

“The Ku Klux Government”: Vigilantism, Lynching, and the Repression of the IWW

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It is almost always the case that a “spontaneous” movement of the subaltern classes is accompanied by a reactionary movement of the right-wing of the dominant class, for concomitant reasons. An economic crisis, for instance, engenders on the one hand discontent among the subaltern classes and spontaneous mass movements, and on the other conspiracies among the reactionary groups, who take advantage of the objective weakening of the government in order to attempt coup d’Etat.

—Antonio Gramsci¹

When the true history of this decade shall be written in other and less troubled times; when facts not hidden come to light in details now rendered vague and obscure; truth will show that on some recent date, in a secluded office on Wall Street or luxurious parlor of some wealthy club on lower Manhattan, some score of America’s kings of industry, captains of commerce and Kaisers of finance met in secret conclave and plotted the enslavement of millions of workers. Today details are obscured. The paper on which these lines are penciled is criss-crossed by the shadow of prison bars; my ears are be-set by the clang of steel doors, the jangle of fetters and the curses of jail guards. Truth, before it can speak, is strangled by power.

Yet the big fact looms up, like a mountain above the morning mists; organized wealth has conspired to enslave Labor, and—in enforcing its will—it stops at nothing, not even midnight murders and wholesale slaughter. It has laughed at law, subverted popular government local, state and national, and spread a network of protected villainy from coast to coast.

—Harrison George, *Member of IWW Executive Committee*²

In this article, I examine the political and cultural role of vigilante violence in the repression of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW or Wobblies) during the first two decades of the twentieth century. The often grim question of vigilante violence and antiradical lynching can be easily lost in the rich and much romanticized history of the IWW. Yet it is not enough to consider the history of vigilante attacks on the IWW as simply a colorful episode of American “frontier justice” or as a tragic, yet distant phase of America’s industrial past. Rather, the effects of these years of militant antiradical violence have left a far more indelible impact on the American political system. Attacks on the IWW brought about a new phase in the history of American vigilantism, one in which the distinctiveness of extralegal, community-based violence transcended local imperatives and became part of the nationalist and state-building project of the Progressive era. In the violent, “100% American” climate of World War I and the Red Scare, vigilante organizations like the American Protective League, the American Legion, and, to a lesser extent, the second Ku Klux Klan, not only earned a measure of state legitimacy by participating in nationally orchestrated antiradical purges, but they became the vanguard of a reactionary social movement and played a critical role in the creation of the modern American political intelligence system.

The history of antilabor and antiradical vigilantism forces us to reconsider the role of extralegal political violence in American politics as well as to reframe the history of the American repressive state apparatus. The term “repressive state apparatus” (RSA) is derived from the work of Louis Althusser, who described the RSA as a unified set of institutions (basically the police and military forces of a government), which he argues functions “massively and predominately by repression (including physical repression) while functioning secondarily by ideology” while “belonging entirely to the public domain.”³ Yet, in the United States, the repressive apparatus has neither been totally unified nor fully controlled by the state. Instead, what we find in the history of political repression in the twentieth century is the gradual subsumption of the formerly private work of labor discipline and political violence by a series of government institutions ranging from local police and urban bomb squads to the Federal Bureau of Investigations.⁴ From the end of the Civil War to the start of World War II, America’s disciplinary regime—the set of repressive institutions and violent practices that enforced workplace and labor discipline, patrolled and surveilled subaltern racial and class groups, and punished radical dissent—comprised a decentralized and hybrid system of private security firms, vigilantism, and state policing institutions. Private detective agencies, such as the Pinkerton National Detective Agency, played a leading role not only

in suppressing strikes and policing radicalism, but they effectively functioned as the first national political intelligence system.⁵ Indeed, nineteenth century German sociologist Max Weber's definition of the state as holding a "monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force" could hardly be said to apply to the United States until as late as the 1940s when most forms of labor espionage and hired strikebreaking were legally curtailed.⁶ This power dynamic in which capital wielded an unmediated authority over labor discipline through the use of mercenary armies, strikebreakers, provocateurs, and spies represents a unique (even "exceptional") feature of American capitalism and marks one inescapable reason why American labor history was the bloodiest of any western industrialized nation. Yet, as the strength and determination of American radicalism grew after 1912, and private detectives and local police appeared unable to contain the spread of socialism and radical unionism, a virulent strain of quasi-legitimate patriotic vigilantism emerged under prewar and wartime conditions to mark a fundamental transition from a private-public system of labor violence to a more centralized repressive state apparatus.

Coupled with this question of political history, I want to consider the culture and ideology behind both the vigilante's xenophobic aggression as well as how the Wobblies and their distinctive culture of American popular radicalism articulated the sources, meaning, and purpose of the vigilante violence directed against the "One Big Union."⁷ Indeed, both sides in this periodic and prolonged conflict between radical and reactionary social movements explicitly viewed the other as a sinister conspiracy. On the one hand, "countersubversives," to use Michael Rogin's brilliant synthesis, whether rural vigilantes or the Attorney General of the United States, consistently represented the IWW as an alien and criminal conspiracy.⁸ And on the other, the popular radicalism of the IWW (as well as a broad coalition of labor, socialist, anarchist, and anti-monopoly movements) denounced "plutocracy" and the great "conspiracy of capital" to enslave the working class. Every accusation of conspiracy in this era of corporate monopoly and the labor injunction (both legally defined under the Sherman Act as "conspiracy in restraint of trade") contains both a legal claim and a political interpolation of illegitimacy. To accuse one's enemy of being a "conspiracy" presents both an instrumental definition of political agency and an overdetermined ideological construct that conflates both a specific crime and a broader social enemy. As contradictory radical and reactionary social movements, the particular cultural and political dialectics of conspiracy that set the anticapitalist Wobblies and xenophobic vigilantes into violent conflict has never been properly considered.

The Wobblies came to know the system of labor discipline, political repression, and physical violence not as sociologists or lawyers, but principally as its targets and victims. “I’ve never read Marx’s *Capital*,” famously said Wobbly leader and former hard rock miner Big Bill Haywood, “but I have the marks of capital all over my body.” Wobbly newspapers and pamphlets consistently offered a clear understanding of what was at stake, both politically and legally, in the differences between assigning moral responsibility for industrial accidents, the activism of vigilantes, the labor of Pinkerton detectives and hired strikebreakers, the tools of prisons and state militias, the antilabor hostility of the “capitalist press,” the phenomenon of riots and mobs, and the authority of Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis’s federal courtroom. Despite the ostensible diversity of their enemies, Wobbly leaders, poets, and cartoonists nevertheless described all the various forms and guises of the disciplinary regime as emerging from a singular source, the totalizing power of monopoly capitalism. “One Union, One Label, One Enemy” read the slogan of Wobbly syndicalism (or for a more elaborate version see the epigraph by Harrison George above). At various moments in their history, the Wobblies called this enemy the “Iron Heel” after Jack London’s 1907 dystopian-revolutionary novel, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn commonly referred to the state as “the slugging committee of the capitalist class,” and, after the start of the Red Scare, the IWW denounced lawlessness and terrorism of “the Ku Klux Government.” In this way, the organic intellectuals of the IWW sought to form new lines of solidarity in the midst of repression by challenging the legitimacy of state and capitalist violence. And out of these experiences with vigilante and federal violence, the IWW forged the twentieth century’s first sustained theoretical interventions in the question of repressive state apparatuses and its place in the capitalist totality.

Thus, a cultural and political history of the repression of the Wobblies can provide us with some fruitful insights into the shifting history of class violence in the twentieth century, the role of vigilantism in the forging of the Justice Department, the FBI, and the modern Federal state apparatus, and the necessity of activism behind the creation of the national “states of emergency,” which instigate and legitimate political violence.

