter, the end of February or early March, I landed in Vancouver with my Mackinaw all covered with oil from those fenders,. And going through those tunnels, the soot holds in there and you get wonderfully dirty going through those tunnels on the outside of a train. I landed in Vancouver on a Sunday. That was quite an English type town. I started going down the
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street from the first city stop the train made, unfamiliar with the town. Never been there before. I saw families coming down the street. The father with the Bible under his arm, the nicely dressed wife and all the children going along.

I felt very much out of place, that I should find a skid-row or something and get down there,. That is a thing that does happen, if a person’s clothing makes him feel that he cannot mix in with that society. Even if he’s tasted that style of life, he feels more at home on the skid row with the lumpen proletariat, at least until he gets cleaned up

I got down there and there was a big unemployment demonstration that day. It struck me as my first evidence of what I felt was revolutionary fanaticism. There was some order that you had to carry the union jack in the parade. So they had a red flag and a union jack on two ends of the same pole. The red flag was up high and the union jack down dragging along in the mud. I could understand the sentiment that was behind it, but I was thinking then, these people do want to get the ordinary citizens, the working people, who do have homes to live in, etc. and are not in this parade, to back up the demands of these construction workers, miners, lumber jacks, etc. for some decent facilities to take care of themselves.

I, coming off a job, had some money but mixing around with people, that didn’t last very long. Pretty soon I ran out, but I did have some to keep myself in tobacco, other satisfactions of Life,. I went out and started living at this unemployed place and that was fairly nice.
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There I found a lot of young people for the first time that would get around. And we would discuss what was going on in the world and things like that. I think that was the first time I found any appreciable number of young people. And when I came down stateside from there, came down through Blaine, went down that country, there increasingly I found on the west coast for some reason or another that radical meetings, radical activities and demonstrations were far more people under 30 than over. Just why this was I do not know; it may have been a geographic drift, or perhaps the depression was making it. Young people were willing to engage in things like that, where the older people had their homes, their lives, their kids and something else to keep them busy.

After World War II in Chicago I happened to go to a meeting and met a very old man. He was in his 90's at that time, about 1945, and someone had indicated to me that he had been one of the champion meeting goers from his boyhood on in Chicago. He went to Knights of Labor meetings, SLP meetings, meetings before and after the Haymarket Affair. He had been going to meetings for years and years. I asked him one time about this thing. When he recalled meetings down the years were they mostly meetings of old people or of young people?

He said, "If something was real exciting, you'd see a lot of young people. Otherwise, what gave continuity to it was mostly people with bald heads and grey hair. They were the standbys and youth only period-
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ically erupts and takes over the leadership, He said all the years as long as he can remember the talk was, We've got to get more young people into the radical movement,” That's what he could remember hearing from his boyhood on.

I came down the west coast, joined the Wobblies, organized for them a little bit, got into some free speech fights, I got sent over to San Quentin for being an organizer .for the Wobblies. Met a bunch of good guys in jail, some of them rather famous, like the MacNamara who was accused of blowing up the Los Angeles Times Building.

You can read in all kinds of history books that he blew up the Los Angeles Times Building, But the building never got blown up, There was a big fire, and he did plead guilty to it, I asked him one time, “Did you?” I didn’t know that the building had never blown up and he seemed such a nice guy, He had charge of dead man's row, you know, for the people who are waiting to be hanged, Good guy for the job I guess because he had been there and anticipated being hanged himself, He had been talked into this idea of making a confession. When I asked him, “Jim, did you blow up the L. A. Times Building?” He ‘says, “I confessed to it, That’s bad enough.” A very injudicious confession.

I ran into a lot of fellows in San Quentin who had the same attitude. They were in jail because they had confessed to something on the idea that they might be charged with something more serious. A lot of them said they had violated laws but it was a different violation than the one they
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were serving time for.

I did change one attitude. I went in there thinking that the prisons are full of the criminal class, a different type of animal than the rest of us. After mixing around with about 4,000 of them, listening to what they had to say, I think developing some confidence (they felt like telling me their troubles and their life story; they were free to do so and I wouldn't snitch on anything,) I got very much the idea that they were just about the same as the folks who hadn't been caught.

That seems to be the difference—some have been caught and some haven't, a lot of them were in there for ridiculous things. So many of the Mexican lads in there, the Spanish speaking lads were there on a statutory rape charge. These people mature sexually earlier than Anglo-Saxons, these young men who want to marry, and whose parents are willing for them to marry, and who had a girl who wanted to marry them, faced a law that said if the girl was pregnant, the boy had committed statutory rape, and into San Quentin. Ridiculous procedure in the case.

I ran into people who were in there for other things. There were about 104 of us Wobblies in there, arrested on the same kind of charges as myself, We managed to keep some kind of organization going there. We had a library of our own. You couldn't have it as part of a building. Someone just had to keep a record of who had what book and so forth. Fairly good library, too. One thing I didn't like about the place was you had to stand in line for everything, If you wanted breakfast, you stood in line. If you wanted to go to the dispensary and get something
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because the beans you had been eating were troubling your stomach, you had to stand in line. That used to be miserable,

But I cherish the memory of one old Wobbly, an old prospector, Baldy Stewart, because jails aren't very good places. On a miserable raining morning as we stood in line to get into the dining area for breakfast, old Baldy who had three hairs on the top of his head, would take out comb and pocket mirror and try combing two to the left side, then decide on two to the right side, and get us all in good humor.

Today, I think more in the United States than here, some young radicals have the idea that part of living your life right is landing in jail. I don't think the fear of jail should stop one from doing what he feels he definitely should do, But at the same time, don't try to get in jail. You can do far more out of jail than you can in. And the cuisine is very bad,

That's one thing the Wobs did do. We did change quite a few of the jail conditions while we were in there. Our speciality was improving jobs and we felt like we should improve that job too while we were there. Did it largely through taking action that caused news in the paper, We'd go on strike in San Quentin; it was unusual in those days to have strikes in a penitentiary. We'd go on strike and that'd make the newspapers.

Other times we'd get some paper co-operating. They were after the warden's political scalp or something like that, I. know there was one paper that would publish the main news for the week; little items like what we used to get. Monday: we had oatmeal with maggots in it. The beans were nice and new but they hadn't been cooked yet. Tuesday they had some corn pone which as very nice for breakfast and also on Tuesday the beans were
cooked well enough. By Wednesday, however, the beans had gotten sour. I did soon learn that pattern. New beans raw on Monday, pretty good to eat on Tuesday. Don't eat them on Wednesday, or else you'll get a bellyache. Beans are what they feed you there all the time. Thursday raw, Friday good, Saturday sour, and so on.

Well, we'd get stuff like that out in the newspapers, the little details of life there in San Quentin. Gradually the food did improve. Pressures can be used. I don't care what the situation is; a bunch of people act together, I don't care how difficult or hopeless it is, people can do things together that they cannot do alone.

I know some of the things I did in regards to getting the amusing things in the Chronicle papers. I couldn't dictate them and mail them out or anything like that. There was one fellow who wasn't a Wobbly at all, but who did like to see any pressures we 'could exert to improve the restaurant facilities—the food in San Quentin. He did have a girlfriend of his who was very ample in her bosoms. We just had a screen so high between us, and 'I'd have my little stuff for the Frisco Chronicle all nicely wound up, We'd watch and toss it over when the guard wasn't looking,

It'd land down here in her dress. I used to make sure it landed there when my eyes popped out of my head in those days. That's another very bad thing about jails. They're not co-educational. That was one of the great objections I had to San Quentin. Well, all good things must end. I got out of there,. Actually I think it's a terrible place but I do have a lot of rather choice memories from my days In San Quentin.
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I got out and meanwhile the IWW had split in two. A bunch of people, theoreticians and what not, had found enough arguments to split it in two. We came out there trying to get it together. We were used to lining up for everything* Herb Edwards and I were going up Market Street in San Francisco when we got out. We were going to a meeting that was supposed to put these two fractured parts of the IWW together again. We came to a line of people who were standing in line to go to a theatre. Automatically, without thinking about it, we were standing in line, Finally it dawned on us, we don't want to go to this picture show, we want to go to this meeting. We had to get out of there.

Let's see, what else is there interesting to tell you? Already I'm hitting 27, almost middle aged, Shortly after that I wander around to Colorado, Cot mixed up in a mine strike, things like that. Got married. First offense of that character in my life. Cherished those memories too a lot. Nice things happened in my Life, The life of a radical maybe sometimes be where you miss some meals here and there, but there are many very pleasant things to look back at.

I sometimes had a notion—I hope you don't think it's egotistic, once I read some books on ethics and wondered, do these rules really work out? I am inclined to think that if a guy does follow this sort of a general rule, that you are going to live for a while, quite a while probably, and you're going to remember things. If you only do things that will be pleasant to remember you probably won't be doing them too wrong. I think I've found that a fairly general rule in quite a number of things,
particular when you get into silly little arguments that you wouldn’t like to remember—get out of them. It works out fairly well.

From there my life was working in different industries and organizing for the IWW or following a few little jobs here and there. I made my living for a few months or several years. One time I worked as a secretary for a union where we had complete job control in Cleveland for a while.

I could go on but I’ll just leave myself open to questions. Is there some particular activity I’ve been engaged in that’s more interesting than another? I think that you young people take me back to my second childhood and make me remember my earlier days.

Q: I don’t quite understand what syndicalism means.

R: Syndicalism, I’m not sure what it means either. I’m very glad that this new book came out, Bread and Roses, Too, by Joseph Conlon. The first chapter raises the same question: It means so many things. You’ll find a large number of books were written around 1913, by Ramsey McDonald in England, by Levine writing about the French movement, French Syndicalism it was called. Several studies in the IWW were labeled syndicalist,

Conlon and Levine point out that the word 'syndicat' is the
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ordinary term in France for a union of any kind of power. You’ll find a very similar word in most European countries. A syndic or syndicat means a local craft union in most cases. Most of the Syndicalist movement in Europe at that time was strictly craft union. It wasn’t an industrial movement; in some countries it was the major union movement. In fact, Syndicalism as the communist leader Foster developed it, was to grow out of boring within the existing craft unions.

Conlon quotes one Wobbly quite to the point, “Syndicalist is the term that our enemies apply to us.” We didn’t call ourselves syndicalists, We try to use words that people will understand, that have a definite meaning. “Industrial unionist” or maybe the term sometimes used, “revolutionary industrial unionist”, meaning we want industrial unionism and we want to use it to bring about a new social order.

Syndicalist sometimes means, as in France, the major union movement, basically at that time on a craft union structure. In Italy it meant a variety of both some industrial and some craft, not the major union movement. It was associated there more with anarchist theory. Later on it did separate away from that as a separate tendency in 1912, In England syndicalist was used chiefly to describe those who believed in the policies of direct action; it grew out of the great dock workers strike of 1890. Tom Mann urged syndicalism
but very much criticized the IWW. We should just be in the A F of L; we shouldn’t be in a union of our own.

The term syndicalist has been used for so many different meanings. I think that when they wanted to have a law against us, it wouldn’t have been good public relations for the capitalists to call it the criminal union law. It was much better public relations to use that horrible foreign sounding term and call it Criminal Syndicalist. Yet all it means is criminal unionist law, if there really is any meaning to it.

In general, syndicalism, so far as it has a meaning, I would think it to mean that wide range of programs and policies that has as a common feature that workers should rely chiefly on those institutions they themselves create, rather than relying on whatever social institutions happen to be provided. That strikes me as the essential core of syndicalism. If someone calls me a syndicalist, I’ll say in that sense I am. I have all my life been a socialist, but I’m the kind of socialist who believes that the socialism that wasn’t a system in which the workers on the job ran the job, wouldn’t be the kind of a socialism I’d want. Some people call me a syndicalist; some call me a socialist and some call me worse than that.

Any other questions? I don’t know just what you’d like me to talk about. Maybe I’ve talked so much that I’ve talked you to sleep here.
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The CP, after it formed it's union and the A F of L -- was there much crossing at any time?

Yes, there has been. As of 1919 I was up in Canada. I couldn't understand what all their papers were talking about--a situation so different than the one I ran into in Canada where they expected that revolution was around the corner. The only paper that I was getting up there that struck me as though these people knew the labor situation at all was Jack Reed's paper, the Voice of Labor. He was in the Communist Labor Party. That one paper did sound as though here's some people that mix around with ordinary workers and have some idea of what life is like.

You see, all of us radicals were very enthusiastic about the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, There was a question in our mind. Some people felt that this splitting up of the Socialist Party into the Proletarian Party, the Communist Party, the Communist Labor Party, and I think there was one or two other factions, a lot of them developed later on.

There were people wandering around, I know one fellow belonged to all three parties in one day, Most of the Wobblies--some of them participated in one or the other. Most of them didn't. We loaned the use of our Throop Street Hall for one convention when they got kicked out of one place, They weren't willing to let them use it.
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I think there was a feeling that the people who have a lot of words are trying to lead some other people around by the nose. I think that was more or less of a general feeling, but general sympathy with what was going on, just wishing that they didn’t screw it up too much with all their arguments.

Later on these people did temporarily unite into the United Communist Party, as an underground organization for a while. Then it formed the Workers Party as its legal super structure, but the Communist Party was the infra structure. I’ve forgotten all the other words they used but it was upstairs and downstairs and what not.

I’d say the Wobblies were—there was a division of opinion—some feeling of distrust to those who looked to capturing the top. The State, it was in those days, you can capture the administration building, you can capture the State. The socialism I grew up in didn’t indicate you would capture the state. Marx once in a while used something—that it must be broken, but yet the socialists I grew up with taught me, and I still believe it, that this great power, the State, is essentially, a body of folkways, practices, habits, role expectances role acceptances, that sort of thing.

It isn’t a thing made out of bricks that you smash with a hammer. It’s a body of those human practices, customs, etc. that constitute an institution. That kind of limits what you can do with
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the darn thing. I think quite a few of us felt along those lines. I think that same understanding of what it is, the vague, rubbery, uncatchable character of the thing, that oppresses us at times. I think a good many Wobblies had come to some realization of that, too, down the years. I think there was a feeling, too, that those people who said, “We are going to acquire the capacity to run this country,” a feeling that if they do, they’re going to run me too. -A lot of Wobblies had that attitude and we not too sympathetic for that very reason.

There was no great intolerance,- just the beginning, the old same division of attitudes that prevailed in the pre-war years. Then later on came the period in which they asked the SWW to join the Communist International, Well, it was an international political party, and we explained we weren’t, Then they formed this Red International Labor Union, later the Red Trade Union International,,

We sent delegates over there and so did the Canadian OBU of Lumber Workers that had been formed by that time. Some kindred groups in England, Germany and so forth reported: This is an effort to end all left wing unionism on the basis of Lenin’s pamphlet “Infantile Sickness of Leftism,” which said there shouldn’t be any left wing unionism. You should all do what William Z, Foster said: work from within the old unions and so forth,
Those of us who saw the need for our separate unions, we couldn't go along with that. Then the Communist Party in 1922 in the United States reached a decision with the IWW, which they still hoped to do something with, would be allowed to organize lumberjacks and agriculture workers but would not be allowed to do anything else. At that time we actually had more people in the seaman's union and the longshoreman's union and maritime trades than all the A F of L unions combined.

