

# The Centralia Conspiracy eBook

## The Centralia Conspiracy by Ralph Chaplin

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# Page 1

## A Labor Case

And so, after all, the famous trial at Montesano was not a murder trial but a labor trial in the strict sense of the word. Under the law, it must be remembered, a man is not committing murder in defending his life and property from the felonious assault of a mob bent on killing and destruction. There is no doubt whatever but what the lumber trust had plotted to “make an example” of the loggers and destroy their hall on this occasion. And this was not the first time that such atrocities had been attempted and actually committed. Isn't it peculiar that, out of many similar raids, you only heard of the one where the men defended themselves? Self-preservation is the first law of nature, but the preservation of its holy profits is the first law of the lumber trust. The organized lumber workers were considered a menace to the super-prosperity of a few profiteers—hence the attempted raid and the subsequent killing.

What is more significant is the fact the raid had been carefully planned weeks in advance. There is a great deal of evidence to prove this point.

There is no question that the whole affair was the outcome of a struggle—a class struggle, if you please—between the union loggers and the lumber interests; the former seeking to organize the workers in the woods and the latter fighting this movement with all the means at its disposal.

In this light the Centralia affair does not appear as an isolated incident but rather an incident in an eventful industrial conflict, little known and less understood, between the lumber barons and loggers of the Pacific Northwest. This viewpoint will place Centralia in its proper perspective and enable one to trace the tragedy back to the circumstances and conditions that gave it birth.

But was there a conspiracy on the part of the lumber interests to commit murder and violence in an effort to drive organized labor from its domain? Weeks of patient investigating in and around the scene or the occurrence has convinced the present writer that such a conspiracy has existed. A considerable amount of startling evidence has been unearthed that has hitherto been suppressed. If you care to consider Labor's version of this unfortunate incident you are urged to read the following truthful account of this almost unbelievable piece of mediaeval intrigue and brutality.

The facts will speak for themselves. Credit them or not, but read!

## The Forests of the Northwest

The Pacific Northwest is world famed for its timber. The first white explorers to set foot upon its fertile soil were awed by the magnitude and grandeur of its boundless stretches of virgin forests. Nature has never endowed any section of our fair world with such an



immensity of kingly trees. Towering into the sky to unthinkable heights, they stand as living monuments to the fecundity of natural life. Imagine, if you can, the vast wide region of the West coast, hills, slopes and valleys, covered with millions of fir, spruce and cedar trees, raising their verdant crests a hundred, two hundred or two hundred and fifty feet into the air.



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When Columbus first landed on the uncharted continent these trees were already ancient. There they stood, straight and majestic with green and foam-flecked streams purling here and there at their feet, crowning the rugged landscape with superlative beauty, overtopped only by the snow-capped mountains—waiting for the hand of man to put them to the multitudinous uses of modern civilization. Imagine, if you can, the first explorer, gazing awe-stricken down those “calm cathedral isles,” wondering at the lavish bounty of our Mother Earth in supplying her children with such inexhaustible resources.

But little could the first explorer know that the criminal clutch of Greed was soon to seize these mighty forests, guard them from the human race with bayonets, hangman’s ropes and legal statutes; and use them, robber-baron like, to exact unimaginable tribute from the men and women of the world who need them. Little did the first explorer dream that the day would come when individuals would claim private ownership of that which prolific nature had travelled through centuries to bestow upon mankind.

But that day has come and with it the struggle between master and man that was to result in Centralia—or possibly many Centralias.

### Lumber—A Basic Industry

It seems the most logical thing in the world to believe that the natural resources of the Earth, upon which the race depends for food, clothing and shelter, should be owned collectively by the race instead of being the private property of a few social parasites. It seems that reason would preclude the possibility of any other arrangement, and that it would be considered as absurd for individuals to lay claim to forests, mines, railroads and factories as it would be for individuals to lay claim to the ownership of the sunlight that warms us or to the air we breathe. But the poor human race, in its bungling efforts to learn how to live in our beautiful world, appears destined to find out by bitter experience that the private ownership of the means of life is both criminal and disastrous.

Lumber is one of the basic industries—one of the industries mankind never could have done without. The whole structure of what we call civilization is built upon wooden timbers, ax-hewn or machine finished as the case may be. Without the product of the forests humanity would never have learned the use of fire, the primitive bow and arrow or the bulging galleys of ancient commerce. Without the firm and fibrous flesh of the mighty monarchs of the forest men might never have had barges for fishing or weapons for the chase; they would not have had carts for their oxen or kilns for the fashioning of pottery; they would not have had dwellings, temples or cities; they would not have had furniture nor fittings nor roofs above their heads. Wood is one of the most primitive and indispensable of human necessities. Without its use we would still be groping in the gloom and misery of early savagery, suffering from the cold of outer space and defenseless in the midst of a harsh and hostile environment.

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### From Pioneer to Parasite

So it happened that the first pioneers in the northern were forced to bare their arms and match their strength with the wooded wilderness. At first the subjugation of the forests was a social effort. The lives and future prosperity of the settlers must be made secure from the raids of the Indians and the inclemency of the elements. Manfully did these men labor until their work was done. But this period did not last long, for the tide of emigration was sweeping westward over the sun-baked prairies to the promised land in the golden West.

[Illustration: Fir and Spruce Trees

The wood of the West coast abound with tall fir trees. Practically all high grade spruce comes from this district also. Spruce was a war necessity and the lumber trust profited unmercifully on the government. U.S. prisons are full of loggers who struck for the 8 hour day in 1917.]

Towns sprang up like magic, new trees were felled, sawmills erected and huge logs in ever increasing numbers were driven down the foaming torrents each year at spring time. The country was new, the market for lumber constantly growing and expanding. But the monopolist was unknown and the lynch-mobs of the lumber trust still sleeping in the womb of the Future. So passed the not unhappy period when opportunity was open to everyone, when freedom was dear to the hearts of all. It was at this time that the spirit of real Americanism was born, when the clean, sturdy name "America" spelled freedom, justice and independence. Patriotism in these days was not a mask for profiteers and murderers were not permitted to hide their bloody hands in the folds of their nation's flag.

But modern capitalism was creeping like a black curse upon the land. Stealing, coercing, cajoling, defrauding, it spread from its plague-center in Wall St., leaving misery, class antagonism and resentment in its trail. The old free America of our fathers was undergoing a profound change. Equality of opportunity was doomed. A new social alignment was being created. Monopoly was loosed upon the land. Fabulous fortunes were being made as wealth was becoming centered into fewer and fewer hands. Modern capitalism was entrenching itself for the final and inevitable struggle for world domination. In due time the social parasites of the East, foreseeing that the forests of Maine, Michigan and Wisconsin could not last forever, began to look to the woods of the Northwest with covetous eyes.

[Illustration: Cedar Trees of the Northwest



With these giants the logger daily matches his strength and skill. The profit-greedy lumber trust has wasted enough trees of smaller size to supply the world with wood for years to come.]

## **Stealing the People's Forest Land**



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The history of the acquisition of the forests of Washington, Montana, Idaho, Oregon and California is a long, sordid story of thinly veiled robbery and intrigue. The methods of the lumber barons in invading and seizing its "holdings" did not differ greatly, however, from those of the steel and oil kings, the railroad magnates or any of the other industrial potentates who acquired great wealth by pilfering America and peonizing its people. The whole sorry proceeding was disgraceful, high-handed and treacherous, and only made possible by reason of the blindness of the generous American people, drugged with the vanishing hope of "success" and too confident of the continued possession of its blood-bought liberties. And do the lumber barons were unhindered in their infamous work of debauchery, bribery, murder and brazen fraud.

As a result the monopoly of the Northwestern woods became an established fact. The lumber trust came into "its own." The new social alignment was complete, with the idle, absentee landlord at one end and the migratory and possessionless lumber jack at the other. The parasites had appropriated to themselves the standing timber of the Northwest; but the brawny logger whose labor had made possible the development of the industry was given, as his share of the spoils, a crumby "bundle" and a rebellious heart. The masters had gained undisputed control of the timber of the country, three quarters of which is located in the Northwest; but the workers who felled the trees, drove the logs, dressed, finished and loaded the lumber were left in the state of helpless dependency from which they could only extricate themselves by means of organization. And it is this effort to form a union and establish union headquarters that led to the tragedy at Centralia.

The lumber barons had not only achieved a monopoly of the woods but a perfect feudal domination of the woods as well. Within their domain banks, ships, railways and mills bore their private insignia-and politicians, Employers' Associations, preachers, newspapers, fraternal orders and judges and gun-men were always at their beck and call. The power they wield is tremendous and their profits would ransom a kingdom. Naturally they did not intend to permit either power or profits to be menaced by a mass of weather-beaten slaves in stag shirts and overalls. And so the struggle waxed fiercer just as the lumberjack learned to contend successfully for living conditions and adequate remuneration. It was the old, old conflict of human rights against property rights. Let us see how they compared in strength.

### **The Triumph of Monopoly**

The following extract from a document entitled "The Lumber Industry," by the Honorable Herbert Knox Smith and published by the U.S. Department of Commerce (Bureau of Corporations) will give some idea of the holdings and influence of the lumber trust:



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“Ten monopoly groups, aggregating only one thousand, eight hundred and two holders, monopolized one thousand, two hundred and eight billion eight hundred million (1,208,800,000,000) board feet of standing timber—each a foot square and an inch thick. These figures are so stupendous that they are meaningless without a hackneyed device to bring their meaning home. These one thousand, eight hundred and two timber business monopolists held enough standing timber; an indispensable natural resource, to yield the planks necessary (over and above manufacturing wastage) to make a floating bridge more than two feet thick and more than five miles wide from New York to Liverpool. It would supply one inch planks for a roof over France, Germany and Italy. It would build a fence eleven miles high along our entire coast line. All monopolized by one thousand, eight hundred and two holders, or interests more or less interlocked. One of those interests—a grant of only three holders—monopolized at one time two hundred and thirty-seven billion, five hundred million (237,500,000,000) feet which would make a column one foot square and three million miles high. Although controlled by only three holders, that interest comprised over eight percent of all the standing timber in the United States at that time.”

The above illuminating figures, quoted from “The I.W.A. in the Lumber Industry,” by James Rowan, will give some idea of the magnitude and power of the lumber trust.

[Illustration: “Topping a Tree”

After one of these huge trees is “topped” it is called a “spar tree”—very necessary in a certain kind of logging operations. As soon as the chopped-off portion falls, the trunk vibrates rapidly from side to side sometimes shaking the logger to certain death below.]

Opposing this colossal aggregation of wealth and cussedness were the thousands of hard-driven and exploited lumberworkers in the woods and sawmills. These had neither wealth nor influence—nothing but their hard, bare hands and a growing sense of solidarity. And the masters of the forests were more afraid of this solidarity than anything else in the world—and they fought it more bitterly, as events will show. Centralia is only one of the incidents of this struggle between owner and worker. But let us see what this hated and indispensable logger—the productive and human basis of the lumber industry, the man who made all these things possible, is like.

The Human Element—“The Timber Beast”

Lumber workers are, by nature of their employment, divided into two categories—the saw-mill hand and the logger. The former, like his brothers in the Eastern factories, is an indoor type while the latter is essentially a man of the open air. Both types are necessary to the production of finished lumber, and to both union organization is an imperative necessity.

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Sawmill work is machine work—rapid, tedious and often dangerous. There is the uninteresting repetition of the same act of motions day in and day out. The sights, sounds and smells of the mill are never varied. The fact that the mill is permanently located tends to keep mill workers grouped about the place of their employment. Many of them, especially in the shingle mills, have lost fingers or hands in feeding the lumber to the screaming saws. It has been estimated that fully a half of these men are married and remain settled in the mill communities. The other half, however, are not nearly so migratory as the lumberjack. Sawmill workers are not the “rough-necks” of the industry. They are of the more conservative “home-guard” element and characterized by the psychology of all factory workers.

The logger, on the other hand, (and it is with him our narrative is chiefly concerned), is accustomed to hard and hazardous work in the open woods. His occupation makes him of necessity migratory. The camp, following the uncut timber from place to place, makes it impossible for him to acquire a family and settle down. Scarcely one out of ten has ever dared assume the responsibility of matrimony. The necessity of shipping from a central point in going from one job to another usually forces a migratory existence upon the lumberjack in spite of his best intentions to live otherwise.

### What Is a Casual Laborer?

The problem of the logger is that of the casual laborer in general. Broadly speaking, there are three distinct classes of casual laborers: First, the “harvest stiff” of the middle West who follows the ripening crops from Kansas to the Dakotas, finding winter employment in the North, Middle Western woods, in construction camps or on the ice fields. Then there is the harvest worker of “the Coast” who garners the fruit, hops and grain, and does the canning of California, Washington and Oregon, finding out-of-season employment wherever possible. Finally there is the Northwestern logger, whose work, unlike that of the Middle Western “jack” is not seasonal, but who is compelled nevertheless to remain migratory. As a rule, however, his habitat is confined, according to preference or force of circumstances, to either the “long log” country of Western Washington and Oregon as well as California, or to the “short log” country of Eastern Washington and Oregon, Northern Idaho and Western Montana. Minnesota, Michigan, and Wisconsin are in what is called the “short log” region.

### [Illustration: A Logger of the Pacific Northwest

This is a type of the men who work in the “long log” region of the West coast. His is a man’s sized job, and his efforts to organize and better the working conditions in the lumber industry have been manly efforts—and bitterly opposed.]

As a rule the logger of the Northwest follows the woods to the exclusion of all other employment. He is militantly a lumberjack and is inclined to be a trifle “patriotic” and disputatious as to the relative importance of his own particular branch of the industry.

“Long loggers,” for instance, view with a suspicion of disdain the work of “short loggers” and vice versa.



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### “Lumber-Jack” The Giant Killer

But the lumber-jack is a casual worker and he is the finished product of modern capitalism. He is the perfect proletarian type—possessionless, homeless, and rebellious. He is the reverse side of the gilded medal of present day society. On the one side is the third generation idle rich—arrogant and parasitical, and on the other, the actual producer, economically helpless and denied access to the means of production unless he “beg his lordly fellow worm to give him leave to toil,” as Robert Burns has it.

The logger of the Northwest has his faults. He is not any more perfect than the rest of us. The years of degradation and struggle he has endured in the woods have not failed to leave their mark upon him. But, as the wage workers go, he is not the common but the uncommon type both as regards physical strength and cleanliness and mental alertness. He is generous to a fault and has all the qualities Lincoln and Whitman loved in men.

In the first place, whether as faller, rigging man or on the “drive,” his work is muscular and out of doors. He must at all times conquer the forest and battle with the elements. There is a tang and adventure to his labor in the impressive solitude of the woods that gives him a steady eye, a strong arm and a clear brain. Being constantly close to the great green heart of Nature, he acquires the dignity and independence of the savage rather than the passive and unresisting submission of the factory worker. The fact that he is free from family ties also tends to make him ready for an industrial frolic or fight at any time. In daily matching his prowess and skill with the products of the earth he feels in a way, that the woods “belong” to him and develops a contempt for the unseen and unknown employers who kindly permit him to enrich them with his labor. He is constantly reminded of the glaring absurdity of the private ownership of natural resources. Instinctively he becomes a rebel against the injustice and contradictions of capitalist society.

Dwarfed to ant-like insignificance by the verdant immensity around him, the logger toils daily with ax, saw and cable. One after another forest giants of dizzy height crash to the earth with a sound like thunder. In a short time they are loaded on flat cars and hurried across the stump-dotted clearing to the river, whence they are dispatched to the noisy, ever-waiting saws at the mill. And always the logger knows in his heart that this is not done that people may have lumber for their needs, but rather that some overfed parasite may first add to his holy dividends. Production for profit always strikes the logger with the full force of objective observation. And is it any wonder, with the process of exploitation thus naked always before his eyes, that he should have been among the very first workers to challenge the flimsy title of the lumber barons to the private ownership of the woods?



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### The Factory Worker and the Lumber-Jack

Without wishing to disparage the ultimate worth of either; it might be well to contrast for a moment the factory worker of the East with the lumber-jack of the Pacific Northwest. To the factory hand the master's claim to the exclusive title of the means of production is not so evidently absurd. Around him are huge, smoking buildings filled with roaring machinery—all man-made. As a rule he simply takes for granted that his employers—whoever they are—own these just as he himself owns, for instance, his pipe or his furniture. Only when he learns, from thoughtful observation or study, that such things are the appropriated products of the labor of himself and his kind, does the truth dawn upon him that labor produces all and is entitled to its own.

[Illustration: Logging Operations

Look around you at the present moment and you will see wood used for many different purposes. Have you ever stopped to think where the raw material comes from or what the workers are like who produce it? Here is a scene from a lumber camp showing the loggers at their daily tasks. The lumber trust is willing that these men should work-but not organize.]

It must be admitted that factory life tends to dispirit and cow the workers who spend their lives in the gloomy confines of the modern mill or shop. Obedient to the shrill whistle they pour out of their clustered grey dwellings in the early morning. Out of the labor ghettos they swarm and into their dismal slave-pens. Then the long monotonous, daily "grind," and home again to repeat the identical proceeding on the following day. Almost always, tired, trained to harsh discipline or content with low comfort; they are all too liable to feel that capitalism is invincibly colossal and that the possibility of a better day is hopelessly remote. Most of them are unacquainted with their neighbors. They live in small family or boarding house units and, having no common meeting place, realize only with difficulty the mighty potency of their vast numbers. To them organization appears desirable at times but unattainable. The dickering conservatism of craft unionism appeals to their cautious natures. They act only en masse, under awful compulsion and then their release of repressed slave emotion is sudden and terrible.

Not so with the weather-tanned husky of the Northwestern woods. His job life is a group life. He walks to his daily task with his fellow workers. He is seldom employed for long away from them. At a common table he eats with them, and they all sleep in common bunk houses. The trees themselves teach him to scorn his master's adventitious claim to exclusive ownership. The circumstances of his daily occupation show him the need of class solidarity. His strong body clamours constantly for the sweetness and comforts of life that are denied him, his alert brain urges him to organize and his

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independent spirit gives him the courage and tenacity to achieve his aims. The union hall is often his only home and the One Big Union his best-beloved. He is fond of reading and discussion. He resents industrial slavery as an insult. He resented filth, overwork and poverty, he resented being made to carry his own bundle of blankets from job to job; he gritted his teeth together and fought until he had ground these obnoxious things under his iron-caulked heel. The lumber trust hated him just in proportion as he gained and used his industrial power; but neither curses, promises nor blows could make him budge. He knew what he wanted and he knew how to get what he wanted. And his boss didn't like it very well.

The lumber-jack is secretive and not given to expressed emotion—excepting in his union songs. The bosses don't like his songs either. But the logger isn't worried a bit. Working away in the woods every day, or in his bunk at night, he dreams his dream of the world as he thinks it should be—that “wild wobbly dream” that every passing day brings closer to realization—and he wants all who work around him to share his vision and his determination to win so that all will be ready and worthy to live in the New Day that is dawning.

In a word the Northwestern lumber-jack was too human and too stubborn ever to repudiate his red-blooded manhood at the behest of his masters and become a serf. His union meant to him all that he possessed or hoped to gain. Is it any wonder that he endured the tortures of hell during the period of the war rather than yield his Red Card—or that he is still determined and still undefeated? Is it any wonder the lumber barons hated him, and sought to break his spirit with brute force and legal cunning—or that they conspired to murder it at Centralia with mob violence—and failed?

### Why the Loggers Organized

The condition of the logger previous to the period of organization beggars description. Modern industrial autocracy seemed with him to develop its most inhuman characteristics. The evil plant of wage slavery appeared to bear its most noxious blossoms in the woods.

The hours of labor were unendurably long, ten hours being the general rule—with the exception of the Grays Harbor district, where the eleven or even twelve hour day prevailed. In addition to this men were compelled to walk considerable distances to and from their work and meals through the wet brush.

Not infrequently the noon lunch was made almost impossible because of the order to be back on the job when work commenced. A ten hour stretch of arduous labor, in a climate where incessant rain is the rule for at least six months of the year, was enough

to try the strength and patience of even the strongest. The wages too were pitifully inadequate.

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The camps themselves, always more or less temporary affairs, were inferior to the cowshed accommodations of a cattle ranch. The bunk house were over-crowded, ill-smelling and unsanitary. In these ramshackle affairs the loggers were packed like sardines. The bunks were arranged tier over tier and nearly always without mattresses. They were uniformly vermin-infested and sometimes of the “muzzle-loading” variety. No blankets were furnished, each logger being compelled to supply his own. There were no facilities for bathing or the washing and drying of sweaty clothing. Lighting and ventilation were of course, always poor.