Expanding the History of Vigilantism

The history of nineteenth century vigilantism—particularly in the western states that in the twentieth century gave birth to the Wobblies—romantically imagines vigilantism as a temporary embodiment of popular sovereignty, a

body of citizens compelled to preserve local order on the frontier in the absence of legitimate law enforcement. Vigilantism stood up as a periodic and temporary form of civil justice carved out of the wild frontier, awaiting the inevitable arrival of modernity in the form of police and courts of law. Terror was thus necessary where the law was lacking. Such histories tend to narrate the decline of vigilantism in the 1850s as a function of the arrival of civilization, civil society, and the rule of law.⁹ Of course, this moment marks not so much a decline in vigilantism as a transformation. As a self-styled civic organization with the explicitly political goal of enforcing class privilege, the famous San Francisco Vigilance Committee of 1856 became the father of countless citizens alliances, employer's associations, commercial clubs, loyalty leagues, and other innocuously democratic sounding bourgeois and petty-bourgeois vigilante groups which arose in every community threatened by working class organization across the nation during the following decades.¹⁰ As noted by Richard Slotkin, the use of extralegal violence by these new civic organizations marked a shift in vigilante ideology, "from an assertion of natural and democratic right to violence to an assertion of class and racial privilege."¹¹ This was the vigilantism of the "respectable classes," the civic leaders and upstanding citizens, against the "dangerous classes," and it could take the form of public morality campaigns, racial and ethnic cleansings, or antilabor violence.

And in the first two decades of the twentieth century the IWW ran into this bourgeois vigilantism, the armed forces of civil society, nearly everywhere they went. Perhaps the most startling examples of this conflict came during the many "Free-Speech Campaigns" in western towns like Fresno, Denver, and Spokane between 1909 and 1914. To the "respectable" citizens of these commercial centers and transportation hubs, the Wobblies were dangerous outsiders, agitators, bums, and anarchists whose mere presence was a moral, ethnic, and insurgent threat to the social order. Of course, the IWW came to these places with the explicit intention of organizing the migratory workers who rode the rails from job to job, the tramps and hobos of a permanent homeless working class who could be reached only by street corner organizers standing on a soap-box before assembled crowds to declare that a better world could be won only by joining the One Big Union. Given that this form of street speaking is at least ostensibly protected by the Constitution (the exercise of free speech and assembly), the leaders of these besieged communities necessarily resorted to a combination of city ordinances, police repression, and outright vigilante terrorism to drive the Wobblies out of town.

The longest and most violent of these Free Speech Campaigns occurred in San Diego in 1912.¹² As they had in the dozens of free speech fights across the

West, thousands of Wobblies poured into San Diego on boxcars to aid in the fight. They came to speak to crowds from soapboxes, to build large and enthusiastic audiences, to battle the cops, and to fill the prisons with singing revolutionaries who proudly stood up for their constitutional rights. Under siege, the San Diego City Council passed dozens of ordinances against street speaking and attempted to ban the IWW outright. These questionable laws were zealously enforced by police and armed citizen deputies, who then turned arrested Wobblies over to vigilante gangs in the middle of the night, night after night, where they were beaten, branded and tortured, tarred and feathered, humiliated (often by being forced to kiss the flag and sing the national anthem), and finally abandoned in the middle of the desert just over the county line. “Hanging is too good for them and they would be much better off dead,” announced the *San Diego Tribune* as if issuing orders to a hidden army of righteous marauders [Figure 1].

Indeed, the San Diego vigilantes became a law unto themselves. When Emma Goldman arrived in town with her partner Ben Reitman, ostensibly to deliver a public lecture on the plays of Ibsen, the two were besieged in their hotel, repeatedly threatened by an angry mob, and told by its emissaries—the respectable elite of San Diego—that “Red Emma” would not be allowed to speak. “Why don’t you use the same measures against these people that you have against the free-speech fighters?” Emma demanded of the Mayor, obviously implying his complicity with the mob. “Your ordinance makes it a crime to gather in the business districts. Hundreds of IWW’s, anarchists, socialists, and trade-union men have been clubbed and arrested, and some even killed for this offense. Yet you allow the Vigilante mob to congregate in the busiest part of the town and obstruct traffic. All you have to do is disperse these lawbreakers.”¹³ Such was the terror of San Diego that even Emma Goldman, perhaps the most fearless of American radicals, was forced to cancel her public lecture and flee the county in the middle of the night. Reitman was not so fortunate. Having been separated from Emma, he was kidnapped by the mob and brutalized, scalded with tar, and had the letters “IWW” burned into his flesh. “We could tear your guts out,” one of his kidnappers told Reitman, “but we promised the Chief of Police not to kill you. We are responsible men, property-owners, and the police are on our side.”¹⁴ The pro-free speech editor of the San Diego *Herald*, Abram R. Sauer, who was himself kidnapped by armed vigilantes for printing the affidavits of Wobblies who had been assaulted, described his attackers in this way: “The personnel of the vigilantes represents not only the bankers and merchants, but has as its workers leading Church members and bartenders. Chambers of commerce and the Real Estate Board



FIGURE 1. Wobbly Cartoon from *Industrial Worker*, May 9, 1912.

are well represented. The press and the public utility corporations, as well as members of the grand jury, are known to belong.¹⁵ This statement, in turn, provoked a vigilante raid against the paper itself, forcing it to be published out of town.

After nine months, the egregious level of violence and the sheer lawlessness finally brought serious protests from the state and federal government, and the fight for free speech in San Diego ended more or less in a bitter draw. The vigilantes backed down under threat of criminal prosecution, but the city never fully restored free speech and assembly rights, and San Diego remained (remains) a reactionary stronghold of the "open shop," all but abandoned by the IWW as an "outlying province of Russia."¹⁶

In the midst of this legal and vigilante class war, leading Southern California Republicans appealed to President Taft, shouting loudly about a foreign conspiracy to overthrow the government and demanding that the federal government

step in and crush the IWW. But the Department of Justice could find no evidence of Wobbly violence, let alone a vast revolutionary conspiracy, and in 1912 there were as yet no effective legal or political tools available to be used against the IWW. As one anti-Wobbly farmer famously quoted: “You can’t kill ’em; the law protects ’em.”¹⁷ The countersubversive activists of Southern California had to wait for that unforeseeable moment in which the historical conditions proved more amenable to their antiradical demands. But with the outbreak of a massive foreign war, a growing movement of “patriotism and preparedness” opened the door for a nationwide countersubversive assault that effectively declared war on both the kaiser and the IWW.

“Preparedness” and Paramilitary Vigilantism

With the start of the war in Europe and the rise of domestic campaigns for militarization, the destruction of the IWW and all forms of immigrant radicalism became a central demand as nativism and “preparedness” cemented into an inflexible demand for “100% Americanism.” A veritable flood of anti-immigrant and countersubversive literature swept over American culture, ranging from the elite white supremacism of Madison Grant and Lothrop Stoddard to the demagogic militarism of Teddy Roosevelt’s *The Foes of Our Own Household* (1917) and the American Defense Societies’ *Awake! America* (1918).¹⁸ Spurred on by government propagandists, corporate spokesmen, and local rabble-rousers alike, organized patriotic vigilantism emerged as a major political force after 1915. Dozens of popular and elite countersubversive organizations appeared, including large, national institutions like the reborn Ku Klux Klan, as well as smaller, more local organizations bearing names like the Home Defense League, the Liberty League, the Knights of Liberty, the American Rights League, the All-Allied Anti-German League, the Anti-Yellow Dog League, the American Anti-Anarchy Association, the Boy Spies of America, the Sedition Slammers, the Terrible Threateners, and Teddy Roosevelt’s own anti-German propaganda society, simply called The Vigilantes.¹⁹ While the activities of these patriotic “Leagues” vary, the more militant organizations expanded their activities from “Preparedness” propaganda to active surveillance, infiltration, intimidation, and other forms of increasingly violent direct action against strikers and radicals.