Yet, we weren't to be allowed to have that. They had instructions issued to a few of their communists who had become branch secretaries that they should try to get as much dissension and disruption in those industries in which we persisted against the Communist decision whether we should persist in them or not. They made all the dissension and trouble they could and some of those boys were subjected to a little bit more than "moral persuasion," I believe, and that resulted in a certain amount of ill will between us afterwards. Likewise our belief that folks we disagreed with in the labor movement should have free speech.

For example, when the Trotskyites separated from the Stalinist group, not that we stayed with Trotsky; Trotsky was a son of a gun who shot down our fellow workers in Petrograd. We never were in favor of Trotsky, but people who had something to say should be
allowed to say it.

The Trotskyites complained that the Communists beat them up when they attempted to hold meetings and we told them they could state their case in our hall and if anyone tried to beat them up he would likely end up getting beaten instead, in the interests of free speech. Some of these things made for unpleasant relations at times. But along with that I think, often went a very friendly exchange of views or exchange of why we disagreed with each other.

Today I know once in a while, I've been meeting with communists off and on; we kid each other rather tolerantly and exchange some useful information. I believe the nature of the world is such that we should not suppress our honest views. We need to express what we honestly think, but I think we should find ways of doing that which minimize this "can't I stick a dagger in you and so forth." That's been more or less our relationship.

Of course, we felt kind of bad about it when they got Bill Haywood and some of those boys to run over to Russia and say they had a notion the revolution's coming tomorrow. They were going to make good all the bonds that people had taken. Workers lost their homes and what not. They issued bonds for these people and the Communists were going to pay it back. They haven't paid it back. Things like that make for some resentment.
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Q: Yes, can you tell me something about the split in the IWW?

R: 1923, there’s been a lot written on that. I’ve been hearing all kinds of explanations for the causes and I think it’s partly because people are ornery and partly because revolutionists tend to be awfully dogmatic at times. The thing I trace it to more than anything else is this September 1923 strike.

In the summer of '23 loggers from the Northwest met together, decided that the boss was expecting them to strike, was sort of set for them to strike, and they felt it an opportune time to strike. After that decision had been reached in a good democratic way at a time when most of the lumberjacks were in town over the 4th of July, a few of the folks held to the doctrine of a militant minority and so on. They weren’t Communists, but they allowed some of the elitist thinking that I feel is typical of Communist habits.

-They hired airplanes, dropped leaflets all over the lumbercamps saying, “Strike for such and such demands. Release all political prisoners,” and this and that; of course the Wobbly lumberjacks wouldn’t stay in the camps when the strike was called. They came into town and talked it over amongst themselves, held meetings again and decided this was not the time when they wanted to strike and went back,
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But, of course, the feeling that they could be called out on a strike entirely contrary to their wishes was not the kind of unionism they wanted. That came about simply because the revolutionary fanatic feels that he knows what is the worker's interest better than the worker himself,

Even assuming that the revolutionary fanatic is by some objective standard correct, I still don’t think it works. You have to go on the basis of what do most workers believe their interests to be. If you think that they misunderstand their interests, explain to them why they misunderstand. Don't try to lead them around by the nose. You can't do the kind of thing you want to that way.
Well, fellow workers, I'd once more like to say that I'm very glad to be around here, and I've been enjoying my time up here very much; You'll probably think as you look at the subject announced for today that this old codger has a tremendous amount of gall to come and talk, about what he'd do if he were a student; that he's probably going to tell us what we ought to aim to do and how we ought to do it. Frankly, I feel inclined to do that very thing.

Maybe in this good academic atmosphere I should lay a foundation, some justification for doing so. I think that the very name, Integrated Studies, does imply that we expect some advantage from the cross-fertilization of different lines of investigation, I'm thinking particularly of one example I rather like.

At a time when economic studies were practically at a standstill, stagnant, they all had arthritus in their joints, Thorstein Veblen came along, interested in anthropology, took a great deal of the research methods and outlooks from anthropology when it was young and still a very undeveloped sort of study, mixed that with his economics, and I think started economics on a rather new drift, I don't know if you're as partial to Thorstein Veblen as I am. I rather like his writings. But there is an example of cross-fertilization, taking some of the insight that one line of study gave, applying it to another. I expect that may have been the reason for aiming at Integrated Studies in the first place.
Anyway, it provides me with a nice justification for what I want to do here. I rather think that the experience, interest, and reading information I’ve picked up regarding unionism and the general labor movement may be something that will help us see through this ruckus on the campus, these demonstrations and confrontations that have been occurring not only on this continent but almost all over the world.

In this age of atomic bombs and such things there is every need that people who are younger than I am should feel that they share with people in Japan, with people in Russia, with people in France, the same future or no future at all: I think there is that sense amongst your generation as there never was in any generation before you. The similarities in the way they kick their heels over the traces in all these different countries, I think, does tend to show a great co-ordination of their viewpoints.

I think that there is a great deal from unionism that can be worthwhile looking into, in figuring what do tie do and how do we do it in regard to things on campus. I notice a tremendous similarity between the series of struggles that constitute the early history of the working class and the sort of thing I’ve been witnessing over several years on different campuses or reading in the papers, particularly if you consider the pre-union history of the working class. I imagine most of you are familiar with the story of the Luddites or of Captain Swing and the people who wrecked the first machines that threatened jobs of workers in England--a very disorderly kind of business--I’m
sure that George Meany wouldn’t approve of it.

The history of the textile workers in Lyons in France in 1837 is another example. Or there’s a movie out about the Molly Maguires, for example, indicating some of that sort of thing, although you did have the Miners and Mine Laborers Benevolent Association at that time. (By the way I’m not, sure if there ever was any Molly Maguires. If you like that movie you can find quite a bit about it in Anthony Bimba’s book, The Molly Maguires. It largely raises the question, was there ever such an organization at all? If you want to get the low-down on that son of a gun McParland, who framed them up and had ten of them hanged, there’s a very good study of the techniques that he duplicated again in the attempt to have Haywood, Pettibone and Moyer hanged in either this book, Bill Haywood and the Radical Labor Movement, that Conlon wrote or in the introductory chapters of We Shall Be All by Dubofsky,)

Where unionism has not been formally established, ordinarily the need of workers to bring about a change in conditions that they want, or more frequently to prevent a change that they didn’t want, some change being imposed by management, that need has not resulted in an orderly process of collective bargaining or anything of that sort.

It has been this massive confrontation. It has been this “doing your thing”. It has been a matter of frequently destroying some physical item, as the weavers destroyed a lot of the first power looms.
It's not necessarily the most traditional approach, A better-organized body of people could have done better for themselves in a much less violent way.

I think in the history of the IWW we've had more than our normal share of that because the IWW's organizing efforts almost inevitably went into those fields where unionism wasn't the customary thing. We went into the unorganized fields where the boss and the sheriff and the local police and everybody said, “We've never had unions here before and you come around here talking union; you're starting trouble in a place where everybody's happy and contented.” For that reason I think we in the Wobblies in our early years faced a great deal of this parallel situation of trying to get some manner of negotiation, some organized way of acting in a field where there were no effective facilities for it.

Thinking back to my own youth, frequently on jobs where we had no union, but a bunch of us wanted to gripe about something, we talked with ourselves about it, There is the first that I know of this type of confrontation. We'd agree amongst ourselves that if anyone of us goes up and bitches to the boss about that we'll be told, “You know what you can do about it, go down the road.” But we felt that if we all got together and went down en masse and somehow kind of took turns so that no one guy could be picked on as spokesman, that we could exert an effective pressure because he wouldn't want to get rid of us all.
So this massive confrontation, a rather disorderly process, was one of the pre-union types of negotiation. I would say that most of what I've seen in these rather massive confrontations on campus have been for a rather similar purpose,

Likewise in industry, the sit down was used normally where you weren't very well organized, where you're in the stage of trying to get the boss to recognize that you have formed a union—the big General Motors sit down strike of 1937, the situation in rubber. Well, the rubber was a little bit different. The purpose was to get action on grievances you couldn't get any action on, In most cases because it was a feeling that if we walk out we risk the loss of our job. If we stay in here we have a certain strategic advantage, and besides that if the soldiers shoot at us, they'll smash up a lot of equipment if they have a battle in the plant instead of on the street. A whole series of considerations of that sort led to the sit down in industry in Britain, France and this country in the 1930.

When I read about students occupying various administration buildings and so forth, I and I think most old unionists who'd been active in the 30's felt—well, now these people are doing in their world what we did in General Motors and such. There was a feeling that this was something very parallel,

About a year ago this winter I was down in Miami, Florida, to watch what the bourgeoisie were doing there. I noticed at this Atlantic
College the student body adopted a resolution that any person coming to that college must sign an affidavit that he is not a member of either SDS or the Southern Student Union. With remarkable dispatch all of the senate and all the top brass of the University agreed, and so it became the rule there that if you belonged to certain proscribed organizations you could not become a student at this Atlantic College. It made me think of the old Yellow Dog Contract that they used to have in the coal mines, that if you are applying for a job you swear that you are not a member of either IWW or the United Mine Workers, Otherwise you couldn’t even make application for a job. I think this again shows the remarkable parallel,

Right along, when I’ve been watching what students have been doing over the last five or six years in this-campus rumpus, I have not felt they were doing something that was strange to me. I felt they were doing what we working men in factories and mines and logging camps did in the process of generating unionism in those fields. But there’s been very little of it that has reminded me of what has been done after unionism was established. I couldn’t help noticing another thing that made my comparisons probably of significance—the great alarm that was expressed almost everywhere against any alliance between students and workers outside, whether it was in what happened in the Paris uprisings both in industry and in the Sorbonne or other places, a general feeling that this is just not right,
I noticed in most cases that it made no matter what the philosophy of an entrenched union official was, whether it was predominantly communist leadership as in the Confederation Generale du Travail or whether it was the George Meany type leadership, very anti-communist; the same kind of reaction took place; We unionists must guard our unions from being subverted by these students from these universities,"

It actually got a lot of workers’ support in a strange way: “You workers know your work. You workers are experienced union men and you’re not going to have these young punks who are still wet behind the ears coming in and telling you how to do it.” I think this kind of a thing has spread very much in union circles. It has to some extent limited student-worker cooperation.

Up here, I think, you had a very splendid example of co-operation in the supporting of the paper strike. Maybe I should transmit to you a nice letter of thanks--I should have brought it up with me--that the Newspaper Guild sent to the Wobblies down in Chicago, as though we’d brought it about, thanking us for all the good work that the Wobblies and their friends on the campus of Waterloo had done on behalf of the strikers up there. At last you’re getting your thanks belatedly. There was one instance of good feeling, but in most cases it's that, “You people ought to keep away from us; we’ve got to protect the virginity of our unions”, or something like that.

Perhaps I’m inclined to see this similarity of the struggles
of workers in coal mines and factories, construction jobs, etc. and the struggles of students on campus for this reason: I try to take an overall picture of what goes on in the world, look at the details and look at the whole thing back and forth, Otherwise a person can get a sort of astigmatic view of the world he lives in,

The world’s work, the nature of the world’s work, is constantly changing. In the metal shops where I’ve done some work, where it used to be a little front office and a great big back shop (now it’s a great big front office and a little small shop), more and more of the work, is making marks on a piece of paper or doing something regarding data and information, and less and less of it is lifting this thing and lugging it there and making it a different shape.

All this changing work, and especially the development of many new chemical industries, all these things have meant that the nature of the world’s work has changed a great deal. Part of it is this, that 60 years ago a young guy getting out of school would go and try to learn his trade as an apprentice somewhere. At 10:00 every morning he used to be sent down to the tavern with a great big tin pail to get some beer for the guys to drink, I almost became a blacksmith on that basis. Now they go to college to serve their apprenticeship instead,, A very important part of the world’s work, of what has to be done in order that production can go ahead, is being done in buildings like this instead of factories and mines.
This campus and all the other campuses are an integral part of the equipment for getting the world's work done.

I know some of my particularly radical student friends feel kind of ashamed: "If only I were a proletarian, working real hard and sweating over it instead of trying to understand what it says in these books, it would be more honorable", they feel. But there's no getting away from it; what you guys do with those books is work. I have tried to read some of those books and I have a lot of trouble trying to understand what the man said. It is work. It isn't that the teacher puts a funnel in there and pours the information in so you can get certified to go punch some kind of a time clock. You have to work to get that stuff in your head, It's an important part of the world's work, only you're not getting any pay for it, As I see it, this is an industry; it isn't campus versus industry* People haven't recognized that this is one of the world's great growing industries, That is one of the things that I think makes me see this thing.

I stressed a little while ago that this confrontation, occupation of buildings, etc. that has been part of the campus rumpus, reminded me of the pre-union activities of the working class. Once unionism sets in you get a rather different pattern of action. You get a series of accommodations between the guy who says no and the guy who wants something, It gradually gets institutionalized, contracts are written, you set up arbitration procedures. Grievances get adjusted by someone who compares how did they do it in 1723 or other places and so on,, It moves in that direction, perhaps not quite that bad; I'm exaggerating slightly, but
not too much, I'm afraid, With that has been lost a great deal of the zest and enthusiasm that made the labor history of the 30's a great and glorious thing, both in the United States and Canada.

Unionism of this practical day-to-day sort tries to negotiate new contracts, tries to make sure you get what you can out of an existing contract and so forth,, Don't think I'm disparaging this. It's very important; it should be well done. There should be the most vigorous well-informed shop stewards. You should get a rank and file that really insists that you get every damn thing you can out of those contracts and make the next one better. All of that is very important. Certainly I'm not disparaging that, but I do wish that some of that zest and enthusiasm was around here in 1970 that I used to see In 1937 and earlier years. Ordinarily I don't see it, It is with that in mind that I look at the prospect of a similar process of routinization to replace confrontation with negotiation at the campus level,,

I think you realize that that process in industry wasn't always just a matter of the workers insisting you recognize their union. Large corporations found the need for some collective dealing with their work force long before unions won elections,, You had in the 20's in America, particularly, an era of company welfarism, in which the company sets up, not a company union so much at that time, but various plans like Works Council as they called it, Works Council in England happened to have a rather radical connotation at the time, but in America the Works Council was something the boss set up so
he could really summon the lead hands and tell them what was on his mind and perhaps even say we’re going to give you an all day sucker.

Later that did, with the first stirrings of unionism, turn into a great amount of company unionism in America. So that the building of unions had to be very largely a battle against company unionism, and in some cases really a taking over and reorganization of company unions into legitimate locals of regular unions.

This same thing has been going on in the education industry. The need has existed in this preorganization stage. You have the semblance of democracy. Even in high schools there’s been ordinarily a feeling that these simulations of the parliamentary process that you have in academic institutions had more semblance than reality. I’m not too familiar with the situation I read something in the paper referring to the Federation of Students. What is that, a “sandbox organization”? I think it’s intended that it’s functions are confined to very narrow purposes. That is the implication I got.

Around the country a great deal of what I do hear about these disturbances does indicate a complete distrust for what I presume students must find as the academic equivalent of a company union. It’s bound I’m sure it’s in the cards that some procedure will replace confrontation, demonstration, with some established regular procedure for adjusting grievances. I don’t know why you shouldn’t do that. If you don’t mind me repeating an expression I used, “When I look at this campus rumpus I can’t help but think it’s a lot of sound and fury
that does signify a mammoth range of dissatisfactions and it is ac-
complishing much less than it should be accomplishing." This is the
way I tend to size the thing up.