In addition to these discomforts the unorganized logger was charged a monthly hospital fee for imaginary medical service. Also it was nearly always necessary to pay for the opportunity of enjoying these privileges by purchasing employment from a “job shark” or securing the good graces of a “man catcher.” The former often had “business agreements” with the camp foreman and, in many cases, a man could not get a job unless he had a ticket from a labor agent in some shipping point.

It may be said that the conditions just described were more prevalent in some parts of the lumber country than in others. Nevertheless, these prevailed pretty generally in all sections of the industry before the workers attempted to better them by organizing. At all events such were the conditions the lumber barons sought with all their power to preserve and the loggers to change.

### Organization and the Opening Struggle

A few years before the birth of the Industrial workers of the World the lumber workers had started to organize. By 1905, when the above mentioned union was launched, lumber-workers were already united in considerable numbers in the old Western afterwards the American Labor Union. This organization took steps to affiliate with the Industrial Workers of the World and was thus among the very first to seek a larger share of life in the ranks of that militant and maligned organization. Strike followed strike with varying success and the conditions of the loggers began perceptibly to improve.

Scattered here and there in the cities of the Northwest were many locals of the Industrial Workers of the World. Not until 1912, however, were these consolidated into a real industrial unit. For the first time a sufficient number of loggers and saw mill men were organized to be grouped into an integral part of the One Big Union. This was done with reasonable success. In the following year the American Federation of Labor attempted a similar task but without lasting results, the loggers preferring the industrial to the craft form of organization. Besides this, they were predisposed to sympathize with the ideal of solidarity and Industrial Democracy for which their own union had stood from the beginning.



The “timber beast” was starting to reap the benefits of his organized power. Also he was about to feel the force and hatred of the “interests” arrayed against him. He was soon to learn that the path of labor unionism is strewn with more rocks than roses. He was making an earnest effort to emerge from the squalor and misery of peonage and was soon to see that his overlords were satisfied to keep him right where he had always been.

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Strange to say, almost the first really important clash occurred in the very heart of the lumber trust's domain, in the little city of Aberdeen, Grays Harbor County—only a short distance from Centralia, of mob fame!

[Illustration: Eugene Barnett

(After the man-hunt)

Coal miner. Born in North Carolina. Member of U.M.W.A. and I.W.W. Went to work underground at the age of eight. Self educated, a student and philosopher. Upon reaching home Barnett, fearful of the mob, took to the woods with his rifle. He surrendered to the posse only after he had convinced himself that their purpose was not to lynch him.]

This was in 1912. A strike had started in the saw mills over demands of a \$2.50 daily wage. Some of the saw mill workers were members of the Industrial Workers of the World. They were supported by the union loggers of Western Washington. The struggle was bitterly contested and lasted for several weeks. The lumber trust bared its fangs and struck viciously at the workers in a manner that has since characterized its tactics in all labor disputes.

The jails of Aberdeen and adjoining towns were filled with strikers. Picket lines were broken up and the pickets arrested. When the wives of the strikers with babies in their arms, took the places of their imprisoned husbands, the fire hose was turned on them with great force, in many instances knocking them to the ground. Loggers and sawmill men alike were unmercifully beaten. Many were slugged by mobs with pick handles, taken to the outskirts of the city and told that their return would be the occasion of a lynching. At one time an armed mob of business men dragged nearly four hundred strikers from their homes or boarding houses, herded them into waiting boxcars, sealed up the doors and were about to deport them en masse. The sheriff, getting wind of this unheard-of proceeding, stopped it at the last moment. Many men were badly scarred by beatings they received. One logger was crippled for life by the brutal treatment accorded him.

But the strikers won their demands and conditions were materially improved. The Industrial Workers of the World continued to grow in numbers and prestige. This event may be considered the beginning of the labor movement on Grays Harbor that the lumber trust sought finally to crush with mob violence on a certain memorable day in Centralia seven years later.

Following the Aberdeen strike one or two minor clashes occurred. The lumber workers were usually successful. During this period they were quietly but effectually spreading One Big Union propaganda throughout the camps and mills in the district. Also they

were organizing their fellow workers in increasing numbers into their union. The lumber trust, smarting under its last defeat, was alarmed and alert.

[Illustration: Bert Faulkner

American. Logger. 21 years of age. Member of the Industrial Workers of the World since 1917. Was in the hall when raid occurred. Faulkner personally knew Grimm, McElfresh and a number of others who marched in the parade. He is an ex-soldier himself. The prosecution used a great deal of pressure to make this boy turn state's evidence. He refused stating that he would tell nothing but the truth. At the last moment he was discharged from the case after being held in jail four months.]

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### A Massacre and a New Law

But no really important event occurred until 1916. At this time the union loggers, organized in the Industrial Workers of the World, had started a drive for membership around Puget Sound. Loggers and mill hands were eager for the message of Industrial Unionism. Meetings were well attended and the sentiment in favor of the organization was steadily growing. The A.F. of L. shingle weavers and longshoremen were on strike and had asked the I.W.W. to help them secure free speech in Everett. The ever-watchful lumber interests decided the time to strike had again arrived. The events of "Bloody Sunday" are too well known to need repeating here. Suffice to say that after a summer replete with illegal beatings and jailings five men were killed in cold blood and forty wounded in a final desperate effort to drive the union out of the city of Everett, Washington. These unarmed loggers were slaughtered and wounded by the gunfire of a gang of business men and plug-uglies of the lumber interests. True to form, the lumber trust had every union man in sight arrested and seventy-four charged with the murder of a gunman who had been killed by the cross-fire of his own comrades. None of the desperadoes who had done the actual murdering was ever prosecuted or even reprimanded. The charge against the members of the Industrial Workers of the World was pressed. The case was tried in court and the Industrialists declared "not guilty." George Vanderveer was attorney for the defense.

The lumber interests were infuriated at their defeat, and from this time on the struggle raged in deadly earnest. Almost everything from mob law to open assassination had been tried without avail. The execrated One Big Union idea was gaining members and power every day. The situation was truly alarming. Their heretofore trustworthy "wage plugs" were showing unmistakable symptoms of intelligence. Workingmen were waking up. They were, in appalling numbers, demanding the right to live like men. Something must be done something new and drastic—to split asunder this on-coming phalanx of industrial power.

But the gun-man-and-mob method was discarded, temporarily at least, in favor of the machinations of lumber trust tools in the law making bodies. Big Business can make laws as easily as it can break them—and with as little impunity. So the notorious Washington "Criminal Syndicalism" law was devised. This law, however, struck a snag. The honest-minded governor of the state, recognizing its transparent character and far-reaching effects, promptly vetoed the measure. After the death of Governor Lister the criminal syndicalism law was passed, however, by the next State Legislature. Since that time it has been used against the American Federation of Labor, the Industrial Workers of the World, the Socialist Party and even common citizens not affiliated with any of these organizations. The criminal syndicalism law registers the high water mark of reaction. It infringes more on the liberties of the people than any of the labor-crushing laws that blackened Russia during the dynasty of the Romanoffs. It would disgrace the anti-Celestial legislation of Hell.

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### The Eight Hour Day and “Treason”

Nineteen hundred and seventeen was an eventful year. It was then the greatest strike in the history of the lumber industry occurred—the strike for the eight hour day. For years the logger and mill hand had fought against the unrestrained greed of the lumber interests. Step by step, in the face of fiercest opposition, they had fought for the right to live like men; and step by step they had been gaining. Each failure or success had shown them the weakness or the strength of their union. They had been consolidating their forces as well as learning how to use them. The lumber trust had been making huge profits the while, but the lumber workers were still working ten hours or more and the logger was still packing his dirty blankets from job to job. Dissatisfaction with conditions was wider and more prevalent than ever before. Then came the war.

As soon as this country had taken its stand with the allied imperialists the price of lumber, needed for war purposes, was boosted to sky high figures. From \$16.00 to \$116.00 per thousand feet is quite a jump; but recent disclosures show that the Government paid as high as \$1200.00 per thousand for spruce that private concerns were purchasing for less than one tenth of that sum. Gay parties with plenty of wild women and hard drink are alleged to have been instrumental in enabling the “patriotic” lumber trust to put these little deals across. Due to the duplicity of this same bunch of predatory gentlemen the airplane and ship building program of the United States turned out to be a scandal instead of a success. Out of 21,000 feet of spruce delivered to a Massachusetts factory, inspectors could only pass 400 feet as fit for use. Keep these facts and figures in mind when you read about what happened to the “disloyal” lumber workers during the war—and afterwards.

[Illustration: Mrs. Elmer Smith and Baby Girl

Mrs. Elmer Smith is the cultured daughter of a Washington judge. Since Elmer Smith got into trouble many efforts have been made to induce his wife to leave him. Mrs. Smith prefers, however, to stick with her rebel lawyer whom she loves and admires.]

Discontent had been smouldering in the woods for a long time. It was soon fanned to a flame by the brazen profiteering of the lumber trust. The loggers had been biding their time—rather sullenly it is true—for the day when the wrongs they had endured so patiently and so long might be rectified. Their quarrel with the lumber interests was an old one. The time was becoming propitious.



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In the early summer of 1917 the strike started. Sweeping through the short log country it spread like wild-fire over nearly all the Northwestern lumber districts. The tie-up was practically complete. The industry was paralyzed. The lumber trust, its mouth drooling in anticipation of the many millions it was about to make in profits, shattered high heaven with its cries of rage. Immediately its loyal henchmen in the Wilson administration rushed to the rescue. Profiteering might be condoned, moralized over or winked at, but militant labor unionism was a menace to the government and the prosecution of the war. It must be crushed. For was it not treacherous and treasonable for loggers to strike for living conditions when Uncle Sam needed the wood and the lumber interests the money? So Woodrow Wilson and his coterie of political troglodytes from the slave-owning districts of the old South, started out to teach militant labor a lesson. Corporation lawyers were assembled. Indictments were made to order. The bloodhounds of the Department of "Justice" were unleashed. Grand Juries of "patriotic" business men were impaneled and did their expected work not wisely but too well. All the gun-men and stool-pigeons of Big Business got busy. And the opera bouffe of "saving our form of government" was staged.

### **Industrial Heretics and the White Terror**

For a time it seemed as though the strikers would surely be defeated. The onslaught was terrific, but the loggers held out bravely. Workers were beaten and jailed by the hundreds. Men were herded like cattle in blistering "bull-pens," to be freed after months of misery, looking more like skeletons than human beings. Ellensburg and Yakima will never be forgotten in Washington. One logger was even burned to death while locked in a small iron-barred shack that had been dignified with the title of "jail." In the Northwest even the military were used and the bayonet of the soldier could be seen glistening beside the cold steel of the hired thug. Union halls were raided in all parts of the land. Thousands of workers were deported. Dozens were tarred and feathered and mobbed. Some were even taken out in the dead of night and hanged to railway bridges. Hundreds were convicted of imaginary offenses and sent to prison for terms from one to twenty years. Scores were held in filthy jails for as long as twenty-six months awaiting trial. The Espionage Law, which never convicted a spy, and the Criminal Syndicalism Laws, which never convicted a criminal, were used savagely and with full force against the workers in their struggle for better conditions. By means of newspaper-made war hysteria the profiteers of Big Business entrenched themselves in public opinion. By posing as "100% Americans" (how stale and trite the phrase has become from their long misuse of it!) these social parasites sought to convince the nation that they, and not the truly American unionists whose backs they were trying to break, were working for the best interests of the American people. Our form of government, forsooth, must be saved. Our institutions must be rescued from the clutch of the "reds." Thus was the war-frenzy of their dupes lashed to madness and the guarantees of the constitution suspended as far as the working class was concerned.

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So all the good, wise and noisy men of the nation were induced by diverse means to cry out against the strikers and their union. The worst passions of the respectable people were appealed to. The hoarse blood-cry of the mob was raised. It was echoed and re-echoed from press and pulpit. The very air quivered from its reverberations. Lynching parties became “respectable.” Indictments were flourished. Hand-cuffs flashed. The clinking feet of workers going to prison rivaled the sound of the soldiers marching to war. And while all this was happening, a certain paunchy little English Jew with moth-eaten hair and blotchy jowls the accredited head of a great labor union glared through his thick spectacles and nodded his perverse approval. But the lumber trust licked its fat lips and leered at its swollen dividends. All was well and the world was being made “safe for democracy!”

[Illustration: Britt Smith

American. Logger. 35 years old. Had followed the woods for twenty years. Smith made his home in the hall that was raided and was secretary of the Union. When the mob broke into the jail and seized Wesley Everest to torture and lynch him they cried, “We’ve got Britt Smith!” Smith was the man they wanted and it was to break his neck that ropes were carried in the “parade.” Not until Everest’s body was brought back to the city jail was it discovered that the mob had lynched the wrong man.]

### **Autocracy vs. Unionism**

This unprecedented struggle was really a test of strength between industrial autocracy and militant unionism. The former was determined to restore the palmy days of peonage for all time to come, the latter to fight to the last ditch in spite of hell and high water. The lumber trust sought to break the strike of the loggers and destroy their organization. In the ensuing fracas the lumber barons came out only second best—and they were bad losers. After the war-fever had died down—one year after the signing of the Armistice—they were still trying in Centralia to attain their ignoble ends by means of mob violence.

But at this time the ranks of the strikers were unbroken. The heads of the loggers were “bloody but unbowed.” Even at last, when compelled to yield to privation and brute force and return to work, they turned defeat to victory by “carrying the strike onto the job.” As a body they refused to work more than eight hours. Secretary of War Baker and President Wilson had both vainly urged the lumber interests to grant the eight hour day. The determined industrialists gained this demand, after all else had failed, by simply blowing a whistle when the time was up. Most of their other demands were won as well. In spite of even the Disque despotism, mattresses, clean linen and shower baths were reluctantly granted as the fruits of victory.

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But even as these lines are written the jails and prisons of America are filled to overflowing with men and women whose only crime is loyalty to the working class. The war profiteers are still wallowing in luxury. None has ever been placed behind the bars. Before he was lynched in Butte, Frank Little had said, "I stand for the solidarity of labor." That was enough. The vials of wrath were poured on his head for no other reason. And for no other reason was the hatred of the employing class directed at the valiant hundreds who now rot in prison for longer terms than those meted out to felons. William Haywood and Eugene Debs are behind steel bars today for the same cause. The boys at Centralia were conspired against because they too stood "for the solidarity of labor." It is simply lying and camouflage to attempt to trace such persecutions to any other source. These are things America will be ashamed of when she comes to her senses. Such gruesome events are paralleled in no country save the Germany of Kaiser Wilhelm or the Russia of the Czar.

This picture of labor persecution in free America—terrible but true—will serve as a background for the dramatic history of the events leading up to the climactic tragedy at Centralia on Armistice Day, 1919.

While in Washington...

All over the state of Washington the mobbing, jailing and tar and feathering of workers continued the order of the day until long after the cessation of hostilities in Europe. The organization had always urged and disciplined its members to avoid violence as an unworthy weapon. Usually the loggers have left their halls to the mercy of the mobs when they knew a raid was contemplated. Centralia is the one exception. Here the outrages heaped upon them could be no longer endured.

In Yakima and Sedro Woolley, among other places in 1918, union men were stripped of their clothing, beaten with rope ends and hot tar applied to the bleeding flesh. They were then driven half naked into the woods. A man was hanged at night in South Montesano about this time and another had been tarred and feathered. As a rule the men were taken unaware before being treated in this manner. In one instance a stationary delegate of the Industrial Workers of the World received word that he was to be "decorated" and rode out of town on a rail. He slit a pillow open and placed it in the window with a note attached stating that he knew of the plan; would be ready for them, and would gladly supply his own feathers. He did not leave town either on a rail or otherwise.

In Seattle, Tacoma and many other towns, union halls and print shops were raided and their contents destroyed or burned. In the former city in 1919, men, women and children were knocked insensible by policemen and detectives riding up and down the sidewalks in automobiles, striking to right and left with "billy" and night stick as they went. These were accompanied by auto trucks filled with hidden riflemen and an

armored tank bristling with machine guns. A peaceable meeting of union men was being dispersed.

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[Illustration: Loren Roberts

American. Logger. 19 years old. Loren's mother said of him at the trial: "Loren was a good boy, he brought his money home regularly for three years. After his father took sick he was the only support for his father and me and the three younger ones." The father was a sawyer in a mill and died of tuberculosis after an accident had broken his strength. This boy, the weakest of the men on trial, was driven insane by the unspeakable "third degree" administered in the city jail. One of the lumber trust lawyers was in the jail at the time Roberts signed his so-called "confession." "Tell him to quit stalling," said a prosecutor to Vanderveer, when Roberts left the witness stand. "You cur!" replied the defense attorney in a low voice, "you know who is responsible for this boy's condition." Roberts was one of the loggers on Seminary Hill.]

In Centralia, Aberdeen and Montesano, in Grays Harbor County, the struggle was more local but not less intense. No fewer than twenty-five loggers on different occasions were taken from their beds at night and treated to tar and feathers. A great number were jailed for indefinite periods on indefinite charges. As an additional punishment these were frequently locked in their cells and the fire hose played on their drenched and shivering bodies. "Breach of jail discipline" was the reason given for this "cruel and unusual" form of lumber trust punishment.

In Aberdeen and Montesano there were several raids and many deportations of the tar and feather variety. In Aberdeen in the fall of 1917 during a "patriotic" parade, the battered hall of the union loggers was again forcibly entered in the absence of its owners. Furniture, office fixtures, Victrola and books were dumped into the street and destroyed. In the town of Centralia, about a year before the tragedy, the Union Secretary was kidnapped and taken into the woods by a mob of well dressed business men. He was made to "run the gauntlet" and severely beaten. There was a strong sentiment in favor of lynching him on the spot, but one of the mob objected saying it would be "too raw." The victim was then escorted to the outskirts of the city and warned not to return under pain of usual penalty. On more than one occasion loggers who had expressed themselves in favor of the Industrial Workers of the World, were found in the morning dangling from trees in the neighborhood. No explanation but that of "suicide" was ever offered. The whole story of the atrocities perpetrated during these days of the White Terror, in all probability, will never be published. The criminals are all well known but their influence is too powerful to ever make it expedient to expose their crimes. Besides, who would care to get a gentleman in trouble for killing a mere "Wobbly"? The few instances noted above will, however, give the reader some slight idea of the gruesome events that were leading inevitably to that grim day in Centralia in November, 1919.



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### Weathering the Storm

Through it all the industrialists clung to their Red Cards and to the One Big Union for which they had sacrificed so much. Time after time, with incomparable patience, they would refurbish and reopen their beleaguered halls, heal up the wounds of rope, tar or “billy” and proceed with the work of organization as though nothing had happened. With union cards or credentials hidden in their heavy shoes they would meet secretly in the woods at night. Here they would consult about members who had been mobbed, jailed or killed, about caring for their families—if they had any—about carrying on the work of propaganda and laying plans for the future progress of their union. Perhaps they would take time to chant a rebel song or two in low voices. Then, back on the job again to “line up the slaves for the New Society!”

Through a veritable inferno of torment and persecution these men had refused to be driven from the woods or to give up their union—the Industrial Workers of the World. Between the two dreadful alternatives of peonage or persecution they chose the latter—and the lesser. Can you imagine what their peonage must have been like?

### Sinister Centralia

But Centralia was destined to be the scene of the most dramatic portion of the struggle between the entrenched interests and the union loggers. Here the long persecuted industrialists made a stand for their lives and fought to defend their own, thus giving the glib-tongued lawyers of the prosecution the opportunity of accusing them of “wantonly murdering unoffending paraders” on Armistice Day.

Centralia in appearance is a creditable small American city—the kind of city smug people show their friends with pride from the rose-scented tranquility of a super-six in passage. The streets are wide and clean, the buildings comfortable, the lawns and shade trees attractive. Centralia is somewhat of a coquette but she is as sinister and cowardly as she is pretty. There is a shudder lurking in every corner and a nameless fear sucks the sweetness out of every breeze. Song birds warble at the outskirts of the town but one is always haunted by the cries of the human beings who have been tortured and killed within her confines.

A red-faced business man motors leisurely down the wet street. He shouts a laughing greeting to a well dressed group at the curb who respond in kind. But the roughly dressed lumberworkers drop their glances in passing one another. The Fear is always upon them. As these lines are written several hundred discontented shingle-weavers are threatened with deportation if they dare to strike. They will not strike, for they know too well the consequences. The man-hunt of a few months ago is not forgotten and the

terror of it grips their hearts whenever they think of opposing the will of the Moloch that dominates their every move.

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Around Centralia are wooded hills; men have been beaten beneath them and lynched from their limbs. The beautiful Chehalis River flows near by; Wesley Everest was left dangling from one of its bridges. But Centralia is provokingly pretty for all that. It is small wonder that the lumber trust and its henchmen wish to keep it all for themselves.