“May God have mercy on them,” spoke Attorney General Thomas W. Gregory of antiwar dissenters, “for they need expect none from an outraged people and an avenging government.”²⁰ In his position as the nation’s top law

enforcement agent, Gregory described vigilante violence against radicals as a sign of the vitality of American loyalty and martial spirit, yet he took it to be his job not to prosecute such mobs as much as it was to preempt them through government action. This mission was partially accomplished when, in the spring of 1917, Albert M. Briggs, a former Chicago ad man, proposed to the Justice Department that he be empowered to form a citizens auxiliary to aid in the Bureau of Investigation's growing national mission of surveillance, infiltration, and repression of aliens and dissenters. The result was the American Protective League (APL), a vigilante army of an estimated 250,000 volunteer superpatriots. Imaging in their subversive enemy a model of their own forbidden desires for intrigue, ideological fervor, and regeneration through violence, the APL described itself as a "mysterious power behind our government," and "a vast, silent, volunteer army organized with the approval and operated under the direction of the United States Department of Justice."²¹ The Justice department called them "agents," and for an entry fee of less than a dollar, any loyal American citizen could get a badge and become an APL operative with a license to indulge in all of his countersubversive fantasies. Working in concert with local police and state militias, members of the APL participated in raids on the IWW and the Socialist Party, and served as the main shock troops in nationwide "Slacker Raids" where tens of thousands of young men were rounded up and forced to display their selective service cards at the point of a bayonet or face arrest. By the time the war was over and the APL officially dissolved, the organization claimed to have brought three million disloyal citizens and aliens to justice in every major city in the country.²²

The example of the APL reveals the leadership of vigilantes in the counter-subversive thrust and organization of federal law enforcement during the war. By deputizing and thereby extending a measure of legitimacy to a "100% American" vigilante army, the Justice Department transformed the APL into a quasi-legal paramilitary apparatus that could not only accomplish the basic tasks of ferreting out radicalism, but it could do so with minimal economic costs and political liabilities (plausible deniability). But despite these innovative approaches to national paramilitary law enforcement, older western style vigilantism and lynch mobs also found new life during the wartime labor struggles.

By the fall of 1916, the offensive against the IWW and foreign radicals opened up nationwide. Wobbly strikes in critical war-export industries met with violent resistance in the Mesabi iron range in Minnesota, the timberlands of Washington, the copper mines of Arizona and Montana, and the wheat fields and fruit orchards of California. "It was difficult for any labor editor to keep up

with events in 1917,” commented Wobbly leader, cartoonist, songwriter, and newspaper editor Ralph Chaplin.²³ For daring to protest wartime austerity and profiteering, the outraged Wobblies were beaten, shot, arrested, convicted, deported, slandered, and murdered. Week after week, and month after month, the *International Socialist Review* (perhaps the most modern illustrated magazine to fully support the IWW) and the established IWW papers *Solidarity*, the *Industrial Worker*, and the *One Big Union Monthly* chronicled the coronation of what they termed the “Invisible Government” and “Government by Gunmen.” Joe Hill, itinerant worker and “Wobbly bard,” framed by the state of Utah for murder, faced execution by a firing squad in November 1915. “Don’t waste any time mourning—Organize!” declared Hill in the instant before he became the IWW’s first and greatest martyr.²⁴ On November 5, 1916, during a free-speech fight in Everett, Washington, local vigilantes and law enforcement attacked a boat full of singing Wobblies, killing up to a dozen people in what became known as the Everett Massacre.²⁵ In the copper mining town of Bisbee, Arizona, on July 12, 1917, some 2,000 deputized vigilantes, in conspiracy with mining company officials and all the leading figures of the town, rounded up 1,200 Wobblies (suspected of being Mexicans, enemy aliens, or German subsidized revolutionaries), forced them onto cattle cars, and “deported” them to the middle of the New Mexico desert.²⁶ “Without precedent in this or any other country, or any other age, was the occurrence of yesterday,” wrote the *Bisbee Daily Review* of the illegal deportations, “it marked a golden date on the calendar; a date when the law-abiding people of the community drove from their midst the ‘Wobbly.’”²⁷ With the population of strikers and radicals expelled from their homes, their property stolen or destroyed, and threatened with death should they return, Bisbee’s vigilantes managed to break the great copper strike. “The Iron Heel at Work” proclaimed *Solidarity*, referring to Jack London’s novel of class war. “Black Hundreds of the Copper Trust” shouted another headline, referring to the reactionary mobs of Czarist Russia. To the IWW, the Everett Massacre and Bisbee deportations stood as clear examples of a state, private, and vigilante conspiracy to rid the country of industrial unionism and as signs of a dangerous new repressive system in which capital was licensed to unleash new levels of violence in order to ensure the continued accumulation of capital. However, the IWW interpreted this lawlessness as a sign of weakness and desperation, which bolstered their determination to resist and win. And as the pre-war hysteria exploded after the sinking of the *Lusitania* and President Wilson betrayed his campaign promise and committed to sending troops to Europe, vigilantism formed the head of the spear in a repressive drive that finally forced the IWW on to the defensive as the cycle of violence spiraled out of control.

Law and Terror in the War on the IWW

Once war was declared in 1917, the IWW took no official stand against it and encouraged its members to register for the draft and serve if called in a rare compromise with the state. However, one Wobbly leader who refused to tone down his opposition to the capitalist war was Frank Little. Rumored to be half-Indian, Frank Little was one of four one-eyed members of the IWW General Executive Board and a tireless advocate of the One Big Union. Little organized free-speech fights, lumberjacks, oil field workers, harvest bindle stiffers, and, best of all, mine and mill workers across the West and Southwest. Absolutely committed, dangerously brave, and bearing the physical scars to prove it, Little was among the most radical of the IWW's lead organizers, advocating direct action and sabotage as necessary tactics to crush capitalism and stop the war.²⁸ "Better to go out in a blaze of glory than to give in," Little told his comrades before heading out into the territory of the Copper Kings. "Either we're for this capitalistic slaughterfest, or we're against it. I'm ready to face a firing squad rather than compromise."²⁹ Little had been in Bisbee but missed being caught up in the mass deportation by only a few days, so he returned to Montana where the conditions in Butte were also especially tense. In early June a fire in the Butte Speculator Mine killed 164 miners who burned to death underground because they were unable to escape due to criminally inadequate safety regulations in the mine. Once Little arrived in Butte, he quickly became a prominent leader in the spontaneous strike that followed the disaster, rallying the mourning and enraged strikers with fiery antipatriotic speeches, denouncing in the same breath the Profiteering Copper Kings, their Pinkerton Armies, and the madness of militarism that fed the European slaughter.