If there is going to be some routine way of processing and channeling
all these expressions of dissatisfaction, all these aspirations etc.,
it seems to me that you really have here and all over the country a
choice. Shall we get into this kind of a thing, recognizing what the
tendency is, fully aware -that it may tend to routinize into something
that's rather deadening and spiritless, but that we can, by planning
for what makes for militant unionism, what makes for rank and file
control, what makes for free discussion within this thing, what makes
for anybody representing top brass being answerable to us guys at the
bottom of the pile; make it different?

There are various mechanics for designing a union that do tend
to make it serve its original purposes and to resist being subverted
to the purposes of making it easier to administrate and manipulate.
I would suggest that on the basis of union experience, Or maybe to
quote an old reactionary, the guy who wrote "Folkways" years ago,
William Graham Sumner, "If you live in a community that's going to
be run by a committee, for goodness sakes get on the committee" I
think the old conservative was saying something that made very good
sense. Maybe I'll get some discussion of that I'd like to toss
that out as the way that I see it,

Now, of course, there are differences between the education
industry and other industries, particularly in the issues with which you're concerned. But I see the similarity more than the differences, Suppose that you people were all in a shoe factory making shoes. You want to do something both to make the conditions of shoe production better—for you, and—you would like to do something for the working class as a whole. I think that surely I'd be giving you good advice by saying, make the best shoes that you can make. Try to make the best shoes that you can and your boss will say, "Don't bother so much, try to make them cheaper." A lot of the fight of unionism is to make a better product. And, of course, the working class will have better shoes if the workers in shoe factories insist upon making better shoes. So if you ever get in a shoe factory I hope that you'll make better shoes.

If, however, you wander around and become historians and start writing history books, I hope you will realize that for the same reason it will be best for the working class if you write good, honest, straight-forward history books that don't pull any punches. I have felt that a lot of history books have been written by people who either didn't know what was happening or who were pulling their punches. I hope that whether you write history books or make shoes you make good ones. Beyond making history books you'll all be making history, so I think that you ought to make history as good as you can, so that the historians will have some good history to put into history books. That is something that you people do, All the working class does. But you people have a
rather specialized function in doing it. The whole process of innovation
that makes 1970 different from 1969 grows out of seed beds in places like
this;

The Research and Development Departments in the big factories and
some muddling through on problems by philosophers in universities, some
Ph.D. research work on such problems as how does a cockroach keep the
saliva in its teeth from causing decay or whatever, all of these are the
seedbeds out of which the process of change grows. One of the things
I'm rather worried about: the direction of change tends very much to
follow the direction of investigation and research here. And the inves-
tigation and research in places like this largely depends on who's
providing the money for it and what kind of research he wants undertaken.

I intended to bring a couple of clippings along about different
corporations that have been called on the spot recently for, oh,--dropping
oil into the ocean and polluting the air and not treating Lake Michigan
right and sundry other things like that, Every once in a while they get
some college professor with a great reputation to say that these boys
aren't naughty at all. That makes me think that there should be some
pressures in the opposite direction, if not economic pressures, moral
pressures or whatever can be built, to make experts in these subjects
act with reasonable honesty.

In Chicago, for example, we have too much SO₂ in our air. You get
above 11 parts per million and lots of people get sick. They call that
the danger point. We've been running about 13-18 parts per million instead,
I think a lot of people died this winter in Chicago on account of it.
It's a murderous thing to do. There's been several things adding to it. One thing is the Peabody Coal Company owns some high sulfur content coal and some low sulfur content coal. They're afraid that eventually the legislature will get around to saying you can't sell any high sulfur content coal, so they're trying to sell that all out now and reserve the low sulfur coal.

What I'm thinking of is this professor back in Hazelton, Pa. He got some mice, nice well behaved mice, put them in some cages where he had a completely controlled atmosphere, completely clean air, fed this air in and fed, in controlled amounts of \( \text{SO}_2 \). He, fed in far above the danger limit and the mice prospered very nicely. He used this to say that the ecologists were giving you a great big scare and it doesn't hurt the mice at all.

I, in my innocence, would begin to think he's a professor, he ought to know what he's talking about. Other professors said, yes, we know that. This \( \text{SO}_2 \) will have its effect on the lung tissue only in the presence of particulate impurities in the air too. In other words, \( \text{SO}_2 \) in clean air, completely clean otherwise, doesn't seem to have any harmful effect, but the air in Chicago is not that kind of air.

This strikes me as about the same dishonesty as I see in the adversary system in the court. Some of you people may become lawyers and I think of a horrible case almost parallel to that. A guy was sent to jail on the charge of having raped some young girl, having taken her over to a boxcar and raped her. He was accused of 'that and of killing
the child too. As evidence they brought out that the dead child had clutched a button off a raincoat in her hand. This man had a raincoat with a button off and that was the evidence presented. It wasn’t until the man was already in jail that someone leaked out the information about what a clever District Attorney we had, The District Attorney knew that the button in that child’s hand didn't fit the raincoat that the man convicted had. Everyone assumed that it did. I just can't help but see the similarity between the adversary system you find there in the coal argument or the murder case that sees everything as fair in love and war. The guy who has enough money ordinarily can get somebody to support his side. I’m thinking of the millionaires who can always get psychiatrists who say they’re not responsible for any murders they may have committed and so on.

In the academic community I think you should feel some responsibility for those people who are the leaders, that they don’t give us bum steers. I don’t know who can do it, unless you can get a pressure from the bottom,, I think that is something outside of the kind of thing that a union man would ordinarily be concerned with. It’s almost peculiar to some of the functions of the industry in which you people are working.,

Unions likewise are finding the need to depart somewhat from concentrating on those problems that would be immediately tied to the time clock. Certainly this whole problem of what is happening to urban society, peace and war, the ecological crisis, these are things that
the union men are about to be concerned with, too, even though they are not things they can negotiate with each particular employer. Unions increasingly find they have to be concerned with rather wide social issues—housing, health care, adequate schooling, a whole host of things outside of the old standards of what a union used to be concerned with, I think that in almost all those issues you would find much the same thing, so that there isn’t too big a difference between union practice on campus or in the factory.

My own approach is that you can, from the practices of unionism, learn not only a bunch of things to do but also a bunch of things not to do,, Knowing what not to do is very important information at times.

The question I get thrown at me the most in talking with people around the country is, “But those students aren’t behaving right. It’s not nice to go in and occupy the dean’s buildings. It ain’t civilized, They may have the right purposes but they’re using the wrong way to go about it.” It’s this matter of the way to go about it that I’d like to speak on very briefly,

I’m awfully uncertain about what’s the right way to go about many things. I’m thinking not only of your campus related disturbances, but of the general feeling to “take it out into the streets”, which I notice is the feeling of not only students, but is the sentiment of people whose life patterns and intimate associations, are closely
tied in with the student body.

I don't have a definite answer to these questions of how do you decide what's a good thing to do,,. There are two facts that have occurred to me and I've been sort of checking them out over a good many years. I think they're at least worth considering, One is this: I am very much disposed to favor those procedures that are appropriate for deliberative bodies over the procedures that you see in mob action. I've been damn near lynched by a mob a couple of times, I have a prejudice against mob action. I much prefer the parliamentary procedure, this type of thing. I seriously feel that freedom of speech for those who disagree with me is much as John Stuart Mills argued, the thing I should fight for is not so much for the right to say what I want, but the right to hear what somebody else wants to tell me, To have the information he may give me, or even if he's giving me misinformation, to listen to his presentation so I can understand more clearly what led him to be so misinformed and so on.

I had an argument with Cyril about that the other day. He was wondering if I approved of the right to scab. I said the scab has a right to give me a lecture on why he believes he has a right to scab, but that's as far as I go. I won't grant him the right to scab. The belief that there should be free trade doesn't give you a right, according to the law, to smuggle goods into the country.

While I like all those things--rationalism against irrationality, deliberative assemblies rather than mobs,' freedom of speech, democracy
versus all sorts of totalitarian dictatorships and so forth. I do find that all these values just won't line up in a straight line so that the angels are all on one side and the devils on the other. So in all these different values I have to try to find something serviceable as a benchmark, as a base line, as a frame of reference.

For a starting point I find the one that I believe may be most serviceable and perhaps most objective because of the second law of thermodynamics: physical processes are substantially irreversible. Get your poker nice and hot, put it in a bucket of water and it gets cool, and you're never going to find the heat starting to come out of the water and making your poker hot again. It's irreversible—a one-way street. History too, I find, since it is a series of physical events, is likewise a one-way street.

Right along in this thing the conflicts between men are largely conflicts between those who want to welcome a tomorrow and those who say, "No, you don't know what the perils of tomorrow will be and besides, the way it is suits me fine and I don't want any tomorrow to be borne." Social conflict in practice, no matter what other economic or what other bases you may find for it, tends very much to work out as a struggle between those who want a new world to be born and those who don't. No matter where I may stand on all these other things, I hope I may always reckon that I'm among those who want & new world to be born. And I figure those who likewise want
it, no matter how I may disagree with them, are on my side. The basic question always is, which side are you on?

I think that that does provide a fairly reliable yardstick in making a bunch of choices that you do have to make about alliances, about going along with people you don't quite agree with. I know that if you do take that you will find as I do that very frequently my allies are not those that I have chosen. My allies are those that the historic processes more or less granted to me.

I expect many of my allies in trying to bring a new world to birth are people who wouldn't mind cutting my throat because they don't like the color of my skin. A lot of very irrational people are for that. A lot of people are very impatient, some of them impatient for reasons that you and I would probably recognize as quite valid; some because they, 're damned hungry, some because their kids haven't eaten a decent meal in the last two years. For very valid reasons they're impatient. Some of them are impatient because it's the new life style among their people: it's a sort of a fad to be impatient. That includes people who recommend violent policies.

Police agents in our ranks have often taken a rather lead hand in trying to shape policy. I've found that their policies usually run this way: "Cause as much dissension in the ranks as you can; get the body to act in such a way that people who were thinking they might join it decide 'I'd better not join up with that bunch'; and if
possible get some people to do something so that it’s very easy for the district attorney to secure an indictment against them." Those seem to be the three golden rules of a police agent,, So we shouldn't, without pay, do the things that the police pay some agents to do. That’s scabbing on the police agents.

I’m sure a great many of those things that I would put in that category are often thought up, not by police agents, but by men whose sincerity is unquestionable, If the policy they're recommending is the policy that'll play into the hands of my enemy, at the same time that they themselves are people whom I should consider my allies, it isn’t a simple question. It isn’t covered by the glib formula that those who are for the good tomorrow are our allies. Just because they are our allies - that does not mean they give us no difficulties.

In that I would certainly suggest, try to work out ways so that you see the advantages of according freedom of speech to those who don’t agree with you. Give your preference to those ways in which minds can add together information to be accumulated. I very frequently feel, in going to a union meeting, that this fellow speaks his bit of information and that fellow speaks his bit and adding it all together you have a body of information that shapes a decision. It is more information than any individual had, The collective body has more information than its best informed member. I can't help but compare that with mob-like actions where I felt that the level of intelligence was the level of intelligence of its least.
informed member. That is the difference between the intelligence of a good union meeting and a mob.

I think there is another thing in the historic process we can point to with a fair feeling that it's reliable. Whatever kind of a future we're going to have, it isn't going to drop out of the sky somewhere. It's going to come out of us. There's no other place it, can come from. History is a process of substantial continuity. The mere fact that I'm a revolutionist and want to get a world almost as different from this world as I can have, doesn't make me unaware of the fact that all processes are unavoidably continuous ones.

I think we can recognize that there is a relationship between the thing we get and the means we use to get it. We have to choose our means with some thought about how our choice of means alters the end result. I'm inclined to look at it this way -- that here man's society right along has problems, All you can do is switch them. If you don't like the ones you have now, by effective action you can switch them for another set of problems I hope you like better,. But you won't get rid of problems, I'd like a new set of problems instead of the ones we've got. I like the problem of how to avoid indigestion from eating too much ice cream far better than this ecological crisis.
But mankind does face problems all the time. He looks around for a means to cope with those problems. I'm not speaking of little individual actions. I'm thinking of cases where either as a matter of national policy or because of widespread custom and habit, a large number of people use the same kind of means to cope with the same kind of problem. You find then that that kind of means enlarges. More and more social energy and what-not flows into the expansion of that kind of a means. Alternative methods shrink absolutely, certainly relatively. So, the result is largely that the means that were selected, that type of means expands and the means not selected become of less importance and still less likely to be chosen.

For instance, many people have asked me, "You Wobblies, you anarchists, you socialists, some of my good Christian friends, all talk about the same sort of values that you want, why don't you all get together?" I'm in favor of all getting together, but I don't want to be muddle headed about it. I realize that the things we reject in this imperialistic, materialistic, capitalistic society, they are pretty well denounced in the "Sermon on the Mount", for example, almost as thoroughly as Karl Marx ever did in the Communist Manifesto. If people feeling that said okay, a more aggressive social action church, an enlargement of the church in our society, that is the way to cope with this problem, and you did make substantial social changes in that way, surely the society you would have would be one in which the church
Fred Thompson

was a great formative factor.

Or I have friends who say if only we'll do our buying in a co-operative store so the store gets enough money that way to own a co-operative factory, you have eventually a whole consumer controlled co-operative economy. And without having to fight with the boss or get any laws passed, you can have a different world motivated by serving the needs of the consumer, just by that kind of a thing. Well, okay, I like co-operative stores. Wherever I can use them, I buy in them. If that were the large scale means used to create a new society surely you'd have a society much influenced by that.

Or I have friends who say the best way toward social change is to pass laws about it. If you got a new social order created by legislation surely the legislative body, the courts, the policemen that might enforce it, they would be a growing factor in the nature and behavior of this new society. Some, like us Wobblies, feel that what we like is not to exclude anything else, but the thing we want to promote most is to use the institutions workers themselves can build, like the union; rely on those in preference to institutions that they don't control. Arrange things so that on the job you're having more to say about safety practice, and you're having more to say about health. Eventually, you'll have to start saying what will be produced and where it'll go. On that kind of a line you create a society in which the face-to-face democratic activity of workers on jobs (plus communication machinery for reaching a consensus
with workers on different jobs all around the world) becomes a big factor shaping the society. What I'm trying to say is this--that surely the kind of means that you use does alter the result. If you use different means it gets different results.

I think it's for that reason that the thing we aim at and the thing we get are so often different. I remember Woodrow Wilson was going to make the world safe for democracy and he put a lot of people in the army and a bunch in jail that wouldn't go in the army and so forth, because he was going to crush militarism. This is the second war now in which we've built up big armies in order to free the world of militarism, I don't see militarism any diminished by it. The means used has expanded the fact that it was for the purpose of ending militarism has nothing to do with it. I see the same thing in other fields.

I see the crime problem and they've built nice big penitentiaries. Some of them look beautiful from the outside. I don't like them from the inside though. They've even arranged different kinds of courts for young children, older children. Maybe after a while they'll have one for middle aged men. They've gone to a lot of trouble to devise a system for coping with crime by passing laws against it and making the punishment fit the crime and so forth. Well the apparatus, the equipment, the means they have developed, those have expanded marvelously, but I guess there's just about as much crime as there ever was, I could go on almost endlessly on this sort of a thing.
In case you think that. I'm a communist I'll declare my objectivity towards that by saying I remember Lenin arguing for the dictatorship of the proletariat to lead to the complete liberation of the working class. I think that as of today I've seen the growth of dictatorship expand, but I haven't seen much growth of the thing that it was allegedly aimed at.