Well tended roads lead in every direction, bordered with clearings of worked out camps and studded with occasional tree stumps of great age and truly prodigious size. At intervals are busy saw mills with thousands of feet of odorous lumber piled up in orderly rows. In all directions stretches the pillared immensity of the forests. The vistas through the trees seen enchanted rather than real—unbelievable green and of form and depth that remind one of painted settings for a Maeterlinck fable rather than matter-of-fact timber land.

### **The High Priests of Labor Hatred**

Practically all of this land is controlled by the trusts; much of it by the Eastern Railway and Lumber Company, of which F.B. Hubbard is the head. The strike of 1917 almost ruined this worthy gentleman. He has always been a strong advocate of the open shop, but during the last few years he has permitted his rabid labor-hatred to reach the point of fanaticism. This Hubbard figures prominently in Centralia's business, social and mob circles. He is one of the moving spirits in the Centralia conspiracy. The Eastern Railway and Lumber Company, besides large tracts of land, owns saw-mills, coal mines and a railway. The Centralia newspapers are its mouthpieces while the Chamber of Commerce and the Elks' Club are its general headquarters. The Farmers' & Merchants' Bank is its local citadel of power. In charge of this bank is a sinister character, one Uhlman, a German of the old school and a typical Prussian junker. At one time he was an officer in the German army but at present is a "100% American"—an easy metamorphosis for a Prussian in these days. His native born "brother-at-arms" is George Dysart whose son led the posses in the man-hunt that followed the shooting. In Centralia this bank and its Hun dictator dominates the financial, political and social activities of the community. Business men, lawyers, editors, doctors and local authorities all kow-tow to the institution and its Prussian president. And woe be to any who dare do otherwise! The power of the "interests" is a vengeful power and will have no other power before it. Even the mighty arm of the law becomes palsied in its presence.

[Illustration: Lumberworkers Union Hall, Raided in 1918

The first of the two halls to be wrecked by Centralia's terrorists. This picture was not permitted to be introduced as evidence of the conspiracy to raid the new hall. Judge Wilson didn't want the jury to know anything about this event.]

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The Farmers' & Merchants' Bank is the local instrumentality of the invisible government that holds the nation in its clutch. Kaiser Uhlman has more influence than the city mayor and more power than the police force. The law has always been a little thing to him and his clique. The inscription on the shield of this bank is said to read "To hell with the Constitution; this is Lewis County." As events will show, this inspiring maxim has been faithfully adhered to. One of the mandates of this delectable nest of highbinders is that no headquarters of the Union of the lumber workers shall ever be permitted within the sacred precincts of the city of Centralia.

### The Loved and Hated Union Hall

Now the loggers, being denied the luxury of home and family life, have but three places they can call "home." The bunkhouse in the camp, the cheap rooming house in town and the Union Hall. This latter is by far the best loved of all. It is here the men can gather around a crackling wood fire, smoke their pipes and warm their souls with the glow of comradeship. Here they can, between jobs or after work, discuss the vicissitudes of their daily lives, read their books and magazines and sing their songs of solidarity, or merely listen to the "tinned" humor or harmony of the much-prized Victrola. Also they here attend to affairs of their Union—line up members, hold business and educational meetings and a weekly "open forum." Once in awhile a rough and wholesome "smoker" is given. The features of this great event are planned for weeks in advance and sometimes talked about for months afterwards.

[Illustration: The Scene of the Armistice Day Tragedy

This is what was left of the Union hall the loggers tried to defend on November 11th. Three of the raiders, Grimm, McElfresh and Cassagranda, were killed in the immediate vicinity of the doorway. Several others were wounded while attempting to rush the doors.]

These halls are at all times open to the public and inducements are made to get workers to come in and read a thoughtful treatise on Industrial questions. The latch-string is always out for people who care to listen to a lecture on economics or similar subjects. Inside the hall there is usually a long reading-table littered with books, magazines or papers. In a rack or case at the wall are to be found copies of the "Seattle Union Record," "The Butte Daily Bulletin," "The New Solidarity," "The Industrial Worker," "The Liberator," "The New Republic" and "The Nation." Always there is a shelf of thumb-worn books on history, science, economics and socialism. On the walls are lithographs or engravings of noted champions of the cause of Labor, a few photographs of local interest and the monthly Bulletins and Statements of the Union. Invariably there is a blackboard with jobs, wages and hours written in chalk for the benefit of men seeking employment. There are always a number of chairs in the room and a roll top desk for the secretary. Sometimes at the end of the hall is a plank rostrum—a modest

altar to the Goddess of Free Speech and open discussion. This is what the loved and hated I.W.W. Halls are like—the halls that have been raided and destroyed by the hundreds during the last three years.

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Remember, too, that in each of these raids the union men were not the aggressors and that there was never any attempt at reprisal. In spite of the fact that the lumber workers were within their legal right to keep open their halls and to defend them from felonious attack, it had never happened until November 11, that active resistance was offered the marauders. This fact alone speaks volumes for the long-suffering patience of the logger and for his desire to settle his problems by peaceable means wherever possible. But the Centralia raid was the straw that broke the camel's back. The lumber trust went a little too far on this occasion and it got the surprise of its life. Four of its misguided dupes paid for their lawlessness with their lives, and a number of others were wounded. There has not since been a raid on a union hall in the Northwestern District.

It is well that workingmen and women throughout the country should understand the truth about the Armistice Day tragedy in Centralia and the circumstances that led up to it. But in order to know why the hall was raided it is necessary first to understand why this, and all similar halls, are hated by the oligarchies of the woods.

The issue contested is whether the loggers have the right to organize themselves into a union, or whether they must remain chattels—mere hewers of wood and helpless in the face of the rapacity of their industrial overlords—or whether they have the right to keep open their halls and peacefully to conduct the affairs of their union. The lumber workers contend that they are entitled by law to do these things and the employers assert that, law or no law, they shall not do so. In other words, it is a question of whether labor organization shall retain its foothold in the lumber industry or be “driven from the woods.”

### Pioneers of Unionism

It is hard for workers in most of the other industries—especially in the East—to understand the problems, struggles and aspirations of the husky and unconquerable lumber workers of the Northwest. The reason is that the average union man takes his union for granted. He goes to his union meetings, discusses the affairs of his craft, industry or class, and he carries his card—all as a matter of course. It seldom enters his mind that the privileges and benefits that surround him and the protection he enjoys are the result of the efforts and sacrifices of the nameless thousands of pioneers that cleared the way. But these unknown heroes of the great struggle of the classes did precede him with their loyal hearts and strong hands; otherwise workers now organized would have to start the long hard battle at the beginning and count their gains a step at a time, just as did the early champions of industrial organization, or as the loggers of the West Coast are now doing.

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The working class owes all honor and respect to the first men who planted the standard of labor solidarity on the hostile frontier of unorganized industry. They were the men who made possible all things that came after and all things that are still to come. They were the trail blazers. It is easier to follow them than to have gone before them—or with them. They established the outposts of unionism in the wilderness of Industrial autocracy. Their voices were the first to proclaim the burning message of Labor's power, of Labor's mission and of Labor's ultimate emancipation. Their breasts were the first to receive the blows of the enemy; their unprotected bodies were shielding the countless thousands to follow. They were the forerunners of the solidarity of Toil. They fought in a good and great cause; for without solidarity, Labor would have attained nothing yesterday, gained nothing today nor dare to hope for anything tomorrow.

[Illustration: Seminary Hall

The Union hall looks out on this hill, with Tower avenue and an alley between. It is claimed that loggers, among others Loren Roberts, Bert Bland and the missing Ole Hanson, fired at the attacking mob from this position.]

### **The Block House and the Union Hall**

In the Northwest today the rebel lumberjack is a pioneer. Just as our fathers had to face the enmity of the Indians, so are these men called upon to face the fury of the predatory interests that have usurped the richest timber resources of the richest nation in the world. Just outside Centralia stands a weatherbeaten landmark. It is an old, brown dilapidated block house of early days. In many ways it reminds one of the battered and wrecked union halls to be found in the heart of the city.

The evolution of industry has replaced the block house with the union hall as the embattled center of assault and defense. The weapons are no longer the rifle and the tomahawk but the boycott and the strike. The frontier is no longer territorial but industrial. The new struggle is as portentous as the old. The stakes are larger and the warfare even more bitter.

The painted and be-feathered scalp-hunter of the Sioux or Iroquois were not more heartless in maiming, mutilating and killing their victims than the "respectable" profit-hunters of today—the type of men who conceived the raid on the Union Hall in Centralia on Armistice Day—and who fiendishly tortured and hanged Wesley Everest for the crime of defending himself from their inhuman rage. It seems incredible that such deeds could be possible in the twentieth century. It is incredible to those who have not followed in the bloody trail of the lumber trust and who are not familiar with its ruthlessness, its greed and its lust for power.

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As might be expected the I.W.W. Halls in Washington were hated by the lumber barons with a deep and undying hatred. Union halls were a standing challenge to their hitherto undisputed right to the complete domination of the forests. Like the blockhouses of early days, these humble meeting places were the outposts of a new and better order planted in the stronghold of the old. And they were hated accordingly. The thieves who had invaded the resources of the nation had long ago seized the woods and still held them in a grip of steel. They were not going to tolerate the encroachments of the One Big Union of the lumber workers. Events will prove that they did not hesitate at anything to achieve their purposes.

### The First Centralia Hall

In the year 1918 a union hall stood on one of the side streets in Centralia. It was similar to the halls that have just been described. This was not, however, the hall in which the Armistice Day tragedy took place. You must always remember that there were two halls raided in Centralia; one in 1918 and another in 1919. The loggers did not defend the first hall and many of them were manhandled by the mob that wrecked it. The loggers did defend the second and were given as reward a hanging, a speedy, fair and impartial conviction and sentences of from 25 to 40 years. No member of the mob has ever been punished or even taken to task for this misdeed. Their names are known to everybody. They kiss their wives and babies at night and go to church on Sundays. People tip their hats to them on the street. Yet they are a greater menace to the institutions of this country than all the "reds" in the land. In a world where Mammon is king the king can do no wrong. But the question of "right" or "wrong" did not concern the lumber interests when they raided the Union hall in 1918. "Yes, we raided the hall, what are you going to do about it," is the position they take in the matter.

During the 1917 strike the two lumber trust papers in Centralia, the "Hub" and the "Chronicle" were bitter in their denunciation of the strikers. Repeatedly they urged that most drastic and violent measures be taken by the authorities and "citizens" to break the strike, smash the union and punish the strikers. The war-frenzy was at its height and these miserable sheets went about their work like Czarist papers inciting a pogrom. The lumber workers were accused of "disloyalty," "treason," "anarchy"—anything that would tend to make their cause unpopular. The Abolitionists were spoken about in identical terms before the civil war. As soon as the right atmosphere for their crime had been created the employers struck and struck hard.

It was in April, 1918. Like many other cities in the land Centralia was conducting a Red Cross drive. Among the features of this event were a bazaar and a parade.

The profits of the lumber trust were soaring to dizzy heights at this time and their patriotism was proportionately exalted.



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There was the usual brand of hypocritical and fervid speechmaking. The flag was waved, the Government was lauded and the Constitution praised. Then, after the war-like proclivities of the stay-at-home heroes had been sufficiently worked upon; flag, Government and Constitution were forgotten long enough for the gang to go down the street and raid the “wobbly” hall.

Dominating the festivities was the figure of F.B. Hubbard, at that time President of the Employers’ Association of the State of Washington. This is neither Hubbard’s first nor last appearance as a terrorist and mob-leader—usually behind the scenes, however, or putting in a last minute appearance.

[Illustration: Avalon Hotel, Centralia

From this point Elsie Hornbeck claimed she identified Eugene Barnett in the open window with a rifle. Afterwards she admitted that her identification was based only on a photograph shown her by the prosecution. This young lady nearly fainted on the witness stand while trying to patch her absurd story together.]

### The 1918 Raid

It had been rumored about town that the Union Hall was to be wrecked on this day but the loggers at the hall were of the opinion that the business men, having driven their Secretary out of town a short time previously, would not dare to perpetrate another atrocity so soon afterwards. In this they were sadly mistaken.

Down the street marched the parade, at first presenting no unusual appearance. The Chief of Police, the Mayor and the Governor of the State were given places of honor at the head of the procession. Company G of the National Guard and a gang of broad-cloth hoodlums disguised as “Elks” made up the main body of the marchers. But the crafty and unscrupulous Hubbard had laid his plans in advance with characteristic cunning. The parade, like a scorpion, carried its sting in the rear.

Along the main avenue went the guardsmen and the gentlemen of the Elks Club. So far nothing extraordinary had happened. Then the procession swerved to a side street. This must be the right thing for the line of march had been arranged by the Chamber of Commerce itself. A couple of blocks more and the parade had reached the intersection of First Street and Tower Avenue. What happened then the Mayor and Chief of Police probably could not have stopped even had the Governor himself ordered them to do so. From somewhere in the line of march a voice cried out, “Let’s raid the I.W.W. Hall!” And the crowd at the tail end of the procession broke ranks and leaped to their work with a will.

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In a short time the intervening block that separated them from the Union Hall was covered. The building was stormed with clubs and stones. Every window was shattered and every door was smashed, the very sides of the building were torn off by the mob in its blind fury. Inside the rioters tore down the partitions and broke up chairs and pictures. The union men were surrounded, beaten and driven to the street where they were forced to watch furniture, records, typewriter and literature demolished and burned before their eyes. An American flag hanging in the hall, was torn down and destroyed. A Victrola and a desk were carried to the street with considerable care. The former was auctioned off on the spot for the benefit of the Red Cross. James Churchill, owner of a glove factory, won the machine. He still boasts of its possession. The desk was appropriated by F.B. Hubbard himself. This was turned over to an expressman and carted to the Chamber of Commerce. A small boy picked up the typewriter case and started to take it to a nearby hotel office. One of the terrorists detected the act and gave warning. The mob seized the lad, took him to a nearby light pole and threatened to lynch him if he did not tell them where books and papers were secreted which somebody said had been carried away by him. The boy denied having done this, but the hoodlums went into the hotel, ransacked and overturned everything. Not finding what they wanted, they left a notice that the proprietor would have to take the sign down from his building in just twenty-four hours. Then the mob surged around the unfortunate men who had been found in the Union hall. With cuffs and blows these were dragged to waiting trucks where they were lifted by the ears to the body of the machine and knocked prostrate one at a time. Sometimes a man would be dropped to the ground just after he had been lifted from his feet. Here he would lay with ear drums bursting and writhing from the kicks and blows that had been freely given. Like all similar mobs this one carried ropes, which were placed about the necks of the loggers. "Here's and I.W.W." yelled someone. "What shall we do with him?" A cry was given to "lynch him!" Some were taken to the city jail and the rest were dumped unceremoniously on the other side of the county line.

Since that time the wrecked hall has remained tenantless and unrepaired. Grey and gaunt like a house in battle-scarred Belgium, it stands a mute testimony of the labor-hating ferocity of the lumber trust. Repeated efforts have since been made to destroy the remains with fire. The defense had tried without avail to introduce a photograph of the ruin as evidence to prove that the second hall was raided in a similar manner on Armistice Day, 1919. Judge Wilson refused to permit the jury to see either the photographs or the hall. But in case of another trial...?

Evidently the lumber trust thought it better to have all traces of its previous crime obliterated.

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The raid of 1918 did not weaken the lumber workers' Union in Centralia. On the contrary it served to strengthen it. But not until more than a year had passed were the loggers able to establish a new headquarters. This hall was located next door to the Roderick Hotel on Tower Avenue, between Second and Third Streets. Hardly was this hall opened when threats were circulated by the Chamber of Commerce that it, like the previous one, was marked for destruction. The business element was lined up solid in denunciation of and opposition to the Union Hall and all that it stood for. But other anti-labor matters took up their attention and it was some time before the second raid was actually accomplished.

There was one rift in the lute of lumber trust solidarity in Centralia. Business and professional men had long been groveling in sycophantic servility at the feet of "the clique." There was only one notable exception.

### **A Lawyer—and a Man**

A young lawyer had settled in the city a few years previous to the Armistice Day tragedy. Together with his parents and four brothers he had left his home in Minnesota to seek fame and fortune in the woods of Washington. He had worked his way through McAlester College and the Law School of the University of Minnesota. He was young, ambitious, red-headed and husky, a loving husband and the proud father of a beautiful baby girl. Nature had endowed him with a dangerous combination of gifts,—a brilliant mind and a kind heart. His name was just plain Smith—Elmer Smith—and he came from the old rugged American stock.

Smith started to practice law in Centralia, but unlike his brother attorneys, he held to the assumption that all men are equal under the law—even the hated I.W.W. In a short time his brilliant mind and kind heart had won him as much hatred from the lumber barons as love from the down-trodden,—which is saying a good deal. The "interests" studied the young lawyer carefully for awhile and soon decided that he could be neither bullied or bought. So they determined to either break his spirit or to break his neck. Smith is at present in prison charged with murder. This is how it happened:

Smith established his office in the First Guarantee Bank Building which was quite the proper thing to do. Then he began to handle law suits for wage-earners, which was altogether the reverse. Caste rules in Centralia, and Elmer Smith was violating its most sacred mandataries by giving the "working trash" the benefit of his talents instead of people really worth while.

Warren O. Grimm, who was afterwards shot while trying to break into the Union Hall with the mob, once cautioned Smith of the folly and danger of such a course. "You'll get along all right," said he, "if you will come in with us." Then he continued:

“How would you feel if one of your clients would come up to you in public, slap you on the back and say ‘Hello, Elmer?’”



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“Very proud,” answered the young lawyer.

[Illustration: Elmer Smith

Attorney at law. Old American stock—born on a homestead in North Dakota. By championing the cause of the “under-dog” in Centralia Smith brought down on himself the wrath of the lumber trust. He defended many union men in the courts, and at one time sought to prosecute the kidnapers of Tom Lassiter. Smith is the man Warren O. Grimm told would get along all right, “if you come in with us.” He bucked the lumber trust instead and landed in prison on a trumped-up murder charge. Smith was found “not guilty” by the jury, but immediately re-arrested on practically the same charge. He is not related to Britt Smith.]

[Illustration: Wesley Everest

Logger. American (old Washington pioneer stock). Joined the Industrial Workers of the World in 1917. A returned soldier. Earnest, sincere, quiet, he was the “Jimmy Higgins” of the Centralia branch of the Lumberworkers Union. Everest was mistaken for Britt Smith, the Union secretary, whom the mob had started out to lynch. He was pursued by a gang of terrorists and unmercifully manhandled. Later—at night—he was taken from the city jail and hanged to a bridge. In the automobile, on the way to the lynching, he was unsexed by a human fiend—a well known Centralia business man—who used a razor on his helpless victim. Even the lynchers were forced to admit that Everest was the most “dead game” man they had ever seen.]

Some months previous Smith had taken a case for an I.W.W. logger. He won it. Other cases in which workers needed legal advice came to him. He took them. A young girl was working at the Centralia “Chronicle.” She was receiving a weekly wage of three dollars which is in defiance of the minimum wage law of the state for women. Smith won the case. Also he collected hundreds of dollars in back wages for workers whom the companies had sought to defraud. Workers in the clutches of loan sharks were extricated by means of the bankruptcy laws, hitherto only used by their masters. An automobile firm was making a practice of replacing Ford engines with old ones when a machine was brought in for repairs. One of the victims brought his case to Smith, and a lawsuit followed. This was an unheard-of proceeding, for heretofore such little business tricks had been kept out of court by common understanding.

A worker, formerly employed by a subsidiary of the Eastern Lumber & Railway Company, had been deprived of his wages on a technicality of the law by the corporation attorneys. This man had a large family and hard circumstances were forced upon them by this misfortune. One of his little girls died from what the doctor called malnutrition—plain starvation. Smith filed suit and openly stated that the lawyers of the corporation were responsible for the death of the child. The indignation of the business and professional element blazed to white heat. A suit for libel and disbarment



proceedings were started against him. Nothing could be done in this direction as Smith had not only justice but the law on his side. His enemies were waiting with great impatience for a more favorable opportunity to strike him down. Open threats were beginning to be heard against him.

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A Union lecturer came to town. The meeting was well attended. A vigilance committee of provocateurs and business men was in the audience. At the close of the lecture those gentlemen started to pass the signal for action. Elmer Smith sauntered down the aisle, shook hands with the speaker and told him he would walk to the train with him.

The following morning the door to Smith's office was ornamented with a cardboard sign. It read: "Are you an American? You had better say so. Citizens' Committee." This was lettered in lead pencil. Across the bottom were scrawled these words: "No more I.W.W. meetings for you."