By whatever calculus the limits of dissent are measured, Frank Little had gone too far. In the morning darkness of August 1, 1917, five men arrived at the boarding house where Little stayed. "We are officers and we want Frank Little," one of the men demanded of the landlady. These masked and gun-wielding men abducted Little from his bed, beat him, dragged him behind their car to the outskirts of town where they lynched him on a railroad trestle. When miners found his body the next day, Frank's leg was still in a cast from a broken ankle, and a warning pinned to his bloodied nightshirt stated "Others Take Notice! First and Last Warning!" followed by a cryptic code. Local authorities made no effort to investigate the lynching of Frank Little nor were any arrests ever made. It was the first hanging of a militant labor leader in America since Haymarket.³⁰

Little's murder had a ready-made and legitimating ideological context, for where the law failed, patriotic citizens had taken license and duty of the state into their own hands, unleashing terror in support of the law. Indeed, the Montana newspapers blamed government inaction for the lynching. The *Helena Independent* wrote "[We are] convinced that unless the courts and the military authorities take a hand now and end the IWW in the West, there will be more night-visits, more tugs at the rope, and more IWW tongues will wag for the last time when the noose tightens about the traitors necks." In an explicit endorsement of the Wobbly's accusation of capitalist conspiracy, the *Chicago Tribune* announced: "If mine owners hired [Little's] lynchers they only anticipated what the community would eventually be compelled to do if the law did not act. And the law must act with more power and promptness against such men."³¹ Across the country, far from the mining towns of the West, newspaper editors greeted the lynching of Frank Little with widespread support, transforming a local vigilante attack into a message for the nation as a whole.³²

As the militancy and attractiveness of the IWW grew during wartime strikes in the mining and timber industries, national political leaders clearly recognized the inadequacy of the existing disciplinary regime to "end the IWW in the West." Built up over the closing decades of the nineteenth century, the previous industrial disciplinary regime relied upon a combination of Pinkertons, private armies of hired strikebreakers, local law enforcement, state militias, and the occasional antiradical vigilante mob. Composed of equal parts private and public elements, this repressive apparatus worked on a local basis, effectively policing one factory, one town, city, or county independently. But with the growth of the IWW as a mobile, national organization (not broken up into autonomous locals like the trade and craft unions of the American Federation of Labor), this older disciplinary regime now appeared too local and critically lacking in sufficient political legitimacy to defeat the One Big Union. "Why wait?" asked the *Wall Street Journal*, "the nation is at war, and treason must be met with preventative as well as punitive measures . . . Instead of waiting to see if their bite is poisonous, the heel of Government should stamp them out at once." "The Bisbee plan does not work," echoed the *New York Globe*, "only the Government of the United States can destroy the troublesome IWW."³³

With the declaration of war, these local voices finally got the dramatic action they had been demanding. In a legislative history too detailed to cover adequately here, the federal government passed new wartime laws greatly expanding the legal bounds of repression. The Espionage and Sedition Acts criminalized a broad range of revolutionary and antiwar speech and made it a crime to be a member of any organization that advocated revolution or

impeded the draft.³⁴ Simultaneously, the state vastly expanded its political intelligence apparatus, establishing branches of military intelligence, creating intelligence divisions within the State Department, and, most importantly, building up the Justice Department's Bureau of Investigation and creating a powerful antiradical General Intelligence Division, originally headed by the ambitious file clerk J. Edgar Hoover.³⁵

Immediately after the passage of the Espionage and Sedition Acts, the federal Justice Department orchestrated state police, National Guard, and Homeguard units, along with thousands of summarily deputized members of the APL in a nationwide crackdown on an increasingly broad segment of the organized Left. The peak of wartime federal repression came with the great Wobbly Trials of 1918.³⁶ In a bold display of bureaucratic precision, on September 5, 1917, Federal marshals coordinated simultaneous raids on the IWW headquarters in Chicago along with 64 local union halls in cities from coast to coast. In the midst of tremendous strikes in the mining and lumber industry, totaling nearly 90,000 strikers under the banner of the IWW, federal agents rounded up the entire national leadership of the IWW, ransacked its headquarters, and seized all of the union's records, correspondence, and files. The goal of the raids, carried out by local police, federal marshals, and members of the APL, was, in the words of a U.S. Attorney in Philadelphia, "very largely to put the IWW out of business."³⁷

Held for nearly a year in the dungeons of the Cook Country jail, Big Bill Haywood, Ralph Chaplin, Ben Fletcher, and the rest of the Wobbly national leadership communed with the spirits of the Haymarket martyrs. When the trial opened on April 1, 1918, 101 Wobblies all sat together in the dock, collectively defended by legendary Wobbly attorney George Vanderveer. Vanderveer argued, like any good IWW street corner agitator, for the existence of the class struggle, and he railed against the state's case, which tried to prove that being anticapitalist made one pro-German and thereby a traitor. The vagaries of the conspiracy charge enabled a wide-ranging courtroom battle that effectively put the nature and goals of the organization itself on trial. The prosecution entered all manner of IWW literature from internal correspondence to cartoons to song lyrics into evidence, alongside a slew of informants, detectives, and spies who testified in court to the Wobblies' subversive nature. The defense turned the conspiracy charge on its head, arguing, "in reality, it is the purpose of the prosecution to destroy the organization with which these men are connected and to break the ideal for which their organization stands."³⁸ Recalling the trial nearly 50 years later, defendant and IWW leader Richard Brazier had this to say:

The main charge against us was that of conspiracy . . . How we one hundred and one defendants had conspired together to arrange such a conspiracy we never knew. For most of us had never met prior to our arrests . . . There were other charges, a lot of stuff introduced as a filler, to make the government indictment look more impressive. But all except the conspiracy charge that carried the heavy sentences was thrown out on appeal. After we had heard the case for the prosecution we became certain that a real charge of conspiracy had been proven . . . but not against us. We were sure that the real conspirators were the ones who were trying the alleged conspirators. The government itself planned the conspiracy, and we were its victims . . . The real truth, I feel sure, was that our trial was being used as a test case, a precedent for bigger and greater outrages against groups of radicals. It had demonstrated that there were no limits to the lawless tactics of law-enforcing bodies when dealing with what they considered subversive groups. This was confirmed during the Palmer days.³⁹

At the end of a five-month trial, the jury deliberated for less than an hour, returning a blanket verdict convicting each and every defendant of each and every offense, a total of 17,500 felonies. When Judge Landis read the sentences, most received five years, 33 men received ten years, while 15 others, including Haywood and Chaplin, faced 20 year sentences in federal prison along with a total of two million dollars in fines. The Chicago trial stopped the advance of the IWW permanently, forcing the once aggressive, direct-action organization onto the defensive and redirecting most of its organizational efforts away from strike work and into organizing a continent-wide legal defense campaign.⁴⁰

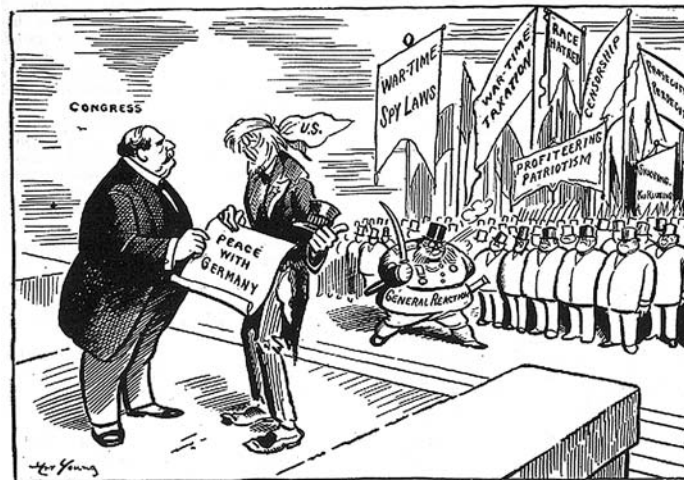
By 1919, with the war over, the modern American political intelligence apparatus was firmly in place, infected with the belief that constitutional guarantees were more obstacles than protections and possessed with an intractable antipathy to labor, African Americans, and the organized Left.⁴¹ The political demands made of the federal government by the San Diego vigilantes back in 1912 had finally come to pass.

Red Scare / White Terror

And yet, with the end of the War, this violence only escalated into the great Red Scare of 1919–1920 [Figure 2].