In this matter of choosing means, perhaps I shouldn't sidetrack myself by bringing up a point on which there may be disagreement, but what I'm going to argue is, it really is not true that you can use whatever means happens to be expedient to aim at whatever end your heart tells you is worthwhile going after. You do have to select means that are appropriate to the thing that you’re going after. I think if that is kept in mind you have to have values to give you some idea of what is good in the future social order. And will this means lead to it? Do I want a world in which this means is growing?

That is another reason why I'm so partial to this idea of workers building up amongst themselves some collective procedure, so that they democratically decide things and quit being pushed around by people whose Interests are the opposite of their own. I think on that basis you can build a workable future. I think that you people on the campus and all those connected with you in civil rights and peace and all the other issues that have brought about parallel activities, confrontations, demonstrations by people who may not necessarily be
students but are closely meshed in with any student movement, I think in all cases I would certainly recommend that you look towards democracy in your own organizations, tying them in with the very promising, productive possibilities of workers outside industries and workers inside industries co-ordinating their work for special purposes. You can build a very good future in that way.

By and large if I have any old fatherly advice for you, it is along those three lines—that if it strikes you that a policy is something that the enemy of the working class would like to see adopted, don't do it. Try to act in such a way that the means you thereby develop will not expand into something that is, repugnant to you. And at all times try to remember that you are on the side of those who want to bring about a new world to birth. That's enough fatherly advice for one day I think.

Can somebody say something--offer an alternative, criticism of the program of something like that?

Q: I agree with you completely when you talk about democratic procedures and using particular means that you'd like to see promoted generally used internally among people who are in a sense fighting against the enemies of the working class. But surely when we deal on a level of strikers and scabs, you're not going to extend those type of freedoms to scabs or to the enemies of the working class. So
are you arguing for policies internal to people who are in a sense trying to bring about a better world and yet denying it to people who are fighting against that?

A: No, in all aspects I guess there is general agreement that within our own organizations, within our own movement, it is very desirable that minority viewpoints have a chance to be expressed, that we handle differences of opinion by bringing them out and not trying to suppress them. It is best to have freedom of open discussion, I think that’s generally understood in practically all the movements today, that within your own organization that is important. Now on these other two cases.

My open and natural enemy, the employer, the militarists and so forth, should I try to deny them the right of free speech? For one thing, I’m hardly in a position to do much denying and I still think as Job said in the Bible, “Would that mine enemy would write a book.” As a matter of fact, don’t you spend a lot of time hunting around looking for instances where your enemy declare their intentions so you can use it against them? I’d like to see these people accorded enough rope so they can hang themselves. I think you should do what you can to force them, not only offer them an opportunity to declare their position, but try to force them to declare their position—so that their set of assumptions can be put out clear, so that people can see this is what they really are saying, not just leaving it for you to guess. According to the statements they make you can answer
and show what they are.

For the other--the scab I'm just thinking when you asked me that question of the number of times I've seen fellows picketing and a guy who used to work in the plant coming there with his lunchbucket under his hand. The natural response of the striker, even before they use some physical deterrent to keep the man from entering the plant (which by my code is okay if he can get away with it) Is, "John, why do you want to go into work today?" He's trying to get the man to explain why he's going scabbing and it's worthwhile to get him to explain.

That Murray Body strike in Detroit, I remember Leon Pody, the fellow who really invented the sit down strike,, He and L were walking down the street there and here was a guy coming to work with a lunch bucket and Leon didn't stop to discuss the weather or anything. He just knocked him down so his lunch bucket went flying We were busy. He didn't stop to argue with him that day. Next day we happened to be walking along the block the same way And the same guy comes down with his lunch bucket.
and he knocks him down. Well, this time I'm curious, I go over and I actually helped the guy up. I asked him, "Why is it that you go in to scab here every day, or try to?" "Well my wife makes me". I got the idea that his wife evidently was convinced that the proper thing he should do was to go and scab. Well, we got a committees of the women to go up and see his wife, and they didn't beat her up, no. I'll admit that we picked some of the huskiest women we bed to serve on that committee. But they didn't lay a finger on her. They explained the situation. It was just an ordinary mental dumbness, That was all that was behind it. I think there's been more scabbing by people because they're dumb than for any other reason and the only way to counter that dumbness is to get them to say why, Actually that woman used to help with coffee and doughnuts down at the strike kitchen every day after that.

Q: What if the man had said, ("I am satisfied with
what: I have. I don't want what all. these men are striking for?"

A: Well, okay. He has the right of free speech to tell me that, but if I can stop him from going into the plant, I'm going to stop him, of course.

If I want to advocate blowing up of university buildings, I have the right to say they make wonderful nice fires and. they don't add to air pollution because they're so gassy to begin with. I have the right to talk the most absurd nonsense in the world. Only one limitation, the sort of limitation that Justice Holmes have in one of his decisions, the right to free speech doesn't give the right to holler "fire" in a crowded theatre, because a lot of people would get killed. The right of free speech does not extend to that kind of a point. It doesn't give me the right to set fire to a building just because I have the right to say it might be a good idea to burn it up,
Again--a man has the right to say, "I don't think we should have called this strike."

I do agree that in a strike too much of that talk can be demoralizing. You will try to minimize it. But my experience is that if you're afraid to say, "We shouldn't have gone on this strike", if that is the prevailing sentiment amongst a bunch of strikers, just to suppress that kind of talk is the most foolish thing you can do. It's better to bring it out in the open and discuss the merits, and if it is a logical position to take, take that position and call it off. But I think ordinarily if there has been good reason for calling a strike, a feeling you can win it, the practical thing to do with sentiment like that is bring it out in the open, confront it with facts, and dispose of it.

Q: I'm thinking back several years ago when the West German SDS attacked the Spruenger Building, Spruenger being the man who owns practically a
monopoly of the German press, Afterwards the leader of the SDS was shot. The students claimed that the reason they were attacking the press, physically attacking the building and the trucks was because the type of literature and propaganda the Spruenger empire was putting forth was shaping the consciousness of the German people, was geared against them and against the movement for social change. They were arguing indirectly violent acts were committed against them and against radicals. In a sense if you admit to this type of subconscious is perhaps a bad word, the possibility of the media and other factors shaping the way people think, leading to conclusions which aren't so--then to allow them to engage in that kind of a process is, in a sense, just allowing yourself to be attacked. It's those kind of arguments which seem to create the problems through the type of blanket freedoms that you're asking for. They create too many problems for radicals whose initial commitment was to a kind
of humanism, or, however, a kind of fight for civil rights or civil liberation. However, many of us got into the movement as such, we didn't spring forth with some kind of radical Marxist analysis we have now. It was extremely difficult to make those kind of decisions,

A: It's a puzzle, no setting away from it, And I hope that the fact that I'm an incurable advocate of the doctrine of free speech doesn't get us side-tracked from my main argument which I could have stated without mentioning the word "free speech". But in that Spruenger situation I'm inclined to think Some other thing should have been done.

But even there I'm inclined to think that some other thing should be done, It is important that effective confrontations be made to the press. For example, I think had there been effective confrontations toward the articles in some of the German press before this Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia--there were parts of the German press arguing that we should demand
a return of the Sudeten land, that that should be German territory. Had there been an effective confrontation at that time showing that a large number of people didn't like to see that kind of talk in the German press, I imagine there would have been a very different historic outcome, that confrontations of that sort can serve very useful purposes.

Again I think the confrontations should be manifestations of moral pressure, possibly social and economic pressures, things of that sort, I, doubt whether breaking up a bunch of presses, things like that do any good. Again probably I try to think of it in reverse. There has been so much of this trying to break up radical presses, trying to suppress the guy who-argues on our side, I do think in this whole process there's an obvious practical advantage in trying to take a position upon which you can be reasonably consistent.

Q: Isn't it more of a situation where you've got
this big giant of a guy and this little wee fellow trying to say that both of them should be the same when they fight each other? Isn't that what you're saying when we argue that kind of consistency?

A: Yes. All of our education has to show the larger reality. We hardly need to give a lecture on economics to explain the absurdity of Anatole France's old line, "The law alike forbids the rich man and the poor the right to beg alms or sleep under bridges", the millionaire being; quite unlikely to. Yes, it is a very unequal world. The mammoth means of propaganda that our enemies have and our very limited means even of answering, I think, does mean this too, that it's a public relations job, which is a lot of confrontation. A lot of trying to get an idea across is really a public relations Job. And who is it aimed at?

You probably aren't going to get that son-of-a-gun we're fighting against anyway, to be converted to your cause, It's rather unlikely. The guy that you're really interested in is this guy on the sidelines, this guy who considers
himself an innocent bystander. If you can get those guys on the fence to be with you instead of on his side, that's what you're aiming at. I know that in leaflets to organize a factory and speeches I've made during strikes, I always figure, the guy who's solidly with me, I don't need to make my pitch at him at all. I need to make my pitch to the weak sister who may desert the strike. I need to make my pitch to the guy who thinks, "I may join that union but I'm rather hesitant whether I will or not". In a situation where there's a pro-fascist press, in a country that is Inherently in danger of going fascist, you want to recall the menace of that. Is the use of tactics very similar to those the fascists in power tend to use, are those the ways to build up an effective resistance to this fascism?

Q: Let's make it concrete, We're In Germany in 1932. There are two very bad mistakes of the century that really lay heavy upon youth and I
think upon you, too. The first one you identified the other day, when the Socialist Parties in the Second International in August, 1914 declared war against each other.

A: The Socialist parties didn't declare war on each other.

Q: Well, the Second International broke up and it set one working class against the other. That was one bad mistake. The other mistake was for the German Socialists not to have taken arms up against the Nazis, the SS, the back shirts and whatnot in Germany at that time. The cry was, "Work through Parliament", and you had both the Social Democrats and the German Communist party fighting each other in the Reichshag. So, where you left in 1932 at that point you're a guy on the sideline and all of a sudden you've Woken up. You're faced with the pro-fascist press; you're faced with the eminent takeover of the Nazi party. It seems to me at that point historically naive, to suggest that you operate in the way you're suggesting.

A: The lesson I get from that period is somewhat different. I'm thinking particularly of the tragedy of European labor, things like that.
And other people I've talked with who'd been around in that, time say the same. It seems to me that Hitler rode to power because a lot of people who could have offered an effective opposition said, "Oh, these government come and go. If we stick our neck out we'll be in trouble, If we don't stick our neck out, it'll only last a little while, so let's play it safe". A lot of those people who didn't stick their neck out lost their lives anyway. It would have been, by hindsight, the more prudent thing to have stuck one's neck out and offered effective opposition, economic, physical, anything that one could have. Certainly, a bunch of people going down and raiding a Jewish store, killing the Jew who runs it and things like that, this isn't a question of free speech. If there's any physical means at my disposal, or if I can get my friends to come down and interpose our own bodies or get a big stick to hit him on the head, or whatever we could do to prevent that act--that we should do. There was a large number of people who didn't like to see that going on but they said, "Keep out of trouble", This idea of keeping out of trouble is the great vicious thing, I think that a willingness to stick their neck out is the important thing.
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To have your neck in a shell and wake up in a fascist world is not good. Better stick your neck out.

Q: Do you think you should stick your neck out individually, or as a group?

A: Well, the more people you can get to stick their necks out the safer your neck is. That's for sure. If you can't stick it out yourself, Often I've been the only radical guy in a job I've been on or something like that. I got the job where I was working to go out on strike when they were executing Sacco and Vanzetti. The guys didn't like the idea but I shamed them into it and they went out with me. Sometimes you have to be one man alone, but one man with a principle that can hardly be assailed (I think it was a conservative who said it.) but you stand there a majority alone. I think we've been getting away from my basic argument. I've been hoping for some feedback on this thing, Is their a substantial similarity between this development, what I call the campus rumpus and the pre-union development in industry? Is there almost inherently in this process some parallel to the routinization of industrial negotiations that can be reasonably expected as a necessary development on campus?
If so, it faces us with a choice. Will we involve ourselves in it, and try to make something good out of it? Or will we say, "This thing just tends to become a new means of controls, or making the controls over us seem more polite with a democratic disguise", and have nothing to do with it. My choice is I say get into it. Have something to do with it.

In this general question of, means to be chosen is there merit to my contention that the result we aim at tends very much to be an extension or an elaboration of the means that we chose, and that consequently we have to be rather fussy. Another consideration in regard to that question of free speech, I think a suppression of free speech isn't likely to land me in a free society. We can certainly use these as more or less practical guidelines in trying struggle for a good tomorrow.

I have a tremendous respect for non-violence. I think that the experience of the last 40 or 50 years has shown us that by the adroit use of various non-violent techniques we can accomplish
things that would have been very difficult to accomplish by forceful methods. I seriously believe that, but for my own part I'm sure that if I'm involved in a strike and some scab is coming down the street and moral persuasion won't keep him from coming down to work and I have available the means of physical force to stop him from coming to work, I'm pretty sure I would not be a Ghandite in that situation, That's not without great respect for Ghandi. I think his techniques were very largely suitable and it is the replacement of his techniques by the strategy of the Congress party, rather than the policies of Ghandi that has stopped India from succeeding much better than it might have. Of course, I know that our enemy doesn't play nice and I think we have to be equipped for it. If our union hall is being attacked by some plug uglies I think We should take care of them,

Q: All the revolutions have been violent ones. They were all physically violent revolutions. Certainly the material existance of the people that partook in them afterward improved from before.
But it did get into Stalinism like they had in Russia.

A: Yes, I think that if we want a good world we must not forget this relationship between ends and means. And we do have a substantial amount of choice. I don't think that we'll ever get a nice perfect world. But, get it as good as you can and select the means as judiciously as you can. It isn't like going down shopping. You're rather limited in your selection of means, yet in those things there is quite a range of choice. For example, surely students want to react to the fact they didn't like the jury decision or the judges' behavior in the Chicago 7. That's right, I would like widespread, very visible, very audible evidence in that kind of thing. The hell with Judge Hoffman. Sure, but I'm afraid burning down that bank in Santa Barbara just adds to air pollution and not much else. I don't know if you saw the big ad in the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal that the bank put out afterwords, "This is a little branch bank, It doesn't bring in much business, just a lot of poor students down there, but we do want to serve them, We'll have to
build a new bank but since we are a big hearted corporation and not going to be chased off the scene by a few rattle brained kids, we'll go to all the expense to build a new building there and soon." So far as a public relations job, I'm afraid that the bank wins the public relations argument in that case. In any issue, there's no sense me slanting my argument to the guy who's with me. It's to the guy who might be brought to my side that I need to slant my argument. I'm not trying to start an argument here. I'm trying to be as objective and scientific as I can.