In 1918 an event occurred which served further to tighten the noose about the stubborn neck of the young lawyer. On this occasion the terrorists of the city perpetrated another shameful crime against the working class—and the law.

### **Blind Tom—A Blemish on America**

Tom Lassiter made his living by selling newspapers at a little stand on a street corner. Tom is blind, a good soul and well liked by the loggers. But Tom has vision enough to see that there is something wrong with the hideous capitalist system we live under; and so he kept papers on sale that would help enlighten the workers. Among these were the "Seattle Union Record," "The Industrial Worker" and "Solidarity." To put it plainly, Tom was a thorn in the side of the local respectability because of his modest efforts to make people think. And his doom had also been sealed.

Early in June the newsstand was broken into and all his clothing, literature and little personal belongings were taken to a vacant lot and burned. A warning sign was left on a short pole stuck in the ashes. The message, "You leave town in 24 hours, U.S. Soldiers, Sailors and Marines," was left on the table in his room.

With true Wobbly determination, Lassiter secured a new stock of papers and immediately re-opened his little stand. About this time a Centralia business man, J.H. Roberts by name, was heard to say "This man (Lassiter) is within his legal rights and if we can't do anything by law we'll take the law into our own hands." This is precisely what happened.

On the afternoon of June 30th, Blind Tom was crossing Tower Avenue with hesitating steps when, without warning, two business men seized his groping arms and yelled in his ear, "We'll get you out of town this time!" Lassiter called for help. The good Samaritan came along in the form of a brute-faced creature known as W.R. Patton, a rich property owner of the city. This Christian gentleman sneaked up behind the blind man and lunged him forcibly into a waiting Oakland automobile. The machine is owned by Cornelius McIntyre who is said to have been one of the kidnapping party.



“Shut up or I’ll smash your mouth so you can’t yell,” said one of his assailants as Lassiter was forced, still screaming for help, into the car. Turning to the driver one of the party said, “Step on her and let’s get out of here.” About this time Constable Luther Patton appeared on the scene. W.R. Patton walked over to where the constable stood and shouted to the bystanders, “We’ll arrest the first person that objects, interferes or gets too loud.”

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“A good smash on the jaw would do more good,” suggested the kind-hearted official.

“Well, we got that one pretty slick and now there are two more we have to get,” stated W.R. Patton, a short time afterwards.

Blind Tom was dropped helpless in a ditch just over the county line. He was picked up by a passing car and eventually made his way to Olympia, capital of the state. In about a week he was back in Centralia. But before he could again resume his paper selling he was arrested on a charge of “criminal syndicalism.” He is now awaiting conviction at Chehalis.

Before his arrest, however, Lassiter engaged Elmer Smith as his attorney. Smith appealed to County Attorney Herman Allen for protection for his client. After a half-hearted effort to locate the kidnappers—who were known to everybody—this official gave up the task saying he was “Too busy to bother with the affair, and, besides, the offense was only ‘third degree assault’ which is punishable with a fine of but one dollar and costs.” The young lawyer did not waste any more time with the County authorities. Instead he secured sworn statements of the facts in the case and submitted them to the Governor. These were duly acknowledged and placed on file in Olympia. But up to date no action has been taken by the executive to prosecute the criminals who committed the crime.

“Handle these I.W.W. cases if you want to,” said a local attorney to Elmer Smith, counsel for one of the banks, “but sooner or later they’re all going to be hanged or deported anyway.”

[Illustration: Where Barnett’s Rifle Was Supposed to Have Been Found

Eugene Barnett was said to have left his rifle under this sign-board as he fled from the scene of the shooting. It would have been much easier to hide a gun in the tall brush in the foreground. In reality Barnett did not have a rifle on November 11th and was never within a mile of this place. Prosecutor Cunningham said he had “been looking all over for that rifle” when it was turned over to him by a stool pigeon. Strangely enough Cunningham knew the number of the gun before he placed hands on it.]

Smith was feathering a nest for himself—feathering it with steel and stone and a possible coil of hempen rope. The shadow of the prison bars was falling blacker on his red head with every passing moment. His fearless championing of the cause of the “under dog” had won him the implacable hatred of his own class. To them his acts of kindness and humanity were nothing less than treason. Smith had been ungrateful to the clique that had offered him every inducement to “come in with us”. A lawyer with a heart is as dangerous as a working man with his brains. Elmer Smith would be punished all right; it would just be a matter of time.

The indifference of the County and State authorities regarding the kidnapping of blind Tom gave the terrorists renewed confidence in the efficacy and “legality” of their methods. Also it gave them a hint as to the form their future depredations were to take. And so, with the implied approval of everyone worth considering, they went about their plotting with still greater determination and a soothing sense of security.

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### The Conspiracy Develops

The cessation of hostilities in Europe deprived the gangsters of the cloak of “patriotism” as a cover for their crimes. But this cloak was too convenient to be discarded so easily. “Let the man in uniform do it” was an axiom that had been proved both profitable and safe. Then came the organization of the local post of the American Legion and the now famous Citizen’s Protective League—of which more afterwards.

With the signing of the Armistice, and the consequent almost imperceptible lifting of the White Terror that dominated the country, the organization of the loggers began daily to gather strength. The Chamber of Commerce began to growl menacingly, the Employers’ Association to threaten and the lumber trust papers to incite open violence. And the American Legion began to function as a “cats paw” for the men behind the scenes.

Why should the beautiful city of Centralia tolerate the hated Union hall any longer? Other halls had been raided, men had been tarred and feathered and deported—no one had ever been punished! Why should the good citizens of Centralia endure a lumberworkers headquarters and their despised union itself right in the midst of their peaceful community? Why indeed! The matter appeared simple enough from any angle. So then and there the conspiracy was hatched that resulted in the tragedy on Armistice Day. But the forces at work to bring about this unhappy conclusion were far from local. Let us see what these were like before the actual details of the conspiracy are recounted.

There were three distinct phases of this campaign to “rid the woods of the agitators.” These three phases dovetail together perfectly. Each one is a perfect part of a shrewdly calculated and mercilessly executed conspiracy to commit constructive murder and unlawful entry. The diabolical plan itself was designed to brush aside the laws of the land, trample the Constitution underfoot and bring about an unparalleled orgy of unbridled labor hatred and labor repression that would settle the question of unionism for a long time.

### The Conspiracy—And a Snag

First of all comes the propaganda stage with the full force of the editorial virulence of the trust-controlled newspapers directed against labor in favor of “law and order,” *i.e.*, the lumber interests. All the machinery of newspaper publicity was used to vilify the lumber worker and to discredit his Union. Nothing was left unsaid that would tend to produce intolerance and hatred or to incite mob violence. This is not only true of Centralia, but of all the cities and towns located in the lumber district. Centralia happened to be the place where the tree of anti-labor propaganda first bore its ghastly fruit. Space does not

permit us to quote the countless horrible things the I.W.W. was supposed to stand for and to

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be constantly planning to do. Statements from the lips of General Wood and young Roosevelt to the effect that citizens should not argue with Bolshevists but meet them “head on” were very conspicuously displayed on all occasions. Any addle-headed mediocrity, in or out of uniform, who had anything particularly atrocious to say against the labor movement in general or the “radicals” in particular, was afforded every opportunity to do so. The papers were vying with one another in devising effectual, if somewhat informal, means of dealing with the “red menace.”

Supported by, and partly the result of this barrage of lies, misrepresentation and incitation, came the period of attempted repression by “law”. This was probably the easiest thing of all because the grip of Big Business upon the law-making and law-enforcing machinery of the nation is incredible. At all events a state’s “criminal syndicalism law” had been conveniently passed and was being applied vigorously against union men, A.F. of L. and I.W.W. alike, but chiefly against the Lumber Workers’ Industrial Union, No. 500, of the Industrial Workers of the World, the basic lumber industry being the largest in the Northwest and the growing power of the organized lumberjack being therefore more to be feared.

[Illustration: His Uncle Planned It

Dale Hubbard, killed in self-defense by Wesley Everest, Armistice Day, 1919. F. Hubbard, a lumber baron and uncle of the dead man, is held to have been the instigator of the plot in which his nephew was shot. Hubbard was martyred by the lumber trust’s determination “to let the men in uniform do it.”]

No doubt the lumber interests had great hope that the execution of these made-to-order laws would clear up the atmosphere so far as the lumber situation was concerned. But they were doomed to a cruel and surprising disappointment.

A number of arrests were made in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana and even Nevada. Fifty or sixty men all told were arrested and their trials rushed as test cases. During this period from April 25th to October 28th, 1919, the lumber trust saw with chagrin and dismay each of the state cases in turn either won outright by the defendants or else dismissed in the realization that it would be impossible to win them. By October 28th George F. Vanderveer, chief attorney for the defense, declared there were not a single member of the I.W.W. in custody in Washington, Idaho or Montana under this charge. In Seattle, Washington, an injunction was obtained restraining the mayor from closing down the new Union hall in that city under the new law. Thus it appeared that the nefarious plan of the employers and their subservient lawmaking adjuncts, to outlaw the lumber workers Union and to penalize the activities of its members, was to be doomed to an ignominious failure.

## **Renewed Efforts—Legal and Otherwise**



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Furious at the realization of their own impotency the “interests” launched forth upon a new campaign. This truly machiavellian scheme was devised to make it impossible for accused men to secure legal defense of any kind. All labor cases were to be tried simultaneously, thus making it impossible for the defendants to secure adequate counsel. George F. Russell, Secretary-Manager of the Washington Employers’ Association, addressed meetings over the state urging all Washington Prosecuting Attorneys to organize that this end might be achieved. It is reported that Governor Hart, of Washington, looked upon the scheme with favor when it was brought to his personal attention by Mr. Russell.

However, the fact remains that the lumber trust was losing and that it would have to devise even more drastic measures if it were to hope to escape the prospect of a very humiliating defeat. And, all the while the organization of the lumber workers continued to grow.

In Washington the situation was becoming more tense, momentarily. Many towns in the heart of the lumber district had passed absurd criminal syndicalism ordinances. These prohibited membership in the I.W.W.; made it unlawful to rent premises to the organization or to circulate its literature. The Employers’ Association had boasted that it was due to its efforts that these ordinances had been passed. But still they were faced with the provocative and unforgettable fact, that the I.W.W. was no more dead than the cat with the proverbial nine lives. Where halls had been closed or raided the lumber workers were transacting their union affairs right on the job or in the bunkhouses, just as though nothing had happened. What was more deplorable a few Union halls were still open and doing business at the same old stand. Centralia was one of these; drastic measures must be applied at once or loggers in other localities might be encouraged to open halls also. As events prove these measures were taken—and they were drastic.

### The Employers Show Their Fangs

That the Employers’ Association was assiduously preparing its members for action suitable for the situation is evidenced by the following quotations from the official bulletin addressed privately “to Members of the Employers’ Association of Washington”. Note them carefully; they are published as “suggestions to members” over the written signature of George F. Russell Secretary-Manager:

June 25th, 1918.—“Provide a penalty for idleness ... Common labor now works a few days and then loafs to spend the money earned ... Active prosecution of the I.W.W. and other radicals.”

April 30th, 1919.—“Keep business out of the control of radicals and I.W.W.... Overcome agitation ... Closer co-operation between employers and employees ... Suppress the agitators ... Hang the Bolshevists.”



May 31st, 1919.—“If the agitators were taken care of we would have very little trouble ... Propaganda to counteract radicals and overcome agitation ... Put the I.W.W. in jail.”



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June 30th, 1919.—“Make some of the Seattle papers print the truth ... Get rid of the I.W.W.’s.”

July 2nd, 1919.—“Educate along the line of the three R’s and the golden rule, economy and self denial ... Import Japanese labor ... Import Chinese labor.”

July 31st, 1919.—“Deport about ten Russians in this community.”

August 31st, 1919.—“Personal contact between employer and employee, stringent treatment of the I.W.W.”

October 15th, 1919. “There are many I.W.W.s—mostly in the logging camps....”

October 31st, 1919.—(A little over a week before the Centralia raid.) “Run your business or quit ... Business men and tax payers of Vancouver, Washington, have organized the Loyal Citizen’s Protective League; opposed to Bolsheviki and the Soviet form of government and in favor of the open shop ... Jail the radicals and deport them ... Since the armistice these radicals have started in again. *Only two communities in Washington allow I.W.W. Headquarters.*” (!!!)

[Illustration: Arthur McElfresh

A Centralia druggist. His wife warned him not to march to the union headquarters because “she knew he’d get hurt.” McElfresh is the man said to have been shot inside the hall when the mob burst through the door.]

December 31st, 1919. “Get rid of all the I.W.W. and all other un-American organizations ... Deport the radicals or use the rope as at Centralia. Until we get rid of the I.W.W. and radicals we don’t expect to do much in this country ... Keep cleaning up on the I.W.W.... Don’t let it die down ... Keep up public sentiment...”

These few choice significant morsels of one hundred percent (on the dollar) Americanism are quoted almost at random from the private bulletins of the officials of the Iron Heel in the state of Washington. Here you can read their sentiments in their own words; you can see how dupes and hirelings were coached to perpetrate the crime of Centralia, and as many other similar crimes as they could get away with. Needless to say these illuminating lines were not intended for the perusal of the working class. But now that we have obtained them and placed them before your eyes you can draw your own conclusion. There are many, many more records germane to this case that we would like to place before you, but the Oligarchy has closed its steel jaws upon them and they are at present inaccessible. Men are still afraid to tell the truth in Centralia. Some day the workers may learn the whole truth about the inside workings of the Centralia conspiracy. Be that as it may the business interests of the Northwest lumber



country stand bloody handed and doubly damned, black with guilt and foul with crime; convicted before the bar of public opinion, by their own statements and their own acts.

## **Failure and Desperation**

Let us see for a moment how the conspiracy of the lumber barons operated to achieve the unlawful ends for which it was designed. Let us see how they were driven by their own failure at intrigue to adopt methods so brutal that they would have disgraced the head-hunter; how they tried to gain with murder-lust what they had failed to gain lawfully and with public approval.

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The campaign of lies and slander inaugurated by their private newspapers failed to convince the workers of the undesirability of labor organization. In spite of the armies of editors and news-whelps assembled to its aid, it served only to lash to a murderous frenzy the low instincts of the anti-labor elements in the community. The campaign of legal repression, admittedly instituted by the Employers' Association, failed also in spite of the fact that all the machinery of the state from dog-catcher down to Governor was at its beck and call on all occasions and for all purposes.

Having made a mess of things with these methods the lumber barons threw all scruples to the winds—if they ever had any—threw aside all pretension of living within the law. They started out, mad-dog like, to rent, wreck and destroy the last vestige of labor organization from the woods of the Northwest, and furthermore, to hunt down union men and martyrize them with the club, the gun, the rope and the courthouse.

It was to cover up their own crimes that the heartless beasts of Big Business beat the tom-toms of the press in order to lash the “patriotism” of their dupes and hirelings into hysteria. It was to hide their own infamy that the loathsome war dance was started that developed perceptibly from uncomprehending belligerency into the lawless tumult of mobs, raids and lynching! And it will be an everlasting blot upon the fair name of America that they were permitted to do so.

The Centralia tragedy was the culmination of a long series of unpunished atrocities against labor. What is expected of men who have been treated as these men were treated and who were denied redress or protection under the law? Every worker in the Northwest knows about the wrongs lumberworkers have endured—they are matters of common knowledge. It was common knowledge in Centralia and adjoining towns that the I.W.W. hall was to be raided on Armistice Day. Yet eight loggers have been sentenced from twenty-five to forty years in prison for the crime of defending themselves from the mob that set out to murder them! But let us see how the conspiracy was operating in Centralia to make the Armistice Day tragedy inevitable.

### **The Maelstrom—And Four Men**

Centralia was fast becoming the vortex of the conspiracy that was rushing to its inevitable conclusion. Event followed event in rapid succession, straws indicating the main current of the flood tide of labor-hatred. The Commercial Club was seething with intrigue like the court of old France under Catherine de Medici; only this time it was Industrial Unionism instead of Huguenots who were being Marked for a new night of St. Bartholomew. The heresy to be uprooted was belief in industrial instead of religious freedom; but the stake and the gibbet were awaiting the New Idea just as they had the old.

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The actions of the lumber interests were now but thinly veiled and their evil purpose all too manifest. The connection between the Employers' Association of the state and its local representatives in Centralia had become unmistakably evident. And behind these loomed the gigantic silhouette of the Employers' Association of the nation—the colossal “invisible government”—more powerful at times than the Government itself. More and more stood out the naked brutal fact that the purpose of all this plotting was to drive the union loggers from the city and to destroy their hall. The names of the men actively interested in this movement came to light in spite of strenuous efforts to keep them obscured. Four of these stand out prominently in the light of the tragedy that followed: George F. Russell, F.B. Hubbard, William Scales and last, but not least, Warren O. Grimm.

[Illustration: Warren O. Grimm

Warren O. Grimm, killed at the beginning of the rush on the I.W.W. hall. At another raid on an I.W.W. hall in 1918 Grimm was said by witnesses to have been leading the mob, “holding two American flags and dancing like a whirling dervish.” His life-long friend, Frank Van Gilder, testified: “I stood less than two feet from Grimm when he was shot. He doubled up, put his hands to his stomach and said to me: ‘My God, I’m shot.’” “What did you do then?” “I turned and left him.”]

The first named, George F. Russell, is a hired Manager for the Washington Employers' Association, whose membership employs between 75,000 and 80,000 workers in the state. Russell is known to be a reactionary of the most pronounced type. He is an avowed union smasher and a staunch upholder of the open shop principle, which is widely advertised as the “American plan” in Washington. Incidentally he is an advocate of the scheme to import Chinese and Japanese coolie labor as a solution of the “high wage and arrogant unionism” problem.

F. B. Hubbard, is a small-bore Russell, differing from his chief only in that his labor hatred is more fanatical and less discreet. Hubbard was hard hit by the strike in 1917 which fact has evidently won him the significant title of “a vicious little anti-labor reptile.” He is the man who helped to raid the 1918 Union Hall in Centralia and who appropriated for himself the stolen desk of the Union Secretary. His nephew Dale Hubbard was shot while trying to lynch Wesley Everest.

William Scales is a Centralia business man and a virulent sycophant. He is a parochial replica of the two persons mentioned above. Scales was in the Quartermaster's Department down on the border during the trouble with Mexico. Because he was making too much money out of Uncle Sam's groceries, he was relieved of his duties quite suddenly and discharged from the service. He was fortunate in making France instead of Fort Leavenworth, however, and upon his return, became an ardent proselyte of Russell and Hubbard and their worthy cause. Also he continued in the grocery business.

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[Illustration: Hizzoner, The Jedge

In his black robe, like a bird of prey, he perched above the courtroom and ruled always adversely to the cause of labor. Appointed to try men accused of killing other men whom he had previously eulogized Judge John M. Wilson did not disappoint those who appointed him. In open court Vanderveer told him. In open court Vanderveer told this man: "There was a time when I thought your rulings were due to ignorance of the law. That will no longer explain them."]

Warren O. Grimm came from a good family and was a small town aristocrat. His brother is city attorney at Centralia. Grimm was a lawyer, a college athlete and a social lion. He had been with the American forces in Siberia and his chief bid for distinction was a noisy dislike for the Worker's & Peasants' Republic of Russia, and the I.W.W. which he termed the "American Bolsheviki". During the 1918 raid on the Centralia hall Grimm is said to have been dancing around "like a whirling dervish" and waving the American flag while the work of destruction was going on. Afterwards he became prominent in the American Legion and was the chief "cat's paw" for the lumber interests who were capitalizing the uniform to gain their own unholy ends. Personally he was a clean-cut modern young man.

### Shadows Cast Before

On June 26th, the following notice appeared conspicuously on the first page of the Centralia Hub:

#### Meeting of Business Men Called for Friday Evening

"Business men and property owners of Centralia are urged to attend a meeting tomorrow in the Chamber of Commerce rooms to meet the officers of the Employers' Association of the state to discuss ways and means of bettering the conditions which now confront the business and property interests of the state. George F. Russell, Secretary-Manager, says in his note to business men: 'We need your advice and your co-operation in support of the movement for the defense of property and property rights. It is the most important question before the public today.'"

At this meeting Mr. Russell dwelt on the statement that the "radicals" were better organized than the property interests. Also he pointed out the need of a special organization to protect "rights of property" from the encroachments of all "foes of the government". The Non-Partisan League, the Triple Alliance and the A.F. of L. were duly condemned. The speaker then launched out into a long tirade against the Industrial Workers of the World which was characterized as the most dangerous organization in America and the one most necessary for "good citizens" to crush. Needless to state the

address was chock full of 100% Americanism. It amply made up in forcefulness anything it lacked in logic.