One Wobbly writer summed up the “social conditions at present in the United States” as “Riots and Race Wars, Lynchings and Massacres, Military Law, Terrorism and Giant Strikes.”⁴² Capitalism, the Wobblies argued, had

"The Ku Klux Government"



U. S.: "Thanks! Now will you please demobilize *this* army?"

FIGURE 2. Art Young, *Good Mornin* (May 15, 1921).

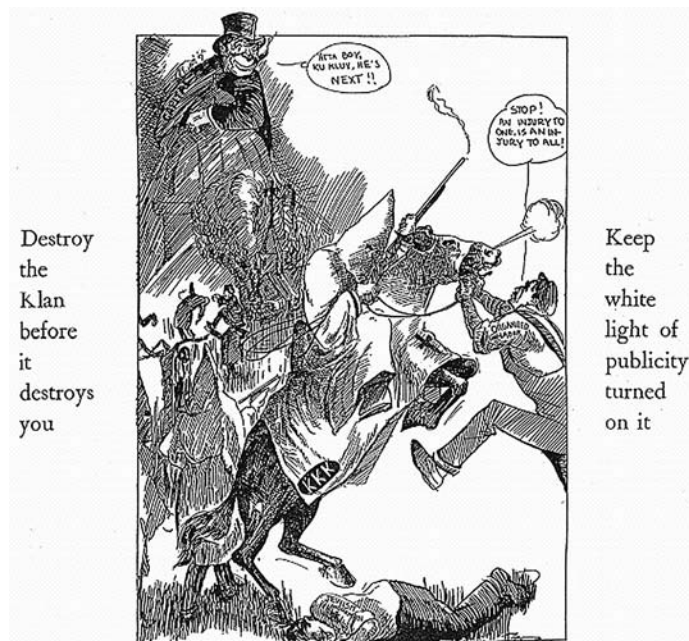


FIGURE 3. Cartoon Published in the *Industrial Worker* and the *Messenger*, August 1923.

been defeated in Russia and was fighting for its life against a global revolutionary wave, answering the demands of the strikers for wages and the radicals for democracy with bullets and prisons. General Leonard Wood suggested his own (highly popular) policy of how to deal with radicals: “S.O.S.—ship or shoot. I believe we should place them all on ships of stone, with sails of lead and that their first stopping place should be hell. We must advocate radical laws to deal with radical people.”⁴³ In this climate, even liberals came under sustained attack by business and patriotic organizations seeking to roll back the so-called Progressive era’s democratizing reforms. From late 1918 to mid-1920 the imposing new configuration of the repressive state apparatus rebuilt during and after the war carried out a nationwide purge of radicalism, a preemptive counterrevolution determined to crush all of the social movements of the Center-Left. Vigilantism once again emerged as the vanguard, the direct-action wing of this counterrevolution that aggressively used race riots, police raids, and lynchings to accelerate the hysteria and accomplish the political goals of the Red Scare.⁴⁴

The American Legion became the most significant vigilante organization to emerge after the armistice. Costumed in their doughboy uniforms and cloaked in wartime patriotism, the Legion forged a potent cultural legitimacy as a patriotic army. Working independently, they openly attacked Bolsheviks, Wobblies, and strikers while offering their services to aid A. Mitchell Palmer’s Raids. “The Legion is constituting itself as a National Ku-Klux Loyalty League or a National Vigilante movement,” recognized the Wobblies, “it is intended as a tool of autocracy and will be so used . . . It is the forerunner of a capitalist autocracy based on military dictatorship.”⁴⁵ *The Messenger*, a rising journal of African American radicalism, also shared the IWW’s viewpoint, describing the postwar American Legion as “simply another Ku Klux Klan, but national in scope . . . We are thoroughly aware of the fact that the American Legion is the physical arm of capital, organized to beat up and destroy the organized labor movement.”⁴⁶ Indeed, Wobbly and black radical intellectuals came closer than any other political thinkers in this era of crisis to formulating a theory of what would, by 1922, be clearly labeled fascism. “Production and distribution is gradually drifting into a stage where terrorism of the workers by ‘stools’ and gunmen is the normal condition,” wrote one Wobbly in the spring of 1920⁴⁷ [Figure 3].

The Centralia Conspiracy

The bloodiest confrontation between the American Legion and the IWW came in Centralia, Washington, on November 11, 1919, the first anniversary of the



FIGURE 4. Cartoon by Maurice Becker for *Solidarity*, November 25, 1919.

signing of the Armistice.⁴⁸ If one read the major national newspapers the next day, the story was quite shocking, confirming every vile thing said about the IWW-Bolsheviki and its un-American ways. Out of sheer fiendish hatred of all things patriotic and American, the IWW suddenly and without provocation attacked a patriotic parade of war veterans, members of the American Legion, and other fellow lumberjacks, killing four in a purely malevolent ambush. One Wobbly had been taken by the outraged crowd and lynched in a justifiable act of public justice. The others were subdued by the heroic crowd and arrested where they awaited trial on charges of conspiracy to commit first-degree murder.

In truth, the Centralia Citizens Protection League and the American Legion had planned the raid on the IWW hall well in advance. As a practical exercise in patriotism, these leading citizens of Centralia decided that it would make a fitting finale to their city's Armistice Day parade to raid and demolish the IWW hall in what was to be no less than the third time the IWW had been violently expelled from Centralia.

On the appointed day, the parade began around two o'clock in the afternoon. After marching through the town of Centralia, patriotic banners waving

in the fall sunlight, the members of the American Legion suddenly broke from the rest of the marchers, and when their officer corps gave the order, the enraged Legionnaires charged the IWW hall. The question of who shot first is, of course, a point of contention, but that the Wobblies defended their hall—just like the black Chicagoans who surprised the nation by defending their homes in the face of a white mob—is not in doubt. The Wobblies who chose to stay and defend their meeting hall were armed and prepared for the anticipated battle, killing three Legionnaires in the initial assault and wounding dozens more. But when the Wobblies inside the hall realized the determination and the numbers of the advancing mob, many gave themselves up to a merciless beating at the hands of the crowd. Wesley Everest, however, a Wobbly, Lumberjack, and war veteran, fled into the woods. Dressed in the military uniform he wore in the fields of France, Everest ran for his life, firing randomly at his pursuers with a pistol. Waist deep in a cold and swiftly flowing stream, Everest turned to face his attackers, offering to surrender to a policeman. But when his offer was ignored, Everest shot the nearest vigilante, a man by the name of Dale Hubbard, nephew of one of the local lumber barons, killing him instantly before his gun finally jammed and he was taken by the mob. Beaten within an inch of his life and dragged back to the city jail, the enraged mob placed a rope around the Everest's neck and threatened him with lynching. But when Everest told the mob that they lacked the courage to lynch a man in daylight, he was dumped in the prison with the rest of his beaten and bleeding comrades.

That night the mob reassembled around the prison, and, during a short power outage, local police took Everest out of his cell and handed him over to the crowd. Forced into a car, the lynching party took Everest to the outskirts of town where he was hung from a bridge and his body riddled with bullets. Though it remains undocumented, it was widely held by both the IWW and the Legion that a leading Centralia businessman castrated Everest while on their way to the bridge, inflicting upon this former soldier and lumberjack, a paragon (and now martyr) of labor's heroic masculinity, the most symbolic horror of the ritualized spectacle lynching usually reserved for black men accused of rape. The next day his body was cut down and dropped before his comrades on the floor of the Centralia prison, where it lay for two days before the prison official forced four union loggers to bury Everest in an unmarked prison yard grave. Nowhere in the history of American labor was a more vicious act of conspiracy, murder, and desecration carried out by a combination of local law enforcement, a uniformed mob of vigilantes, and a well-heeled lynch mob [Figure 4].