In this struggle for a new world, we who want that new world and have some idea of what values we should aim at, we are, 'unfortunately a minority. However, the people who have any substantial interest in preventing us are much smaller than we are. We vastly outnumber them. In between is Mr. Nixon's silent majority. That's a great mass of people. It's with changing their attitudes that we have to be very much concerned. Their fear is that it's perhaps very imperfect, very unsatisfactory as we have things here now. You'll even find people who haven't eaten regularly saying, "I'm uncertain about eating. But if you have a great deal of chaos and confusion here, I may not even get my welfare check If you overthrow
the government.” This forward pressing movement should not help build the image of itself that it wants to create maximum disorder, that it wants to create: chaos and confusion, that it wants to burn the world down and expects to build a new world on the ashes of the old, which are very unsuitable material for building anything. Instead we should create the image that we are anxious and competent and create order in this world that is chaotic and disorderly, that does make millions of people starve, that does create situations that are so untenable that we're making powder magazine with a bunch of monkeys playing with the dynamite. But that is the situation. that the old order has gotten us into, And each day is going to be a more and more hazardous situation than the day before for the whole human race.

In this situation, we people who have given thought to this thing, who have stayed up nights reading books about ecology and economics, and history and what have you, we people have tried to figure out an orderly way to, create a good world in which the resources of the world can be used rationally planned by the organized workers of the world for the collective good.
Surely that is the image we want to create, and even our minor behaviours to be consistent with creating that image.

Q: We don't have a great deal of time, though. The parliamentary system takes a long time,

A: That's absolutely right. I think we don't forget the bomb, but leave it in the background of our thoughts. We've lived here since 1945, that's two dozen years now, with the capacity to bomb us all to hell and we're still here. So you figure after a while it's okay—you can live on Mt. Vesuvius if you want to. You get inured and used to this sort of a thing. But it doesn't mean that the threat doesn't increase and my mathematically minded friends who use their good theory of probability on forecasting a horrible future, instead of playing poker with their knowledge of mathematics, they tell me that by the probability theory we should have all been bumped off now. That doesn't stop it, There is a continuous threat in that direction, It's quite real.
Personally I think that the thing pressing on us most is this ecological crisis. The bombing may happen if some damn fool presses the button, and there's an increasing likelihood that some damn fool will. But this other thing is for sure. It isn't an if. It's for sure unless we make a fundamentally different pattern. I don't think there's much point in me coming to a college and telling you the basic facts. Some people talk as if nice afterburners on cars could lick this problem. I think fundamentally the question is this: You live in an economy that is in good condition only if it's expanding. Can an economy that must continuously expand to keep in good health, can it cut down appreciably the conversion of fossil fuels into gas? This pollution problem is very largely how fast we are turning fossil fuels into gas. I don't believe a set of economic arrangements that requires continuous expansion is able technically to cope with that problem. I don't think that the motivations that govern its decision making permit it. I'm thinking of the nice display in your Chevron paper the other day about
the phosphate content of different kinds of detergents. I don't think that Tide or any of those people who have nice big ads for all the housewives, are going to say that such and such a scientific source says, "Avoid using Tide. It's very bad for your health and the water and everything else". They're not going to. I think it should be very obvious that you have to have a switch to making economic decisions on the basis of some other interest than those of corporations. I don't think that you can have decisions made on the basis of what will make the most money and cope with this crisis, That is an additional reason why we should aim at a transfer of decisive power from those old people to an aggressive labor movement. I urge that by all means.

Q: You say that the bomb is something that's going to unite us. I think it's very naive to say something like that. I think what you're saying actually is that the economic system is something that's either going to unite us against it or for it. The conditions under that system
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are what I think would have to be emphasized, not the fact that the bomb is there and could be detonated five or ten minutes from now. Say the bomb is there. We could be destroyed, therefore, let's do something, To think that the bomb puts us in a power position I think is a very naive thing to say.

A: I figure this way. We human beings all over the world have a common interest that there shall not be an atomic destruction of the earth. There has been the growth of a common culture--we play Russian music in this country. In Russia I'm sure they play our Gerschwin. In cultural senses, in scientific Senses, in business arrangements, in all kinds of things, there has been this transfer from tribalism and narrow nationalism toward cosmopolitanism. And yet antagonism, distrust of your national neighbors, surely that has been on the ascendancy instead. It just doesn't fit in with the picture. The bomb hasn't minimized that at all. I do think, especially amongst the younger people, I think there is a strong sense that either we have no future, or we'll all have pretty much the same future, that kind of a feeling.
Q: I don't know if I can exactly correlate the labor movement with the student movement today. I see a problem. Let's say Dow-Chemical napalm workers were being treated unjustly and so they're on strike. There's something very basic that people are doing when they go out on strike but it's like a perpetuation of the system that has caused them to go out on strike. I find the same problem today with students, They themselves don't have to make a product, so when they go out on strike, I find the things they're asking for really are just like gutting safety measures around a Napalm plant. It's not really dealing with the fact that the whole reason that they're in that system has to be changed or has to be made meaningful. The alternative in factories I've worked in is that they've created a closed shop, their own union, so that the people haven't gone on strike. What I compare with this, the liberal university that will constantly give their students everything they want, put them all on all the committees, let them have some sort of responsibility for
controlling the way they live on the campus, and that way never be put in a position where they have to take into account that they're producing material that is perpetuating the system, that causes other workers to go on strike and causes other workers to be oppressed. I don't know if the power of decision in the university with the students I've seen finally come to the position where they've been able to bargain with the administration, I haven't ever been able to see that bargaining as meaningful. Usually the administrations that do bargain have just gotten very smart? They decided to bring the students into the decision making, but they really haven't made the changes that would cause the university to be a really different thing. If the university was really made for the people and created products that were really for the good of all the Workers it wouldn't be the same university as it is today. I don't see any university becoming that, no matter how much the students have been put in a situation where they co-operate with the administration.
A: Well, without being cynical, I think you have established how unfortunately like the labor movement this university movement is. The same thing has been happening: there, that the routine has been set up so that we bargain collectively we get a 10% increase in pay and a 10% increase in prices and wonder why it looks like it did when we came in. These's a great deal of this run-around and a great maneuvering so that we seem to be getting places and yet get nowhere. We encounter that in the labor movement all the time.

I think you'll find the same thing in labor's political efforts. You ask for so-and-so and get something that looks almost like what you asked for but when you get to the heart of it you find you didn't get it. This is a kind of disappointment you're likely to find most everywhere in life, except for girlfriends. You won’t find it there. But otherwise you can expect that the surface thing is given and not the substance, certainly our political experience is very much alike. Democracy is far more a matter of form.
than a matter of reality in the United States, Canada, anywhere I can think of. I believe that this does show that the university does have its different concern. I still think that here a student is putting into the university not a life's work. He's putting in four or five, maybe eight years of his life. That's what: he's turning into this thing, and that is the reason why students must develop some control over the universities into which they put such chunks of their lives,

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE I.W.W.

It might have been better if I had started this week with a brief history of the I.W.W. I've been speaking here assuming you people have read six or seven books on the I.W.W. Some of you have and some haven't. Today I'm rather belatedly using this session for a brief birdseye view of the I.W.W. history. There is far more I.W.W. history, otherwise you wouldn't find these many big volumes on it, more than we can possibly cover in a reasonable time. So I think I'll make my talk rather short, just hitting some high spots and leave lots of time for something you're interested in asking.
Maybe the best place to start is: Why did anyone go to the trouble of starting the I.W.W.? The answer is, of course, in the labor situation that faced American workers in 1904. There were several problems of this sort. There was the Brewery workers union. It was a union that had been started very largely by German immigrants in America; while the brewery industry was substantially in their hands. They started down in Cincinnati, they had a background that tended to make them, in general sense of the word, rather socialistic in their outlook. They had started out having not only the people who made the beer, but the people who ran the power plant, the electricians, carpenters, All kinds of people are needed in a large brewery, and in those days the barrels were made by cooperers which was a special trade, There'd be a cooperage as a part of almost every big brewery, In those days, too, the beer was hauled around by teams of 6-8 horses, beautiful horses. So the teamsters were involved. You had all of these different things. Several times efforts had been made by the teamsters union to haul the teamsters
Thompson away, by the electricians union to haul the electricians away, to dismember this industrial structure into a number of separate craft unions. The only reason for It was that each craft union said, "We want to collect the dues from the electricians if we are electricians. We want to collect dues from the coopers if there's a coopers union", and so on.

Naturally, the brewery workers felt they were much stronger, in a much better position to win their battles if they didn't break up. However, they didn't feel very independent. They had a good many battles. A major weapon they had to rely on was a boycott, getting people to refuse to patronize taverns that sold scab beer. While they might have acted quite independently as an industrial union and told the American Federation of Labor, with which they were affiliated, to go jump in the lake, they couldn't very well do that and still have the AF of L boycotting the beer that was produced by those who broke their strikes. So, they had that particular problem.
The railroad workers were at that time divided into 26 different craft unions. Recently there's been a merging so you have a much smaller number of collective bargaining groups. They acted very much in the manner of breaking each others strikes. That is why Gene Debs, the old socialist, had launched the American Railway Union to make an industrial union for railroad workers. It had been smashed but a lot of railroad workers felt it should be possible, if you had the backing of enough other union people in other fields, to build the kind of industrial union that they wanted on railroads.

The major component coming into the I.W.W. was the Western Federation of Miners, the people who worked in copper, silver and similar mines, largely in Colorado, Nevada and Idaho. They also tried to organize, but not very successfully at that time among the smelter workers. Their lineal descendant is the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers that we still have up around the Sudbury district. They had had a history, of many severe struggles. I happened to overhear a conversation yesterday in Dr. Johnson's class about what rights you
have when martial law is declared. I'm thinking of just one instance, General Bell in Colorado. He built a bullpen and put a bunch of strikers in it and some lawyer went up there to say, "I want to serve writs of habeas corpus to get these people out there so we can find out what right have you to put them in". The general said, "Hell, we don't have habeas corpus here; we just have post-mortems". There were occasions for a few post-mortems, too. The whole mining community was horror stricken at the brutality toward the men in the stockades and toward the women they left behind. The whole mining community was horror stricken. The feeling among these metal miners was that they needed to have a union that would do several things for them, a set of union affiliations,

They had been affiliated with the AF of L, but found that the AF of L was not at all concerned in doing the things that they felt had to be done. Of course, they promised every union some kind of backing, for when they go on strike, that there'd be beans and bacon for their families to eat. That, of course, is an essential thing. They found
that the AP of L was reluctant even to do things like that for them, and was saying, "Be? nice to the boss until you build up a big treasury so the boss will be afraid to have you go on strike because he'll know you have so much beans and bacon". That wouldn't work out in that situation.

They thought, too, that it was necessary to have a labor movement that spread news of the labor movement, spread some understanding of what workers were up against, why workers were taking the actions that they were. They felt that if the working class of America knew what the miners of the Cour d'Alene area of Idaho were up against, and why they were fighting for what they were, that it would be very difficult to send in the federal troops to brutalize the miners In-that area. You needed a union performing the educational functions of unions in order to make it possible for them to win their strikes. That had led the Western Federation to feel the need for some larger labor body. Some men met in Chicago in 1904 and surveyed their own particular problems in the brewery workers, amongst the railroad workers, in the hard rock mining areas and others from
other unions, too. They reckoned, "Isn't it possible that the problems that others in the working class are facing make it possible to launch a different kind of a labor movement?"

I don't know If you've read this famous novel, the Jungle, of Upton Sinclair's. It describes a strike that had just been lost in the packing house area of Chicago where these men met, which was part of the milieu where they held their session. They said, "Let's try it", So they sent a notice out to a bunch of people that; they were going to meet in January of 1904 to discuss whether they should make such an attempt. Substantially the same handful plus a few people with very little to offer met again in January.

They called a convention in June and these, people, giving paper enrollment of about 50 odd thousand, said, "OK, we'll form this thing". One reason they questioned whether they should, was because they saw that the brewery workers would need the boycott power of a far larger power than they were able to amass. For many of these things they felt size was important. They recognized that
they didn't have the size necessary to do the job that they wanted to do. But they felt -- okay, we'll go ahead and try it and they would still be worse, they felt, within a union that insisted upon dismembering them, dividing them up into different crafts. So they said go ahead,

Some felt that one reason many had not joined with them lay in the craft union structure. The question wasn't simply: "Is this structure a bit more efficient than that?" There were a lot of overtones that went with it. The industrialists primarily felt that we're concerned with people without skill; we're concerned with the people at the lowest wage level. The philosophy of the industrial unionist usually is: the basis upon which any wage structure may be negotiated, the very foundation of it is the wage of the man at the bottom. Likewise, I think that ordinarily there is less attachment to the existing social order on the part of those who urge the industrial unionism than those who didn't, also some general sense that we should look forward to a cooperative commonwealth.

Even the old craft unions had professed that, because most of them had been created at time when it was advisable to put into the introductory preambles
to their constitutions some statement that they formed their unions because they realized that no matter what terms they might negotiate from their employers, they would still be in a position of a conflict of interest with their employers. This conflict would endure until the means of production were owned by the workers so that you didn't have one class that hires others to do the work.

Normally, the old craft unions had professed this belief that sooner or later there will be some cooperative commonwealth, some socialist society, some successor to capitalism. I think there had been an old type hope for it, largely animated, not so much by Marxian socialism as by Bellamy's Looking Backward, for equality and things of that sort. However, there was a great antipathy on the part of those secretaries, officers of unions, who found it businesslike to get along with the district attorney of the town. I'm not scoffing at them, but if you're a bunch of carpenters on strike, you're not so concerned whether the government declares in favor of socialism or not. You're rather concerned with the cop running in those guys on the picket line. So, union secretaries frequently had found it good to be on speaking terms with the local gendarmes and district attorneys and the local element in the power structure. Frequently
for that purpose it was beat to play along with which ever politician they bet was going to win and become mayor of the town. Instead of the old socialist politics many of them wished to play winning party politics, which ever the winnine party happened to be, on a strictly local scale. There was some antipathy developing In all of these craft unions between those who advocated any brand of socialism and those who said you've got to play with the winner.

Within the socialist movement as of 1901 there'd been one great big split between those who stood with the SLP and those who'd gone with Debs and people like that to form the Socialist Party. I don't need to tell you that there's no people who can wrangle with each other like people who are split apart in some kind of radical political party. So that kind of a thing was on, too, as part of the emotional involvement of those building the IWW. I think you realize that unions get built not by people who have no social vision at all. It's only company unions get built that way. Any bonafide union has ordinarily been built by people who' want not only a union, but wanted to do something about the great range of problems that beset the working class. That is true in the AF of L unions of my youth, that ordinarily the guy who'd become local
treasurer, local secretary, the guy who'd undertake work with the grievance committee, was the kind of a man who did have some kind of social convictions. To some extent that is true today.

So these people were quite concerned about this political schism. I don't intend to get into the details, but I want to point out that this schism made many who agreed with the industrial union idea still reluctant to support the new venture. They tended to say: "This is a bunch of De Leon socialists and a bunch of Debs socialists who want to get control of our unions and pull them apart." There was a distrust that wasn't altogether unfounded.

I think those who started the IWW, Bill Haywood and St. John and those boys, were hoping that the union could conduct its affairs in such a way that these fears would be allayed and that gradually there would be not only some reorganization of the existing labor movement but a great growth.

As of 1905 there was only about 5% of the wage workers in America that had belonged to any union anyway. So there was the 95% available, the unorganized to go out and organize and that was the focus of attempts primarily. Of course, it's nice to have something to start with. That was another reason why
they'd like men of the other unions, if possible, with them. This circumstance led to a split in 1906, a split in 1908 and so forth. It's really from 1908 that the typical Wobbly movement that we know historically has developed. By that time it had shed more or less the marks of its founding fathers, and had its own distinguishing characteristics. I don't think the IWW history before 1908 is essential to an understanding of that happened after that.