So the “Citizens’ Protective League” of Centralia was born. From the first it was a law unto itself—murder lust wearing the smirk of respectability—Judge Lynch dressed in a business suit. The advent of this infamous league marks the final ascendancy of terrorism over the Constitution in the city of Centralia. The only things still needed were a secret committee, a coil of rope and an opportunity.

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F.B. Hubbard was the man selected to pull off the “rough stuff” and at the same time keep the odium of crime from smirching the fair names of the conspirators. He was told to “perfect his own organization”. Hubbard was eminently fitted for his position by reason of his intense labor-hatred and his aptitude for intrigue.

The following day the Centralia Daily Chronicle carried the following significant news item:

### **BUSINESS MEN OF COUNTY ORGANIZE**

Representatives From Many Communities Attend Meeting in Chamber of Commerce, Presided Over Secretary of Employers’ Association.

“The labor situation was thoroughly discussed this afternoon at a meeting held in the local Chamber of Commerce which was attended by representative business men from various parts of Lewis County.

“George F. Russell, Secretary of the Employers’ Association, of Washington, presided at the meeting.

“A temporary organization was effected with F. B. Hubbard, President of the Eastern Railway & Lumber Company, as chairman. He was empowered to perfect his own organization. A similar meeting will be held in Chehalis in connection with the noon luncheon of the Citizens’ Club on that day.”

[Illustration: “Special Prosecutor”

C.D. Cunningham, attorney for F.B. Hubbard and various lumber interests, took charge of the prosecution immediately. He was the father of much of the “third degree” methods used on witnesses. Vanderveer offered to prove at the trial that Cunningham was at the jail when Wesley Everest was dragged out, brutally mutilated and then lynched.]

The city of Centralia became alive with gossip and speculation about this new move on the part of the employers. Everybody knew that the whole thing centered around the detested hall of the Union loggers. Curiosity seekers began to come in from all parts of the county to have a peep at this hall before it was wrecked. Business men were known to drive their friends from the new to the old hall in order to show what the former would look like in a short time. People in Centralia generally knew for a certainty that the present hall would go the way of its predecessor. It was just a question now as to the time and circumstances of the event.

Warren O. Grimm had done his bit to work up sentiment against the union loggers and their hall. Only a month previously—on Labor Day, 1919,—he had delivered a “labor”



speech that was received with great enthusiasm by a local clique of business men. Posing as an authority on Bolshevism on account of his Siberian service Grimm had elaborated on the dangers of this pernicious doctrine. With a great deal of dramatic emphasis he had urged his audience to beware of the sinister influence of “the American Bolsheviki—the Industrial Workers of the World.”

A few days before the hall was raided Elmer Smith called at Grimm’s office on legal business. Grimm asked him, by the way, what he thought of his Labor Day speech. Smith replied that he thought it was “rotten” and that he couldn’t agree with Grimm’s anti-labor conception of Americanism. Smith pointed to the deportation of Tom Lassiter as an example of the “Americanism” he considered disgraceful. He said also that he thought free speech was one of the fundamental rights of all citizens.



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“I can’t agree with you,” replied Grimm. “That’s the proper way to treat such a fellow.”

### The New Black Hundred

On October 19th the Centralia Hub published an item headed “Employers Called to Discuss Handling of ‘Wobbly’ Problem.” This article urges all employers to attend, states that the meeting will be held in the Elk’s Club and mentioned the wrecking of the Union Hall in 1918. On the following day, October 20th, three weeks before the shooting, this meeting was held at the hall of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks—the now famous Elks’ Club of Centralia. The avowed purpose of this meeting was to “deal with the I.W.W. problem.” The chairman was William Scales, at that time Commander of the Centralia Post of the American Legion. The I.W.W. Hall was the chief topic of discussion. F.B. Hubbard opened up by saying that the I.W.W. was a menace and should be driven out of town. Chief of Police Hughes, however, cautioned them against such a course. He is reported to have said that “the I.W.W. is doing nothing wrong in Centralia—is not violating any law—and you have no right to drive them out of town in this manner.” The Chief of Police then proceeded to tell the audience that he had taken up the matter of legally evicting the industrialists with City Attorney C.E. Grimm, a brother of Warren O. Grimm, who is said to have told them, “Gentlemen, there is no law by which you can drive the I.W.W. out of town.” City Commissioner Saunders and County Attorney Allen had spoken to the same effect. The latter, Allen, had gone over the literature of the organization with regard to violence and destruction and had voluntarily dismissed a “criminal syndicalist” case without trial for want of evidence.

[Illustration: Lewis County’s Legal Prostitute

Herman Allen, prosecuting attorney of Lewis County. He stood at the corner during the raid and received papers stolen from the hall. There is no record of his having protested against any illegal action. He turned over his office to the special Prosecutors and acted as their tool throughout. During the entire trial he never appeared as an active participant.]

Hubbard was furious at this turn of affairs and shouted to Chief of Police Hughes: “It’s a damned outrage that these men should be permitted to remain in town! Law or no law, if I were Chief of Police they wouldn’t stay here twenty-four hours.”

“I’m not in favor of raiding the hall myself,” said Scales. “But I’m certain that if anybody else wants to raid the I.W.W. Hall there is no jury in the land will ever convict them.”

After considerable discussion the meeting started to elect a committee to deal with the situation. First of all an effort was made to get a workingman elected as a member to help camouflage its very evident character and make people believe that “honest labor”



was also desirous of ridding the town of the hated I.W.W. Hall. A switchman named Henry, a member of the Railway Brotherhood, was nominated. When he indignantly declined, Hubbard, red in the face with rage, called him a “damned skunk.”



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### The Inner Circle

Scales then proceeded to tell the audience in general and the city officials in particular that he would himself appoint a committee “whose inner workings were secret,” and see if he could not get around the matter that way. The officers of the League were then elected. The President was County Coroner David Livingstone, who afterwards helped to lynch Wesley Everest. Dr. Livingstone made his money from union miners. William Scales was vice president and Hubbard was treasurer. The secret committee was then appointed by Hubbard. As its name implies it was an underground affair, similar to the Black Hundreds of Old Russia. No record of any of its proceedings has ever come to light, but according to best available knowledge, Warren O. Grimm, Arthur McElfresh, B.S. Cromier and one or two others who figured prominently in the raid, were members. At all events on November 6th, five days before the shooting, Grimm was elected Commander of the Centralia Post of the American Legion, taking the place of Scales, who resigned in his favor. Scales evidently was of the opinion that a Siberian veteran and athlete was better fitted to lead the “shock troops” than a mere counter-jumper like himself. There is no doubt but the secret committee had its members well placed in positions of strategic importance for the coming event.

The following day the Tacoma News Tribune carried a significant editorial on the subject of the new organization:

“At Centralia a committee of citizens has been formed that takes the mind back to the old days of vigilance committees of the West, which did so much to force law-abiding citizenship upon certain lawless elements. It is called the Centralia Protective Association, and its object is to combat I.W.W. activities in that city and the surrounding country. It invites to membership all citizens who favor the enforcement of law and order ... It is high time for the people who do believe in the lawful and orderly conduct of affairs to take the upper hand ... Every city and town might, with profit, follow Centralia’s example.”

The reference to “law and orderly conduct of affairs” has taken a somewhat ironical twist, now that Centralia has shown the world what she considers such processes to be.

No less significant was an editorial appearing on the same Date in the Centralia Hub:

“If the city is left open to this menace, we will soon find ourselves at the mercy of an organized band of outlaws bent on destruction. What are we going to do about it?” And, referring to the organization of the “secret committee,” the editorial stated: “It was decided that the inner workings of the organization were to be kept secret, to more effectively combat a body using similar tactics.” The editorial reeks with lies; but it was necessary that the mob spirit should be kept at white heat at all times. Newspaper

incitation has never been punished by law, yet it is directly responsible for more murders, lynching and raids than any other one force in America.



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[Illustration: The Stool Pigeon

Tom Morgan, who turned state's evidence. There is an historical precedent for Morgan. Judas acted similarly, but Judas later had the manhood to go out and hang himself. Morgan left for "parts unknown."]

### The Plot Leaks Out

By degrees the story of the infamous secret committee and its diabolical plan leaked out, adding positive confirmation to the many already credited rumors in circulation. Some of the newspapers quite openly hinted that the I.W.W. Hall was to be the object of the brewing storm. Chief of Police Hughes told a member of the Lewis County Trades Council, William T. Merriman by name, that the business men were organizing to raid the hall and drive its members out of town. Merriman, in turn carried the statement to many of his friends and brother unionists. Soon the prospective raid was the subject of open discussion,—over the breakfast toast, on the street corners, in the camps and mills—every place.

So common was the knowledge in fact that many of the craft organizations in Centralia began to discuss openly what they should do about it. They realized that the matter was one which concerned labor and many members wanted to protest and were urging their unions to try to do something. At the Lewis County Trades Council the subject was brought up for discussion by its president, L. F. Dickson. No way of helping the loggers was found, however, if they would so stubbornly try to keep open their headquarters in the face of such opposition. Harry Smith, a brother of Elmer Smith, the attorney, was a delegate at this meeting and reported to his brother the discussion that took place.

Secretary Britt Smith and the loggers at the Union hall were not by any means ignorant of the conspiracy being hatched against them. Day by day they had followed the development of the plot with breathless interest and not a little anxiety. They knew from bitter experience how union men were handled when they were trapped in their halls. But they would not entertain the idea of abandoning their principles and seeking personal safety. Every logging camp for miles around knew of the danger also. The loggers there had gone through the hell of the organization period and had felt the wrath of the lumber barons. Some of them felt that the statement of Secretary of Labor Wilson as to the attitude of the Industrial Workers of the World towards "overthrowing the government," and "violence and destruction" would discourage the terrorists from attempting such a flagrant and brutal injustice as the one contemplated.

[Illustration: "Oily" Abel

Suave and slimy as a snake; without any of the kindlier traits of nature, W.H. Abel, sounded the gamut of rottenness in his efforts to convict the accused men without the



semblance of a fair trial. Abel is notorious throughout Washington as the hireling of the lumber interests. In 1917 he prosecuted "without fee" all laboring men on strike and is attorney for the Cosmopolis "penitentiary" so called on account of the brutality with which it treats employes. Located in one of the small towns of the state Abel has made a fortune prosecuting labor cases for the special interests.]

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Regarding the deportation of I.W.W.'s for belonging to an organization which advocates such things, Secretary of Labor Wilson had stated a short time previously: "An exhaustive study into the by-laws and practices of the I.W.W. has thus far failed to disclose anything that brings it within the class of organizations referred to."

Other of the loggers were buoyed up with the many victories won in the courts on "criminal syndicalism" charges and felt that the raid would be too "raw" a thing for the lumber interests even to consider. All were secure in the knowledge and assurance that they were violating no law in keeping open their hall. And they wanted that hall kept open.

Of course the question of what was to be done was discussed at their business meetings. When news reached them on November 4th of the contemplated "parade" they decided to publish a leaflet telling the Citizens of Centralia about the justice and legality of their position, the aims of their organization and the real reason for the intense hatred which the lumber trust harbored against them. Such leaflet was drawn up by Secretary Britt Smith and approved by the membership. It was an honest, outspoken appeal for public sympathy and support. This leaflet—word for word as it was printed and circulated in Centralia—is reprinted below:

### **To the Citizens of Centralia We Must Appeal**

[Illustration: The Chief Fink

Frank P. Christensen, who was the "fixer" for the prosecution. As Assistant Attorney General he used his office to intimidate witnesses and in the effort to cover up actions of the mob. He is reported to have been responsible for the recovery and burial of Everest's body, saying: "We've got to bring in that body and bury it. If the wobs ever find out what was done and get it they'll raise hell and make capital of it."]

"To the law abiding citizens of Centralia and to the working class in general: We beg of you to read and carefully consider the following:

"The profiteering class of Centralia have of late been waving the flag of our country in an endeavor to incite the lawless element of our city to raid our hall and club us out of town. For this purpose they have inspired editorials in the Hub, falsely and viciously attacking the I.W.W., hoping to gain public approval for such revolting criminality. These profiteers are holding numerous secret meetings to that end, and covertly inviting returned service men to do their bidding. In this work they are ably assisted by the bankrupt lumber barons of southwest Washington who led the mob that looted and burned the I.W.W. hall a year ago.



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“These criminal thugs call us a band of outlaws bent on destruction. This they do in an attempt to hide their own dastardly work in burning our hall and destroying our property. They say we are a menace; and we are a menace to all mobocrats and pilfering thieves. Never did the I.W.W. burn public or private halls, kidnap their fellow citizens, destroy their property, club their fellows out of town, bootleg or act in any ways as law-breakers. These patriotic profiteers throughout the country have falsely and with out any foundation whatever charged the I.W.W. with every crime on the statute books. For these alleged crimes thousands of us have been jailed in foul and filthy cells throughout this country, often without charge, for months and in some cases, years, and when released re-arrested and again thrust in jail to await a trial that is never called. The only convictions of the I.W.W. were those under the espionage law, where we were forced to trial before jurors, all of whom were at political and industrial enmity toward us, and in courts hostile to the working class. This same class of handpicked courts and juries also convicted many labor leaders, socialists, non-partisans, pacifists, guilty of no crime save that of loyalty to the working class.

“By such courts Jesus the Carpenter was slaughtered upon the charge that ‘he stirreth up the people.’ Only last month 25 I.W.W. were indicted in Seattle as strike leaders, belonging to an unlawful organization, attempting to overthrow the government and other vile things under the syndicalist law passed by the last legislature. To exterminate the ‘wobbly’ both the court and jury have the lie to every charge. The court held them a lawful organization and their literature was not disloyal nor inciting to violence, though the government had combed the country from Chicago to Seattle for witnesses, and used every pamphlet taken from their hall in government raids.

“In Spokane 13 members were indicted in the Superior Court for wearing the I.W.W. button and displaying their emblem. The jury unanimously acquitted them and the court held it no crime.

“In test cases last month both in the Seattle and Everett Superior Courts, the presiding judge declared the police had no authority in law to close their halls and the padlocks were ordered off and the halls opened.

“Many I.W.W. in and around Centralia went to France and fought and bled for the democracy they never secured. They came home to be threatened with mob violence by the law and order outfit that pilfered every nickel possible from their mothers and fathers while they were fighting in the trenches in the thickest of the fray.

“Our only crime is solidarity, loyalty to the working class and justice to the oppressed.”

“Let the Men in Uniform Do It”

On November 6th, the Centralia Post of the American Legion met with a committee from the Chamber of Commerce to arrange for a parade-another “patriotic” parade. The first

anniversary of the signing of the armistice was now but a few days distant and Centralia felt it incumbent upon herself to celebrate. Of course the matter was brought up rather circumspectly, but knowing smiles greeted the suggestion. One business man made a motion that the brave boys wear their uniforms. This was agreed upon.

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The line of march was also discussed. As the union hall was a little off the customary parade route, Scales suggested that their course lead past the hall “in order to show them how strong we are.” It was intimated that a command “eyes right” would be given as the legionaries and business men passed the union headquarters. This was merely a poor excuse of the secret committeemen to get the parade where they needed it. But many innocent men were lured into a “lynching bee” without knowing that they were being led to death by a hidden gang of broad-cloth conspirators who were plotting at murder. Lieutenant Cormier, who afterwards blew the whistle that was the signal for the raid, endorsed the proposal of Scales as did Grimm and McElfresh—all three of them secret committeemen.

Practically no other subject but the “parade” was discussed at this meeting. The success of the project was now assured for it had placed into the hands of the men who alone could arrange to “have the men in uniform do it.” The men in uniform had done it once before and people knew what to expect.

The day following this meeting the Centralia Hub published an announcement of the coming event stating that the legionaires had “voted to wear uniforms.” The line of march was published for the first time. Any doubts about the real purpose of the parade vanished when people read that the precession was to march from the City Park to Third street and Tower avenue and return. The union hall was on Tower between Second and Third streets, practically at the end of the line of march and plainly the objective of the demonstrators.

[Illustration: Bridge from which Everest Was Hanged

From this bridge, over the Chehalis river, Wesley Everest was left dangling by a mob of business men. Automobile parties visited this spot at different times during the night and played their headlights on the corpse in order better to enjoy the spectacle.]

“Decent Labor”—Hands Off!

A short time after the shooting a virulent leaflet was issued by the Mayor’s office stating that the “plot to kill had been laid two or three weeks before the tragedy,” and that “the attack (of the loggers) was without justification or excuse.” Both statements are bare faced lies. The meeting was held the 6th and the line of march made public of the 7th. The loggers could not possibly have planned a week and a half previously to shoot into a parade they knew nothing about and whose line of march had not yet been disclosed. It was proved in court that the union men armed themselves at the very last moment, after everything else had failed and they had been left helpless to face the alternative of being driven out of town or being lynched.

About this time eyewitnesses declare coils of rope were being purchased in a local hardware store. This rope is all cut up into little pieces now and most of it is dirty and

stained. But many of Centralia's best families prize their souvenir highly. They say it brings good luck to a family.

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A few days after the meeting just described William Dunning, vice president of the Lewis County Trades and Labor Assembly, met Warren Grimm on the street. Having fresh in his mind a recent talk about the raid in the Labor Council meetings, and being well aware of Grimm's standing and influence, Dunning broached the subject.

"We've been discussing the threatened raid on the I.W.W. hall," he said.

"Who are you, an I.W.W.?" asked Grimm.

Dunning replied stating that he was vice president of the Labor Assembly and proceeded to tell Grimm the feeling of his organization on the subject.

"Decent labor ought to keep its hands off," was Grimm's laconic reply.

The Sunday before the raid a public meeting was held in the union hall. About a hundred and fifty persons were in the audience, mostly working men and women of Centralia. A number of loggers were present, dressed in the invariable mackinaw, staggd overalls and caulked shoes. John Foss, an I.W.W. ship builder from Seattle, was the speaker. Secretary Britt Smith was chairman. Walking up and down the aisle, selling the union's pamphlets and papers was a muscular and sun-burned young man with a rough, honest face and a pair of clear hazel eyes in which a smile was always twinkling. He wore a khaki army coat above staggd overalls of a slightly darker shade, —Wesley Everest, the ex-soldier who was shortly to be mutilated and lynched by the mob.

"I Hope to Jesus Nothing Happens"

The atmosphere of the meeting was already tainted with the Terror. Nerves were on edge. Every time any newcomer would enter the door the audience would look over their shoulders with apprehensive glances. At the conclusion of the meeting the loggers gathered around the secretary and asked him the latest news about the contemplated raid. For reply Britt Smith handed them copies of the leaflet "We Must Appeal" and told of the efforts that had been made and were being made to secure legal protection and to let the public know the real facts in the case.

"If they raid the hall again as they did in 1918 the boys won't stand for it," said a logger.

"If the law won't protect us we've got a right to protect ourselves," ventured another.

"I hope to Jesus nothing happens," replied the secretary.

Wesley Everest laid down his few unsold papers, rolled a brown paper cigarette and smiled enigmatically over the empty seats in the general direction of the new One Big Union label on the front window. His closest friends say he was never afraid of anything in all his life.



None of these men knew that loggers from nearby camps, having heard of the purchase of the coils of rope, were watching the hall night and day to see that “nothing happens.”

The next day, after talking things over with Britt Smith, Mrs. McAllister, wife of the proprietor of the Roderick hotel from whom the loggers rented the hall, went to see Chief of Police Hughes. This is how she told of the interview:



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“I got worried and I went to the Chief. I says to him ‘Are you going to protect my property?’ Hughes says, ‘We’ll do the best we can for you, but as far as the wobblies are concerned they wouldn’t last fifteen minutes if the business men start after them. The business men don’t want any wobblies in this town.’”

The day before the tragedy Elmer Smith dropped in at the Union hall to warn his clients that nothing could now stop the raid. “Defend it if you choose to do so,” he told them. “The law gives you that right.”

It was on the strength of this remark, overheard by the stool-pigeon, Morgan, and afterwards reported to the prosecution, that Elmer Smith was hailed to prison charged with murder in the first degree. His enemies had been certain all along that his incomprehensible delusion about the law being the same for the poor man as the rich would bring its own punishment. It did; there can no longer be any doubt on the subject.

[Illustration: Carting Away Wesley Everest’s Body for Burial

After the mutilated body had been cut down in laid in the river for two days. Then it was taken back to the city jail where it remained for two days more—as an object lesson—in plain view of the comrades of the murdered boy. Everest was taken from this building to be lynched. During the first week after the tragedy this jail witnessed scenes of torture and horror that equaled the worst days of the Spanish inquisition.]