"The Ku Klux Government"

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In the days after the riot, the state of Washington issued broad instructions for the police to detain any IWW members still on the loose. The recently passed state criminal syndicalism law made it a felony to be a member of the IWW, and in the poisonous climate after Centralia there were widespread raids, arrests, and repression of radicalism throughout the state and up and down the west coast. Many Wobblies claimed that, in the weeks following Armistice Day, the bodies of several union lumberjacks were found lynched, hanging from trees deep in the forest, killed at the hands of unknown and unseen vigilantes.

With the necessary violence applied, it became the turn of the local judiciary to complete the conspiracy by sending the surviving Centralia Wobblies to prison. The trial of 11 IWW members for conspiracy and murder opened in January 1920, with an armed encampment of American Legion and state militia members present to intimidate the jury, a judge that offered a eulogy for the slain Legionnaires at their funerals, and George Vanderveer, "attorney for the damned," defending the IWW once again. All evidence of a conspiracy by local businessmen to raid the union hall was thrown out, as was the self-defense argument. The result was a series of convictions on second-degree murder charges in one of the many degraded examples of American justice perpetrated during this time of countersubversive frenzy. The IWW's General Defense Committee, the Centralia Publicity Committee, and the newly formed American Civil Liberties Union immediately took up a legal defense campaign. Ultimately the Centralia prisoners were released from jail one by one beginning in 1930, with the last prisoner being released in 1939.

Conclusion

In conclusion, one can read early twentieth century antiunion vigilantism as the vanguard of reaction, naming the enemies of the nation (especially the IWW) and assaulting them using their own methods of direct action tactics: physical beatings and torture, kidnappings and deportations, tar and feathers, raiding and looting union halls, and, in two spectacular incidents, lynching. And it was this violent breach between law and terror opened by vigilantism that—during the World War I and Red Scare era—governmental apparatuses sought to fill. The result was the creation of semilegitimized national vigilante organizations (like the American Protective League and American Legion), federal repressive institutions (like the Federal court system and the FBI), and laws (like the Espionage Act) that effectively followed the lead established by

local anti-Wobbly vigilantism towards the building of the modern American political intelligence apparatus.

It was this historical dynamic, this complex of vigilante direct action, guided by the antilabor interests of monopoly capitalism and supported by state authority that the IWW denounced as the “Ku Klux Government.” Writing during the Red Summer of 1919, one Wobbly editorialist explained this choice of naming:

Over and above the government, federal and state, instituted by the vote of the people, there is a secret and invisible government, which affects our daily life in a most disastrous manner. The same invisible government left traces at Homestead, at Ludlow, in Everett, on the Mesaba Range and in Lawrence, etc. It left traces behind at the hanging of Frank Little, at the legal murder of Joe Hill, at the numerous lynchings thruout the country, at the repeated Ku Klux visits . . .

Our fight is with the secret and invisible government, which to us is neither secret nor invisible. We know where that government is located and we know of what persons it is composed. Its capitol is in Wall Street, and its officials are the defenders of the private ownership of the means of production thruout the country. Its executive servants are the stools, finks, gunmen and murderers. That government, we frankly confess, we intend to overthrow . . .⁴⁹

Indeed, the Wobblies fully understood—better than any other political commentators of the era—the role played by vigilantism in guiding and shaping state policy. So, too, did the IWW come to recognize, sadly after it was too late, their necessary solidarity with African Americans and the continuities between their experiences of repression and the horrors of southern lynching.⁵⁰ Thus, when they named their enemy as “the Ku Klux Government,” it was not just some rhetorical flourish or act of radical propaganda, but a serious confrontation of the lawlessness behind the forging of a new repressive state apparatus, and the extent to which such lawmaking and law enforcement was, in fact, driven by a racist, nativist, and vigilante agenda. But finally, and most importantly, the role of vigilante repression of the IWW should make one thing abundantly clear: the greatest act of violence and the most serious threats to American freedom and liberty have not come from so-called radicals and subversives, but from those who oppose them.



NOTES

1. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 199.
2. Harrison George, *Is Freedom Dead?* (Chicago: IWW Publishing Bureau, 1918), 5.
3. The term "repressive state apparatus" (RSA) is derived from Louis Althusser, who created the term in the 1960s not as an object of inquiry in itself, but as a means of setting off what remains his major contribution to Marxist theories of the state, namely in the theorization of ideological state apparatuses. I am here suggesting that a more historical understanding of the RSA has two tasks: first, to consider just how, in the United States especially, the "public domain" came to monopolize the repressive function, displacing the widespread use of private forms of violence (such as private detectives, hired strikebreakers, paid provocateurs, etc.), and, second, to challenge the sense of unity behind the RSA by illuminating the various, often competing factors and groups that have historically contributed to the current composition of America's RSA. Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses: Notes Towards and Investigation," in *Lenin and Philosophy* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 127–188.
4. On the history of political repression in the United States see William Preston Jr., *Aliens and Dissenters: Federal Suppression of Radicals, 1903–1933* (1964; reprint, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994); Alan Wolfe, *The Seamy Side of Democracy: Repression in America* (New York: Longman, 1978); Robert Justin Goldstein, *Political Repression in Modern America: 1870 to the Present* (New York: Schenkman Publishing, 1978); Frank J. Donner, *The Age of Surveillance: The Aims and Methods of America's Political Intelligence Establishment* (New York: Vintage Books, 1981); Michael Rogin, "Political Repression in the United States," in *Ronald Reagan, the Movie: And Other Episodes in Political Demonology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 44–80; Ward Churchill, "From Pinkertons to the PATRIOT Act: The Trajectory of Political Policing in the United States, 1870 to the Present," *CR: The New Centennial Review* 4, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 1–72.
 On the political economy of policing, see Sidney L. Harring, "Policing a Class Society: The Expansion of Urban Police in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," in *Crime and Capitalism: Readings in Marxist Criminology*, ed. David F. Greenburg (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 546–67; *The Iron Fist and the Velvet Glove: An Analysis of the U.S. Police* (Berkeley: Center for Research on Criminal Justice, 1977); David Montgomery, *Citizen Worker: The Experience of Workers in the United States with Democracy and the Free Market During the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 52–114; and Frank Donner, *Protectors of Privilege: Red Squads and Police Repression in Urban America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990). And on this history of the militias and the National Guard, see Jerry Cooper, *The Rise of the National Guard: The Evolution of the American Militia 1865–1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997); Robin Higham, ed., *Bayonets in the Streets: The Use of Troops in Civil Disturbances* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1969).
5. For a potent synthesis of the uses of private detectives in the history of American capitalism see the work of Robert Weiss, "Private Detective Agencies and Labor Discipline in the United States, 1855–1946," *The Historical Journal* 29, no. 1 (1986): 87–107; Robert Weiss, "The Emergence and Transformation of Private Detective Industrial Policing in the United State, 1850–1940," *Crime and Social Justice* 9 (Spring-Summer 1978): 35–48. Also see, Stephen Norwood, *Strikebreaking and Intimidation: Mercenaries and Masculinity in Twentieth Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Robert Michael Smith, *From*



Blackjacks to Briefcases: A History of Commercialized Strikebreaking and Unionbusting in the United States (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2003); and a true lost classic, Edward Levinson, *I Break Strikes! The Technique of Pearl L. Berghoff* (New York: Robert M. McBride, 1935). On the history of the Pinkerton's, see Frederick Voss and James Barber, *We Never Sleep: The First Fifty Years of the Pinkertons* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institutions Press, 1981); Frank Morn, "The Eye that Never Sleeps:" *A History of the Pinkerton National Detective Agency* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1982); Allan Pinkerton, *Strikers, Communists, Tramps and Detectives* (New York: G. W. Dillingham and Co., 1878). On the question of labor discipline see E. P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," *Past and Present* 38 (December 1967): 56–97; and Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capitalism: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Monthly Review, 1974).

6. Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," *From Max Weber*, ed. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), 78. In this light, the well publicized current move towards privatization of security, military, and prison operation in the United States is not so much a new innovation as it is a regression to the brutal system of the Gilded Age.
7. On the history of the IWW see Paul Brissenden, *IWW: A Study of American Syndicalism* (1919; reprint, New York: Russel and Russel, 1957); Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, vol. 4, *The Industrial Workers of the World, 1905–1917* (New York: International Publishers, 1965); Melvyn Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All: A History of the IWW* (New York: Quadrangle, 1969); Patrick Renshaw, *The Wobblies: The Story of the IWW and Syndicalism in the United States* (1967; reprint, Chicago: Ivan R. Dee Publishers, 1999); Fred W. Thompson and Patrick Murfin, *The IWW: Its First Seventy Years, 1905–1975* (Chicago: Industrial Workers of the World, 1976); Salvatore Salerno, *Red November Black November: Culture and Community in the Industrial Workers of the World* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989); Franklin Rosemont, *Joe Hill: The IWW and the Making of a Revolutionary Workingclass Counterculture* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2002). For an invaluable collection of Wobbly history, documents, and culture see Joyce L. Kornbluh, ed., *Rebel Voices: An IWW Anthology* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1998). The key Wobbly autobiographies include William D. Haywood, *Big Bill Haywood's Book: The Autobiography of William D. Haywood* (New York: International Publishers, 1929); Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, *The Rebel Girl: An Autobiography, My First Life 1906–1926* (New York: International Publishers, 1973); Ralph Chaplin, *Wobbly: The Rough-and-Tumble Story of an American Rebel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948).
8. In using the phrase "countersubversive" I wish to build upon the considerable achievement of Michael Rogin in developing the theoretical contours and mapping the political history of what he calls the "countersubversive tradition" or the history of "American political demonology." "Fearing chaos and secret penetration," writes Rogin, "the countersubversive interprets local initiatives as signs of alien power, . . . The countersubversive needs monsters to give shape to his anxieties and to permit him to indulge his forbidden desires. Demonization allows the countersubversive, in the name of battling the subversive, to imitate his enemy." Much of Rogin's work focuses upon the individual countersubversive personality in political psychological studies of Ronald Reagan, D. W. Griffith, and others. Rogin addresses the problem of collective movements of countersubversion, or countersubversion as an ideology rather than a psychology, in his unsurpassed theorization of "Political Repression in The United States." Together, Rogin demonstrates that the countersubversive tradition does not occupy the margins of American politics, but it is constitutive of the mainstream of American Nationalism, race relations, class struggle, and popular culture. Rogin argues (contra the work of "consensus" historian Richard Hofstadter, author of "The Paranoid Style in American Politics") that countersubversion is far more important than mere rhetoric; indeed, it has a very real ideological and material impact, particularly through the institutions of political surveillance and violence that organize themselves and thrive on countersubversive fantasies of treacherous

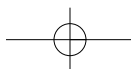


“The Ku Klux Government”

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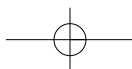
Indians, black rapists, immigrant anarchists, godless communists, and Islamic terrorists. The countersubversive tradition derives its energy from the expansionist nature of American history, the effective political manipulation of mass produced fear, the history (and denial) of political repression, and the definition of American identity against the presence of political, racial, gender, class, and religious aliens. Whether it is the demonization of Indians or Anarchists as “Reds,” organized Nativism or Jim-Crow, anti-Communism, or the current war on terrorism, countersubversion has been a stock trope of reactionary politics and patriotism for centuries. In short, countersubversion is the ideological project behind the RSA. Rogin, *Ronald Reagan, the Movie*.

9. David A. Johnson, “Vigilance and the Law: The Moral Authority of Popular Justice in the Far West,” *American Quarterly* 33 (Winter 1981): 558–86.
10. For an especially detailed study of one powerful citizens alliance see William Millikan, *A Union Against Unions: The Minneapolis Citizens Alliance and its Fight Against Organized Labor, 1903–1947* (Minneapolis: Minnesota Historical Society, 2001).
11. Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: the Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 173–74.
12. For more on the IWW’s free speech fights and the San Diego Free Speech fight in particular, see “The History of the San Diego Free Speech Fight” (1914; reprint, San Diego: Industrial Workers of the World, 1973). Emma Goldman, *Living My Life, Vol 1* (1931; reprint, New York: Dover Publications, 1970): 494–503; Flynn, *Rebel Girl*, 177–79; Kornbluh, *Rebel Voices*, 94–126; Foner, *HLMUS*, 4:194–205.
13. Goldman, *Living My Life*, 1: 497.
14. *Ibid.*, 500.
15. Quoted in Foner, *HLMUS*, 4: 198.
16. “Plague Sweeps over San Diego,” *Industrial Worker* (September 5, 1912): 1; “A Damnable Plot Against Workers,” *Industrial Worker* (June 6, 1912): 1, 4.
17. Preston, *Aliens and Dissenters*, 43.
18. Excerpts of these and other Red Scare examples of countersubversive ideology can be found in David Brion Davis, ed., *The Fear of Conspiracy: Images of Un-American Subversion from the Revolution to the Present* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971), 214–47.
19. H. C. Peterson and Gilbert C. Fite, *Opponents of War, 1917–1918* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1957), 18.
20. Quoted in David Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 78.
21. Emerson Hough, *The Web: The Authorized History of the American Protective League* (Chicago: Reilly and Lee Co., 1919), 1.
22. For more on the history of American Protective League and wartime nativist social movements see John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860–1925* (New York: Atheneum, 1963), 194–243; Kennedy, *Over Here*, 66–86; David H. Bennett, *The Party of Fear: The American Far Right from Nativism to the Militia Movement* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 183–98.
23. Chaplin, *Wobbly*, 211.



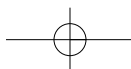
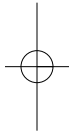