The IWW has had much history written about it, (I had a big array of books here the other day) but not because it's been very large. It's never been very large. I mentioned that something like 53 thousand is the paper membership with which it started. It actually started with 800 people. Although the Western Federation is ordinarily depicted as being the founder it couldn't Join until after its 1906 convention in July. In September was a convention at which a little internal argument in the Western Federation of Miners led them to split away. So really the Western Federation of Miners belonged to the IWW from July to September 1906. It's illusion that they brought in 35,000 members. They didn't. They paid per capita for three months only. The IWW had to function with only a few people who came
in, some from the De Leon's Socialist Trades and Labor Alliance, which was the economic expression of the SLP, but chiefly from the people they set about organizing who had no union, who said this sounds like a good deal to us.

As I mentioned, they really started by trying to reach the folks who were somewhat kept out of other unions by the fact of immigration. The American Federation of Labor carried on its activities almost entirely in English except amongst the German speaking people. Many German unionists came over and large numbers of German speaking locals in carpentry, bricklayers, bakers, etc. had very little handicap. From 1900 on there had been a great switch in sources of immigration to the southeastern part of Europe, the Balkan areas, and with these people the AF of L had little to do.

One of our first big strikes was in McKees Rocks, not far from Pittsburg. We didn't organize that place. We didn't cause the strike. We did have a few people down in that area. They tried to organize something else. These people had tried to get, the AF of L locally to help. They wouldn't but Morrison, the Secretary-Treasurer of the AF of L happened to be going through and some people approached him. He actually issued a statement: "We don't want to bother with these damn illiterate foreigners."
Well, some of those illiterate foreigners that, he was talking about were people who did have considerable union knowledge. One of them had served in the Duma of 1905 in Russia and had had to escape afterwards. Some of them had been members of the largest metal workers union in the world and were familiar with its structure, policies, etc. Some from Italy had been active in unions there. They were really better informed in a good many-things, I think, than Mr. Morrison was. These people, handicapped as they were in not knowing the language of the country, having no means, and being in a starving situation; which is an awful handicap to doing anything. When your major problem is how to eat, it's a little difficult to organize at times.

They did call on the IWW. In it were people who could speak these various languages. One didn't need to be a professor to explain the union, that there are a lot of things we can do together that we can't do alone, and that we have a union. It isn't too complicated an idea to explain in any language one can speak.
It isn't too complicated an idea to explain in any language. The McKees Rocks strike got a lot of attention in the newspapers, partly because of the violence in the strike, not that we were violent. As our Secretary, William Trautman, explained we just curbed violence. There is a story that he uses, that after a bunch of strikers were killed by the Cossacks (I don't know whether this is true) that an Unknown Committee that was doing certain things in the strike sent a message up that for every striker's life you take, a state trooper's life will be taken. Now that's part of the legend. I don't know if it was so because they killed four strikers and the strikers killed three state troopers. Maybe they wondered who was going to be the fourth. Anyway, these weren't big prosecutions the biggest sentence was six months. Solidarity was being printed there already. The newspaper people were thrown in the can, but that was on the grounds that they hadn't filed for some kind of a permit. But they were editing the newspaper all the time from the jail there in New Castle so that didn't make much trouble for them. I bring that up to illustrate that the area of labor in which the craft unions were quite uninterested was actually good area in which the IWW could function.

We did that to such an extent that the image got built that the IWW is an organization of foreigners. This again was not true. When World War I came and there were efforts to repress the IWW, it was thought for a while you could
practically curb the IWW by arresting all of the aliens and deporting them. When they tried that they found that moat of the people they were arresting were native born. Some of their families had been here since the American Revolution, I would say their ethnic make up just about represented the ethnic make up of the work force. They certainly found out that this image that we were predominantly foreign born was not true. But it is true that we did make a special effort to tell the foreign born that if you are a union minded man you're quite welcome here. We did issue papers in a large number of languages and quite a few of our early organizers were very good linguists and could make speeches in four or five languages, too. Maybe that helped make that image.

Some of these other Eastern strikes, too, gave that picture of many groups, for example, the Lawrence Strike of 1912. A big woolen town had the strike there because the introduction of a new law cutting the hours of labor meant that these people lost about 54 cents a week in pay. And 54 cents a week, somebody figured, is about equal to 26 loaves of bread at that time, and the people needed the bread. What I'm trying to point out is that most of the thing that our union did, other unions normally did. Certainly, I think that anybody
can expect the greater part of our union functions would largely duplicate what any good union would do in a like situation.

It's more interesting if I talk about the innovations and novelties and so forth that arise out of such strikes. In the case of the Lawrence. Strike, the newspaper at the time commented on the structure of the strike committee, where communication necessitated representation by language groups, so that you elected people not so much by what kind of work they did but by what language did they speak, to make sure that all groups had representation so there could be mutual understanding among them. Another thing -- they weren't allowed to walk back and forth, back and forth in the picket line. There's nothing to stop people from taking a walk all morning long if they want to and the mills were concentrated around an area where spur tracks, canals, etc. made it convenient to build factories. So they kept an endless circle of pickets walking around that whole area, endless chain picketing., I think that was about the first time it was introduced.

When I mention these innovations, I would like to correct a notion that I find sometimes that the Wobblies are a bunch of union "inventors". They don't go around figuring, "Can't you invent a new stunt?" No, we don't
do that. It's simply that there is complete freedom for our members facing a situation to devise what the situation calls for. And I suppose, along with that, we don't encourage stereotype thinking or stereotype action. So a lot of things have been invented and improvised by those facing a particular problem saying, "Well, we can't do it like we used to, How can we adapt the way we used to, to the situation that we face?" And there were some rather interesting developments at times. This endless picket line was one, and it has been rather useful in other instances where the law would not let you picket back and forth. You can hardly stop a man from taking a walk around several blocks if he wishes to and another man about a foot behind him doing likewise and so on.

I, think the thing that attracted the most attention there was a tactic we didn't invent but some of our people had known it to be practiced in Belgium. There were a large number of Belgian workers, in fact. We would have had a very difficult time, I think, to have run that strike so well if it had not been that the France-Belgian people had a big hall, a cooperative store, and a very big bakery, so that they could provide bread for the strikers. A tactic that had been used in a
somewhat similar situation in Belgium was suggested by Margaret Sanger. You'll hear of her more in connection with birth control. They didn't have the pill in those days. In fact, you weren't allowed to mention such things, Margaret Sanger was in and out of jail every once in a while for saying it isn't advisable for working men to have 13 children if they can't afford to feed two of them. So she was a member of the IWW, too, and she was around there and helping us in Lawrence. She took to this idea that some Belgian man suggested. Here there race these kids. We find it hard to feed them out here, police rare brutal, it's a heck of a place to be. Why not arrange with our friends, the Socialist Party and different union people who are friendly to us, that the kids will go on vacation to visit these friends in other cities around the country for the duration of the strike. We started doing that, and of course it had a very good effect Psychologically in building a sense of solidarity and an interest in what was going on in Lawrence. Where these kids were visiting, they could help gather strike funds which were needed. When the police decided to stop it, beating up a bunch of mothers and kids as they were trying to get on a train to Boston,
that led to a Congressional Investigation. You'll find two big fat volumes, of that, where the Congress investigates the Lawrence Strike, if you want to read it. Anyway, it made a great deal of publicity. I don't know why it isn't used more often, because if there is a strike and it looks like a long tough one and a place where unpleasant things may happen, you don't want children involved in it. If you can send them on a vacation to friendly workers elsewhere, I think it does help build up that sense of a working class community and solidarity.

There's a lot about that Lawrence strike that would be interesting, particularly the way an undertaker who was working on the Board of Education -- and I'm not sure which hat he was wearing in this matter -- planted a bunch of dynamite and tried to frame up the IWW with planting the dynamite. I'm not sure if it was as an undertaker or in his educational capacity he was doing that. They fined him $500 and they proved in the end that the American Woolen Company's President Wood had paid him to do the job.

Patterson Strike, that's a rather famous one. I don't know of any great tactic that came out of it. Maybe I'll mention the things that didn't work so well. Several of our friends that were acquainted with theatrical people and so forth In New York, hit upon the idea:
why not put the strikers through an act, show the strike experience in New York and they did. It was a wonderful pageant they put on but it was a financial loss. It was intended to raise funds, but you couldn't have these people over and over and over again, and the cost of getting the Madison Square Gardens where they put it on just didn't make it work. I don't know why that whole thing should be worked up, but I do think in a strike if you can get small groups to put on skits, labor drama, things that tell the labor story, involving two or three or five people and they go around the country putting on this little incident of the strike dramatically, then I think that would be an excellent idea. But this involved about a thousand participants or something like that. That does make it a costly thing to do and Elizabeth Gurly Flynn who was in that strike, wrote an analysis of it afterward and said that it made for some ill will between those who participated in the pageant and those who didn't get to play a role in it.

However, my own conviction of the chief reason why that strike was lost was this: we didn't want that strike in. the first place. It wasn't something we sought. Most of those early strikes were strikes that we just felt morally obliged to do what we could
for, because they had happened. Patterson was in an area where the industry was old fashioned. You could produce silk much cheaper in Allentown, Pennsylvania and places like that. The silk industry at Allentown was largely unorganized. In fact, the wives of miners and the daughters of miners trying to supplement the father's income were largely working in these mills in Allentown and working on two looms, two modern looms as compared to one loom in the old fashioned way. There are only slight chances of winning a strike called to resist the modernization of old fashioned plants when the market can be supplied from the newer and more efficient plants, especially where there is overlapping ownership. And I think the Wobblies were aware of these difficulties in winning. That's no reason for not doing your best. Sometimes you have to fight even if you figure the chances are against you.

Well, instead of talking all about back East, maybe talk about out West. Some people think of the IWW as a bunch of Western lumberjacks or Western image. Now if you do some reading, there's one part of Tyler's Rebels of the Woods that goes into that very nicely. Tyler shows how the public Image of the IWW has
wandered around geographically, where they came from, what they wore, what they were doing, and that there is a big difference between the images that have been presented at different times. Up until World War I we were far more active east of the Mississippi than west of it. Yet today people think of the Wobblies as wild guys from out West. We had been, of course, active in the West from very early and it, was a Western contingent that had a lot to do with starting the IWW. A strike in the sawmills in Portland, Oregon led to a newspaper article in one of the local papers that we issued as a pamphlet, "The Story of a New Union," Some people were rather surprised to find that here was a union that was run entirely by the guys on the job, but took them all out and did win a strike. There hadn't been many won there before.

A lot of our experience out West is with a work situation very unlike the factory situation that was typical of the East -- the laying of railroads, mining, lumbering, building irrigation projects, later on not so much in 1900 but by 1920, building dams for power projects all that kind of thing. That was the greater part of the work going on at that time. There was very little
of the factory, you will find. They didn't have any Boeing Aircraft at Seattle at that time. Seattle, Spokane and so forth, those were commercial centers and centers where workers drifted in between these jobs. The automobile was not used extensively. In fact, there were hardly roads in most of the country to make it suitable for using automobiles at that time. The labor force got around riding box cars from one place to another as hobos. Some people would normally follow construction work, some people normally followed the mines, some normally worked in the woods. You actually would find a large number of people who would alternate between one or another, working farms in between. There was quite a labor force of migrant workers more or less likely to work in one industry or another through that early period. Their concern was with their sub-normal life conditions. They practically all wandered around with their worldly possessions rolled up in a blanket and on their back. You've seen old cartoons and so forth depicting that situation. They would go places where no bedding was furnished and frequently they slept out under the stars.

I think of an amusing instance of a young college lad who went, toward the end of that period, to some
farm where you have to take your blanket and sleep out in a wheat field. It was a new life to him altogether and he found he was to sleep out there in the field anywhere. The next day he was helping the farmer with something and said he needed to go to the bathroom and asked where to go. "Out in the field anywhere." It was two hours before he came back. "What took you so long?" He said, "Oh, I didn't want to do anything like that in my bedroom." That's a side track from the issue. These were people who had to live, The bedding they carried on their back.

Hobos, and I can speak with some first hand knowledge of this, find a major problem is keeping clean, partly so you won't loom as if you just got off a freight train. When you land in a town you might want to merge in with the local working populace. Also if you don't keep clean, you get very itchy after a while and there's the vermin. The only way to do that is to boil them up; they can't stand boiling but they can stand almost anything else. Fighting with vermin was really a lot of trouble of the work force and a large part of their gripe. In many a camp the only place you could keep clean was to chop a hole in the ice In the winter time somewhere to get some water and put it into a Standard Oil can or something and
boil it up and stick your clothes in it. A lot of the gripe was against this sub-normal living condition. Even in town, they could just mix with their own lot, a submerged class.

They were especially victimized by the employment shark. Canada arranged rather early, I think, that nobody could charge any man a fee for getting a job. I think you can now for office work, clerical, etc. No, I guess the employer pays the fee. Government employment agencies were set up here much earlier than they were in the United States. Most of the job hunting was done by going into the area of town that catered to that -- a bunch of little offices, where the man had a number of jobs that he could sell you for a dollar or two dollars. Very frequently when they got to the job they found it non-existent. More often they would find after working a week they would be fired so that the foreman could split the fee with the employment sharks. So a big fight went up against the employment sharks and that is what led to a large number of free speech fights. Get the picture? The Spokane situation--I think it has a lot to do with the image of the IWW and maybe with this Joe Hill that they are making a movie about now. The Wobblies would want to get up and
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tell the people, "You don't have to pay money to the employment shark. If we get an understanding amongst the lot of us that we won't pay the employment sharks a fee the companies will have to hire us directly, or we'll set up places where they could hire us here and they could haul us out to the job, or short of that after a while it'll be that you can go down to the job and rustle a job and get on there. If we were just to collectively refuse to patronize the employment shark, the employment shark would go out of business and you would have him off your back." They wanted to make speeches explaining that and a lot of other things about the union, but essentially focusing on that right or wrong where the employment sharks had their offices.

When they started doing that the Salvation Army came along and started holding religious services and it wasn't so much that the religion appealed to these people more than the pork chops problem, but the Salvation Army had a brass band and a great big drum. They could make even more noise than the Dumont Chowder and Marching Band.1 That is what led them to make so many

1 Some of the more radical Waterloo students boarded at the Gabriel Dumont Commune, named after a rebel who was hanged in Canada. They had formed a band which they called the Gabriel Dumont Memorial Chowder and Marching Band. They met me at the train when I arrived.
of these parodies, there was one they sang to that tune that became very popular, "Hallelujah, I'm a bum." That was one that went to the tune of the Salvation Army song. They were ridiculing them. It was for the same reason that they did that song to "In the Sweet By and By," you know, "Holy rollers and jumpers come out. Try to tell you what's wrong and what's right," etc.

I'm really poor at singing. In fact, it's my inability to sing that I'm afraid accounts maybe for this tradition of not standing up when the judge sentences you. Ed Dawes and I were to be sentenced at the Narysville trial in 1923 and it was custom to sing a verse of "Solidarity" or something like that, but both Ed and I agreed that we sang like frogs. We had to do something, so we said, "Let's just sit down instead, and not stand up when we're supposed to stand up to receive sentence."