## The Scorpion’s Sting

November 11th was a raw, gray day; the cold sunlight barely penetrating the mist that hung over the city and the distant tree-clad hills. The “parade” assembled at the City Park. Lieutenant Cormier was marshal. Warren Grimm was commander of the Centralia division. In a very short time he had the various bodies arranged to his satisfaction. At the head of the procession was the “two-fisted” Centralia bunch. This was followed by one from Chehalis, the county seat, and where the parade would logically have been held had its purpose been an honest one. Then came a few sailors and marines and a large body of well dressed gentlemen from the Elks. The school children who were to have marched did not appear. At the very end were a couple of dozen boy scouts and an automobile carrying pretty girls dressed in Red Cross uniforms. Evidently this parade, unlike the one of 1918, did not, like a scorpion, carry its sting in the rear. But wait until you read how cleverly this part of it had been arranged!

The marchers were unduly silent and those who knew nothing of the lawless plan of the secret committee felt somehow that something must be wrong. City Postmaster McCleary and a wicked-faced old man named Thompson were seen carrying coils of rope. Thompson is a veteran of the Civil War and a minister of God. On the witness

stand he afterwards swore he picked up the rope from the street and was carrying it “as a joke.” It turned out that the “joke” was on Wesley Everest.



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“Be ready for the command ‘eyes right’ or ‘eyes left’ when we pass the ‘reviewing stand’,” Grimm told the platoon commanders just as the parade started.

The procession covered most of the line of march without incident. When the union hall was reached there was some craning of necks but no outburst of any kind. A few of the out-of-town paraders looked at the place curiously and several business men were seen pointing the hall out to their friends. There were some dark glances and a few long noses but no demonstration.

“When do we reach the reviewing stand?” asked a parader, named Joe Smith, of a man marching beside him.

“Hell, there ain’t any reviewing stand,” was the reply. “We’re going to give the wobbly hall ‘eyes right’ on the way back.”

The head of the columns reached Third avenue and halted. A command of ‘about face’ was given and the procession again started to march past the union hall going in the opposite direction. The loggers inside felt greatly relieved as they saw the crowd once more headed for the city. But the Centralia and Chehalis contingents, that had headed the parade, was now in the rear—just where the “scorpion sting” of the 1918 parade had been located! The danger was not yet over.

“Let’s go! At ‘em, boys!”

The Chehalis division had marched past the hall and the Centralia division was just in front of it when a sharp command was given. The latter stopped squarely in front of the hall but the former continued to march. Lieutenant Cormier of the secret committee was riding between the two contingents on a bay horse. Suddenly he placed his fingers to his mouth and gave a shrill whistle. Immediately there was a hoarse cry of “Let’s go-o-o! At ‘em, boys!” About sixty feet separated the two contingents at this time, the Chehalis men still continuing the march. Cromier spurred his horse and overtook them. “Aren’t you boys in on this?” he shouted.

At the words “Let’s go,” the paraders from both ends and the middle of the Centralia contingent broke ranks and started on the run for the union headquarters. A crowd of soldiers surged against the door. There was a crashing of glass and a splintering of wood as the door gave way. A few of the marauders had actually forced their way into the hall. Then there was a shot, three more shots ... and a small volley. From Seminary hill and the Avalon hotel rifles began to crack.

[Illustration: Elks Club, Centralia

It was here that the Centralia conspiracy was hatched and the notorious “secret committee” appointed to do the dirty work.]

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The mob stopped suddenly, astounded at the unexpected opposition. Out of hundreds of halls that had been raided during the past two years this was the first time the union men had attempted to defend themselves. It had evidently been planned to stampede the entire contingent into the attack by having the secret committeemen take the lead from both ends and the middle. But before this could happen the crowd, frightened at the shots started to scurry for cover. Two men were seen carrying the limp figure of a soldier from the door of the hall. When the volley started they dropped it and ran. The soldier was a handsome young man, named Arthur McElfresh. He was left lying in front of the hall with his feet on the curb and his head in the gutter. The whole thing had been a matter of seconds.

### “I Had No Business Being There”

Several men had been wounded. A pool of blood was widening in front of the doorway. A big man in officer's uniform was seen to stagger away bent almost double and holding his hands over his abdomen. “My God, I'm shot!” he had cried to the soldier beside him. This was Warren O. Grimm; the other was his friend, Frank Van Gilder. Grimm walked unassisted to the rear of a nearby soft drink place from whence he was taken to a hospital. He died a short time afterwards. Van Gilder swore on the witness stand that Grimm and himself were standing at the head of the columns of “unoffending paraders” when his friend was shot. He stated that Grimm had been his life-long friend but admitted that when his “life-long friend” received his mortal wound that he (Van Gilder), instead of acting like a hero in no man's land, had deserted him in precipitate haste. Too many eye witnesses had seen Grimm stagger wounded from the doorway of the hall to suit the prosecution. Van Gilder knew at which place Grimm had been shot but it was necessary that he be placed at a convenient distance from the hall. It is reported on good authority that Grimm, just before he died in the hospital, confessed to a person at his bedside: “It served me right, I had no business being there.”

A workingman, John Patterson, had come down town on Armistice Day with his three small children to watch the parade. He was standing thirty-five feet from the door of the hall when the raid started. On the witness stand Patterson told of being pushed out of the way by the rush before the shooting began. He saw a couple of soldiers shot and saw Grimm stagger away from the doorway wounded in the abdomen. The testimony of Dr. Bickford at the corner's inquest under oath was as follows:

“I spoke up and said I would lead if enough would follow, but before I could take the lead there were many ahead of me. Someone next to me put his foot against the door and forced it open, after which a shower of bullets poured through the opening about us.” Dr. Bickford is an A.E.F. man and one of the very few legionaires who dared to tell the truth about the shooting. The Centralia business element has since tried repeatedly to ruin him.

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In trying to present the plea of self defense to the court, Defense attorney Vanderveer stated:

“There was a rush, men reached the hall under the command of Grimm, and yet counsel asks to have shown a specific overt act of Grimm before we can present the plea of self-defense. Would he have had the men wait with their lives at stake? The fact is that Grimm was there and in defending themselves these men shot. Grimm was killed because he was there. They could not wait. Your honor, self defense isn't much good after a man is dead.”

The prosecution sought to make a point of the fact that the loggers had fired into a street in which there were innocent bystanders as well as paraders. But the fact remains that the only men hit by bullets were those who were in the forefront of the mob.

### Through the Hall Window

How the raid looked from the inside of the hall can best be described from the viewpoint of one of the occupants, Bert Faulkner, a union logger and ex-service man. Faulkner described how he had dropped in at the hall on Armistice Day and stood watching the parade from the window. In words all the more startling for their sheer artlessness he told of the events which followed: First the grimacing faces of the business men, then as the soldiers returned, a muffled order, the smashing of the window, with the splinters of glass falling against the curtain, the crashing open of the door ... and the shots that “made his ears ring,” and made him run for shelter to the rear of the hall, with the shoulder of his overcoat torn with a bullet. Then how he found himself on the back stairs covered with rifles and commanded to come down with his hands in the air. Finally how he was frisked to the city jail in an automobile with a business man standing over him armed with a piece of gas pipe.

Eugene Barnett gave a graphic description of the raid as he saw it from the office of the adjoining Roderick hotel. Barnett said he saw the line go past the hotel. The business men were ahead of the soldiers and as this detachment passed the hotel returning the soldiers still were going north. The business men were looking at the hall and pointing it out to the soldiers. Some of them had their thumbs to their noses and others were saying various things.

[Illustration: City Park, Centralia

At this place the parade assembled that started out to raid the Union hall and lynch its secretary.]



“When the soldiers turned and came past I saw a man on horseback ride past. He was giving orders which were repeated along the line by another. As the rider passed the hotel he gave a command and the second man said: ‘Bunch up, men!’

“When this order came the men all rushed for the hall. I heard glass break. I heard a door slam. There was another sound and then shooting came. It started from inside the hall.



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“As I saw these soldiers rush the hall I jumped up and threw off my coat. I thought there would be a fight and I was going to mix in. Then came the shooting, and I knew I had no business there.”

Later Barnett went home and remained there until his arrest the next day.

In the union hall, besides Bert Faulkner, were Wesley Everest, Roy Becker, Britt Smith, Mike Sheehan, James McInerney and the “stool pigeon,” these, with the exception of Faulkner and Everest, remained in the hall until the authorities came to place them under arrest. They had after the first furious rush of their assailants, taken refuge in a big and long disused ice box in the rear of the hall. Britt Smith was unarmed, his revolver being found afterwards, fully loaded, in his roll-top desk. After their arrest the loggers were taken to the city jail which was to be the scene of an inquisition unparalleled in the history of the United States. After this, as an additional punishment, they were compelled to face the farce of a “fair trial” in a capitalistic court.

### Wesley Everest

But Destiny had decided to spare one man the bitter irony of judicial murder. Wesley Everest still had a pocket full of cartridges and a forty-four automatic that could speak for itself.

This soldier-lumberjack had done most of the shooting in the hall. He held off the mob until the very last moment, and, instead of seeking refuge in the refrigerator after the “paraders” had been dispersed, he ran out of the back door, reloading his pistol as he went. It is believed by many that Arthur McElfresh was killed inside the hall by a bullet fired by Everest.

In the yard at the rear of the hall the mob had already reorganized for an attack from that direction. Before anyone knew what had happened Everest had broken through their ranks and scaled the fence. “Don’t follow me and I won’t shoot,” he called to the crowd and displaying the still smoking blue steel pistol in his hand.

“There goes the secretary!” yelled someone, as the logger started at top speed down the alley. The mob surged in pursuit, collapsing the board fence before them with sheer force of numbers. There was a rope in the crowd and the union secretary was the man they wanted. The chase that followed probably saved the life, not only of Britt Smith, but the remaining loggers in the hall as well.

Running pell-mell down the alley the mob gave a shout of exaltation as Everest slowed his pace and turned to face them. They stopped cold, however, as a number of quick shots rang out and bullets whistled and zipped around them. Everest turned in his tracks and was off again like a flash, reloading his pistol as he ran. The mob again



resumed the pursuit. The logger ran through an open gateway, paused to turn and again fire at his pursuers; then he ran between two frame dwellings to the open street. When the mob again caught the trail they were evidently under the impression that the logger's ammunition was exhausted. At all events they took up the chase with redoubled energy. Some men in the mob had rifles and now and then a pot-shot would be taken at the fleeing figure. The marksmanship of both sides seems to have been poor for no one appears to have been injured.



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### Dale Hubbard

This kind of running fight was kept up until Everest reached the river. Having kept off his pursuers thus far the boy started boldly for the comparative security of the opposite shore, splashing the water violently as he waded out into the stream. The mob was getting closer all the time. Suddenly Everest seemed to change his mind and began to retrace his steps to the shore. Here he stood dripping wet in the tangled grasses to await the arrival of the mob bent on his destruction. Everest had lost his hat and his wet hair stuck to his forehead. His gun was now so hot he could hardly hold it and the last of his ammunition was in the magazine. Eye witnesses declare his face still wore a quizzical, half bantering smile when the mob overtook him. With the pistol held loosely in his rough hand Everest stood at bay, ready to make a last stand for his life. Seeing him thus, and no doubt thinking his last bullet had been expended, the mob made a rush for its quarry.

“Stand back!” he shouted. “If there are ‘bulls’ in the crowd, I’ll submit to arrest; otherwise lay off of me.”

[Illustration: Blind Tom Lassiter

Tom Lassiter is the blind news dealer who Was kidnapped and deported out of town in June, 1919, by a gang of business men. His stand was raided and the contents burned in the street. He had been selling The Seattle Union Record, The Industrial Worker and Solidarity. County attorney Allen said he couldn’t help to apprehend the criminals and would only charge them with third degree assault if they were found. The fine would be one dollar and costs! Lassiter is now in jail in Chehalis charged with “criminal syndicalism.”]

No attention was paid to his words. Everest shot from the hip four times,—then his gun stalled. A group of soldiers started to run in his direction. Everest was tugging at the gun with both hands. Raising it suddenly he took careful aim and fired. All the soldiers but one wavered and stopped. Everest fired twice, both bullets taking effect. Two more shots were fired almost point blank before the logger dropped his assailant at his feet. Then he tossed away the empty gun and the mob surged upon him.

The legionaire who had been shot was Dale Hubbard, a nephew of F.B. Hubbard, the lumber baron. He was a strong, brave and misguided young man—worthy of a nobler death.

“Let’s Finish the Job!”

Everest attempted a fight with his fists but was overpowered and severely beaten. A number of men clamoured for immediate lynching, but saner council prevailed for the time and he was dragged through the streets towards the city jail. When the mob was

half a block from this place the “hot heads” made another attempt to cheat the state executioner. A wave of fury seemed here to sweep the crowd. Men fought with one another for a chance to strike, kick or spit in the face of their victim. It was

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an orgy of hatred and blood-lust. Everest's arms were pinioned, blows, kicks and curses rained upon him from every side. One business man clawed strips of bleeding flesh from his face. A woman slapped his battered cheek with a well groomed hand. A soldier tried to lunge a hunting rifle at the helpless logger; the crowd was too thick. He bumped them aside with the butt of the gun to get room. Then he crashed the muzzle with full force into Everest's mouth. Teeth were broken and blood flowed profusely.

A rope appeared from somewhere. "Let's finish the job!" cried a voice. The rope was placed about the neck of the logger. "You haven't got guts enough to lynch a man in the daytime," was all he said.

At this juncture a woman brushed through the crowd and took the rope from Everest's neck. Looking into the distorted faces of the mob she cried indignantly, "You are curs and cowards to treat a man like that!"

There may be human beings in Centralia after all.

Wesley Everest was taken to the city jail and thrown without ceremony upon the cement floor of the "bull pen." In the surrounding cells were his comrades who had been arrested in the union hall. Here he lay in a wet heap, twitching with agony. A tiny bright stream of blood gathered at his side and trailed slowly along the floor. Only an occasional quivering moan escaped his torn lips as the hours slowly passed by.

"Here Is Your Man"

Later, at night, when it was quite dark, the lights of the jail were suddenly snapped off. At the same instant the entire city was plunged in darkness. A clamour of voices was heard beyond the walls. There was a hoarse shout as the panel of the outer door was smashed in. "Don't shoot, men," said the policemen on guard, "Here is your man." It was night now, and the business men had no further reason for not lynching the supposed secretary. Everest heard their approaching foot steps in the dark. He arose drunkenly to meet them. "Tell the boys I died for my class," he whispered brokenly to the union men in the cells. These were the last words he uttered in the jail. There were sounds of a short struggle and of many blows. Then a door slammed and, in a short time the lights were switched on. The darkened city was again illuminated at the same moment. Outside three luxurious automobiles were purring them selves out of sight in the darkness.

The only man who had protested the lynching at the last moment was William Scales. "Don't kill him, men," he is said to have begged of the mob. But it was too late. "If you don't go through with this you're an I.W.W. too," they told him. Scales could not calm the evil passions he had helped to arouse.

But how did it happen that the lights were turned out at such an opportune time? Could it be that city officials were working hand in glove with the lynch mob?



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Defense Attorney Vanderveer offered to prove to the court that such was the case. He offered to prove this was a part of the greater conspiracy against the union loggers and their hall,—offered to prove it point by point from the very beginning. Incidentally Vanderveer offered to prove that Earl Craft, electrician in charge of the city lighting plant, had left the station at seven o'clock on Armistice day after securely locking the door; and that while Craft was away the lights of the city were turned off and Wesley Everest taken out and lynched. Furthermore, he offered to prove that when Craft returned, the lights were again turned on and the city electrician, his assistant and the Mayor of Centralia were in the building with the door again locked.

These offers were received by his honor with impassive judicial dignity, but the faces of the lumber trust attorneys were wreathed with smiles at the audacity of the suggestion. The corporation lawyers very politely registered their objections which the judge as politely sustained.

### The Night of Horrors

After Everest had been taken away the jail became a nightmare—as full of horrors as a madman's dream. The mob howled around the walls until late in the night. Inside, a lumber trust lawyer and his official assistants were administering the “third degree” to the arrested loggers, to make them “confess.” One at a time the men were taken to the torture chamber, and so terrible was the ordeal of this American Inquisition that some were almost broken—body and soul. Loren Roberts had the light in his brain snuffed out. Today he is a shuffling wreck. He is not interested in things any more. He is always looking around with horror-wide eyes, talking of “voices” and “wires” that no one but himself knows anything about. There is no telling what they did to the boy, but he signed the “confession.” Its most incriminating statement must have contained too much truth for the prosecution. It was never used in court.

When interviewed by Frank Walklin of the Seattle Union Record the loggers told the story in their own way:

“I have heard tales of cruelty,” said James McInerney, “but I believe what we boys went through on those nights can never be equaled. I thought it was my last night on earth and had reconciled myself to an early death of some kind, perhaps hanging. I was taken out once by the mob, and a rope was placed around my neck and thrown over a cross-bar or something.

“I waited for them to pull the rope. But they didn't. I heard voices in the mob say, ‘That's not him,’ and then I was put back into the jail.”

John Hill Lamb, another defendant, related how several times a gun was poked through his cell window by some one who was aching to get a pot shot at him. Being ever

watchful he hid under his bunk and close to the wall where the would-be murderer could not see him.



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Britt Smith and Roy Becker told with bated breath about Everest as he lay half-dead in the corridor, in plain sight of the prisoners in the cells on both sides. The lights went out and Everest, unconscious and dying, was taken out. The men inside could hear the shouts of the mob diminishing as Everest was hurried to the Chehalis River bridge.

[Illustration: Bert Bland

Logger. American. (Brother of O.C. Bland.) One of the men who fired from Seminary Hill. Bland has worked all his life in the woods. He joined the Industrial Workers of the World during the great strike of 1917. Bert Bland took to the hills after the shooting and was captured a week later during the man hunt.]

None of the prisoners was permitted to sleep that night; the fear of death was kept upon them constantly, the voices outside the cell windows telling of more lynchings to come. "Every time I heard a footstep or the clanking of keys," said Britt Smith, "I thought the mob was coming after more of us. I didn't sleep, couldn't sleep; all I could do was strain my ears for the mob I felt sure was coming." Ray Becker, listening at Britt's side, said: "Yes, that was one hell of a night." And the strain of that night seems to linger in their faces; probably it always will remain—the expression of a memory that can never be blotted out.

When asked if they felt safer when the soldiers arrived to guard the Centralia jail, there was a long pause, and finally the answer was "Yes." "But you must remember," offered one, "that they took 'em out at Tulsa from a supposedly guarded jail; and we couldn't know from where we were what was going on outside."

"For ten days we had no blankets," said Mike Sheehan. "It was cold weather, and we had to sleep uncovered on concrete floors. In those ten days I had no more than three hours sleep."

"The mob and those who came after the mob wouldn't let us sleep. They would come outside our windows and hurl curses at us, and tell each of us it would be our turn next. They brought in Wesley Everest and laid him on the corridor floor; he was bleeding from his ears and mouth and nose, was curled in a heap and groaning. And men outside and inside kept up the din. I tried to sleep; I was nearly mad; my temples kept pounding like sledge-hammers. I don't know how a man can go through all that and live—but we did."

All through the night the prisoners could hear the voices of the mob under their cell windows. "Well, we fixed that guy Everest all right," some one would say. "Now we'll get Roberts." Then the lights would snap off, there would be a shuffling, curses, a groan and the clanking of a steel door. All the while they were being urged to "come clean" with a statement that would clear the lumber trust of the crime and throw the blame onto its victims. McInerney's neck was scraped raw by the rope of the mob but he repeatedly told them to "go to hell!" Morgan, the stool-pigeon, escaped the torture by



immediate acquiescence. Someone has since paid his fare To parts unknown. His  
“statement” didn’t damage the defense.

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[Illustration: Ray Becker

Logger, American born. Twenty-five years of age. Studied four years for the ministry before going to work in the woods. His father and brother are both preachers. Becker joined the Industrial Workers of the World in 1917 and has always been a strong believer in the cause of the solidarity of Labor. He has the zeal of a prophet and the courage of a lion. Defended himself inside the hall with an Ivor Johnson, 38, until his ammunition was exhausted. He surrendered to the authorities—not the mob.]

### The Human Fiend

But with the young logger who had been taken out into the night things were different. Wesley Everest was thrown, half unconscious, into the bottom of an automobile. The hands of the men who had dragged him there were sticky and red. Their pant legs were sodden from rubbing against the crumpled figure at their feet. Through the dark streets sped the three machines. The smooth asphalt became a rough road as the suburbs were reached. Then came a stretch of open country, with the Chehalis river bridge only a short distance ahead. The cars lurched over the uneven road with increasing speed, their headlights playing on each other or on the darkened highway.