24. On Joe Hill see, Rosemont, *Joe Hill*; Flynn, *Rebel Girl*, 191–95; “Joe Hill,” *International Socialist Review* 16 (December 1915): 326–31; Philip S. Foner, *The Case of Joe Hill* (New York: International Publishers, 1965); Kornbluh, *Rebel Voices*, 127–57.
25. For a thorough contemporary history of the Everett Massacre, see Walker Smith, *The Everett Massacre: A History of Class Struggle in the Lumber Industry* (Chicago: IWW Press, 1918). And for a remarkable eyewitness account, see the chapter by Jack Miller, “The Last Surviving Wobbly Witness to the Everett Massacre,” in *It Did Happen Here: Recollections of Political Repression in America*, ed. Bud and Ruth Schultz (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 236–48.
26. Leslie Marcy, “Eleven Hundred Exiled Copper Miners,” *International Socialist Review* 18 (September 1917): 160–62; Rob E. Hanson, *The Great Bisbee IWW Deportation of July 12, 1917* (Bisbee: Signature Press, 198-).
27. Quoted in Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, vol. 7, *Labor and World War I, 1914–1918* (New York: International Publishers, 1987), 274.
28. Sabotage is simply defined by the IWW as “the conscious withdrawal of the worker’s industrial efficiency,” or according to a slogan printed on thousands of stickers known as “silent agitators”: “Good pay or Bum work.” To the Wobblies, sabotage was never imagined to be anything violent or akin to “machine breaking.” Of course, to the reactionary, the idea of “sabotage”—especially during wartime—left the countersubversive imagination dangerously stimulated. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Walker C. Smith, and William E. Trautman, *Direct Action and Sabotage: Three Classic IWW Pamphlets from the 1910s*, ed. Salvatore Salerno (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1997).
29. Quoted in Foner, *HLMUS*, 7: 281.
30. Arnon Gutfeld, “The Murder of Frank Little: Radical Labor Agitation in Butte, Montana, 1917,” *Labor History* 10 (Spring 1969): 177–92; Mike Byrnes and Les Rickey, *The Truth about the Lynching of Frank Little* (Butte: Old Butte Publishing, 2003). For an understanding of how the radical movement responded to Little’s lynching, see “The Man That Was Hung,” *International Socialist Review* 17 (September 1917): 132–38.
31. Editorials on the Little lynching are compiled in “Lynch-Law and Treason,” *The Literary Digest* (August 18, 1917): 12–13. For the members of the IWW, these poles, between aggressors and victims, lawbreakers and the defenders of honor, were exactly reversed: “The present administration in completely ignoring the crimes of Bisbee and Butte,” claimed an editorial in *Solidarity*, “was showing itself to be but the pliant tool of the Wall-Street war-lords.” “The Capitalist State and ‘Invisible Government,’” *Solidarity* (September 1, 1917): 2.
32. If one understands vigilantism as extralegal civic violence, the lynching of Frank Little was obviously the work of vigilantes. However, the IWW generally believed Little’s murderers were paid agents of the Anaconda Copper company. To this end, Little’s tombstone reads: “Slain by Capitalist Interests for Organizing and Inspiring His Fellow Men.” Though no one is sure who the men were that attacked Little, Dashiell Hammett apparently knew something about their motives from his days as a Pinkerton detective. Lillian Hellman, playwright and Dash’s lifelong companion, related this story about Hammett’s experiences in Butte: “I remember sitting on a bed next to him in the first months we met, listening to him tell me stories about his Pinkerton days when an officer of the Anaconda Copper Company had offered him five thousand dollars to kill Frank Little . . . From Frank Little’s murder I think I can date Hammett’s belief that he was living in a corrupt society. In time he came to the conclusion that nothing less than a revolution could wipe out the corruption.” Lillian Hellman, *Scoundrel Time* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1976).
33. Foner, *HLMUS*. 7: 298–99.



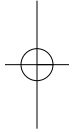


34. For a contemporary critique of the Espionage and Sedition Acts, see Zechariah Chafee Jr., *Free Speech in the United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1941), 36–107. Also see Geoffrey R. Stone, *Perilous Times: Free Speech in Wartime* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2004), 135–233.
35. On the founding and history of the FBI see Michael R. Belknap, "The Mechanics of Repression: J. Edgar Hoover, the Bureau of Investigation and the Radicals 1917–1925," *Crime and Social Justice* 7 (Spring–Summer 1977): 49–58; David Williams, "The Bureau of Investigation and Its Critics, 1919–1921: The Origins of Federal Political Surveillance," *Journal of American History* 68 (December 1981): 560–79; Donner, *The Age of Surveillance*: 3–51; Curt Gentry, *J. Edgar Hoover: The Man and The Secrets* (New York: Penguin Books, 1991); Theodore Kornweibel Jr., *'Seeing Red': Federal Campaigns Against Black Militancy, 1919–1925* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1998), 1–18.
36. There are many sources for the history of the IWW trial. One of the most useful primary sources is Harrison George, *The IWW Trial: Story of the Greatest Trial in Labor's History by One of the Defendants* (Chicago: IWW Publishing Bureau, n.d.), which combines extensive trial transcripts with analysis and comment by a Wobbly who had a front row seat. For more autobiographical accounts, see Haywood, *Bill Haywood's Book*, 290–325; Chaplin, *Wobbly*, 219–83; Richard Brazier, "The Mass IWW Trial of 1918: A Retrospect," *Labor History* 7 (Spring 1966), 178–92. The *International Socialist Review* reprinted the IWW Indictments in *ISR* 18 (November/December 1918), 268–79. Also see John Reed and Art Young, "The Social Revolution in Court," *Liberator* (September 1918); Helen Keller, "In Behalf of the IWW," *Liberator* (March 1918): 13. For secondary histories of the IWW raids and Chicago Trial, see Preston, *Aliens and Dissenters*, 118–51; Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 423–44; Foner, *HLMUS* 7:292–314. Philip Taft, "The Federal Trials of the IWW," *Labor History* 3 (Winter 1962): 52–65; Philip S. Foner, "United States of America vs Wm. D. Haywood, et al.: The IWW Indictment," *Labor History* 11 (Fall 1970): 500–30; Clayton R. Koppes, "The Kansas Trial of the IWW, 1917–1919," *Labor History* 16 (Summer 1975): 338–58; Francis Shor, "The IWW and Oppositional Politics in World War I: Pushing the System Beyond its Limits," *Radical History Review* 64 (1996): 74–94; Earl Bruce White, "The United States v. C. W. Anderson et al.: The Wichita Case, 1917–1919," in *At the Point of Production: The Local History of the IWW*, ed. Joseph R. Conlin (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1981), 143–164.
37. Foner, *HLMUS* 7: 299.
38. Quoted in Haywood, *Bill Haywood's Book*, 317.
39. Brazier, "The Mass IWW Trial of 1918: A Retrospect," *Labor History*, 179.
40. As something of an aside, it is worth remembering that in defeat the IWW's refusal to give up on its imprisoned comrades may be its most permanent legacy: the work of the IWW in campaigning for their fellow "prisoners of the class war" played a direct role in the formation of the American Civil Liberties Union and the International Labor Defense as well as in the general legal protection of civil liberties in the twentieth century.
41. Civil Liberties lawyer and historian Frank Donner described this repressive system as follows: "If World War I created a climate favorable to the federalization of intelligence, the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution gave it a permanent *raison d'etre*, constituency, and mission. As war-borne hatred of the 'Huns' was transferred to the reds, the defenders of America closed ranks in a new counter-subversive consensus that dwarfed similar movements of the past. The great American nightmare of a foreign-hatched conspiracy has become a reality. The twin traumas of war and revolution at once consolidated a nationwide countersubversive constituency and made intelligence its spokesman. This wartime collaboration between intelligence and grass-roots nativism





- permanently influenced the growth and direction of political intelligence—its structure, priorities and style.” Donner, *The Age of Surveillance*, 33.
42. “Riots and Race Wars, Lynchings and Massacres, Military Law, Terrorism and Giant Strikes,” *The One Big Union Monthly* 1 (November 1919): 9–10.
 43. Quoted in Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, vol. 8, *Postwar Struggles 1918–1920* (New York: International Publishers, 1988), 24.
 44. On the Red Scare of 1919–1920, see Murray B. Levin, *Political Hysteria in America: The Democratic Capacity for Repression* (New York: Basic Books, 1971); William J. Tuttle Jr., *Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1970); and Robert K. Murray, *Red Scare: A Study in National Hysteria* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1955).
 45. “The ‘American Legion’ a Revolutionary Body,” *One Big Union Monthly* 1 (December 1919): 9–10.
 46. “The American Legion—Our National Ku Klux Klan,” *The Messenger* II (February 1920): 4.
 47. John Sandgren, “Under the Spell of Terrorism,” *One Big Union Monthly* 2 (March 1920): 25.
 48. There are many sources on the Centralia Massacre, the most thorough secondary history is by John McClelland Jr., *Wobbly War: The Centralia Story* (Tacoma: Washington State Historical Society, 1987). But one should also consult the remarkable pamphlet by Ralph Chaplin, *The Centralia Conspiracy* (Chicago: IWW Publishing, 1920).
 49. “The Ku Klux Government,” *One Big Union Monthly* 1 (August 1919): 7.
 50. On the historical conflicts and engagement between African Americans and the organized Left, see Barbara Foley, *Specters of 1919: Class and Nation in the Making of the New Negro* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003); also see chap. 2 “‘The Negro Question:’ Red Dreams of Black Liberation,” in Robin D. G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), 36–59.



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