I think that was the first time that was ever done, but that's how traditions get born, just because we couldn't sing.

I think that probably you're more familiar with these songs than you are with Wobbly history. Quite a few of them are of the type that were suitable to put to the Salvation Army music so, with music furnished free by the Salvation Army, we went ahead with our
message. They didn't like that and so the police started running us in. That was a great big free speech fight.

They put out the word around the country to foot-loose Wobblies, "Come to Spokane," And it's surprising the enthusiasm with which they came there. Hundreds and hundreds of them filled up the jails. The police took over some school buildings and made them into jailhouses. Some people still think schoolhouses are jail houses, The citizens, I must say, by and large were in our favor. Once in a while they—would let these people take a walk, about every two weeks, from the school where they were imprisoned to a place where they could take shower baths in the county jail. People would shower us with Duke's mixture, a popular roll-your-own tobacco at the time, Bull Durham, and so on, oranges, apples, what have you. They kept doing that for several months and there are several very interesting odds and ends there.

Elizabeth Gurly Flynn, who later became a very active member of the Communist Party, but whose early life is associated with the IWW, she wanted to make a speech there and she didn't like this Idea that most people had that you didn't get much time. Some people didn't share that. I think that I mentioned to some class here the other day the unfortunate experience of a man who, from the warmth
of his heart went there for the free speech fight, noticing that if a man would just get up there and say, "friends and fellow workers" the cops would haul him off. He got up there and said, "friends and fellow workers," No cop hauled him off. "Friends and fellow workers, where the hell is the cops?" Elizabeth Gurly Flynn wasn't stage struck; she could give a nice long speech. So she handcuffed herself to a telephone post and had somebody throw away the key so the cops had to file all the way through the chain before they could take her off to jail.

That tactic has been used by women suffragettes and various other people speaking on behalf of unpopular causes since. In jail she ran into an odd situation there, too. They hadn't expected women to be put in that jail and when she got there she found that the police were all pimping for a whorehouse that the sheriff was running in the jail. When she did get out, she got the story published in the Industrial Worker, and they suppressed that entire issue of the Industrial Worker. If anybody can find a copy of that issue, it would be a historical oddity and I think you can sell it for quite a price. They tried to get that whole issue and burn it. Very few copies were saved.
Well, these were typical things had to do in more than one instance, but Spokane is the most famous. Perhaps since I'm in Canada I should mention that out of this environment of drifting workers going to construction jobs, lumber camps and so forth, a bunch had taken work when they were starting the building of the Grand Trunk. The company tried to get around the deal there by sub-contracting from large contractors to small contractors, and these in turn sub-contracting out a station where a fellow and two or three of his friends would undertake to get out a certain cut where a line was going or something like, that. It's very difficult to anticipate if you are going to find earth there or rock, what you're going to find; it's very hard to anticipate what fee you should charge for that.

There was a long strike there and according to myth, I'm not sure how accurate it is, this name Wobbly got coined out of that situation. Somewhere along there near Lytton, British Columbia, in that area, there was some point where we couldn't keep any strike headquarters but where it would be necessary for Wobs going up and down the line to stop and eat. An arrangement, I understand, was made with this restaurant that if they show
their IWW cards, they could get a meal there and they would keep a tab on it and they could pay their bill after a while. This Chinaman was trying to ask them, "Are you an IWW?" and he had lingual difficulties in saying that and it came out I woble, woble, or something like that. So the term Wobblies is supposed to have come from there. I have no way of proving that, but I do know that the first time it appears in print is in 1913, which at least is consistent with that kind of an assumption.

That was a strike that lasted quite a long time. It did win minor concessions and it's one of the places where Joe Hill came and wrote the song that's been sung quite frequently since about the "Frazier River Flows." I think one song gave the spirit of things more than others, "We won't build no more railroads for overalls and snuff," a song along that line. It never got so popular, but I think it expressed the sentiment.

That strike did occasion a new strategy. They were shipping people from all over the country to that job. That's what begot the expression, "the thousand mile picket line." We had to find ways and means of stopping the recruitment of workers to go to that kind of job in Minneapolis, in San Francisco, Winnipeg, in many places.
So at all those points we had to have our men out telling people that there's a strike on there, don't accept a shipment. And people were recruited despite our efforts to publicize the facts. Ordinarily one or two Wobs would, ship out, too, and discourage the people and usually nobody landed there to scab on the job. That was picketing over a large area.

This expression, "the thousand mile picket line", came up somewhat later, when from 1915 on we started trying to organize the workers who came in on box cars, riding freight trains, hobos to harvest wheat each summer. We did a very substantial thing there. I think. we changed their conditions, improved them a great deal. Towards the edge of the wheat belt we couldn't keep out too many of these non-union people. The more you got to the center of the wheat belt, the more you combed out the people who wouldn't agree with the idea that you'd stick out for such and such a wage, and the wage is much higher towards the center of the wheat belt than toward the edge. Various things of that sort measure to some extent the effectiveness of the union.. Our membership for some years, and to quite an extent the finances with which we operated, began to come increasingly
out of these people who joined us for a few months in this harvest belt. And some people had felt that that, too, was off the track of concentrating on building permanent and stable unions in various industries.

In fact, in those years about the only stability we had achieved anywhere was in Philadelphia, where we had won control of the docks and kept it till 1925. I think most of you were in here the other day when I happened to mention that, more or less in connection with being one of the first breakthroughs on organizing Negroes and whites together. This organization in all of these areas, especially organizing in the harvest, did give us the manpower and the resources. I think I mentioned a fellow might be an oil worker, he might be a copper miner, he might be a lumberjack, and yet during the harvest, he might want to take in the harvest for a change of environment.

One innovation in regard to our, practice occurred there, too. It used to be that if you wanted to join the IWW, you had to hunt up the secretary if you wanted a card. You couldn't have a secretary of a local talking from St. Louis, Lincoln, Nebraska, or something all the way to the wheat belt, "Anybody want a card today?" and 80 on. You had to build up a system, a job delegate system, so a member could be given a few cards, some
stamps, application forms and so on without being the elected organizer or anything. He simply had to keep tab of his little bit of bookkeeping. about dues collected, membership cards sold, etc. to perform these functions delegated to him by the Branch Secretary. That gave us a force which improved our working capacity in the woods, partly from that, partly through the free speech fights.

The Everett free speech fights did get enough workers to realize that we seriously meant business. And you did have that great transformation I think I've mentioned in some of these other classes this week -- the timber beast, the great unwashed fellow who went around with this lousy roll of blankets stuffed with nothing but these caulked shoes that were used for walking on logs. Most people didn't want you to walk on their floors, and a man with them on was a pariah for these reasons. These people did strike, did win the eight hour day largely by direct action, did change their camp conditions entirely by direct action, and I think made the workability of direct action fairly well established in the Wobbly tradition.
For instance, take the question of the eight hour day. That was a major issue in the strike, along with shower facilities, facilities to wash clothes, a change room, a dry room to dry them in after we've washed them, decent food. Conditions on the job, I think, was the biggest result of the eight hour day. When they went back, well they were all on strike. By this time the war was on and the militia were running people around, building bull pens' someplace, and chasing men in it. They'd build a great big fence and herd a bunch of men in there and that's it. That's why they called it a bull pen. It was getting pretty Cough. I'd say the strikers didn't have much money when the strike started. The union had no reserves to feed them with; some of them were going hungry. The militia was giving them a tough time. Some of the boys got the idea, why not go back to the job, not defeated, but go back while the boss is paying us, strike while the boss is feeding us? use tactics on the job that will make the boss come through. The main issue was the eight hour day and quite a few of them sat around here and they talked It over and the understanding was: we'll work eight hours, blow our own whistles, march into camp and if the boss doesn't like it, If he fires us, okay, we'll. go some other place where some other bunch is doing
the same thing and we'll just take this other job and do the same thing again. A lot of that was done. There's a tremendous amount in this world (I do believe on racial Issues, for instance) so many things that instead of passing resolutions about something, if you only go ahead and to it, you get it done. I think, frankly, if people work eight hours and stop you have an eight hour day. That's all there is to it, it's that simple. Now I think on that same philosophy that the people who realize that we make whatever is made and we move it where ever it's moved, can decide what we're going to make and where we are going to move it, and we've surely got our new world made. I think someday we're going to build a new world, maybe have some legislative decrees and all kinds of other trimmings, but I think the essential fact is still at the rock bottom level where the guys who do the work of the world are going to decide what gets done and where it goes, so that direct action is almost inherent. In fact, I don't see how a good job of that could be done very well any other way. If somebody decrees an eight hour day, the boys work eight hours and say, "Okay boss, we'd like to do a little moonlighting. We'd like overtime, etc." I've seen many an eight hour day killed with overtime. That can be done, you know.
There's one horrible myth that grew up -- that we put spikes in logs. We didn't. There are spikes put in logs. You have to put a spar tree up in order to have the cables and things, the pulleys and things fastened to haul logs around in the woods. But those spar trees, when you cut them down they should be burnt, so they cannot get into a sawmill and cause a fatal accident. Some chiseling employers have tried to remove all spikes that they could see and send them into a mill, but a tree that's been used that way it's not safe to cut it up in the mill. It should be burnt. And whenever any workers with any intelligence have been around they have insisted, no matter how peanut politician chiseling a boss was, that this tree doesn't go down to the mill. This tree gets burnt; it's the only safe thing to do with it. There have been a few accidents in saw mills, but I'm sure it wasn't Wobblies doing it. It was some chiseling contractor.

There were things that we could do. You know lumber is always sold in 12 foot, lengths, 16 foot lengths, 18 foot lengths, never in 17 foot lengths or any odd number like that. And in the woods the final operation after you felled the tree and cut the limbs off is to cut it into the appropriate lengths. Well, if you cut
a thing 17 feet, 11 1/2 inches, there's only 16 foot in saleable timber. You just happened to get a half inch short of where the mark was to cut. That strategy was used on some employers who were very reluctant to provide shower bath facilities and things of that sort. There were a number of things of that sort -- sometimes just strewing all the camp ware and the things In the cook house around and saying we're taking a holiday until you build a decent one. The camp would be shut down for a few days and the employer would figure, "Well, I guess I've got to buy some dishes and decent cooking utensils and give the cook a chance to prepare some decent meals." It was by a series of different direct action techniques that the whole life pattern of the lumberjack was completely changed. These, I would say, were fairly typical of the things we were doing.

What we were doing was penetrating areas where unions have never been established, not only the lumber industry but in copper mining, in the ore fields, a variety of these things particularly in the Southwest. The boss was getting very very wild. They did bring pressures on the local governors trying to do something about it. There were all sorts of plans. Subsequently, they're starting to dig them up. How could you deport them all? They found they couldn't deport them all to
make it worth while. Can you round them all up in the bull pen? That's what the governor of California used to urge. He was a great liberal. He wanted to put them someplace where they would be hidden and nobody will know where they are and we'll treat them nice, we'll feed them regular, but they'll just be there till this whole thing is over. They have a few places like that still. Some people wouldn't mind doing that sometime, too. Look magazine gave pictures of them a while back. They built them originally for the displaced Japanese in World War II, but they're still keeping them.

But all these pressures eventually became a wave of federal repression. On September 5th a very sudden transformation -- the federal government saying, "We've got nothing against them," and then come the big trials in Chicago, Wichita, Sacramento. I don't think I'll go into great detail. It's a great long trial. Several people have been asking if they compared with the "Chicago 7" and in some ways it was alike and some ways different. The judge was a very genial fellow in this trial. In Chicago everyone wanted to make sure the boys were comfortable. They even provided cuspidors for around the defendants, things like that, so that they would feel at home during the long trial. It was a
tremendous long trial. I think I saw three big trunks full of the transcripts of the case. I haven't read through them yet, but I intend to.

I formed a conclusion already regarding the trial. But even for all his cordiality, Judge Landis handed out sentences for 20-25 years and things like that when the jury found us all guilty. His rulings during the trial were vicious. You could bring in all kinds of hearsay testimony from years and years back that some Wobs had done this or some Wobs had done the other thing, some acts of sabotage, burning down lumber yards, burning down hay fields, burning down hay piles. Yet can you find anywhere that any Wobbly was ever even accused of these things or brought to trial? Eldridge Foster Dowell of the John Hopkins University some years back made questionaires out to almost every District Attorney who searched his files for years back and they couldn't find one case where any IWW had even been accused of this sort of thing and yet you bring all this blanket type of accusation from folks who said they believed this.

The defense, of course, objected to this. If the fact did occur, somebody should have been charged with the crime in the vicinity of the crime and within a reasonable time after the crime was committed. You can't
come here and talk about it now, but old Judge Landis said, "It may help the jury understand the frame of mind of the defendants." And on that ground all this kind of stuff was put in. They didn't lock up the jury in that case, they didn't have to. It only took them an hour to reach their decision and they were wandering around through the trial. Right across the street was a motion picture house with shows how Kaiser Wilhelm was hiring all the reds to make sabotage in this country etc. That was running regularly at the movie house. With stuff like that I don't know whether what happened in the court room had very much to do with the verdict. Labor trials are settled, I think; very largely outside the courtroom, about as much as by what goes on in it. Though I do believe we should do a good technical performance in the court, so much of the outcome is determined by the psychology that prevails in the community. Anyway we got them convicted there.

The bunch out in Sacramento went to trial later and they said what was the sense of hiring all these lawyers and making all this "how de do." When it came time for trial one stood up and said, "I've been made spokesman for us and we've decided you're going to convict us no matter what the evidence is, so you go ahead and do your bit and we'll do what we have to do
and we hope our fellow workers outside do what they have to do, too. To hell with you." And it's called the silence defense. They wouldn't say a damn thing one way or the other. At the end of it, one fellow did make a very brief summary. It was a bunch of bourgeois hogwash was the expression he used and the judge didn't like it any better than when Dellinger called it bullshit recently. Anyway they got convicted just as satisfactorily as if they had several eminent counselors to assist them.

Following after were other efforts of repression in which the Criminal Syndicalism law was involved. There is one notion frequently spread that the IWW got eradicated by these war time repressions, I'm satisfied that it had its peak about 1923. There was a revival and it was largely on the basis of very practical union action in the woods, on the construction jobs, doing the things that made the job a more pleasant place to live. Maybe you don't get this picture. Workers didn't live at home and go to their jobs every day. They lived on those jobs and there's much less of that being the case today. There were no transportation facilities then to live in town and drive to work and so you had, of course, a lot of footloose men at that time who, if they
did have wives and children, had lost contact with them in the shuffle. That led to a somewhat different breed of men. Some were more the results of broken households, but I don't think that it was because that was what they wanted.

We did build up on the basis of practical job action through the middle of '23 and then a very unfortunate thing happened. We started quarreling with ourselves. I think there's a moral in there, not only in the quarreling but in what led to it. Following the war there was a period that somewhat reminds me of our own time and of the range of the current radical spectrum, from moderate radical to "let's bring the war out of Viet Nam and into the streets." There was a somewhat similar rage, particularly following the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. I remember as a young fellow in those days wandering around and I'd hear all kinds of arguments very similar, not the same kind of words, but the same general style, the type of argument that I hear among student radicals and so on today, basically parallel questions.