Wesley Everest stirred uneasily. Raising himself slowly on one elbow he swung weakly with his free arm, striking one of his tormentors full in the face. The other occupants immediately seized him and bound his hands and feet with rope. It must have been the glancing blow from the fist of the logger that gave one of the gentlemen his fiendish inspiration. Reaching in his pocket he produced a razor. For a moment he fumbled over the now limp figure in the bottom of the car. His companions looked on with stolid acquiescence. Suddenly there was a piercing scream of pain. The figure gave a convulsive shudder of agony. After a moment Wesley Everest said in a weak voice: "For Christ's sake, men; shoot me—don't let me suffer like this."

On the way back to Centralia, after the parade rope had done its deadly work, the gentlemen of the razor alighted from the car in front of a certain little building. He asked leave to wash his hands. They were as red as a butcher's. Great clots of blood were adhering to his sleeves. "That's about the nastiest job I ever had to do," was his casual remark as he washed himself in the cool clear water of the Washington hills. The name of this man is known to nearly everybody in Centralia. He is still at large.

The headlight of the foremost car was now playing on the slender steel framework of the Chehalis river bridge. This machine crossed over and stopped, the second one reached the middle of the bridge and stopped while the third came to a halt when it had barely touched the plankwork on the near side. The well-dressed occupants of the first and last cars alighted and proceeded at once to patrol both approaches to the bridge.

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### Lynching—An American Institution

Wesley Everest was dragged out of the middle machine. A rope was attached to a girder with the other end tied in a noose around his neck. His almost lifeless body was hauled to the side of the bridge. The headlights of two of the machines threw a white light over the horrible scene. Just as the lynchers let go of their victim the fingers of the half dead logger clung convulsively to the planking of the bridge. A business man stamped on them with a curse until the grip was broken. There was a swishing sound; then a sudden crunching jerk and the rope tied to the girder began to writhe and twist like a live thing. This lasted but a short time. The lynchers peered over the railing into the darkness. Then they slowly pulled up the dead body, attached a longer rope and repeated the performance. This did not seem to suit them either, so they again dragged the corpse through the railings and tied a still longer rope around the horribly broken neck of the dead logger. The business men were evidently enjoying their work, and besides, the more rope the more souvenirs for their friends, who would prize them highly.

This time the knot was tied by a young sailor. He knew how to tie a good knot and was proud of the fact. He boasted of the stunt afterwards to a man he thought as beastly as himself. In all probability he never dreamed he was talking for publication. But he was.

The rope had now been lengthened to about fifteen feet. The broken and gory body was kicked through the railing for the last time. The knot on the girder did not move any more. Then the lynchers returned to their luxurious cars and procured their rifles. A headlight flashed the dangling figure into ghastly relief. It was riddled with volley after volley. The man who fired the first shot boasted of the deed afterwards to a brother lodge member. He didn't know he was talking for publication either.

On the following morning the corpse was cut down by an unknown hand. It drifted away with the current. A few hours later Frank Christianson, a tool of the lumber trust from the Attorney General's office, arrived in Centralia. "We've got to get that body," this worthy official declared, "or the wobs will find it and raise hell over its condition."

The corpse was located after a search. It was not buried, however, but carted back to the city jail, there to be used as a terrible object lesson for the benefit of the incarcerated union men. The unrecognizable form was placed in a cell between two of the loggers who had loved the lynched boy as a comrade and a friend. Something must be done to make the union men admit that they, and not the lumber interests, had conspired to commit murder. This was the final act of ruthlessness. It was fruitful in results. One "confession," one Judas and one shattered mind were the result of their last deed of fiendish terrorism.

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[Illustration: The Burial of the Mob's Victim

No undertaker would handle Everest's body. The autopsy was performed by a man from Portland, who hung the body up by the heels and played a hose on it. The men lowering the plank casket into the grave are Union loggers who had been caught in the police drag net and taken from jail for this purpose.]

No undertaker could be found to bury Everest's body, so after two days it was dropped into a hole in the ground by four union loggers who had been arrested on suspicion and were released from jail for this purpose. The "burial" is supposed to have taken place in the new cemetery; the body being carried thither in an auto truck. The union loggers who really dug the grave declare, however, that the interment took place at a desolate spot "somewhere along a railroad track." Another body was seen, covered with ashes in a cart, being taken away for burial on the morning of the twelfth. There are persistent rumors that more than one man was lynched on the eve of Armistice day. A guard of heavily armed soldiers had charge of the funeral. The grave has since been obliterated. Rumor has it that the body has since been removed to Camp Lewis. No one seems to know why or when.

"As Comical as a Corner"

An informal inquest was held in the city jail. A man from Portland performed the autopsy, that is, he hung the body up by the heels and played a water hose on it. Everest was reported by the coroner's jury to have met his death at the hands of parties unknown. It was here that Dr. Bickford let slip the statement about the hall being raided before the shooting started. This was the first inkling of truth to reach the public. Coroner Livingstone, in a jocular mood, reported the inquest to a meeting of gentlemen at the Elks' Club. In explaining the death of the union logger, Dr. Livingstone stated that Wesley Everest had broken out of jail, gone to the Chehalis river bridge and jumped off with a rope around his neck. Finding the rope too short he climbed back and fastened on a longer one; jumped off again, broke his neck and then shot himself full of holes. Livingstone's audience, appreciative of his tact and levity, laughed long and hearty. Business men still chuckle over the joke in Centralia. "As funny as a funeral" is no longer the stock saying in this humorous little town; "as comical as a coroner" is now the approved form.

## The Man-Hunt

Acting on the theory that "a strong offensive is the best defense," the terrorists took immediate steps to conceal all traces of their crime and to shift the blame onto the shoulders of their victims. The capitalist press did yeoman service in this cause by deluging the nation with a veritable avalanche of lies.

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For days the district around Centralia and the city itself were at the mercy of a mob. The homes of all workers suspected of being sympathetic to Labor were spied upon or surrounded and entered without warrant. Doors were battered down at times, and women and children abused and insulted. Heavily armed posses were sent out in all directions in search of “reds.” All roads were patrolled by armed business men in automobiles. A strict mail and wire censorship was established. It was the open season for “wobblies” and intimidation was the order of the day. The White Terror was supreme.

An Associated Press reporter was compelled to leave town hastily without bag or baggage because he inadvertently published Dr. Bickford’s indiscreet remark about the starting of the trouble. Men and women did not dare to think, much less think aloud. Some of them in the district are still that way.

To Eugene Barnett’s little home came a posse armed to the teeth. They asked for Barnett and were told by his young wife that he had gone up the hill with his rifle. Placing a bayonet to her breast they demanded entrance. The brave little woman refused to admit them until they had shown a warrant. Barnett surrendered when he had made sure he was to be arrested and not mobbed.

O.C. Bland, Bert Bland, John Lamb and Loren Roberts were also apprehended in due time. Two loggers, John Doe Davis and Ole Hanson, who were said to have also fired on the mob, have not yet been arrested. A vigorous search is still being made for them in all parts of the country. It is believed by many that one of these men was lynched like Everest on the night of November 11th.

[Illustration: Court House at Montesano—And a Little “Atmosphere”

The trial was held on the third floor of the building as you look at the picture. The soldiers were sent for over the head of the judge by one of the lumber trust attorneys of the prosecution. Their only purpose was to create the proper “atmosphere” for an unjust conviction.]

## Hypocrisy and Terror

The reign of terror was extended to cover the entire West coast. Over a thousand men and women were arrested in the state of Washington alone. Union halls were closed and kept that way. Labor papers were suppressed and many men have been given sentences of from one to fourteen years for having in their possession copies of periodicals which contained little else but the truth about the Centralia tragedy. The Seattle Union Record was temporarily closed down and its stock confiscated for daring to hint that there were two sides to the story. During all this time the capitalist press was given full rein to spread its infamous poison. The general public, denied the true version of the affair, was shuddering over its morning coffee at the thought of I.W.W.



desperadoes shooting down unoffending paraders from ambush. But the lumber interests were chortling with glee and winking a suggestive eye at their high priced lawyers who were making ready for the prosecution. Jurymen were shortly to be drawn and things were "sitting pretty," as they say in poker.



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Adding a characteristic touch to the rotten hypocrisy of the situation came a letter from Supreme Court Judge McIntosh to George Dysart, whose son was in command of a posse during the manhunt. This remarkable document is as follows:

Kenneth Mackintosh, Judge  
The Supreme Court, State of Washington  
Olympia.

George Dysart, Esq.,  
Centralia, Wash.  
My Dear Dysart:

November 13, 1919.

I want to express to you my appreciation of the high character of citizenship displayed by the people of Centralia in their agonizing calamity. We are all shocked by the manifestation of barbarity on the part of the outlaws, and are depressed by the loss of lives of brave men, but at the same time are proud of the calm control and loyalty to American ideals demonstrated by the returned soldiers and citizens. I am proud to be an inhabitant of a state which contains a city with the record which has been made for Centralia by its law-abiding citizens.

Sincerely,  
(Signed) Kenneth MacKintosh.

### **“Patriotic” Union Smashing**

Not to be outdone by this brazen example of judicial perversion, Attorney General Thompson, after a secret conference of prosecuting attorneys, issued a circular of advice to county prosecutors. In this document the suggestion was made that officers and members of the Industrial Workers of the World in Washington be arrested by the wholesale under the “criminal syndicalism” law and brought to trial simultaneously so that they might not be able to secure legal defense. The astounding recommendation was also made that, owing to the fact that juries had been “reluctant to convict,” prosecutors and the Bar Association should co-operate in examining jury panels so that “none but courageous and patriotic Americans” secure places on the juries.

This effectual if somewhat arbitrary plan was put into operation at once. Since the tragedy at Centralia dozens of union workers have been convicted by “courageous and patriotic” juries and sentenced to serve from one to fourteen years in the state penitentiary. Hundreds more are awaiting trial. The verdict at Montesano is now known to everyone. Truly the lives of the four Legion boys which were sacrificed by the lumber



interests in furtherance of their own murderous designs, were well expended. The investment was a profitable one and the results are no doubt highly gratifying.

But just the same the despicable plot of the Attorney General is an obvious effort to defeat the purpose of the courts and obtain unjust convictions by means of what is termed "jury fixing." There may be honor among thieves but there is plainly none among the public servants they have working for them!

[Illustration: Mike Sheenan

Born in Ireland. 64 years old. Has been a union man for over fifty years, having joined his grandfather's union when he was only eight. Has been through many strikes and has been repeatedly black-hated, beaten and even exiled. He was a stoker in the Navy during the Spanish War. Mike Sheehan was arrested in the Union hall, went through the horrible experience in the city jail and was found "not guilty" by the jury. Like Elmer Smith, he was re-arrested on another similar charge and thrown back in jail.]



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The only sane note sounded during these dark days, outside of the startling statement of Dr. Bickford, came from Montana. Edward Bassett, commander of the Butte Post of the American Legion and an over-seas veteran, issued a statement to the labor press that was truly remarkable:

“The I.W.W. in Centralia, Wash., who fired upon the men that were attempting to raid the I.W.W. headquarters, were fully justified in their act.

“Mob rule in this country must be stopped, and when mobs attack the home of a millionaire, of a laborer, or of the I.W.W., it is not only the right but the duty of the occupants to resist with every means in their power. If the officers of the law can not stop these raids, perhaps the resistance of the raided may have that effect.

“Whether the I.W.W. is a meritorious organization or not, whether it is unpopular or otherwise, should have absolutely nothing to do with the case. The reports of the evidence at the coroner’s jury show that the attack was made before the firing started. If that is true, I commend the boys inside for the action that they took.

“The fact that there were some American Legion men among the paraders who everlastingly disgraced themselves by taking part in the raid, does not affect my judgment in the least. Any one who becomes a party to a mob bent upon unlawful violence, cannot expect the truly patriotic men of the American Legion to condone his act.”

### Vanderveer’s Opening Speech

Defense Attorney George Vanderveer hurried across the continent from Chicago to take up the legal battle for the eleven men who had been arrested and charged with the murder of Warren O. Grimm. The lumber interests had already selected six of their most trustworthy tools as prosecutors. It is not the purpose of the present writer to give a detailed story of this “trial”—possibly one of the greatest travesties on justice ever staged. This incident was a very important part of the Centralia conspiracy but a hasty sketch, such as might be portrayed in these pages, would be an inadequate presentation at best. It might be well, therefore, to permit Mr. Vanderveer to tell of the case as he told it to the jury in his opening and closing arguments. Details of the trial itself can be found in other booklets by more capable authors. Vanderveer’s opening address appears in part below:

May it please the court and gentlemen of the jury:—As you have already sensed from our examination of you and from a question which I propounded to counsel at the close of his statement yesterday, the big question in this case is, who was the aggressor, who started the battle? Was it on the one side a deliberately planned murderous attack upon innocent marchers, or was it on the other side a deliberately planned wicked attack

upon the I.W.W., which they merely resisted? That, I say, is the issue. I asked counsel what his position would be in order that you might know it, and that he said was his position, that he would stand and fall and be judged by it, and I say to you now that is our position, and we will stand or fall and be judged by that issue.



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In order that you may properly understand this situation, and the things that led up to it, the motives underlying it, the manner in which it was planned and executed, I want to go just a little way back of the occurrence on November 11th, and state to you in rough outline the situation that existed in Centralia, the objects that were involved in this case, the things each are trying to accomplish and the way each went about it. There has been some effort on the part of the state to make it appear it is not an I.W.W. trial. I felt throughout that the I.W.W. issue must come into this case, and now that they have made their opening statement, I say unreservedly it is here in this case, not because we want to drag it in here, but because it can't be left out. To conceal from you gentlemen that it is an I.W.W. issue would be merely to conceal the truth from you and we, on our part, don't want to do that now or at any time hereafter.

The I.W.W. is at the bottom of this. Not as an aggressor, however. It is a labor organization, organized in Chicago in 1905, and it is because of the philosophy for which it stands and because of certain tactics which it evolves that this thing arose.

[Illustration: James McInerney

Logger. Born in County Claire, Ireland. Joined the Industrial Workers of the World in 1916. Was wounded on the steamer "Verona" when the lumber trust tried to exterminate the union lumberworkers with bullets at Everett, Washington. McInerney was one of those trapped in the hall. He surrendered to officers of the law. While in the city jail his neck was worn raw with a hangman's rope in an effort to make him "confess" that the loggers and not the mob had started the trouble. McInerney told them to "go to hell." He is Irish and an I.W.W. and proud of being both.]

## A Labor Movement on Trial

The I.W.W. is the representative in this country of the labor movement of the rest of the world. It is the representative in the United States of the idea that capitalism is wrong: that no man has a right, moral or otherwise, to exploit his fellow men, the idea that our industrial efforts should be conducted not for the profits of any individual but should be conducted for social service, for social welfare. So the I.W.W. says first, that the wage system is wrong and that it means to abolish that wage system. It says that it intends to do this, not by political action, not by balloting, but by organization on the industrial or economical field, precisely as employers, precisely as capital is organized on the basis of the industry, not on the basis of the tool. The I.W.W. says industrial evolution has progressed to that point there the tool no longer enforces craftsmanship. In the place of a half dozen or dozen who were employed, each a skilled artisan, employed to do the work, you have a machine process to do that work and it resulted in the organization of the industry on an industrial



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basis. You have the oil industry, controlled by the Standard Oil; you have the lumber industry, controlled by the Lumbermen's Association of the South and West, and you have the steel and copper industry, all organized on an industrial basis resulting in a fusing, or corporation, or trust of a lot of former owners. Now the I.W.W. say if they are to compete with our employers, we must compete with our employers as an organization, and as they are organized so we must protect our organization, as they protect themselves. And so they propose to organize into industrial unions; the steel workers and the coal miners, and the transportation workers each into its own industrial unit.

This plan of organization is extremely distasteful to the employers because it is efficient; because it means a new order, a new system in the labor world in this country. The meaning of this can be gathered, in some measure, from the recent experiences in the steel strike of this country, where they acted as an industrial unit; from the recent experiences in the coal mining industry, where they acted as an industrial unit. Instead of having two or three dozen other crafts, each working separately, they acted as an industrial unit. When the strike occurred it paralyzed industry and forced concessions to the demands of the workers. That is the first thing the I.W.W. stands for and in some measure and in part explains the attitude capital has taken all over the country towards it.

In the next place it says that labor should organize on the basis of some fundamental principle; and labor should organize for something more than a mere bartering and dickering for fifty cents a day or for some shorter time, something of that sort. It says that the system is fundamentally wrong and must be fundamentally changed before you can look for some improvement. Its philosophy is based upon government statistics which show that in a few years in this country our important industries have crept into more than two-thirds of our entire wealth. Seventy-five per cent of the workers in the basic industry are unable to send their children to school. Seventy-one per cent of the heads of the families in our basic industries are unable to provide a decent living for their families without the assistance of the other members. Twenty-nine per cent of our laborers are able to live up to the myth that he is the head of the family. The results of these evils are manifold. Our people are not being raised in decent vicinities. They are not being raised and educated. Their health is not being cared for; their morals are not being cared for. I will show you that in certain of our industries where the wages are low and the hours are long, that the children of the working people die at the rate of 300 to 350 per thousand inhabitants under the age of one year because of their undernourishment, lack of proper housing and lack of proper medical attention and because the mothers of these children before they

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are born and when the children are being carried in the mother's womb that they are compelled to go into the industries and work and work and work, and before the child can receive proper nourishment the mother is compelled to go back into the industry and work again. The I.W.W.'s say there must be a fundamental change and that fundamental change must be in the line of reorganization of industry, for public service, so that the purpose shall be that we will work to live and not merely live to work. Work for service rather than work for profit.

[Illustration: James McInerney

(After he had undergone the "Third degree".)

McInerney had a rope around his neck nearly all night before this picture was taken. One end of the rope had been pulled taut over a beam by his tormentors. McInerney had told them to "go to hell." "It's no use trying to get anything out of a man like that," was the final decision of the inquisitors.]

To Kill an Ideal...

Some time in September, counsel told you, the I.W.W., holding these beliefs, opened a hall in Centralia. Back of that hall was a living room, where Britt Smith lived, kept his clothes and belongings and made his home. From then on the I.W.W. conducted a regular propaganda meeting every Saturday night. These propaganda meetings were given over to a discussion of these industrial problems and beliefs. From that district there were dispatched into nearby lumber camps and wherever there were working people to whom to carry this message—there were dispatched organizers who went out, made the talks in the camps briefly and sought to organize them into this union, at least to teach them the philosophy of this labor movement.

Because that propaganda is fatal to those who live by other people's work, who live by the profits they wring from labor, it excited intense opposition on the part of employers and business people of Centralia and about the time this hall was opened we will show you that people from Seattle, where they maintain their headquarters for these labor fights, came into Centralia and held meetings. I don't know what they call this new thing they were seeking to organize—it is in fact a branch of the Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association of the United States, a national organization whose sole purpose is to fight and crush and beat labor. It was in no sense a local movement because it started in Seattle and it was organized by people from Seattle, and the purpose was to organize in Centralia an organization of business men to combat this new labor philosophy. Whether in the mouths of the I.W.W., or Nonpartisan League, or the Socialists, it did not make any difference; to brand anybody as a traitor, un-American, who sought to tell the truth about our industrial conditions.

## The Two Raids

In the fall of 1918, the I.W.W. had a hall two blocks and a half from this hall, at the corner of First and B streets. There was a Red Cross parade, and that hall was wrecked, just as was this hall. These profiteering gentlemen never overlook an opportunity to capitalize on a patriotic event, and so they capitalized the Red Cross parade that day just as they capitalized the Armistice Day parade on November 11, and in exactly the same way as on November 11.



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And that day, when the tail-end of the parade of the Red Cross passed the main avenue, it broke off and went a block out of its way and attacked the I.W.W. hall, a good two-story building. And they broke it into splinters. The furniture, records, the literature that belongs to these boys, everything was taken out into the street and burned.

[Illustration: O. C. Bland

Logger. American. Resident of Centralia for a number of years. Has worked in woods and mills practically all his life. Has a wife and seven children. Bland was in the Arnold hotel at the time of the raid. He was armed but had cut his hand on broken glass before he had a chance to shoot. Since his arrest and conviction his family has undergone severe hardships. The defense is making an effort to raise enough funds to keep the helpless wives and children of the convicted men in the comforts of life.]

Now, what was contemplated on Armistice Day? The I.W.W. did as you would do; it judged from experience.

### Patience No Longer a Virtue

When the paraders smashed the door in, the I.W.W.'s, as every lover of free speech and every respecter of his person—they had appealed to the citizens, they had appealed to the officers, and some of their members had been tarred and feathered, beaten up and hung—they said in thought: "Patience has ceased to be a virtue." And if the law will not protect us, and the people won't protect us, we will protect ourselves. And they did.

And in deciding this case, I want each of you, members of the jury, to ask yourself what would you have done?

There had been discussions of this character in the I.W.W. hall, and so have there been discussions everywhere. There had never been a plot laid to murder anybody, nor to shoot anybody in any parade. I want you to ask yourself: "Why would anybody want to shoot anybody in a parade," and to particularly ask yourself why anyone would want to shoot upon soldiers?

He who was a soldier himself, Wesley Everest, the man who did most of the shooting, and the man whom they beat until he was unconscious and whom they grabbed from the street and put a rope around his neck, the man whom they nearly shot to pieces, and the man whom they hung, once dropping him ten feet, and when what didn't kill him lengthened the rope to 15 feet and dropped him again—why would one soldier want to kill another soldier, or soldiers, who had never done him nor his fellows any harm?

I exonerate the American Legion as an organization of the responsibility of this. For I say they didn't know about it. The day will come when they will realize that they have



been mere catspaws in the hands of the Centralia commercial interests. That is the story. I don't know what the verdict will be today, but the verdict ten years hence will be the verdict in the Lovejoy case; that these men were within their rights and that they fought for a cause, that these men fought for liberty. They fought for these things for which we stand and for which all true lovers of liberty stand, and those who smashed them up are the real enemies of our country.



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This is a big case, counsel says, the biggest case that has ever been tried in this country, but the biggest thing about these big things is from beginning to end it has been a struggle on the one side for ideals and on the other side to suppress those ideals. This thing was started with Hubbard at its head. It is being started today with Hubbard at its head in this courtroom, and I don't believe you will fall for it.

### Vanderveer's Closing Argument

There are only two real issues in this case. One is the question: Who was the aggressor in the Armistice Day affray? The other is: Was Eugene Barnett in the Avalon hotel window when that affray occurred?

We have proven by unimpeachable witnesses that there was a raid on the I.W.W. hall in Centralia on November 11—a raid, in which the business interests of the city used members of the American Legion as catspaws. We have shown that Warren O. Grimm, for the killing of whom these defendants are on trial, actually took part in that raid, and was in the very doorway of the hall when the attack was made, despite the attempts of the prosecution to place Grimm 100 feet away when he was shot.

We have proven a complete alibi for Eugene Barnett through unshaken and undisputable witnesses. He was not in the Avalon hotel during the riot; he was in the Roderick hotel lobby; he had no gun and he took no part in the shooting.

In my opening statement, I said I would stand or fall on the issue of: Who was the aggressor on Armistice Day? I have stood by that promise, and stand by it now.

Mr. Abel, specially hired prosecutor in this trial, made the same promise. So did Herman Allen, the official Lewis county prosecutor, who has been so ingloriously shoved aside by Mr. Abel and his colleague, Mr. Cunningham, ever since the beginning here. But a few days ago, when the defense was piling up evidence showing that there was a raid on the I.W.W. hall by the paraders, Mr. Abel backed down.

Why Were the Shots Fired?

I was careful in the beginning to put him on record on that point; all along I knew that he and Mr. Allen would back down on the issue of who was the aggressor; they could not uphold their contention that the Armistice Day paraders were fired upon in cold blood while engaged in lawful and peaceful action.

What possible motive could these boys have had for firing upon innocent marching soldiers? It is true that the marchers were fired upon; that shots were fired by some of these defendants; but why were the shots fired?

[Illustration: John Lamb



Logger. American. Joined the Industrial Workers of the World in 1917. Lamb was in the Arnold Hotel with O.C. Bland during the raid on the hall. Neither of them did any shooting. John Lamb has lived for years in Centralia. He is married and has five children who are left dependent since the conviction.]



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There is only one reason why—they were defending their own legal property against unlawful invasion and attack; they were defending the dwelling place of Britt Smith, their secretary.

And they had full right to defend their lives and that property and that home against violence or destruction; they had a right to use force, if necessary, to effect that defense. The law gives them that right; and it accrues to them also from all of the wells of elementary justice.

The law says that when a man or group of men have reason to fear attack from superior numbers, they may provide whatever protection they may deem necessary to repel such an attack. And it says also that if a man who is in bad company when such an attack is made happens to be killed by the defenders, those defenders are not to be considered guilty of that man's death.

So they had the troops come, to blow bugles and drill in the streets where the jury could see; their power, however wielded, was great enough to cause Governor Hart to send the soldiers here without consulting the trial judge or the sheriff, whose function it was to preserve law and order here—and you know, I am sure, that law and order were adequately preserved here before the troops came.

“Fearful of the Truth”

They tried the moth-eaten device of arresting our witnesses for alleged perjury, hoping to discredit those witnesses thus in your eyes because they knew they couldn't discredit them in any regular nor legitimate way.

Fearful of the truth, the guilty ones at Centralia deliberately framed up evidence to save themselves from blame—to throw the responsibility for the Armistice Day horror onto other men. But they bungled the frame-up badly. No bolder nor cruder fabrication has ever been attempted than the ridiculous effort to fasten the killing of Warren Grimm upon Eugene Barnett.

[Illustration: Court Room in which the Farcical “Trial” Took Place

This garish room in the court house at Montesano was the scene of the attempted “judicial murder” that followed the lynching. The judge always entered his chambers through the door under the word “Transgression”: the jury always left through the door over which “Instruction” appears. In this room the lumber trust attorneys attempted to build a gallows of perjured testimony on which to break the necks of innocent men.]

These conspirators were clumsy enough in their planning to drive the I.W.W. out of town; their intent was to stampede the marching soldiers into raiding the I.W.W. hall. But how much more clumsy was the frame-up afterward—the elaborate fixing of many

witnesses to make it appear that Grimm was shot at Tower avenue and Second street when he actually was shot in front of the hall; and to make it appear that Ben Casagrande and Earl Watts were shot around the corner on Second street, when they were actually shot on Tower avenue, close to the front of the hall.



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Then, you will remember, I compelled Elsie Hornbeck to admit that she had been shown photographs of Barnett by the prosecution. She would not have told this fact, had I not trapped her into admitting it; that was obvious to everybody in this courtroom that day.

You have heard the gentlemen of the prosecution assert that this is a murder trial, and not a labor trial. But they have been careful to ask all our witnesses whether they were I.W.W. members, whether they belonged to any labor union, and whether they were sympathetic towards workers on trial for their lives. And when the answer to any of these questions was yes, they tried to brand the witness as one not worthy of belief. Their policy and thus browbeating working people who were called as witnesses is in keeping with the tactics of the mob during the days when it held Centralia in its grasp.

You know, even if the detailed story has been barred from the record, of the part F.R. Hubbard, lumber baron, played in this horror at Centralia. You have heard from various witnesses that the lumber mill owned by Hubbard's corporation, the Eastern Railway and Lumber Company, is a notorious non-union concern. And you have heard it said that W.A. Abel, the special prosecutor here, has been an ardent and active labor-baiter for years.

Hubbard wanted to drive the I.W.W. out of Centralia. Why did he want to drive them out? He said they were a menace. And it is true that they were a menace, and are a menace—to those who exploit the workers who produce the wealth for the few to enjoy.

### Why Were Ropes Carried?

Was there a raid on the hall before the shooting? Dr. Frank Bickford, a reputable physician, appeared here and repeated under oath what he had sworn to at the coroner's inquest—that when the parade stopped, he offered to lead a raid on the hall if enough would follow,—but that others pushed ahead of him, forced open the door, and then the shots came from inside.

And why did the Rev. H.W. Thompson have a rope? Thompson believes in hanging men by the neck until they are dead. When the state Employers' Association and others wanted the hanging law in Washington revived not long ago, the Reverend Thompson lectured in many cities and towns in behalf of that law. And he has since lectured widely

against the I.W.W. Did he carry a rope in the parade because he owned a cow and a calf? Or what?



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Why did the prosecution need so many attorneys here, if it had the facts straight? Why were scores of American Legion members imported here to sit at the trial at a wage of \$4 per day and expenses?

They have told you this was a murder trial, and not a labor trial. But vastly more than the lives of ten men are the stakes in the big gamble here; for the right of workers to organize for the bettering of their own condition is on trial; the right of free assemblage is on trial; democracy and Americanism are on trial.

In our opening statement, we promised to prove various facts; and we have proven them, in the main; if there are any contentions about which the evidence remains vague, this circumstance exists only because His Honor has seen fit to rule out certain testimony which is vital to the case, and we believed, and still believe, was entirely material and properly admissible.

But is there any doubt in your minds that there was a conspiracy to raid the I.W.W. hall, and to run the Industrial Workers of the World out of town? Even if the court will not allow you to read the handbill issued by the I.W.W., asking protection from the citizens of Centralia have you any doubt that the I.W.W. had reason to fear an attack from Warren Grimm and his fellow marchers? And have you any doubt that there was a raid on the hall?

When I came into this case I knew that we were up against tremendous odds. Terror was loose in Centralia; prejudice and hatred against the I.W.W. was being systematically and sweepingly spread in Grays Harbor county and throughout the whole Northwest; and intimidation or influence of some sort was being employed against every possible witness and salesman.

[Illustration: George Vanderveer

This man single handed opposed six high priced lumber trust prosecutors in the famous trial at Montesano. Vanderveer is a man of wide experience and deep social vision. He was at one time prosecuting attorney for King County, Washington. The lumber trust has made countless threats to "get him." "A lawyer with a heart is as dangerous as a workingman with brains."]

Not only were unlimited money and other resources of the Lewis County commercial interests banded against us, but practically all the attorneys up and down the Pacific coast had pledged themselves not to defend any I.W.W., no matter how great nor how small the charge he faced. Our investigators were arrested without warrant; solicitors for our defense fund met with the same fate.

And when the trial date approached, the judge before whom this case is being heard admitted that a fair trial could not be had here, because of the surging prejudice existent

in this community. Then, five days later, the court announced that the law would not permit a second change of venue, and that the trial must go ahead in Montesano.

In the face of these things, and in the face of all the atmosphere of violence and bloodthirstiness which the prosecution has sought to throw around these defendants, I am placing our case in your hands; I am intrusting to you gentlemen to decide upon the fate of ten human beings—whether they shall live or die or be shut away from their fellows for months or years.



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But I am asking you much more than that—I am asking you to decide the fate of organized labor in the Northwest; whether its fundamental rights are to survive or be trampled underfoot.

### The Lumber Trust Wins the Jury

On Saturday evening, March 13th, the jury brought in its final verdict of guilty. In the face of the very evident ability of the lumber interests, to satisfy its vengeance at will, any other verdict would have been suicidal—for the jury.

The prosecution was out for blood and nothing less than blood. Day by day they had built the structure of gallows right there in the courtroom. They built a scaffolding on which to hang ten loggers—built it of lies and threats and perjury. Dozens of witnesses from the Chamber of Commerce and the American Legion took the stand to braid a hangman's rope of untruthful testimony. Some of these were members of the mob; on their white hands the blood of Wesley Everest was hardly dry. And they were not satisfied with sending their victims to prison for terms of from 25 to 40 years, they wanted the pleasure of seeing their necks broken. But they failed. Two verdicts were returned; his honor refused to accept the first; no intelligent man can accept the second.

Here is the way the two verdicts compare with each other: Elmer Smith and Mike Sheehan were declared not guilty and Loren Roberts insane, in both the first and second verdicts. Britt Smith, O.C. Bland, James McInerney, Bert Bland and Ray Becker were found guilty of murder in the second degree in both instances, but Eugene Barnett and John Lamb were at first declared guilty of manslaughter, or murder "in the third degree" in the jury's first findings, and guilty of second degree murder in the second.

The significant point is that the state made its strongest argument against the four men whom the jury practically exonerated of the charge of conspiring to murder. More significant is the fact that the whole verdict completely upsets the charge of conspiracy to murder under which the men were tried. The difference between first and second degree murder is that the former, first degree, implies premeditation while the other, second degree, means murder that is not premeditated. Now, how in the world can men be found guilty of conspiring to murder without previous premeditation? The verdict, brutal and stupid as it is, shows the weakness and falsity of the state's charge more eloquently than anything the defense has ever said about it.

But Labor Says, "Not Guilty!"

But another jury had been watching the trial. Their verdict came as a surprise to those who had read the newspaper version of the case. No sooner had the twelve bewildered and frightened men in the jury box paid tribute to the power of the Lumber Trust with a

ludicrous and tragic verdict than the six workingmen of the Labor Jury returned their verdict also. Those six men represented as many labor organizations in the Pacific Northwest with a combined membership of many thousands of wage earners.



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The last echoes of the prolonged legal battle had hardly died away when these six men sojourned to Tacoma to ballot, deliberate and to reach their decision about the disputed facts of the case. At the very moment when the trust-controlled newspapers, frantic with disappointment, were again raising the blood-cry of their pack, the frank and positive statement of these six workers came like a thunderclap out of a clear sky,—“Not Guilty!”

The Labor Jury had studied the development of the case with earnest attention from the beginning. Day by day they had watched with increasing astonishment the efforts of the defense to present, and of the prosecution and the judge to exclude, from the consideration of the trial jury, the things everybody knew to be true about the tragedy at Centralia. Day by day the sordid drama had been unfolded before their eyes. Day by day the conviction had grown upon them that the loggers on trial for their lives were being railroaded to the gallows by the legal hirelings of the Lumber Trust. The Labor Jury was composed of men with experience in the labor movement. They had eyes to see through a maze of red tape and legal mummery to the simple truth that was being hidden or obscured. The Lumber Trust did not fool these men and it could not intimidate them. They had the courage to give the truth to the world just as they saw it. They were convinced in their hearts and minds that the loggers on trial were innocent. And they would have been just as honest and just as fearless had their convictions been otherwise.

It cannot be said that the Labor Jury was biased in favor of the defendants or of the I.W.W. If anything, they were predisposed to believe the defendants guilty and their union an outlaw organization. It must be remembered that all the labor jury knew of the case was what it had read in the capitalist newspapers prior to their arrival at the scene of the trial. These men were not radicals but representative working men—members of conservative unions—who had been instructed by their organizations to observe impartially the progress of the trial and to report back to their unions the result of their observations. Read their report:

### Labor's Verdict

Labor Temple, Tacoma, March 15, 1920, 1:40 p.m.

The Labor Jury met in the rooms of the Labor Temple and organized, electing P. K. Mohr as foreman.

Present: J.A. Craft, W.J. Beard, Otto Newman, Theodore Mayer, E.W. Thrall and P.K. Mohr.

1. On motion a secret ballot of guilty or not guilty was taken, the count resulting in a unanimous “Not Guilty!”



2. Shall we give our report to the press? Verdict, "Yes."

[Illustration: Labor's Silent Jury

W.J. Beard, Central Labor Council, Tacoma: Paul K. Mohr, Central Labor Council, Seattle: Theodore Meyer, Central Labor Council, Everett: E.W. Thrall, Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen, Centralia: John A. Craft, Metal Trades Council, Seattle.]



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3. Was there a conspiracy to raid the I.W.W. hall on the part of the business interests of Centralia? Verdict, "Yes."

There was evidence offered by the defense to show that the business interests held a meeting at the Elk's Club on October 20, 1919, at which ways and means to deal with the I.W.W. situation were discussed. F.B. Hubbard, Chief of Police Hughes and William Scales, commander of the American Legion at Centralia, were present. Prosecuting Attorney Allen was quoted as having said, "There is no law that would let you run the I.W.W. out of town." Chief of Police Hughes said, "You cannot run the I.W.W. out of town; they have violated no law." F.G. Hubbard said, "It's a damn shame; if I was chief I would have them out of town in 24 hours." William Scales, presiding at the meeting, said that although he was not in favor of a raid, there was no American jury that would convict them if they did, or words to that effect. He then announced that he would appoint a secret committee to deal with the I.W.W. situation.

4. Was the I.W.W. hall unlawfully raided? Verdict, "Yes." The evidence introduced convinces us that an attack was made before a shot was fired.

5. Had the defendants a right to defend their hall. Verdict, "yes." On a former occasion the I.W.W. hall was raided, furniture destroyed and stolen, ropes placed around their necks and they were otherwise abused and driven out of town by citizens, armed with pick handles.

6. Was Warren O. Grimm a party to the conspiracy of raiding the I.W.W. hall? Verdict, "Yes." The evidence introduced convinces us that Warren O. Grimm participated in the raid of the I.W.W. hall.

7. To our minds the most convincing evidence that Grimm was in front of and raiding the I.W.W. hall with others, is the evidence of State Witness Van Gilder who testified that he stood at the side of Grimm at the intersection of Second street and Tower avenue, when, according to his testimony, Grimm was shot. This testimony was refuted by five witnesses who testified that they saw Grimm coming wounded from the direction of the I.W.W. hall. It is not credible that Van Gilder, who was a personal and intimate friend of Grimm, would leave him when he was mortally wounded, to walk half a block alone and unaided.

8. Did the defendants get a fair and impartial trial? Verdict, "No." The most damaging evidence of a conspiracy by the business men of Centralia, of a raid on the I.W.W. hall, was ruled out by the court and not permitted to go to the jury. This was one of the principal issues that the defense sought to establish.

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Also the calling of the federal troops by Prosecuting Attorney Allen was for no other reason than to create atmosphere. On interviewing the judge, sheriff and prosecuting attorney, the judge and the sheriff informed us that in their opinion the troops were not needed and that they were brought there without their consent or knowledge. In the interview Mr. Allen promised to furnish the substance of the evidence which in his opinion necessitated the presence of the troops the next morning, but on the following day he declined the information. He, however, did say that he did not fear the I.W.W., but was afraid of violence by the American Legion. This confession came after he was shown by us the fallacy of the I.W.W. coming armed to interfere with the verdict. Also the presence of the American Legion in large numbers in court.

Theodore Meyer, Everett Central Labor Council; John O. Craft, Seattle Metal Trades Council; E.W. Thrall, Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen, Centralia; W.J. Beard, Tacoma Central Labor Council; Otto Newman, Portland Central Labor Council; P.K. Mohr, Seattle Central Labor Council.

The above report speaks for itself. It was received with great enthusiasm by the organizations of each of the jurymen when the verdict was submitted. On March 17th, the Seattle Central Labor Council voted unanimously to send the verdict to all of the Central Labor Assemblies of the United States and Canada.

Not only are the loggers vindicated in defending their property and lives from the felonious assault of the Armistice Day mob, but the conspiracy of the business interests to raid the hall and the raid itself were established. The participation of Warren O. Grimm is also accepted as proved beyond doubt. Doubly significant is the statement about the "fair and impartial trial" that is supposed to be guaranteed all men under our constitution.

Nothing could more effectively stamp the seal of infamy upon the whole sickening rape of justice than the manly outspoken statements of these six labor jurors. Perhaps the personalities of these men might prove of interest:

E. W. Thrall, of the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen, Centralia, is an old time and trusted member of his union. As will be noticed, he comes from Centralia, the scene of the tragedy.

Otto Newman, of the Central Labor Council, Portland, Oregon, has ably represented his union in the C.L.C. for some time.

W.J. Beard is organizer for the Central Labor Council in Tacoma, Washington. He is an old member of the Western Federation of Miners and remembers the terrible times during the strikes at Tulluride.



John O. Craft is president of Local 40, International Union of Steam Operating Engineers, of which union he has been a member for the last ten years. Mr. Craft has been actively connected with unions affiliated with the A.F. of L. since 1898.

Theodore Meyer was sent by the Longshoremen of Everett, Washington. Since 1903 he has been a member of the A.F. of L.; prior to that time being a member of the National Sailors and Firemen's Union of Great Britain and Ireland, and of the Sailors' Union of Australia.

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P. K. Mohr represents the Central Labor Council of Seattle and is one of the oldest active members in the Seattle unions. Mr. Mohr became a charter member of the first Bakers' Union in 1889 and was its first presiding officer. He was elected delegate to the old Western Central Labor Council in 1890. At one time Mr. Mohr was president of the Seattle Labor Council. At the present time he is president of the Bakers' Union.

Such are the men who have studied the travesty on justice in the great labor trial at Montesano. "Not Guilty" is their verdict. Does it mean anything to you?

### Wesley Everest

Torn and defiant as a wind-lashed reed,  
Wounded, he faced you as he stood at bay;  
You dared not lynch him in the light of day,  
But on your dungeon stones you let him bleed;  
Night came ... and you black vigilants of Greed,...  
Like human wolves, seized hand upon your prey,  
Tortured and killed ... and, silent, slunk away  
Without one qualm of horror at the deed.

Once ... long ago ... do you remember how  
You hailed Him king for soldiers to deride—  
You placed a scroll above His bleeding brow  
And spat upon Him, scourged Him, crucified...?  
A rebel unto Caesar—then as now—  
Alone, thorn-crowned, a spear wound in His side!

—R.C. in "N.Y. Call."

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