One doctrine that was quite prevalent at that time was what some people termed the doctrine of the militant minority: that most people are wrong, even most people in the union are wrong, that a small minority
of us knows better than the rest of us do. And you can argue that thing beautifully. You can argue that there was a time when only a minority of people believed that the world was round while the rest believed it was flat. It wasn't so very long ago that only Dr. Louis Pasteur believed that there were any germs in this world, and he was a minority of one, I believe, at the time. There was a time when even among the most informed people there was a wide belief that atoms couldn't be broken. Now I understand you have to handle them with care. I think it's easy enough to show that ordinarily the most advanced opinions are correct and the rest of the opinions are wrong and a good showing could be made for that. But it doesn't follow from that, that the bunch who figure it has the one true light should take the rest of us and lead us around by the nose, either. For one thing, you can go it in reverse that there have been a bunch of people who have had notions that were rather unique but didn't pan out. I remember one old fellow who used to argue and argue with me, "Yes the world is round just like an orange, but we're living on the inside of it. The sun is in the middle of the thing and not out there," In fact, they had a whole denomination of Zionists, down in Zion, Illinois. There have been a bunch of notions that I'm sure were incorrect that had the support of a small minority,
including the minorities in the radical framework. So simply because it's a minority opinion doesn't necessarily mean that it's so either, and of course, at the time we don't have the advantage of hind sight.

The workable thing ordinarily, especially in union matters, is what does the majority want. You always have to base it on that. The majority judgement in union matters is more likely, I think, to be right than the minority. If a minority in the union has a different opinion than the majority and has information to back it up and if there's free speech and a chance for a discussion, ordinarily that minority can swing a number of people, if you make a good argument for your case, on your side and win it from that way. In 1923 there were a bunch of the militant minority in the lumber worker's union who held to that theory and they believed that the important thing, since there were a lot of Wobs in jail, was not to strike for higher wages and better conditions but to strike for the release of class war prisoners. I don't doubt that the lumber barons had a lot to say with politics in Washington, but no individual lumber baron could very well say, "Let these boys out of jail." About the most you could do was you can create a situation in which powerful business interests which can influence
governors and pardon boards and so forth will say, "I think we'd have less trouble if those guys weren't in Jail." I think you could exert that kind of pressure whether you make that your demand or not, probably just put it along with other demands. Well we did incorporate two demands.

It's customary in the Douglas fir area of Washington to quit work over the July 4th weekend and to catch up on some postponed drinking and other social engagements that you can't engage in out in the woods very readily. We all come into town, for that occasion. If you want to have a strike that may be a good time to start the strike because the boys are off the Job already. There had been some talk of that but the boys got together and they said the companies are evidently planning on a strike. They've got a lot of logs piled up down by the sawmills and they know that we are weak in the sawmills and probably can't pull the sawmills, not sure if they would strike. We were stronger in the woods and those guys who were concerned with issues of practicality felt the boss is ready for us, doesn't mind if we strike, and it's silly to oblige the boss by striking at a time when he is expecting it. Let's not call a strike now. So that was agreed upon. And
at some later date when we see that we can really hurt the boss by striking we'll get our heads together and pull the thing then.

Some of the militant minority, the fellows who thought that they knew better, had a different viewpoint. I think a difference in life style had something to do with that, too. I noticed it quite a bit as a young, fellow going around. I was afraid I'd been in a work box most of my life, because I'd found that to eat the kind of food that I figured I need to eat and to have the social entertainment that I find necessary for satisfactory living it has ordinarily been necessary to earn some money with a fair degree of frequency. But I ran into a bunch of people in my younger days who lived abysmally poor and actually preferred to work just a few days now and then, and I find somewhat that same view now. It has a lot of merit to it, but at the same time it has its detractions. I think it was these people who were more radical, who were less interested in the material goods of life, and who lived very abstemiously. I don't think they really ate enough to nourish themselves properly. They frequently lived largely on handouts from those who worked more regularly, as a matter of fact. They tended to be this radical minority;
they didn't give a damn if the strike was a practical economic thing or not. If it gets us a lot of talk in the newspapers, if it gives us a chance to talk Marxian economics to some of those boys who don't know their Marx very well, it's worthwhile. So they hired an airplane, printed a bunch of leaflets, plotting a strike after the boys said let's not have one. They took the airplanes out over all the different camps and dropped the leaflets, calling the strike in that way. The guys who weren't going to strike, when the strike was called, they came out, but they were very sore about it. I think that hurt more than any single thing I know of, that and some other things roughly parallel to it, the practical unionists vs. the impractical revolutionists who were trying to lead union men around by the nose. We, unfortunately, had an affliction of that sort and I think that's what broke the union up in '23. It split into two parts and most dropped out the middle.

It left me very much with the feeling that no matter what your disagreements are at any time in any organization you're in, if you want that organization to work well, find some way so that disagreements get talked out without tearing it apart. It's one of the
worst things that could happen to any organization. That didn't, of course, kill the IWW, but our membership has never been as high since then as it was in the summer of 1923. We were quite active -- big strikes down the docks of San Pedro. We had quite a number since. I see I should quit and give you a chance to ask some questions here pretty soon. 1927, '28 -- a wonderful strike in the coal fields of Colorado -- quite successful.

Depression came around and I think the big thing that the Wobblies did was the sort of thing that happened at Cle Ellum. Have I told you people the story of Cle Ellum? I think. that illustrates what can be done under a depressed situation. We did several things; we issued about ten million copies of a leaflet called "Bread Lines or Picket Lines" pointing out that bread lines, just lead people down to degradation and despair. Picket lines are the things with which workers have learned to do something for themselves and improved their lot in life and that it's necessary to change from being in the bread line to picket lines instead,

Even if you don't find a strike, if you can find some place where hours are very lone, pay very small, talk to some of those workers, tell them if they'll only go on strike for improvement of conditions, you people
who are unemployed will come there, not to scab, but to make a big strong picket line so that nobody can go in and scab on them. A great deal of the revival of unionism in the '30s came about substantially on that sort of a basis,

Perhaps I should point out that up until 1920 all kinds of labor historians point out that union membership in the AF of L in Canada and the United States rose up in periods of prosperity and went down in periods of recession. It actually went down in the '20s because unionism didn't seem to be performing a satisfactory function. A few militant efforts were about the only thing that did succeed, some of them the Wobbly ones, some that some Communist people were urging, some that a group of progressives, largely from Socialist orientation, had started. It was not the conventional unions that were making any kind of progress in the '20s at all. Ordinarily they were just sitting tight. And in the '30, in this big depression, a great wave of new vigorous unionism did grow, quite the reverse of the previous period. I think it was largely due to the fact that the unemployed behaved in a way they never had before.
This Cle Ellum was a small construction job. I think it's typical, up in Washington, a framing area. Some roads and a bridge or two were to be built and an irrigation dam, too. Not many people, just a few hundred people to be hired. They had started paying 20 cents an hour and cut it down to 15. Hobo jungle was full of hobos there, some Wobblies amongst them. They canvassed the situation, that the wages were actually being cut down from starvation to sub-starvation wages, so they went around, talked to the men on the 'job, "Wouldn't you rather have higher pay than this?" "Well, we sure would, but if we dare say a word, down the road we go. The boss doesn't give a damn." They talked to the storekeepers, "If these fellows had more pay, wouldn't you like it better? They can't afford to buy any tobacco here or anything like that. They can't afford to buy socks, they're going around working without socks on," etc. They talked to the farmers around there those sons had hoped that they could get a little bit of spending money, 'cause farmers were very short of spending money in those days, too. It worked well. They talked to the hobos in the jungle. "Sure, we'd go along with this idea." So our deal was made up that the unemployed that come in there hunting for a job would all march around the project and picket, that the farmers would give
what farm produce they had that the boys might eat, and the storekeepers would provide some coffee, which doesn't grow in the state of Washington. And between them all they had a very nice social retirement during the strike and raised it up in three stages up to 35 cents an hour, which was pretty good, and I think illustrates what can be done in that kind of a situation just by reversing the forces that are dragging you down into forces that lift you instead.

On a large scale the same thing was going on in Minneapolis, in Cleveland, Detroit, all kinds of places. The labor movement was really born out of the struggles of the unemployed who were insisting, "Don't be afraid to go on strike boys, we won't come and scab. We'll knock down anyone who does come around trying to scab on you." And a healthy labor movement did grow up and we had quite a bit to do in it. We organized the metal miners on the West Coast again. We organized for a while in Cleveland. I would like to mention in that connection that since our efforts in organizing in Detroit, in particular, took the form of millions of handbills, talking to thousands of workers at the factory gate, visiting in their homes, trying to get unionism started in different auto plants, that when unionism eventually did get going there it wasn't us. We had to
pant all our eggs in one basket. When the men felt they had to strike, when we finally got them coming in, in sizable numbers, the plant had occasion, to close down for chance of models, and the guy that joined last week and got laid off this week felt, "I'm laid off because I joined last week." That was the attitude he took. I don't think he was right in that case, but I can understand feeling so, certainly, and you can't very well win strikes if you pull them at the time when the boss doesn't need you anyway.'

Tape 6

But, out of all our efforts there organizing, the automobile workers got a notion of what unionism should be and what the Wobblies felt unionism should be. And so you might say that they almost dealt with subsequent unions for some years, "You should meet Wobbly specifications. This is what we expect the union role to be." I think that if there's been anything more progressive about the UAW than other unions, it has to a very significant degree reflected the education that accompanied our unsuccessful attempt to organize that industry.

We did organize a number of places in Cleveland, American Stove, Magic Chef, other stove plants like that, a bunch of steel barrel plants, some small brass plants.
We had a very nice little bunch there that stayed with us until 1949 when we were put on the subversive list and we felt it might be better for these people if they could protect their job interests better, going into another union rather than staying with us. It's only recently again that we are making serious efforts to organize in industry, to become a collective bargaining agent again.

I would have liked to have gone over some of that some time, but I'm so loquacious that I see it's time to stop, and I do want to open myself up for questions, discussion, things like that.

I: Could I ask you what the understanding of the labor movement was, say at the time when the monopolies were formed, the system that they were organizing against? Could you tell me, I wonder, whether the decisions to adopt the industrial union structure was at all influenced by the fact that the industry was beginning to integrate politically as a result of the monopolies?

R: Yes, the changes in industry are related very closely with the "Morganization" of industry. That is the Morgan who built the first great big corporation, the U.S. Steel Corporation, Quite a bit of comment at that time in other journals about the IWW industrial
union argument ran that there was a need to reorganize the labor unions; that many an employer had more crafts working for him in 1905 than his predecessors had individual workers working for them two generations earlier. They thought not only of the corporation, the legal form, but of the forbidden thing, the monopoly which they thought would be the reality even though the law says you don't have any such animals here. That was one of the big arguments.

At the same time the thinking of many of the unions was, "Here we have built something. It has done us some good. We carpenters, we metal polishers, we of this craft or that craft, we have done reasonably well. We're better off than these other people, and if we throw our luck in all together we may be forfeiting our differential advantages and having to share pot luck with the others." I think it was that kind of a fear. Our argument was that we're sure, even if you do give us a substantial amount of backing in other things, that you do go out once in a while and maybe lose a days work because you're helping the cause of people who have less skill than yourself, but you will, in the long run, earn more and have a higher standard of living than if you don't do that. That was the sort of argument
we advanced. I think that we were largely up against the fact that power structures of any sort resist being dissolved. But that fear is what the people who were managing these unions felt. I wouldn't say that they were all doing that cynically. I think power structures practically always feel they shouldn't be dissolved, that they're doing a very important and necessary thing, and that they ought to be perpetuated. I think that's how most of them looked at themselves, too.

Any other questions? Perhaps some other phases of Wobbly history that I haven't covered that you are interested in?

I: What do you see as the significance of the debate over the political clause?

R: It's been a much misrepresented thing. This latest book out on the IWW, Bread and Roses Too, goes rather thoroughly into that from two different angles, in two different chapters. When the IWW was formed it was a sort of a compromise between two socialist parties. There were some people who said, "We don't object to you people talking socialism as long as your different
conceptions of socialism don't pull us apart." That's what they mainly worried about, Likewise, there was a feeling that if in some particular instance in some locality union men feel that for a practical union reason you can run a Republican for sheriff and he's a good guy and he won't give you too much trouble, or you can run a socialist who won't get elected, and if a Democrat gets in he'll wear the living Jesus out of you, in that case it's best to run the Republican for sheriff. There's a certain amount of practicality to this feeling that we shouldn't be the tail to a political kite. And so the original preamble said that when it's necessary, workers may unite on the industrial field and the political field both but without affiliation with any political party. That represented that idea. Between then and 1908 so many accusations against the IWW depicted it as simply something pulling socialist chestnuts out of the fire, particularly the chestnuts of Daniel De Leon, head of the SLP, that it was necessary to put right across the top of our paper repeatedly, "This union is not affiliated with any political party:"
We were at no time anti-political. In 1908 they chanced the constitution simply to say that it was necessary that the workers organize in the industrial field and plan for this world where industrial workers, collectively, control the means of production. That has been misinterpreted so often that our rejection of the phrase about uniting "on the political as well as the industrial" was making us anti-political. We certainly weren't.

Right along, the Wobbly philosophy has been: we wish to leave religion, politics, all things that are not related directly to Job matters, up to our individual members to decide according to their own lights. We do hope that the bit of economics, the greater social concern, the greater social awareness that comes out of their union activities will perhaps influence what they say as members of a church, as members of an ethnic group, will influence their activities, their choices in balloting, maybe their activities on behalf of some political party they may be interested in. We expect that union attitude to project itself elsewhere, but all these questions are up to them individually to decide.

There's been a great deal of misrepresentation right along that the IWW is anti-political. I think that some of that has been encouraged because our
open mindedness hasn't excluded from our ranks anarchists. Some of my best friends are anarchists. They used to say that about Jews, I think, but now I say that about anarchists. I'm not one in my own personal slant. If I see a traffic light that isn't functioning I figure that you really have more freedom with some rational rules and regulations than in the absence of those rules and regulations. And to that extent I'm inclined to take the viewpoint of old Thomas Jefferson that that government is best which governs least, and not to take the long jump from there that that government is best which governs not at all. I'd like to see the street light working and the traffic light regulating traffic and a few things like that. I do think we live in a world where all kinds of things that people should do for themselves have been left for government to do. I've run into so many gripes all the time it's amazing. Somebody or something isn't working right. Why doesn't the government do something about it? I think that a world where people always think that if things ain't right, the government ought to do something about it isn't a world that is drifting towards freedom. It's drifting towards totalitarianism. So maybe I'm just a half baked anarchist,
I have paid my Socialist dues until after the last convention of the Socialist Party. I was a little bit disgusted when they started promoting that Humphrey for president. But I had paid my dues because I do like the idea of the social ownership of the means of production. So I felt if I'm a Socialist I ought to pay dues to the Socialist Party. But then I thought they weren't practicing socialism anymore so I abstained. That's getting sidetracked.

Many people have preached at different times that it's rather silly to vote. Maybe it is but I've usually figured that if there's a chance to show that there are more people voting for some radical candidate, some guy wh'd be against the war in Viet Nam rather than some guy who's for it, why not add up your votes on his side? But there again, I'm speaking as an individual. The Wobblies leave that up to each member to decide for himself. That happens to be my own sentiment on the thing.
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